

# Listings of 12 Step Recovery Groups (Commentary Follows Listings)

The following listings of 12 step recovery groups was taken from the website [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_twelve-step\\_groups](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_twelve-step_groups). Fellowships in this section follow reasonably close variations of the [Twelve Steps](#) and [Twelve Traditions](#) of [Alcoholics Anonymous](#).

- AA - [Alcoholics Anonymous](#)
- ACA - [Adult Children of Alcoholics](#)
- [Al-Anon/Alateen](#), for friends and family members of [alcoholics](#)
- CA - [Cocaine Anonymous](#)
- CLA - [Clutterers Anonymous](#)
- CMA - [Crystal Meth Anonymous](#)
- [Co-Anon](#), for friends and family of [addicts](#)
- CoDA - [Co-Dependents Anonymous](#), for people working to end patterns of dysfunctional relationships and develop functional and healthy relationships
- COSA - [Codependents of Sex Addicts](#)
- COSLAA - [CoSex and Love Addicts Anonymous](#)
- DA - [Debtors Anonymous](#)
- EA - [Emotions Anonymous](#), for recovery from [mental and emotional illness](#)
- EHA - [Emotional Health Anonymous](#), for recovery from [mental and emotional illness](#)
- FA - [Families Anonymous](#), for relatives and friends of addicts
- FA - [Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous](#)
- FAA - [Food Addicts Anonymous](#)
- GA - [Gamblers Anonymous](#)
- [Gam-Anon/Gam-A-Teen](#), for friends and family members of [problem gamblers](#)
- HA - [Heroin Anonymous](#)
- MA - [Marijuana Anonymous](#)
- NA - [Narcotics Anonymous](#)
- NAIL - [Neurotics Anonymous](#), for recovery from [mental and emotional illness](#)
- [Nar-Anon](#), for friends and family members of [addicts](#)
- NicA - [Nicotine Anonymous](#)
- OA - [Overeaters Anonymous](#)
- OLGA - [Online Gamers Anonymous](#)
- PA - [Pills Anonymous](#), for recovery from prescription pill addiction.
- RA - [Reentry Anonymous](#), for recovery of criminal addiction and ex-offender reentry support
- SA - [Sexaholics Anonymous](#)
- SA - [Smokers Anonymous](#)
- S-anon - for friends and family of sexaholics
- SAA - [Sex Addicts Anonymous](#)
- SCA - [Sexual Compulsives Anonymous](#)
- SIA - [Survivors of Incest Anonymous](#)
- SLAA - [Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous](#)
- WA - [Workaholics Anonymous](#)

## Programs partially patterned after Alcoholics Anonymous

Fellowships in this section use material from [Alcoholics Anonymous](#), and credit its influence but do not necessary follow both the [Twelve Steps](#) and [Twelve Traditions](#) of AA.

[Celebrate Recovery](#), Christian-focused twelve-step program for recovery from various behaviors

[GROW](#), a peer support and mutual aid organization for recovery from, and prevention of, serious [mental illness](#)

[Courage International](#), Catholic ministry which ministers to those with same-sex attractions

[Homosexuals Anonymous](#), group of people using a modified version of the 12 steps to help each other to live an [ex-gay](#) lifestyle

[Horizon Services](#), social service nonprofit based in the [San Francisco Bay Area](#) which uses the NA and AA models extensively, along with other methods of recovery

[LDS Family Services](#) Addiction Recovery Program, program affiliated with [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](#) that uses twelve-step principles

Some commentary and thoughts on 12 step recovery programs as a whole:

Most people will notice that many 12 step programs contain the term or label "anonymous". We must ask ourselves, "Is the term or label 'anonymous' truly Biblically accurate? The following article entitled, "Sinners Anonymous - is this a Biblical mode?" by Mr. James Sandquist (taken from <http://www.perfectpeaceplan.com/post/celebrate-recovery-exposed>) explains in detail that applying a label of "anonymous" to any recovery model program cannot be accepted as Biblically accurate. Read further:

[For a excerpt from the book "Who's Driving the Purpose Driven Church?" click here.](#)

## Literature in 12 Step Group Programs

Let us now discuss certain literature in 12 step groups. It becomes clear rather quickly that the literature accepted as "approved" through certain 12 step groups is meant to promote the man-made doctrines and teachings of these groups rather than a full reliance solely on God's word, the Bible. For instance, Alcoholics Anonymous members adhere to the teachings of their own manual the "AA Big Book". Celebrate Recovery has gone so far as to put out their own version of the Bible called The Celebrate Recovery Bible. The issue is that these particular resources make additions and subtractions to God's word by influencing the readers to accept the doctrines and theology taught in these specific groups. How does this measure up to the true standard, God's word? Consider the following verses:

Deuteronomy 4:2, "<sup>2</sup> Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."

1 Corinthians 4:6, "<sup>6</sup> Now, brothers and sisters, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond

what is written." Then you will not be puffed up in being a follower of one of us over against the other."

Revelation 22: 18-19, "<sup>18</sup>For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: <sup>19</sup>And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

According to the above verses, for Alcoholics Anonymous members to adhere to their own "Bible", the AA Big Book, and for Celebrate Recovery to approve and encourage their members to adhere to their own version of the Bible, The Celebrate Recovery Bible, goes beyond what is taught in the Bible. If any 12 step recovery groups really had a firm foundation in God's word, then why do they need to rely upon literature which only adds to the teachings of the already sufficient word of God? Is God's word not enough for us to know how to live according to God's standards? Since when did humans think they have the "authority" to put themselves above God and use literature, written by the fleshly influence of man instead of the direction and movement of the Holy Spirit? Listen carefully to the strong warning from the Lord given to us from

Isaiah 55: 8-9, "<sup>8</sup> For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. <sup>9</sup> For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

If God's thoughts are higher than man's thoughts, man absolutely has no authority adding and "obeying" literature which was not influenced by the Holy Spirit in the first place! I see no difference with what AA has done with the "Big Book" and what Celebrate Recovery has done with The Celebrate Recovery Bible any different than what other cult groups have done in distorting God's word. The Watchtower Society has written their own Bible version called The New World Translation. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (the Mormons) have written their own Bible translation called The Book of Mormon. To go beyond (adding) or subtracting from God's word is clearly forbidden according to God's standards. Here are some additional literature of other 12 step recovery groups that follows the same pattern as AA and Celebrate Recovery :

Narcotics Anonymous: Narcotics Anonymous, Basic Text, 6th Edition  
It Works: How and Why  
Sex Addicts Anonymous: SAA Green Book  
Overeaters Anonymous: A New Beginning

## **The Serenity Prayer**

Many 12 step recovery groups recite what is commonly known as "the serenity prayer". The serenity prayer is as follows: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." While the serenity prayer may actually be considered a Biblical prayer for various life situations, it is not

Biblical to give the vain repetition of the same prayer at every meeting. Listen to what Jesus says about vain repetition in

Matthew 6: 7-8, "When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases like the Gentiles do; for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him."

A second problem is introduced through reciting the serenity prayer in 12 step meetings. When 12 step members state their serenity prayer towards "God", which God? The God of the Bible? Allah (the Muslim god)? Buddha (the Buddhist god)? The "god" of the group, member's sponsors, or their accountability partners? My point is most 12 step members are not saved through the blood of Jesus Christ (read Matthew 7: 13-14). Because of this fact, many members in 12 step programs are not referring to the God of the Bible, but rather another "god" as an idol when the serenity prayer is recited in 12 step meetings.

## **Life Enhancement or Radical Transformation in Jesus Christ?**

Are most members in 12 step groups more focused on "life enhancement" or true radical transformation in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior? My own experience in both secular and "Christianized" 12 step recovery programs informs me most 12 step members are more focused on life enhancement than sharing how Jesus Christ is changing and transforming their very lives. In small group sharing and many testimonies, members rarely if ever give proper credit to Jesus Christ for changing and transforming their lives. Many members give "credit" to their specific 12 step group for "changing" their life. Other members elevate and bring glory to themselves with such statements as "I was able to do this", or "I now have 30 days of sobriety because I have properly worked the steps of the program." Life enhancement is meant to focus on organizing a lifestyle in balance with one's finances, communication skills, work ethic, etc. At the onset, it sounds Biblical. However, closer examination of the motives for "life enhancement" reveal most 12 step members are more concerned about having a organized life by their own "strength" rather than by Jesus Christ who grants eternal life to those who surrender entirely to Him and submit to His will, plans, and purposes. God does want soundly converted Christians to have a productive work ethic, appropriate use of finances, etc. However, when the motive is meant to bring glory to self for having an "organized" life, the devil is the one who receives all the glory, not Jesus Christ.

Jesus told a parable about a rich fool who stored treasures for himself but was not rich towards God (read Luke 12: 13-21). Listen how many times the rich fool uses the pronoun "I" and "my" in verses 17-19,

"What should I do for I have no place to store my crops? Then he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry."

## **Psychology Versus The Bible**

When a person's focus is on "me, myself, and I", there is no way Jesus Christ can be glorified and exalted through such an attitude and life choices. Most 12 step recovery groups have their "foundations" in psychology. Having groups focus on psychology as the basis for "recovery" presents several problems. Let us contrast the Bible versus psychology:

1. Psychology completely and totally focuses on "self". The roots of psychology claim that people are "inherently good" and that people who have made "bad" mistakes in life should be pointed to their "goodness" as a "springboard" to help them "recover". However, God tells us in His word, the Bible, a totally different viewpoint. Romans 3:10 says, "There is no one who is righteous, not even one." Because "all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory" (Romans 3:23), people are in need of a Savior Jesus Christ to save them from their sins and God's wrath upon unsaved humanity (the word "Savior" literally means "to save us from our sins" (read Matthew 1:21).

2. Psychology focuses on man's wisdom whereas the Bible focuses on God's wisdom. Listen to how God's wisdom is contrasted to human wisdom from 1 Corinthians 1: 18-25 of the Bible,

"<sup>8</sup> For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup> For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>20</sup> Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup> For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup> Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup> but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup> For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength."

Again, let us look to 1 Corinthians 3: 18-23 and discover how God compares His wisdom to the "wisdom" of humans, "<sup>18</sup> Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become "fools" so that you may become wise. <sup>19</sup> For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"<sup>[a]</sup>; <sup>20</sup> and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile."<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>21</sup> So then, no more boasting about human leaders! All things are yours, <sup>22</sup> whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas<sup>[c]</sup> or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, <sup>23</sup> and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

3. Psychology only focuses on a person's sinful past in order to help them "recover". As new creations in Jesus Christ, born-again Christians "die" to self, that is their fleshly nature by forgetting what is behind and focusing on what is ahead. Consider the following verses:

2 Corinthians 5:17, "<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:<sup>[a]</sup> The old has gone, the new is here!" If the old has gone, and the new has come, explain to me how a person in Jesus Christ must repeatedly return to his or her past to "recover" from his or her sins and be forgiven entirely?

Philippians 3: 12-13, "<sup>12</sup> Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. <sup>13</sup> Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead," Satan's goal is to keep people in bondage to their past sins. The devil knows as long as people can be held in bondage to their past, they **WILL NEVER** be forgiven of their sins and never reach their potential in Jesus Christ.

4. Psychology simply focuses on temporary change over past behavior. Soundly converted Christians in Jesus Christ experience everlasting permanent change by being set free from sin's bondage once and for all. John 8: 34-36 tells us,

"<sup>34</sup> Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.<sup>35</sup> Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever.<sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

5. Psychology promotes a fear of people. Psychology says people are entirely accountable to other human beings but ultimately not accountable to Jesus Christ. God's word tells us we are ultimately accountable to Jesus Christ and will have to answer for the choices we made in this life in eternity. Consider the following Bible verses:

Romans 14: 11-12, "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: "*As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.*" So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (NKJV)

Matthew 12: 36-37, "<sup>36</sup> But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. <sup>37</sup> For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." Since we have already established we will all have to answer to Jesus Christ in eternity, we will have to answer for our words and actions to Christ ultimately on our eternal judgment seats.

John 12:48, "<sup>48</sup>He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

Philippians 2: 10-11, "<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,<sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

## **Deception of Working The Steps**

Most 12 step program leaders place a strong emphasis on "working the steps". Most 12 step members who have worked through the 12 steps in their entirety at least one time believe they are "right" before God simply because they have completed a requirement for a program to have a life labeled as "manageable", "organized", "responsible", and "sober". Is a person truly forgiven of his or her sins solely on the basis of "working the steps" requirements of a 12 step program? That is not what God declares through His word, the Bible. Attempting to "earn" one's salvation through "working the steps" is what is commonly known as "works based

righteousness". There are many people in life, including those in 12 step programs, who falsely believe they are saved by "works of their own merit" apart from the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ exhibited to us at the cross. A soundly converted Christian is only saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Listen to what we are told in

Ephesians 2: 8-10, "<sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Grace in its simplest definition can be defined as "unmerited favor". A person is only genuinely saved because he or she chose to repent entirely of his or her sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Any works a person does after accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and receiving the free gift of eternal life is solely done from a heart whose motive is to reveal to others an obedient heart to Jesus Christ. In other words, works done after salvation are done to show gratitude for what Jesus Christ did at the cross for forgiveness of sins, but not to be done in order to "earn salvation" (faith without works is dead = read James 2: 14-26; contrast this verse to the correct context of Ephesians 2: 8-10). Listen to what God tells us about our own human "righteousness" in

Isaiah 64:6, "But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

Our own righteousness is like filthy rags in the sight of the Lord. If a person really does believe he or she can "earn" salvation by his or her own "righteousness" apart from the blood of Jesus Christ, answer the following questions:

1. Exactly how many "good works" must you do and perform here on earth to "receive" salvation through Jesus Christ?
2. When you die and stand before God in eternity, are you absolutely certain your "good deeds" will outweigh your "bad deeds"? If you answered "yes", please provide solid, concrete evidence to support your claim that your "good deeds" will absolutely and confidently "outweigh" your "bad deeds".

## **Substitution of Issue Specific Sin**

One of the loopholes encountered in "issue specific small groups" of Christianized 12 step programs or issue specific secular groups (e.g., drugs, overeating, sexual sin, etc. etc.) is that many members will substitute the main issue specific sin they are dealing with in replacement for another sin. For example, members associated with groups dealing with the specific issue of drugs or gambling will find members willing to "repent" of their habitual sins of drugs or gambling. However, these same members who have taken steps to conquer drugs or gambling are the same members who are deceived by the devil that sexual sin is perfectly alright with God and have no problem deliberately and persistently committing acts of sexual sin against God. On the other hand, members in groups specifically dealing with sexual sin may "trade off" their

sexual sin for other sins such as gambling or overeating. Group leaders in issue specific groups many times will deal harshly with those members who refuse to repent of the specific issue dealt with the group after prolonged periods of membership but will not confront members gently in God's love if those same members are willfully sinning against God through other sins. Here are several examples from my own experience in 12 step programs how such an issue actually causes more confusion and division than unity in Jesus' name: (the names of group members and specific groups/locations have been omitted to protect their identity and confidentiality)

1. A man in a Narcotics Anonymous group confessed to me that despite years of sobriety and cleanliness from drugs, he found absolutely nothing wrong with viewing pornographic material in any form.
2. A lady in another Narcotics Anonymous program I attended admitted to the group that despite her clean time from drugs, she felt guilty and shameful feelings after gambling at the local casinos.
3. Even in a "Christianized" 12 step program I attended which claimed to use the God's word in their program found the same pattern of substituting one habitual sin for another. While I was actively involved in a false intimacy group (sexual sin) of a Christianized 12 step program, there was a newcomer to our group one day. We all recognized him because he had been attending faithfully the drugs and alcohol small group for an extended period of time at the same church where groups were divided by specific issues. However, when he started attending the sexual sin small group, his admission was, "I had been experiencing victory over drugs and alcohol, but I find myself confused because during my clean time from drugs, I have been falling repeatedly into sexual sin."

It appears to me that if 12 step programs were truly Biblical and correctly founded upon God's word, **groups would hold members FULLY accountable for ALL habitual sins and choices, not just one specific sin issue.** Listen to what God expects of us in terms of holiness according to His word. In 1 Peter 1: 15-16, God tells us,

"<sup>15</sup>But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;  
<sup>16</sup>Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

To be holy simply means to be "set apart" from the world. A soundly converted child of God will trust in Jesus Christ to live a life of holiness in ALL matters of speech and conduct through actions, not just one area. Is substituting one habitual sin for another truly serving as an effective witness to those lost and dying in sin? Notice the following phrase from verse 15, "be ye holy in **ALL** manner of conversation". **Notice it did not say, "be ye holy in one area of conversation and substitute your sins for another"**. God does not expect Christians to be perfectly sinless, but at the same time, He does expect true converts in Jesus Christ to continually grow and mature (read Psalm 72:7; Matthew 5:48; Colossians 1:10; Hebrews 5:11 - 6:3). Since sin is what separates us from His holiness, then how can a 12 step member grow and mature if he or she has willfully chose to substitute one issue specific sin in replacement of another one? Additionally, listen to what God tells us about this issue of substitution in



James 2: 10-11, " <sup>10</sup> For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. <sup>11</sup> For he who said, "You shall not commit adultery,"<sup>[a]</sup> also said, "You shall not murder."<sup>[b]</sup> If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker."

A person may be free of gluttony, but if he or she repeatedly commits sexual sin, he or she is still an adulterer according to His word. A person may be free of sexual sin, but if he or she constantly uses God's name in vain (blasphemy), that person according to God's word is still considered a blasphemer. 12 step programs would avoid confusion, shame, and guilt of their members if they wisely chose to follow the specific instructions for holiness found in God's word instead of watering down sin and its eternal consequences upon its membership.

Idolatry of sponsors and accountability partners is also a common problem found in 12 step programs. Listen carefully - I agree with the principle of confessing our sins to each other (read James 5:16). I also firmly believe if we are honest to one another and transparent in our words and actions, God's name will be glorified, even if we must confess unrepentant sin to another person. However, when a person's sponsor or accountability partners is your main source of confession of unrepentant sin each time you fall short of God's glory in your life, that is replacing trust in Jesus Christ and putting full trust in humans. Listen to what God has to say about idolatry in

Exodus 20: 3-4, " <sup>3</sup> "You must not have any other god but me. <sup>4</sup> "You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea."

Let me put it to you this way. Your sponsor may be able to coach you. However, your sponsor cannot save you from your sins before a holy and just God. Your accountability partners may be able to hold you accountable for your conduct, but your accountability partners cannot offer you forgiveness of your sins before the Lord Jesus Christ. If you truly want to be forgiven of your sins, you must stop trusting in humans, call upon the name of Jesus, repent entirely of your sins, and trust in Him as Lord and Savior. It is for this very reason why 12 step programs are fear based. People in 12 step programs fear each other more than they fear and reverence God's name. Listen carefully to the following verses on fearing man versus fearing God according to the Bible:

Proverbs 29:25, " <sup>25</sup> Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe"

Matthew 10: 26-28, " <sup>26</sup> "So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. <sup>27</sup> What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. <sup>28</sup> Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

Luke 12: 4-5, " <sup>4</sup> "I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. <sup>5</sup> But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him."

When you die and leave this earth, you will stand before God in eternity and give a full account of your life. In eternity, you will not see the faces of your sponsor or accountability partners judging you to determine if you will spend eternity in heaven or hell. Every person must ultimately answer to Jesus Christ, the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings in eternity. God will have the final word on whether souls are allowed into the glories of heaven or cast into the fires of hell.