

# Journey To

# LIFE

*"You have shown me the path of life."  
Psalms 16:11*

ADVENTIST  
**recovery**  
MINISTRIES  
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

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## Editorial Perspective

### Mistaken Identity

A few weeks ago, I was mowing a lawn when I felt what I thought was several small pebbles hitting my left ankle and being thrown by the lawnmower. However, when I looked, I noticed several yellow jacket wasps. I didn't realize the potency of the venom of those three or four flying insects and later that day spent more time walking behind the mower while mowing the lawns at my home.

The next few days and nights were filled with intense pain that kept me from accomplishing some things I needed to do. The swelling of the ankle and foot meant treatments with ice and medications while, I spent the days sitting in a big comfortable reclining chair with my leg and foot elevated to relieve the pressure and reduce the chances of the venom traveling to the rest of my body.

Isn't this the way addiction often begins. A person thinks the addictive substance, such as an alcoholic beverage or tobacco, is of little or no consequence. However, that substance or an activity like playing video games soon becomes a "drug of choice" (with its physical and mental attachments) to medicate the pain

and escape the negative feelings associated with living life on one's own terms.

Frank's personal experience with alcohol as he shares it in this issue of the Journey to Life, is another reminder of the years that are negatively effected by mistaking the true identity of the substance. Like the yellow jackets (which unlike most other stinging insects) can sting repeatedly, alcohol keeps on stinging and causing pain.

You will also notice in this issue the feature article, "Addiction and the Family" by Professor Alina Baltazar. The many ways addiction continues to negative impact the family are its' focus.

False and mistaken identities can and will confuse us and cause dysfunction in our lives and those we know. The good news is that even though we may be alcoholics and addicts (in other words "sinners"); our true identity is "a new creation" in Christ Jesus.

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## ARMin Mission and Vision

### Our Mission:

Promote healing and freedom from harmful practices by providing resources and training to facilitate recovery.

### Our Vision:

Healthy people growing in a relationship with Christ by using principles of God's Word and choosing healthful practices aimed at finding freedom from harmful habits and addictive behaviors.

### Potential Objectives/Goals:

- Promote healing (individually and corporately) utilizing the healthy, balanced principles of God's Word
- Provide resources to churches and individuals in order to raise awareness and educate regarding the root of dysfunctions that create disunity within individuals, families, churches and communities through unresolved trials, troubles and tragedies
- Train individuals to facilitate ongoing support groups and mentoring in a safe, nurturing environment

We believe that as we heal from life's trials, troubles and tragedies, we become inspired and committed to reach out to others as a result of gratitude for our personal healing; to care for others because our lives are so enriched by Christ's forgiveness; and the blessing of the freedom we have experienced due to His unending grace and mercy.

# The Healing Value of the 12 STEPS

## Step 10—

“Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.”

### Biblical Comparison

“For I say through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.”

— Romans 12:3 (NKJV)

### Steps to Christ Chapter

The Work and the Life

## Upcoming Events

**National Recovery Month (September, 2015)** For more information: SAMHSAInfo@samhsa.hhs.gov | 800-662-4357 Tool Free [www.recoverymonth.gov/](http://www.recoverymonth.gov/)

### ARMin training Schedule: SAVE THE DATE

- Southwestern Union (SWUC), Dallas, TX (October 9-11, 2015)
- Emotional Wellness Summit (January 13-17, 2016). Registration is now open. More info at [www.EmotionalWellnessSummit.com](http://www.EmotionalWellnessSummit.com)

For more information about the above trainings go to [www.adventistrecovery.org](http://www.adventistrecovery.org) or call 301-680-6733.



## 12 STEPS to Recovery STEP #10

Step 10 is the first of the so-called maintenance steps. We first took a searching and fearless inventory when we worked on our 4th step. I used the words “worked on” intentionally because Step 10 informs us that we are a work-in-process and, as such, we will continue to ask God to search us and show us our hearts daily (Ps. 139:23-24). In steps 8 and 9, we initiated an amends process guided by the wisdom of Scripture and those who have gone before us on the journey of recovery.

Many of those who work a strong recovery program make it a part of their evening devotional routine to take a few minutes to review their day. They may ask that the Holy Spirit bring to their memory any way that day in which they may have hurt God, another person, or themselves. Others have become so sensitized to the still small voice of the Spirit that they can sense immediately that they have transgressed the boundaries of another or spoken with a self-centered motive or acted in some hurtful way. They can immediately take care of the offense by it to themselves, to God and to the other and by asking forgiveness.

Keeping a clear conscience becomes an important part of the daily routine of a person in recovery. As important as attending Journey to Wholeness recovery meetings is in a person's life, it is equally as important to maintain the daily discipline of working steps such as taking a continual personal inventory. I begin the day with reading and working on recovery material from the *Journey to Wholeness* Participant Guides, my recovery Bibles, and other spiritual reading. My day begins by asking God to be remind me to keep him first in my life at every moment of the day. I've learned and am learning more each day that God is faithful to keep me as I continue to take a personal inventory.

## Testimony

I am a new creature in Christ today, however the journey to that was not a pleasant one because of my self-centeredness. I have a will that has been contaminated by sin and Paul describes this dilemma in Romans 7: 18-24.

I was taught as a child the right way to live but as I grew older my self will wanted to run riot and so I rebelled against my family, church, society and God. The contaminated will was able to take control even further because I let alcohol become the center of my life. Yes, I was addicted to alcohol, my drug of choice. The result of placing my will on the wrong side hurt many people in my life and those hurt the most were people the closest to me.

My youth was spent in the metropolitan New York area and my family was comprised of European immigrant grandparents and first

generation American parents, Aunts and Uncles. I was the oldest of three and my sisters were twins three years younger than I.

The family was Catholic and I attended church and catechism classes as well as being an altar boy for a short time. My behavior was rebellious and I found myself in trouble with the priests and nuns more than I liked. The culture at the time was one where the priests and nuns would hand out punishments for kids like me hoping we would change. The cry was be more like Jesus and do good works. The condemnation turned me away from the church as well as God because I felt He was a punishing, condemning God just like the leaders in the church. I would avoid going to service and study classes when my parents sent me. I would go instead to a local candy store and meet friends where we would smoke cigarettes drink sodas and hang out. We were all between the ages of 11-15 and there was plenty of time to progress toward more dubious activities.

The time came where a few of us met in a vacant lot and drank a bottle of whiskey. The result for me was a feeling of freedom and that I was OK. The feeling OK was a lot better than the condemnation I seemed to be getting so I continued to drink for some 30 years to keep that feeling. Alcohol had become my God.

The problem with addiction is that it always leads a person down spiritually, mentally, physically and emotionally. This was happening all along however I kept doing the same thing over and over expecting a better result (the OK feeling). I was insane!

I eventually lost my wife and five kids, a business and myself. I had troubles with the police, relationships and finances. Finally on my last night of drinking, the most dysfunctional night of my life I cried out for help to a God I did not know and had turned my back on.

God is faithful and He heard my plea (1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.) and answered me with Love. He restored my life first by lifting the obsession to drink and making me sane (2 Tim 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.)

What a loving God who sent Jesus to save and provides us with the Holy Spirit to guide us rather than try to do it by works. He sent me to AA for early recovery and to a Catholic priest in AA that explained the Love of Jesus and that I am OK in the eyes of Jesus. I was born again as this priest told me about the real meaning of the cross and surrender. I finally found what I was looking for all those years of drinking and it was not in the bottle but in a relationship with Jesus and getting to know Him through the Bible where the 12 steps reside. He has led me through one of the kids in that long ago lot to the SDA church for the final message. He has allowed me to share recovery and Jesus' Love in the church for the last 27 years along with others in recovery who have taught me about a Loving God.

Jesus remembers my prayer of surrender and keeps working in my life. He has provide me with a loving Christian wife of 27 years, restored my relationship with those five children and provided two more as well as eight grandchildren to love.

Frank Sanchez





## Addiction and the Family

**A**ddiction is a family system problem. That is, the problem affects the entire family. What happens to one family member impacts everyone else in the family. People living in families with an addict often live in a constant state of stress and crisis. Their lives focus on the addict's behavior, whether it is coming home and finding the addict drunk or high and being sick or emotionally volatile, losing jobs and money, not following through with responsibilities, breaking promises, being unavailable physically or emotionally, or embarrassing them in front of family or friends.

There are certain characteristics research has found that are present in the families of an addict. First, the abuser's object of addiction (ex. gambling, food, pornography, alcohol, or drugs) becomes the most important thing in the family's life. This is because the abuser's top goal is getting their addiction fix that other family members must structure their own lives around.

Then it is the rest of the family's job to keep the family together even when conditions are deteriorating due to the abuser's behavior. The unknown is scary. The family knows what it is like living with the addict, regardless of how bad the situation really is.

In addition, family members have a tendency to become enablers for the abuser's addiction. The enablers take on the responsibility of maintaining the family's functioning and making excuses for the abuser's behavior. By doing this, the enabler then allows the abuser to stay in their addiction.

Family members have a tendency to feel incredibly guilty. They often think it is their fault the abuser has become an addict. The abuser typically denies responsibility for their addiction, and someone must be to blame, so then it must be the family members' fault. For example, the spouse often thinks if they were just a better husband or wife then everything would be okay. Children may think if they were just good at school then their parent will get better.

Families with an addict often feel out of control. This is due to the high levels of energy it takes to try

and control the addict, family members lose contact with themselves. They are so focused on the addict they lose who they are, how they feel, and think they can't share how they feel with others. This makes their interpersonal relationships seem empty and alone. Due to this lack of support their problems can escalate out of control. Like you are on a treadmill trying to keep the family together.

Thus family members don't know what they want. They know what the addict wants. That becomes the family's focus. The family is often surviving by a thread and there is no time for superficial wishes and wants of a normal family. They only have vague hopes that someday things will get better. They get so used to broken promises by the addict they just don't listen anymore.

Family members of an addict can also feel worthless. They may feel no one cares and they are unlovable. As if they deserve what is happening to them because they are so inadequate in their familial role. This is the best they can get.

As a result, they frequently do not trust others. They have been disappointed so many times by the dependent person's behavior they don't believe things will ever get better. In order to keep the addiction a secret, they feel they can't trust others with the shame they are hiding.

Communication is another issue. Because the family with an addict learns the credo: "Don't talk, don't trust, and don't feel," this blocks healthy communication. They don't feel they can openly talk to each other, extended family, or friends. They are cut off from everyone. If you talk openly, then the truth might come out and the whole family will fall apart.

Children suffer the most in this situation. Their development can be severely impacted. Children need to deal with the same level of stress that the adults experience, but they have less physical, social, emotional, and mental resources than adults. The family situation may lead to a lack of sleep, when it is vital

*continued on page 4*

## Resources

### Journey to Wholeness:



A series that can be used in support groups or small groups as a resource to facilitate recovery

of breaking away from harmful practices and strengthening an intimate relationship with God in the Journey to an abundant life. Facilitator guides and participant guides can be purchased in our online store at [www.AdventistRecovery.org](http://www.AdventistRecovery.org)

### Journey to Life Newsletter:



This bi-monthly newsletter is available in English, Spanish, and soon in French as well. Print a free

pdf copy, download, or register to subscribe and receive it via email at [www.AdventistRecovery.org](http://www.AdventistRecovery.org)

### Choose Full Life Resources:



These are posters, calendars/bookmarks, booklets that can be used to share with others 10

Ways to Choose a

Full Life embarking on a Journey to Recovery. For more information and to place an order please go to [www.NADHealthMinistry.org](http://www.NADHealthMinistry.org) and check out the online store. The Choose Full Life theme song is also available for download.

### Unhooked:



This is a 28 part series produced by ARMin and Hope Channel,

highlighting different type of addictive behaviors, real stories, and experts comments on effective treatment. The ultimate goal is to bring hope for recovery in Christ. You can watch the series weekly Hope Channel or direct TV channel 368. The complete DVD with all episodes will be available for purchase in October. For previous episodes and more information go to: [www.hopetv.org/unhooked](http://www.hopetv.org/unhooked) or [www.adventistrecovery.org](http://www.adventistrecovery.org)

## NEWS

### Atlantic Union ARMin Training

On June 20-21 the nearly over 60 people attended the Adventist Recovery Ministries training held in Woodside, Queens, in New York City. Attendees came primarily from the Greater New York and Northeastern Conference, but all conferences in the Union were represented, with some coming from Canada and other US states. The group left inspired and committed to begin or expand the ARMin meetings around the Union.



### Southern New England Conference

On October 3, the Concord SDA Church, in Concord, NH, held its 1st ever Adventist Recovery Awareness Sabbath Event. "We had a full house!" reported Eddie Travis, ARMin coordinator. He recounted how a lady from Boston, Massachusetts, saw the event posted on the choose full life website ([www.choosefulllife.org](http://www.choosefulllife.org)) and was so inspired by the Recovery mission that she wants to start a ministry in her church, in Cambridge Massachusetts. She along with several others attended the program and were blessed.



### SEND US YOUR NEWS

Recovery related news, pictures (protect anonymity of individuals in meetings) and upcoming recovery and awareness events can be sent for future newsletters. Please send these to Ray Nelson, Journey to Life Editor – [adventistrecovery@gmail.com](mailto:adventistrecovery@gmail.com) and/or Katia Reinert, Adventist Recovery Ministries Director – [recovery@nad.adventist.org](mailto:recovery@nad.adventist.org)

## Featured Article *continued from page 3*

for growth. They may have less social resources because they are afraid to open up to their friends and they feel they can't have their friends over to the house. Emotional resources are depleted due to the negative feelings they often experience (pain, fear, and embarrassment). Mental resources may be affected by lack of parental help and difficulties with school attendance.

Research has found children growing up in an addicted home are at risk of developmental problems. They have higher rates of:

- 1) behavioral problems (delinquency, truancy, aggression, hyperactivity, temper tantrums)
- 2) school difficulties (learning problems, reading delays, difficulty concentrating)
- 3) emotional problems (negative attitude toward addicted parent, lack of bonding with parents, psychosomatic complaints, self-blame)
- 4) problematic adolescence (socially isolated, acting out for attention, leaving home early, risk taking behavior that can lead to their own addiction)

Note that not all children who grow up with an addicted parent will develop these problems. However, there are factors that put them at greater risk. These factors are: 1) single parent household, 2) longer length of time the child was exposed to the addiction, and 3) lack of availability of a parental surrogate (older sibling, close relative, or mentor).

Children need to know it is not their fault. Support is vital. Children need to have people they can turn to for support. The Lord is always available, but when change doesn't happen children may doubt His existence.

These factors are important to keep in mind in the recovery process. The family has maladapted to the situation and will have a certain degree of difficulty making adjustments to life without an addict. Even though the family has wanted the addict to recover, they will have to take on new roles they are not used to having. The adolescent daughter who had to cook for the siblings and make family decisions suddenly now has a recovering mother who has taken charge. The teenager is put back into the daughter role with less power. She may resent the change.

Just like there are negative emotions to deal with when there is an addict in the home, there are emotions to deal with recovery. Children need to know their parent's recovery is not their responsibility. Relapse is common. If it happens, it is not the family's fault. Each family member should be in their own recovery to make the adjustment smoother and to work through their own negative feelings.

*Alina M. Baltazar, Ph.D. candidate, MSW, CFLE*

*MSW Program Director  
Department of Social Work*

## Director's Message



October 10 is World Mental Health Day. We know that there is no health without mental health. We also know that often, mental health issues are associated with addictions and compulsive behaviors that feed into dependencies and vice-versa. Mental illness is the number one cause of financial burden in most of the world, and despite the many efforts to reduce stigma, there is still much discrimination and misconceptions about it.

This year on World Mental Health Day, the World Health Organization is focusing on the theme of "Dignity" for those with mental illness. There is much we can do to accept, understand, respect and preserve the dignity of those with mental illness as much as those with a diagnosis such as diabetes or heart disease.

In order to assist on this effort and to educate, raise awareness and explore tangible plans to make a difference in bringing this issue to the forefront of the Seventh-day Adventist church as a way to prevent and assist those in the church and community, we are planning for a mental/emotional wellness summit on January 13-17, 2016 at Orlando, Florida.

Registration is open now and the early bird discount ends on November 30. To learn more and reserve the hotel go to: [www.EmotionalWellnessSummit.com](http://www.EmotionalWellnessSummit.com). The ARMin training will be offered there, along with many other interesting presentations that will help those leading ARMin programs assist more meaningfully to those with mental health needs. Come and join us. If you can't, pray that God will bless this unprecedented event which is sponsored by North America, Inter-America and South-American Divisions!

*Katia Reinert*

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