The 7 Steps to
The Cure of Souls

Dr. Robert L. O’Block
Jesus answered and said to him, truly, truly I say to you, unless you have been born again you cannot see the kingdom of God.

~John 3:3
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## Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is The Cure of Souls?</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1 – The Rejection of Sin</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2 – Confession</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3 – Forgiveness</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4 – Faith</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5 – Love</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 6 – Prayer</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 7 – Holiness</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The History of The Cure of Souls</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Society for The Cure of Souls</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End Notes</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Springfield MO, March 2005
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Foreword

There are over a million trained professional psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, counselors, marriage and family therapists, psychoanalysts, psychotherapists, and psychiatric nurses practicing in the United States alone. We have more psychotropic medication and psychiatric drugs than ever for the treatment of every condition medicine and psychology can name. From anxiety to zoophobia, there is either a pill or a therapy to treat it. In America, we also have more churches than ever before, with some churches reaching mega sizes.

Why then with all this psychological help and religious ritual are more people than ever unhappy, sad, depressed, alcoholic, drug dependent, and institutionalized? The answer is that the root cause of the problem is not medical or psychological but spiritual. This book, *The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls*, introduces the reader to an almost forgotten role of the Church. That is the role of the Curate and The Cure of Souls. Step one shows that before you will be successful with the cure for your own soul or anyone else’s, you have to understand what sin is and reject it. That does not mean you will never sin again; you will sin before the sun sets. As
Jesus said, “There are none that are righteous, no not one,” but you have to strive for holiness daily.

Once sin is understood and rejected, only then can you begin the actual process of The Cure of Souls, which begins with step two, that of confession. Then step three is forgiving others as well as forgiving yourself.

This small volume is not meant to be a complete encyclopedia of theology. It is the hope of all who worked on this book that thousands will understand and reject sin and then continue through the entire process to truly having a soul that is cured, a soul that is content with life, healthy, and happy. However, if only one comes to this level of understanding and learns this mystery, this project will have been a success.

Will you make the decision now to reject sin and begin to follow The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls?
Introduction

Do you want to live without fear, depression, anxiety, confusion, and worry? Would you be surprised to learn that your own wrong thinking causes many of the problems you face each day? Are there times when you just want to give up, or when you no longer have hope of a better life? Then this is the right book for you. The Cure of Souls is about a profound life change which is possible. It becomes a reality when you progress through the seven steps outlined in the next few pages of this little book.

You may think your situation is not all that bad; maybe you aren’t feeling like giving up; maybe you’re only dealing with a few issues. Perhaps it’s a personal matter about your childhood or a failed marriage that left you angry. Are you confused about why you just seem to have such bad luck in life? If any of this sounds familiar, keep reading. There are some things you need to know.

The term “cure of souls” is an antiquated expression that needs explaining. The concept behind the phrase is familiar. The ideas of emotional healing, wholeness and wellness of souls are a more common way to express The Cure of Souls. Hundreds and thousands of people each day confide in and receive help from counselors, pastors, teachers, and
friends in an effort to relieve the pain and turmoil of their lives. They are seeking The Cure of Souls. In history, the person listening and giving spiritual direction was known as a “Curate,” thus the expression the “cure of souls.”

This book can be used in individual or group counseling sessions where the client, patient, or counselee is taken one session at a time through the 7 steps. It can also be used by the individual who desires to discover the cure for his own soul.

*The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls* is much more than a self-help book for emotional problems. It’s more than a self-improvement course. The search for a healthy soul is more than a journey to find yourself or to learn to love yourself, and it’s more than simply getting more out of life. All of these things may be part of the outcome, but they are not the ultimate goal. The goal is to find the true meaning of life, which commences with the salvation of the soul and ends with spending eternity in the presence of God. It also involves a daily application of the principles learned in the study of *The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls*. If you reach this level of understanding, you will learn this mystery by the end of the book.

My prayer for you, Reader, is that you experience The Cure of Souls.
What Is The Cure of Souls?

Unless souls are saved, nothing is saved; there can be no world peace unless there is soul peace. World wars are only projections of the conflicts waged inside the souls of modern men and women, for nothing happens in the external world that has not first happened within a soul.

~Rev. Fulton Sheen

As Laura opened the curtains in the front room, the sun was just beginning to peek through the trees. The rest of the family was still sleeping, but Laura had been tossing and turning most of the night. She finally left the bed hoping not to disturb her husband, Dave. She couldn’t seem to get rid of a sense of uneasiness that continued to haunt her. It was hard to pinpoint exactly when it started. She thought it was after the death of her mother that she began to feel such heaviness and to question life in general. She kept asking that ageless question of, “Why am I here?” Or “What’s the meaning of life?” At first, she assumed it was just the normal response to grieving the loss of a loved one. That’s what her husband had said. But the feeling was still looming after a few months, and she decided it wasn’t
just grief. She just wasn’t very happy with her life. She wondered if there could be more. She tried to be content with all she had and her circumstances. She had tried to find peace somewhere among the family’s busy schedule, but it only seemed to make her think even more deeply and wonder, “Does anyone really live at peace?”

Laura scanned the newspaper headlines as she drank her coffee. This quiet time of the early morning was precious to this working mother and wife in this household of 3 children, 2 cats and 2 dogs, an aquarium, and a husband whose life was his work. Setting the paper aside, Laura flipped through the magazines and school papers stacked at the end of the bar. A cartoon colored page caught Laura’s attention. Eight-year-old Emily brought it home from an after-school event she had attended with the neighbor’s daughter.

The characters on the page were brightly dressed little rabbits role-playing as children. One rabbit had taken something that didn’t belong to him. Laura followed the story line and read the last words in large bold letters, “The wages of sin is death.” She wondered what that meant. She felt unhappy and unsure of herself and her life. Maybe there was something in her life someone might call sin. She didn’t know.
What is The Cure of Souls?

Maybe you have felt unsettled in your life. Maybe you feel like life is unfair. In a lot of cases, it is. Maybe you run from errand to errand, or you are working too many hours at your job. Is there any peace in your life? There can be. You can have a change in your life that will enable and empower you to live at peace with yourself and with others. If you will read on and actually follow these seven steps, you can have a cured soul. And with a cured soul, you can achieve a sense of purpose and wholeness in your life.

*The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls* is about a profound life change you can make. This will happen when you put your faith in God and accept His grace and divine guidance. As you read this book, these concepts will be explained. Although the term “cure of souls” is an antiquated expression and most do not recognize the terminology, we understand it. We may be more familiar with words like emotional healing or wholeness and are willing to sit through hours of counseling, psychotherapy, or psychoanalysis to rid ourselves of the pain life brings. Sometimes, in an effort to overcome hardships and strife, we turn to drugs, alcohol, sex, and all manner of sin. Yet, if you will simply follow the seven steps outlined here with a fully committed heart, you will find that
you can achieve a sense of purpose and whole-
ness in your life.

The Cure of Souls is much more than overcom-
ing personal emotional problems. It is more than a self-improvement course. The quest for a healthy soul is not a journey to find ourselves or to learn to like ourselves better and enjoy life more. It is about facilitating real change in your life. This change must be achieved before you can become One with God. It is about living a life at peace with yourself, with others, and in union with the Creator. But it is mainly about entering eternal life with God. You must make a concen-
trated effort to find God in the middle of the busyness of life. Wouldn’t it be nice to actually feel at peace even as you go about your very busy day?

Your soul is made up of the spirit, mind, and will, and your emotions are a critical component of your makeup. But, your emotions will lie to you! The purpose of *The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls* is for you to learn how you can bring these areas into agreement with God’s will and pur-
pose for your life. The gravest of dangers is to lose your soul.

Everyone is born with a God-sized hole in their soul. If you do not have the knowledge of and a union with God, you will feel lost, uneasy. Life
will not make sense to you. There will be a lack of purpose in your life. This feeling will come when you permit your will to have its own way, refuse to be humbled under the authority of God, and do whatever feels good at that time or let your emotions control your life.

*The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls* is the life of freedom, which is consistent with the life that God designed for His children at creation. The God-breathed spirit can be understood as conscience, intuition, soul, and communion. To achieve true communion with God, we must know Him.

God offers you His Holy Spirit to live in you. Through the Spirit, God regenerates and teaches all who will believe. Scripture tells us it is through His Spirit that man truly learns about God. We learn about God from the Scriptures, the early church fathers, the doctors of the church, from great spiritual writers and teachers, and from fellow believers. We, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, can learn the deepness of God’s Holiness by reading the Scriptures. The Cure of Souls can be accomplished only through the powerful work of the Holy Spirit revealing the mystery of God.

The Scriptures speak of freedom, love, and rest for our souls. Jesus told the multitudes that He came to give them life and to give it more abun-
dantly. Because of the fall of man, this life doesn’t always reflect that picture of health, wholeness, and happiness. Life will bring disappointment, emotional injury, physical abuse, violence, frustration, hardship, and pain, over which much of the time, we have no personal control. The results of these are mental and emotional injuries, which one counselor refers to as having “holes in our souls.” Everyone has been affected by difficult circumstances and situations in life. Do you feel like you have holes in your soul? Wrong thinking, undesirable personality traits, and unrepentant and rebellious souls intermingle and collide in an explosion called daily living that many people have come to simply accept. Life does have trouble, but the Scriptures say, “Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matthew 6:34).

Do you feel like your life has no purpose? Maybe the worst things have happened to you or you are unable to let go of past hurts. We need to realize, however, that God has not promised us “heaven on earth.” Instead, He has promised to be with us through both good and bad times. God demonstrates His love for His children in many ways. The primary demonstration of God’s love is
What is The Cure of Souls?

through sending His Son to earth to pay for sin through His victorious death on the cross. Romans 5:8 states, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Another way He shows His love is through kindness and love expressed by people, one to another.

A cleric, pastor, priest, layperson, friend, fellow student, or even a stranger may have an opportunity to encourage, correct, teach, or train a fellow believer, or to bring unbelievers into the Kingdom. “Some plant, some sow, and some reap.” There may be opportunities to listen to each other and to share what has been learned pertaining to God and to life from studying and applying the principles of Scripture. “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Pastors, priests, ministers, rabbis, and Christian counselors and psychologists agree that the majority of life’s problems are not simply emotional issues but are actually spiritual problems. Many of these problems involve actions tied to sin. Attempting to live in God’s world without allow-
ing Him to be the authority and central focus of our lives brings conflicts of all kinds, internal and external. We attempt to make our own rules and live by our own desires. Indeed, it is exactly as the last line of the Book of Judges states, “because they had no king, each man did what was right in his own eyes.” When we can help ourselves no longer and feel life has no purpose and there is no hope, we cry out for help, or we turn to alcohol, drugs, illicit affairs, and other self-destructive sin. The concept of sin has lost its importance in today’s world filled with psychosocial babble. People who have unconfessed and unforgiven sin in their lives are experiencing harmful guilt. Many therapists and spiritual leaders believe this to be the root of humankind’s neuroses.

Generally, people are more prone to consult a physician, psychologist, or counselor to find a solution to their problems than to go to the local church, because it is no longer seen as an authority in the local community. It appears the church has largely handed over The Cure of Souls to the medical practitioner who treats mental and emotional illness with pills. Psychological terms and diagnoses are often given to the byproducts of sin or sin itself. Unconfessed sin is usually buried beneath the behaviors being treated and it is often unrecognized
What is The Cure of Souls?

or ignored by mental health practitioners. Could this be true of you? Could there be sin in your life that you need to recognize and confess? If I told you that this is the key and the beginning to having a new life, would you be willing to consider it? This is one of the central theses of this book.

One of the most eminent psychiatrists of the 21st century, Dr. Karl Menninger, in his book Whatever Became of Sin? states a similar thesis, which says sin is at the root of our medical conditions and psychological dysfunctions.

In all of the laments and reproaches made by our seers and prophets, one misses any mention of ‘sin,’ a word which used to be a veritable watchword of prophets. It was a word once in everyone’s mind, but now rarely is ever heard. Does that mean that no sin is involved in any of our troubles – sin with an ‘I’ in the middle? Is no one any longer guilty of anything? Guilty perhaps of a sin that could be repented and repaired or atoned for? Is it only that someone may be stupid or sick or criminal – or asleep? Wrong things are being done, we know; tares are being sown in the wheat field at night. But is no one responsible, no one answerable for these
acts? Anxiety and depression we all acknowledge, and even vague guilt feelings; but has no one committed any sins? Where, indeed, did sin go? What became of it?³

We all need help to avoid sin in our lives. In his book, *The Pastoral Care of Souls*, Wendelen Meyer states, “The cure of souls is about religious instruction that helps us live our daily lives. God’s intent is that man and the universe will bridge the gap between the Bible, which is the inspired word of God, and God himself.”⁴

Charles Holman also recognizes that the individual has a need for soul healing in today’s world:

Life has become so complex, and the pressures and demands upon the individual so multiplied and severe, that multitudes break down under the strain. At the same time, the old religious convictions, that gave steadiness and poise to many, are being questioned, with the result that wounded souls wonder if there is any source of healing. The need for an intelligent and competent ministry was never more urgent than now.⁵
You may be a person who is ready to break down under the strain of life. Once you begin feeling hopeless, it is difficult to change your thinking, but there is hope.

Noted psychologist and author Dr. Larry Crabb believes the local church and fellow believers should accept responsibility for the restoration of troubled people. He refers to a recent statement by a psychiatrist who stated that “his patients are all basically hungry for love and acceptance.” Dr. Crabb continues:

Where should true love be more evident than in a Christ-centered local church? Jesus prayed that His people would be one. Paul speaks of rejoicing and weeping with one another and bearing each other’s burdens. To the degree that the Lord’s design for His Church is implemented, the deep need for love, which if unmet generates psychological problems, will be satisfied within the Church.⁶

Many people have been hurt and disappointed with situations in their local church, and even when we feel we have been let down by the
church, you can progress through the seven steps outlined in this book and experience The Cure of Souls, a changed life. Eventually, if we are willing to continue with this progression, we will see the need to forgive the church, as well as our enemies, our spouse, our children, and everyone who has wronged us. It will be necessary to accept God’s forgiveness. The steps in this book can help us through that process.

The primary objective of *The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls* is to facilitate our journey from a position of carnality, or “being dead in our trespasses and sin,” to an attitude of submission [surrender] to the Holy Spirit, allowing the Spirit to lead us to a personal relationship with God. Paul taught us, “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Romans 8:14). Jesus initiated this work as He taught the apostles and the multitudes during His time on earth. Today, the Holy Spirit continues to teach men and women and to heal the soul through His human laborers.

In his book, *The Myth of Psychotherapy*, Thomas Szasz describes the decline of religion and the growth of science. He says that as a result of this, the cure of (sinful) souls, which had been an integral part of the Christian religions, was recast as the cure of (sick) minds, and became an integral
part of medical science. One of Szasz’s main objectives has been to change society’s thinking that “medical and therapeutic pretensions of psychiatry and psychotherapy” are the answers. He doesn’t believe medicine and treatment are bad things, but rather that in the so-called mental health field, the psychiatric and psychotherapeutic mythology is now used to disguise deception and conceal coercion – by psychiatrists, patients, politicians, jurists, journalists, and people in general. There is a time and a place for medical and/or psychiatric treatment, but many times these treatments are used when in fact the person has a sickened soul and harbors unconfessed sin. Spiritual problems cannot be solved through medicinal cures.

Dr. Larry Crabb gives specific steps of counseling and change for the curing of souls.

1) Identify negative (sinful) feelings (which are compounded by negative behavior);
2) Identify negative (sinful) behavior (which, along with negative feelings, is caused by wrong thinking);
3) Identify wrong (sinful) thinking;
4) Promote right thinking;
5) Plan right behavior (produced by right
thinking); and

6) Identify satisfying feelings (produced by right behavior and right thinking).  

Right now you may be able to identify negative feelings or behavior and maybe even identify wrong thinking in your life (Dr Crabb’s steps 1, 2, and 3). As you progress through the seven steps in this book, you can also learn how to promote right thinking, right behavior, and begin to feel satisfied with life.

God makes himself known through the everyday workings of our lives, even in unfortunate circumstances. God is always with us. Many of the bad circumstances of life are the result of our own wanderings: sin. David, King of Israel and anointed by God, was a “man after God’s own heart.” Yet, his troubles were many. Much of his trouble was brought on by his propensity to sin, but when he was confronted with his sin, he repented quickly and asked God for His forgiveness. God forgave all of David’s sins, and though Scriptures tell us that God does not measure the severity of sins, nevertheless by human standards, David’s sins were large and many. He committed adultery with Bathsheba and when he learned she was pregnant, he arranged for her
husband to be killed. Did God continue to love him? Yes, He did. God loved him even when he committed sins. The evidence of God’s unconditional love toward David, which is the same for each and every one of us, is seen throughout the Scriptures and especially in the Psalms. David is even included into what many refer to as the “Faith Hall of Fame” in Hebrews 11 where he is listed as a man who lived his life by faith.

Each one of us can have a life of purpose and meaning and live in union with God. We have been able to learn much through modern technology, science, and medicine about how to cure illness and how to help people handle the circumstances and situations life brings. These, however, will never be enough to cure a person’s soul when the spiritual element is not being reached. The spiritual issues are often ignored in secular psychology, psychiatry, and counseling settings. It is a major failure when the psychological approach neglects the spiritual aspect of man and the primary focus is strictly on behavior.

The purpose of our existence on this earth is to accept the redemption of our soul, to know God and to become one in union with Him. This can only be achieved when we are led by the Holy Spirit to truly believe John 3:16, “For
God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but shall have eternal life.” We can be led by the Spirit of God only when we turn from sin and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us to redemption.

There is a long history of The Cure of Souls, which is the spiritual healing of humankind. The concept has been around for many, many years, but with the diminished authority of the church, this concept has been forgotten. We have traded the true Cure of Souls with a band-aid approach of medicinal, psychological, and self-help remedies from secular gurus. Until we address the spiritual issues in our lives, we will not reach The Cure of Souls. The beginning is to be honest with ourselves and with God about the sin we have in our lives.
Step 1 – The Rejection of Sin

If you love me, you will obey what I have commanded.
~John 14:15

† † †

I am a sinner. You are a sinner. We all are sinners in thoughts, words, and deeds. “For all of us have become like one who is unclean. And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment. And all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind that take us away” (Isaiah 64:6). All have fallen short. A soul with sin is a soul that needs to be cured.

What is sin? Even though it is a common term, it’s not clearly understood. We may hear the comedian make jokes about sin. People who don’t understand what sin really is may make inaccurate assumptions about it. The Scriptures define the true meaning of sin and are the source to beginning to understand the depth of the meaning of this word. The original word “sin” comes from an archery term meaning to miss the mark. The Scriptures tell us that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Everyone sins, and The Cure of Souls can come
about only when we are able to see our sins and our need for forgiveness. The sickness of our hearts and souls are caused by sin. The Scripture says, “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9). We must see our need for healing before we can be healed.

We must also understand sin and its nature before we can accept the payment for the debt of sin that was paid by the sacrifice of Christ. Romans 5:8 tells us, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

**Sin and the Unbeliever** – It is the sinful nature of fallen man that separates us from God. Before being accepted into the family of God through faith in God’s Son, no one can be in relationship with God. Even if we try to keep all the commandments and live a good life, we will still fall short. That is why God sent his Son to die and pay the penalty for the sins of the world—so there would be a pathway, a bridge if you will, that would bring us closer to God. Jesus is our King. One of the most powerful verses of Scripture is the very last line of Judges: “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in
his own eyes” (21:25). The teachings of Jesus, our King, have to be the standard. Any deviation from that standard is sin. When Jesus is not our King, we do what is right in our own eyes.

Before a person accepts this gift, the chasm of sin which separates God and man must be closed. In the Old and New Testament, the only remedy for sin was sacrifice, and for the last two thousand years, the only acceptable sacrifice has been Christ.

**Sin and the Believer** – Scripture tells us that the payment for sins at the cross took away the power of sin to hold a person as a slave. When a person comes to God by faith and asks for forgiveness of sins and entry into the Kingdom of God, all sin (past, present, and future) is done away with because of Jesus’ payment on the cross. Even after we accept Christ’s payment for our sin and become a believer, we will continue to commit acts of sin through our unkindness, bitterness, anger, selfishness, and hatred. How does God see these acts and omissions? The Scripture tells us that we are no longer condemned for that sin, but it hinders our relationship with God. “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). If a person
appears to continue in sin just as he did before becoming a believer, then the commitment to the Lord should be examined. Paul says that a true believer has “been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20).

The believer will continue to struggle with the habits of sin but 1 Corinthians 10:13 tells us that God is faithful and will enable him to overcome. “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.” We are all tempted, but we can make the decision to get ourselves out of a tempting situation; there is always a way out. Once you are a believer, you do not have to choose sin.

We can group sin into types of sin. There are seven categories that are commonly known as the seven deadly sins, and each sin has a corresponding virtue. They are written on the scroll on the next page.
The Seven Deadly Sins

Pride
Covetousness
Lust
Anger
Gluttony
Envy
Sloth

The Seven Virtues

Humility
Generosity
Chastity
Meekness
Temperance
Charity
Diligence
Many times we are plagued by a habit that is taken too lightly and we don’t take the time to eliminate it from our lives. Eventually, these bad habits will turn into sins. Some people believe a “white” lie here and there is okay. They may also believe that embellishing the truth just a bit won’t hurt anyone. Before you know it, the little lies have turned into bigger ones. Another example might be when someone loses his temper. When people don’t do all they can to keep control of their temper, they are soon characterized by anger. Envy is also one of the seven deadly sins. We all probably know someone who is envious of something another person has. It can be their position, money, or possessions.

The examples above show us our actions, for the most part, do not instantly become deadly sins. Instead, they reveal that sin begins subtly. Unfortunately, as an individual gets used to the act, he is hardened to it and the behavior becomes a normal part of his life and becomes sin. The soul suffers and is sickened. The Cure of Souls is needed. This cure may take the form of breaking a bad habit or asking for forgiveness and complete restoration for ourselves, or it may be with a relationship with someone else.

There seems to be an aversion to using the word
sin when we describe our weaknesses, faults, mistakes, personality disorders, addictions, or problems with anger. We use many labels to describe them and have physicians and psychologists diagnose them instead of calling them sin. It is this avoidance of accepting the responsibility of sin that has caused the contemporary society to stray so far away from God.

The Old Testament prophet Isaiah portrayed humans as mischievous and ignorant sheep who have strayed from our intended pasture. We have chosen to go where things are more appealing or where our curiosity has been piqued. Just as the old saying, “The grass is always greener on the other side,” we are constantly looking for something bigger and better. Even though this is not always wrong, when we refuse to be content with the circumstances God has given us, we are straying.

Fortunately, God doesn’t leave us without a remedy for our waywardness. The prophet goes on to say that God has taken care of all of our iniquity. “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on HIM the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6 (ESV)).
God has given us a comforting example of his loving kindness through the life of David, the King of Israel. David’s life is an example of sin and forgiveness, over and over. God referred to him as a man after His own heart because David was so quick to repent. By looking at David’s life, we can see that he was plagued by sin, and as a result, led a very difficult life. We also know, however, that because he was quick to ask for forgiveness, sin did not separate David from God’s love. Some of our most comforting Scriptures from the Psalms were written by David when he was in anguish over his own fleshly weaknesses. The following is a Psalm that David wrote.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Thy presence, And do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, And sustain me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Thy ways, And sinners will be converted to Thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; Then my tongue will joyfully sing of
The Rejection of Sin

Thy righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Thy praise. For Thou dost not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; Thou art not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise. (Psalm 51:10-17)

We need to recognize the sin in our lives and be quick to repent and ask for forgiveness. A look at the Ten Commandments will help us discern what is sin in our lives. When Moses met with God on Mount Sinai, God etched on tablets of stone what He expected of the Israelites: we must believe in God and make Him our first priority. God wants more than to be a side interest tacked onto the rest of our lives or a Sunday morning ritual. The Ten Commandments are to be used as a guide to help us steer clear of sin and also to train us to recognize and embrace His divine presence.

Even if we have accepted Christ’s free gift of eternal life and our soul is ultimately “saved,” there will be times when we are tempted to let our old habits and old ways of living emerge. While we may not be living with a soul that needs to be saved again, we need to have our soul cured from
The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls

sin. We need to be quick to go back to God and ask for forgiveness. There are also times that others will hurt and offend us. If we hold grudges against others, we will let sickness back into our souls. In the next chapter, we take the next step to experience The Cure of Souls.

While the Ten Commandments is a clear statement of God’s idea of sin, man continues to argue and dispute the matter. One person thinks something is sin while another feels it is acceptable behavior. “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything.” (I Corinthians 6:12 (ESV)).

Jerry Bridges, the author of The Pursuit of Holiness, gives four questions to help determine right and wrong when there may be a question:

Think about these questions as you examine what is sin in your life.

• Question 1: “Is it helpful—physically, spiritually, and mentally?

• Question 2: Does it bring me under its power?”

• Question 3: “Does it hurt others?” This question
is based on 1 Corinthians 8:13: “Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble.”

• Question 4, “Does it glorify God?” This question comes from 1 Corinthians 10:31: “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

The next time you are tempted with a potentially sinful decision, use these four questions to determine if it is right or wrong for you.²
The 10 Commandments

I
Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

II
Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

III
Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.

IV
Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
V
Honour thy father and thy mother.

VI
Thou shalt not kill.

VII
Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII
Thou shalt not steal.

IX
Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

X
Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s goods.
The Ten Commandments are still in effect today; don’t get them confused with disputable matters. Jesus said, “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law of the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill” (Matthew 5:17). At one point, Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment is. He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” The second is that “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:30-31). All the commandments are based on these.

“In this way we know we love God’s children, when we love God and keep his commandments. That is what the love of God is; keeping his commandments. Nor are His commandments burdensome, because every child of God overcomes the world, and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith” (1 John 5:2 (ESV)).

We must recognize the need for The Cure of Souls. It is a journey that we must all experience to know wholeness and union with our Creator. The Cure of Souls is the pathway to the supernatural and divine union with our Creator. To be physically well, we know we need to eat healthy food, drink pure water, exercise, breath fresh air, and get sufficient rest. The Cure of Souls has similar requirements.
The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls:

- Step 1 - Rejection of sin
- Step 2 - Confession
- Step 3 - Forgiveness
- Step 4 - Faith
- Step 5 - Love
- Step 6 - Prayer
- Step 7 - Holiness

We conclude the steps with Holiness because it shows us what life should be like as we live in the spiritual realm with God. There are many Saints in history who have experienced the mystical life of Holiness, living as one with God.

† † † †

† The first step in The Cure of Souls is to reject sin.
Step 2: Confession

From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

~Matthew 4:17

† † †

The previous chapter was very clear about what sin is and began The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls. The process of The Cure of Souls has a progressive order, but there will be times when the order may be reversed or repeated. Some people may have more difficulty in one step than in another. Sometimes they may have to go very slowly and possibly seek help from a trusted friend, spiritual director, pastor, priest, or curate who has mastered the step. Whatever the difficulty or the slowness of progress, whether we have to walk through some concepts experientially even a couple of times, we know it is God’s will for His children to have a healthy soul. He will guide and provide the necessities for arriving at wholeness. We must be persistent and refuse to give up. We begin first with confession.

Confession begins with a feeling deep within the heart that says, “I know my actions have been wrong and displeasing to God, and I am sorry.”
The first part of confession is repenting when we are brought close to God through the calling of the Holy Spirit as He convicts us of sin. You will experience repentance many times throughout your spiritual life. It is important that we all recognize sin and its effects. When we become spiritually mature enough to recognize sin when we are first tempted and are not deceived by it, we will be able to avoid it. It is at this point in our Christian journey that we begin to experience a closer walk with God.

The following is from Eaton’s Bible Dictionary:

Confession Is
1. An open profession of faith: “And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God” (Luke 12:8);

2. An acknowledgement of sins to God: “O my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift up my face to Thee, my God, for our iniquities have risen above our heads, and our guilt has grown even to the heavens” (Ezra 9:6); and

3. To a neighbor whom we have wronged:
“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much” (James 5:16).\(^1\)

Those who attempt to instill fear about hell and fire and the horrors of what might be, have only a slim chance of helping someone become aware of the truth of God. Some souls will come to God through fear of an uncertain future. But that fear will not keep a person close to God. There may be some who are not truly repentant and say, “I don’t want to go to hell” or “I don’t want to die” or “I don’t want to suffer,” but the confession that God is looking for is from a person who desires to fully accept His ways and His kingdom. God does not want people to come to Him out of fear, even though there definitely is a hell, and we need to be aware that we are never guaranteed another tomorrow. The message of God is one of love and compassion. It is God’s desire for everyone to know Him as He truly is and for us to know the facts about eternity. Confession is the starting point of a life with God.

As soon as we have a repentant heart, we need to confess our sins. The Scriptures tell us that, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive our-
selves, and truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 8-9).

† † †

Eaton’s Bible Dictionary gives the following definitions for repentance:

**Repentance** — Evangelical repentance consists of (1) a true sense of one’s own guilt and sinfulness; (2) an apprehension of God’s mercy in Christ; (3) an actual hatred of and turning from it to God; and (4) a persistent endeavor after a holy life in a walking with God in the way of His commandments.

If you are truly repentant, you are conscious of:

- **Your guilt:** “Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned and done what is evil in your sight” (Psalm 51:4);

- **Sinful pollution:** “Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Psalm 51:7); “Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit
within me.” (Psalm 51:10); and

- Helplessness: “But Thou, O God, the Lord, deal kindly with me for Thy name’s sake; Because Thy loving kindness is good, deliver me; For I am afflicted and needy, And my heart is wounded within me” (Psalm 109:21–22).

Repentance comprehends not only such a sense of sin, but also an apprehension of mercy, without which there can be no true repentance: “Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness; According to the greatness of Thy compassion blot out my transgressions” Psalm 51:1.²

When we first verbalize our faith in God after the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, the humbling prayer that brings us to the foot of His throne is a prayer of confession.

Many people realize the need to confess sin on a regular basis. A result of unconfessed sin is guilt, and this is a guilt that can eat away at a person like a cancer. It can cause anger and bitterness, and can even eventually ruin a person’s life when it is not dealt with and confessed.
When sin impacts our emotions, guilt becomes painful and oppressive. Confession brings freedom through forgiveness. When we express to God our sorrow for sin, He will forgive us of any, including serious or mortal faults. God can forgive any sin, which is what He wants to do. No sin is too big. You might say, “Oh, but you don’t know what I’ve done. God wouldn’t forgive me for _____” (you fill in the blank). But you’re wrong. God knows what you have done and He is very willing and even eager to forgive you, if you will only ask Him. God sees the heart and knows everything about your life. “And there is no creature hidden from His sight but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him [God]” (Hebrews 4:13).

Unconfessed sin causes an abundance of problems, such as depression, anxiety, anger, guilt, and feelings of hopelessness among others. These problems can grow and escalate, and can lead to broken homes, alcohol or drug additions, uncharacteristic actions, or even suicide. Many of these problems are commonly seen in the psychologist’s office where unconfessed sin is diagnosed as an illness. The soul in need of spiritual healing often receives pharmaceuticals and therapies instead. This is a common 21st century approach to the
You are responsible for your own sin. You cannot shift the responsibility for your sin to another person or to a circumstance. A person’s mother or father, wife or husband, co-worker, or neighbor cannot be blamed as the cause for one’s actions. Each person must answer to God for his own actions. “So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Romans 14:12).

Throughout history, the Catholic, Anglican, and Orthodox faith has had a more formal understanding of the value of confession, making it a sacramental practice (sacrament) for the people and instituting a plan for carrying it out. The priest is responsible for hearing confession and leading the repentant in reconciliation. While other denominations don’t regularly practice a formal confession, there is great value in it.

The Value of Confession in Physical Healing –

Many times we try to compartmentalize our lives by compartmentalizing certain things as spiritual and others as non-spiritual. There is an element of error in this form of thinking. All things have a spiritual effect to varying degrees. Bergsten states, “The value of confession is recognized both within the Church and outside it. Medicine and
psychology both acknowledge its therapeutic importance.”

Thomas Szasz speaks of McNeill’s remarks on how much the Church uses medical terminology when speaking of confession and penance.

The penitential discipline is called “the health-giving medicine of souls,” priests are called “spiritual physicians,” and the disorders they heal are called “the wounds, fevers, transgressions, sorrows, sicknesses, and infirmities of souls.”

A valuable treatment in caring for souls is confession. Meeting with a spiritual advisor to confess sins has not been practiced in the evangelical churches, though “many are of the opinion that nothing more than this is necessary for the exercise of the ministry of spiritual healing and soul care; and no knowledge of psychology is needed for the hearing of a confession.”

The Value of Confession in Spiritual Growth –

Martin Luther expressed his encouragement of the act of confession and said he felt there was no equal for distressed consciences. The founders of The Church stated the purpose of confession was for repentance, penance, and absolution.

As long as we are in our physical bodies, we will be tempted and at times, we will commit sin. Our
response to our sin is as important as the sin itself. We must recognize the sin against God as what it truly is, and not try to blame someone else or refuse to accept responsibility for it. When our conscience causes us to feel guilty about the sin, it is at this point that confession is necessary for restoration of closeness with God. Unconfessed sin becomes a barrier between us and God. Humbling ourselves before God, confessing the sin, and asking for reinstatement back into a place of close communion can easily dismantle it.

Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, a Baptist preacher from New York, recommended to fellow preachers in a meeting that there should be the institution of a “Protestant Confessional.” He claimed that those who practiced the Catholic faith have a wonderful way of treating diseased souls. He continued, “A good priest can, in the confessional, help individuals in a manner that we have nothing corresponding to. In spite of the fact that I am a Baptist, I have myself had for six years what I should like to call a confessional.”

Bergston proposes that no matter what faith a person practices, the Christian church should provide confession if believers want it. He believes that not having confession at all “violate[s] a human need, for the need of confession is rooted
Confession is seeing our sin as God sees it. It’s the result of looking inward objectively and examining ourselves as the Scripture instructs. We need to confess our sin to God. Confession is a personal communication with God that recognizes “I am a sinner.”

† † †

Confession Begins Total Reconciliation

When people live with unconfessed sin, they will be searching for answers to their problems—answers to life—until they are ready to repent honestly and completely and begin the process of total reconciliation. “The Church fathers understood that the purpose of confession was repentance, penance, and absolution.”

Clearly, then, the first thing a man has to do if he desires absolution is to identify his sins. Self-examination is his first duty. If he has made no attempt to examine his conscience, he is clearly not taking his confession seriously.

Almighty God, the Creator of the universe and mankind is a mysterious Being of another realm. He is always in control. His ways are always ways of order and structure. He set into motion every natural phenomenon that governs our world. It
is understandable that He would institute specific rules and systematic orders for us to follow. There is a progression to spiritual growth and a progression to continual healing and soul care, and the progression begins with repentance and confession.

God is faithful to his children. He is compassionate and full of loving kindness. He is always the same. He does not change. We know He loves us even when we live in sin. When we are convicted of sin and humble ourselves before God through repentance, He most assuredly is happy for us and gives us His blessing.

The Lord’s loving kindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness. “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “Therefore I have hope in Him.” The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, To the person who seeks Him. (Lamentations 3:22 – 25)

† † †

† The second step to The Cure of Souls is confession and repentance of sin.

While repentance happens in the heart or the soul, confession is an outward action. Once we
become aware of our sin, humble ourselves and confess with a repentant heart, God will forgive us.

Forgiveness is the third step. We need to receive forgiveness from God and offer forgiveness to ourselves and to others.

The steps to The Cure of Souls now include:
1. Rejection of sin
2. Confession
Step 3: Forgiveness

Look upon my affliction and my trouble, And forgive all my sins.

~Psalm 25:18

† † †

We have previously discussed the rejection of sin and confession. These subjects are very extensive, and we will continue to learn the fullness of them as we progress. All of the steps for healing the soul are initially inward happenings. It is in the center of our being that we sense the need to humble ourselves to confess our sin and ask for forgiveness. Although these steps have an outward action, the initial motivation comes from the heart (or soul).

Forgiveness comes from God. By God’s grace, we are forgiven of sin. Eaton’s Bible Dictionary gives the following definition:

**Forgiveness of Sin** –

This is one of the constituent parts of justification. In pardoning sin, God absolves the sinner from the condemnation of the law, and that on account of the work of Christ, i.e., he removes the guilt of sin, or the sinner’s actual liability to eternal wrath on account of it.
• All sins are forgiven freely. “Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you” (Acts 13:38). “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:6–9).

• The sinner is by this act of grace forever freed from the guilt and penalty of his sins. This is the peculiar prerogative of God; He can do this because He is God. “But there is forgiveness with Thee” (Psalm 130:4). It is offered to all in the gospel.¹

God has a forgiving nature. He cannot turn his back on sin and pretend it doesn’t exist, but He is eager to forgive. Psalm 103:12 states, “as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” As His children, we should work to cultivate that same forgiving nature in ourselves. We were created to be imitators of God.

The Scriptures are a revelation of God’s purpose of forgiveness and mercy. The glorious Temple of the Old Testament was built to show the glory of God. God gave specific instructions about every
Forgiveness

detail and He inspired craftsmen in the building of it. It was elaborate and beautiful, with no expense spared. There was a prominent place in the Holiest part of the Temple, the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant was placed. This was known as the Mercy Seat of God and was a place of awe and wonder. It was here the people of God received renewed acceptance by God because of His mercy.

We, the people of God, are the Temple of the Holy Spirit. “Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16). As believers, we are meant to be that place which resonates with God’s mercy. To live our lives according to the example Christ portrayed, we must extend to others the same mercy we have received from the ultimate giver of mercy.

Joanna Arnold tells us, “Forgiveness is a door to peace and happiness. It is a small, narrow door, and cannot be entered without stooping. It is also hard to find. But no matter how long the search, it can be found.”2 We all have the capacity to forgive if we so choose.

We receive forgiveness of our sin by God’s grace, and it is by God’s grace that we are able to choose to forgive others. Every characteristic of God that
The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls

we desire to build into our lives is so foreign to our human nature that it is only through grace we can make the transition. We have confidence the transforming work that God began in us will be accomplished through His supernatural abilities. Our job is to keep the faith as we remain steadfast in our love for God.

Forgiving Others

Robert Enright in his book, *Forgiveness Is a Choice*, gives us a definition of forgiveness taken from philosopher Joanna North. She says when we are hurt by another, we must forgive them by overcoming the resentment toward the offender and by trying to offer the wrongdoer compassion, benevolence, and love.³

Scripture addresses forgiveness with strong words. Jesus gives us the command to forgive and then tells us the consequences when we do not forgive. “For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions” (Matthew 6:14–15).

It is God’s desire and nature to forgive. Until we are able to forgive others and ourselves, God cannot forgive us. Betty Tapscott and Robert
Forgiveness

DeGrandis explain the importance of forgiveness: “Forgiveness is the foundation for all healing.”

They continue:

Forgiveness is an act of the will, not a feeling. If we pray for a person, we can be assured that we have forgiven that person. To help accept an individual and open ourselves to a particular person more, picture him with the Lord Jesus and say to the Lord, “I love him because You love him. I forgive him.” Forgiveness is a life-long obligation. Daily we need to forgive those who hurt or injure us.

It is important to recognize that forgiveness is not a feeling. It is an act we choose to make.

Richard Fitzgibbons, a Pennsylvania psychiatrist, has pioneered the use of forgiveness in therapy. He observed that when a person forgives, fear is reduced. He traces reduced feelings of fear to a reduction of guilt. Many people are angry at a loved one who hurt them and may have thoughts about getting revenge. Then they feel guilty for their unconscious violent impulses. Forgiveness puts a stop to the impulses. Dr. Fitzgibbons finds that as a client forgives, he or she begins to express
anger in more appropriate ways.⁶

† † †

And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. (Colossians 3:12–13)

† † †

In the Scriptures, Mark 11:25 stresses the importance of forgiveness again, “And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions.”

† † †

Then Peter came and said to Him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.” (Matthew 18:21-22)

† † †

There are many people who have the mistaken idea that forgiving means we will forget what
happened or that we are excusing the act against us. Joanna Arnold states that forgiving, “certainly does not depend on a face-to-face meeting with the person responsible for it, which – in the case of sexual abuse, at least – may not even be advisable. But it does mean making a conscious decision to stop hating, because hating can never help.”

When someone does something to hurt you in some way, you are offended and probably feel like they owe you something to make up for the offense. At the very least, you feel they should at least acknowledge they have done something wrong. You want them to pay for the transgression in some way or feel that there should be some kind of restitution. However, when you choose to forgive the individual, you cancel the debt and no longer feel they owe you.

† † †

“But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

“For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same?” (Matthew 5:46).
“But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you” (Luke 6:27).

Scripture is a continuous story of forgiveness and its many nuances. Jesus came to earth to be the Way of forgiveness for us. The very fact that He humbled himself and left His throne to come to earth as a man reflects the paramount weight forgiveness embodies. Jesus tells us to pray, then, in this way:

Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. (Matthew 6:9–15)

† † †

The forgiveness we receive from God is bestowed as a gift called Grace. Even though we don’t deserve it, God gives it freely without condemnation. He also gave His Son, Jesus Christ, who came to earth in the flesh for the very purpose of setting an example for us to follow. Some
may have difficulty seeing their life in the same light as Jesus’ life because they don’t understand that Jesus was fully human. He had desires and feelings just as we do, but He was totally without sin and obedient to the Father. Jesus was given a very difficult task. His fleshly nature made Him want things to be different. He pleaded with the Father to make another way. Then He resigned His will to the will of the Father and said, “Yet not my will, but Thine be done.” When we are presented with life challenges that may appear to be more than we can bear, our response should be, “Not my will, Father, but Thine.”

We also see the historical accounts of the men of faith throughout the ages. We can examine the Apostle Paul’s life or read through Hebrews Chapter 11, which provides us with the names of many who, by faith, lived committed to God. If we were to study these great men and women of faith, we would undoubtedly find them accepting forgiveness and giving forgiveness to themselves and to others. “When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both” (Luke 7:42).

We have numerous opportunities to forgive. We need to practice the act of forgiveness toward those who cause small, everyday irritations such as cutting in a line or being overly concerned about
themselves. Unfortunately, some people have experienced horrid things such as molestation, rape, or sexual abuse. Perhaps you or someone you know was abandoned by a parent, their spouse had an affair, or something was said or done to hurt them or someone they love. When you feel you have truly been wronged and have suffered greatly because of something someone else has done, God will comfort you. The act of forgiveness is difficult and painful, and it may take years to work through, but God is available to meet every emotional, spiritual, and physical need through His Grace.

† † †

“If someone says ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also” (I John 4:20-21).

The apostle Paul, a man of great faith and courage, had an issue that tormented him. He prayed three times and asked God to take it away. But God didn’t take it away. Instead, God told Paul, “My Grace is sufficient for you, for power is
perfected in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). When we are willing to accept it, God’s Grace is able to meet every need we have. God does not necessarily want us to try to solve the problem, but He does want us to rely on Him to see us through. God desires to develop in us a forgiving nature, which will be reflected in our daily life as we cancel debts we believe others owe us.

† † †

For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. (Matthew 6:14–15)

† † †

† The third step to The Cure of Souls is to forgive.

You must go through the actions of forgiving. You may have to go to the person and tell them face-to-face that you forgive them. Another act that has worked for some is to write a letter to that person, and then either send it, or simply throw it away and forgive them in your heart. It is not always a good idea to confront the offender, but you must cancel their debt if you want to release
the anger and bitterness you have against them. Remember, by forgiving, you are canceling a debt they owe. You are not saying that what they did was right.

The next of *The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls* that we will discuss is faith and what it means to be born again. We must have faith at the beginning of our journey to the awareness of God, and after we give our lives to Him, we also choose to walk by faith as we trust God to carry us through the trials in our lives. God is in control, and acknowledging His sovereignty instead of focusing on our life’s circumstances is the beginning to living a life of faith in God.

**The steps to The Cure of Souls now include:**

1. Rejection of sin
2. Confession
3. Forgiveness
Step 4: Faith

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

~Hebrews 11:1

†††

The previous steps are step one, the rejection of sin, step two, confession, and step three, forgiveness. While these are important steps, the journey with God cannot be continued until there is faith. “And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

Paul explains coming to God through faith: “nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified” (Galatians 2:16). It is our faith, not the doctrines of men, that bring us to God through Jesus.

Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in
the body we are absent from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight—we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:6–8).

**Definition of Faith:** The definition of faith tells us that faith is closely tied to trust and truth. “Faith is in general the persuasion of the mind that a certain statement is true and therefore worthy of trust. It admits many degrees [of faith] up to full assurance of faith, in accordance with the evidence on which it rests.”

When people put their faith in another person or a thing, it is almost certain that eventually their souls will be severely injured. Humans and things are fallible and fallen. Some people put their faith in the world system of economy. They measure achievement by money, physical appearance, fame, or popularity, but when that does not sustain or cannot fill the void of a broken heart, their world falls apart. The only thing worthy of our faith is God. “If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you” (John 15:19).

Having material things and relationships with
people are a part of life, but trying to live without a relationship with the Creator is the ultimate deception. There are many good things; all are provided by God. People who make decisions in life based on what feels good and who measure their success according to the world’s standards, can only be sustained for a season when their life is based on things other than what God wants for us. Faith in God should be our ultimate focus. “For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?” (Mark 8:36).

God’s plan for mankind is that we would be in a personal relationship with Him. Because of sin and the falling away of man, the fellowship with God was broken. However, God provided a way for us to once again enter into fellowship with Him through the sacrifice of His Son. To receive that relationship, we must act on faith and we must be born again.

There are many words we use when we talk about being born again. We talk about being saved, redeemed, claiming salvation, being justified, and reconciled to God. All of these indicate what takes place between a person and God to bridge the gap caused by sin. “See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For
this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him” (I John 3:1).

Several Scriptures speak directly about God who “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).

Peter speaks the words of the prophet Joel in Acts 2:21: “And it shall be, that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” One of the most important Scriptures says: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

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“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, he saves us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the holy spirit” (Titus 3:5).

Scriptures tell us, “But God demonstrates His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Before we were ever born, He was the Sacrifice for our sins. “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

And here is the key Scripture to faith and being
born again: “If you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, you will be saved” (Romans 10: 9-10).

Therefore the two necessary Scriptures to reach faith enough to be born again are John 3:16 and Romans 10: 9-10.

The Scripture calls it foolish if we try to live life without putting our faith in God:

“He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But he who walks wisely will be delivered” (Proverbs 28:26).

“that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God” (1 Corinthians 2:5).

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world–our faith” (1 John 5:4).

Living in faith is a life long journey on the road that leads to the supernatural union with our Creator. Often it is a very emotional experience when we have to give up sins that by habit we have grown to love. Scripture gives us very direct and simple instructions.
Paul addresses all people when he says, “that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation” (Romans 10:9–10).

Jesus took this to a more mysterious level when He answered Nicodemus:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

When Jesus said, “…unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,” He was speaking to a respected leader of the Jewish community, Nicodemus, a very religious man. He was a ruler of the Jews who studied the Torah and knew all the requirements of the law and the customs. When Jesus told him that he (and everyone) must be born again, Nicodemus was completely confused. Jesus explained to Nicodemus what it meant to be born again by telling him that the new birth is a birth that comes about through a force we cannot see. It is like the wind; we see the trees blowing or leaves rustling down the road and we know the wind has caused it, but
we can’t see the wind. Jesus also told Thomas one time, “Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed” (John 20:29).

When we are born again, we receive a new identity. There is a newness of life which comes about through belief in God as a result of the testimony, life, and resurrection of Jesus. Belief by itself is not enough; for Scripture tells us, “You believe that there is one God. Good; even the demons believe that, and shudder” (James 2:19). James also said: “Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself” (2:17). We must believe; then, we must turn that into action. That action is loving one another.

Even though we do not fully understand all that’s involved in the new birth, when we, by faith, accept the message of the gospel which Jesus came to earth to proclaim, then at that moment God does the miraculous. He puts His creative signature upon our new birth certificate and gives us His name. We become His children and He becomes our Father.

Peter speaks about Jesus under the direction of the Holy Spirit when he proclaims, “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

The believer is crucified with Christ and raised
up to the new life of freedom and victory over death through faith in the Son of God. In the face of opposition, Paul states, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20).

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“Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:4)

We continue to live in the same physical body, but now we have God’s Holy Spirit living inside us. We have discussed sin and its deadly characteristics. We know that sin separates us from God, but when we accept Jesus, everything that Jesus did and said and stood for becomes part of who we are. The effects of the new birth are seen in a person’s life through the change of habits and attitudes. “Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).
born again person is no longer passive about sin. Paul wrote to believers “instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age” (Titus 2:12).

As long as we live in the earthly body, sin will have to be dealt with, but God gives us Grace and the necessary power to overcome. “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

We should be able to recognize people who belong to God: “any one who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another” (1 John 3:10–11).

There are many believers listed in the book of Hebrews whose lives give us examples of great faith. The Scripture says it was through their faith that they gained supernatural power:
...who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. And all these, having gained approval through their faith (Hebrews 11:33-39a).

When we talk about the supernatural power faith will give us, Jesus went further and said, “if you have the faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and
it shall move; and nothing shall be impossible to you” (Matthew 17:20).

We study the lives of these Saints and are amazed by the work done by God because of their faith. The greatest example of faith comes from Jesus’ life. He lived on earth as a man and He had to exercise His faith in His relationship with the Father. He prayed to the Father just as we are commanded to do. He relied on the Father for everything throughout His life. Even in His death, God sustained Him and then gave Him victory over death and sin. This is the same amazing God who is with us in every situation of our lives. What an encouragement for us to keep the faith!

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Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and per- fector of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against
Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart (Hebrews 12:1-3).
“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17).

If you have looked everywhere in the world for the answers to life and have come up empty handed, you must begin to realize that the answers are not in this world. The answer is God. Put your faith in God, become a believer, and live the life He desires for you. Learn what He’s like by studying the Scripture and spending time in prayer. We often think there isn’t enough time in our busy lives to spend time in Bible study and prayer, but many of our soulful longings are to know the purpose of life and where we should invest our faith. Cultivate a relationship with God and He will take care of the rest. He will heal your soul.

Faith, however, is still not enough for the complete cure of souls. When Jesus told the rich man who asked what he had to do to be saved, “Keep the commandments.” The rich man assured Jesus, “All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?” “Jesus said to him, ‘If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’” But when the young man
heard this statement, he went away grieved, for he was one who owned much property. And Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven…. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God… How then can we gain entry to heaven? With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:25).

Step four in The Cure of Souls is Faith strong enough to fulfill Jesus’ commission that you must be born again. Nicodemus asked Jesus how a man can be born again. Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again”’(John 3: 5-7).

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† Faith is step four in the progression to The Cure of Souls.

Without faith, you cannot be born again. If you haven’t taken the four steps: Rejection of sin, Confession, Forgiveness, and Faith in God,
chances are that you are still searching for the meaning to life. In step five, we will understand more about the character of God as we explore love. Love is given freely to us by God, and then He asks us to give love freely to others.

The steps to The Cure of Souls now include:

1. Rejection of sin
2. Confession
3. Forgiveness
4. Faith

Now we take the next step, to love.
Step 5: Love

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think
The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls

as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known. But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13)

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Through the previous steps, we have seen how important it is to recognize sin, call it what it is, and confess it with a truly repentant heart. God forgives us when we ask, but He also requires that we forgive others. We have also learned that it is by faith we are born again and when we put that faith into action, we are well on our way in the process of The Cure of Souls. This is what must occur if we are to have the relationship with God that He desires.

The fact is that God wants us to be like Him. He also wants to have a close relationship with each one of us. This concept of love is consistent with God’s character. God is love. While living on this earth, we will never be able to fully understand.
stand God or His love. First John 4:16 tells us, “And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”

God loves us with an unconditional love. This type of love is difficult for an unbeliever to comprehend, but it is very important in our progress in The Cure of Souls that we have a correct concept of God’s character. If we are trying to be like God, we must know what He is like even though we will never fully be able to understand until we see Jesus when our earthly bodies are transformed into supernatural beings. God’s attributes are so awesome and so unlike our earthly bodies and makeup that they are hard for us to grasp. However, we must keep on the straight and narrow path for wide is the road to destruction.

God loves us and He wants us to love Him as well as one another. In Matthew 22: 37–39, when Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment is, He said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind…. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” If we will focus on love, it will transform us.

“A new commandment I give to you, that you
love one another, even as I have loved you that you also love one another” (John 13:34).

If we love God, then we will want to keep His commandments: “And this is love, that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command, is that you walk in love” (2 John 1:6 (NIV)).

God also requires we love each other. If we were being controlled by the same love that controlled Christ, what would our lives look like? If we could put aside self-centeredness, pride, an independent spirit, and being controlled by our emotions, and instead let the Holy Spirit through love control our lives, we would come to know The Cure of Souls. “And He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf” (2 Corinthians 5:15). Another place the Scripture encourages the believer is in 1 John 5:3: “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.”

Love is a continuous action that requires our undivided attention and commitment. God designed His children to be full of love so that through us others would have a glimpse of Him. Tradition has handed down a story about St.
John. John did not die a martyr’s death as did the other apostles because while on the cross, Jesus looked down on John and said, “Behold your Mother and Mother behold your son.” John was commissioned by Jesus to take care of His Holy Mother, the Virgin Mary, for the rest of her life. Tradition says that John lived to be around 100 years old. In his old age, when people would learn that John was an apostle and that he knew Jesus personally, they would ask John what must they do to be a follower of the Christ. At the end of his days on earth as a very old man, John would quietly and simply respond to them, “You must love one another.”

Once we accept God’s love and we begin to love others in the same way, living at peace is a much easier process. We live in peace because of who God is.

Living in a state of love is reflected in our attitudes, responses to life’s circumstances, and perspectives. Living in love is attained when we embrace the truth in the message of the gospel and rest in knowing that God is in control of our lives if we will only allow Him to be. Being in love with God is realized only after we turn (repent) from the ways of the world and accept God’s ways of righteousness.
Love is achieved when we cease to struggle with God. We accept His wisdom and His ways even though our finite mind may not always understand. Isaiah 55:8 tells us, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways,’ declares the Lord.” What comfort we can get from Scriptures that assure us we can live in love. God is in control of everything, so we can live in love.

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Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything is worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.” (Philippians 4:6-8)

“The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, Because he trusts in Thee” (Isaiah 26:3). “For the mind set on the flesh is death,
but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace” (Romans 8:6).

Living in love combines a thankful heart with a childlike innocence where we want to bring every concern to the Father expecting to receive all that we need. A person with a life of love with God has a trained mind that focuses on truth, honor, purity, and right living. Martha and her sister, Mary, respected Jesus very much, so when He came to visit their house, it was quite an honor. Martha was busy worrying about food preparations and serving her Guest, while Mary took advantage of having The Christ in her very own home to talk directly to her. Mary sat at Jesus’ feet and listened to Him, focused on Him. Feeling like she had been left with all the work, frustrated, Martha asked Jesus to tell Mary to help her with the preparations and serving. “But the Lord answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her’” (Luke 10:38-42).

We worry about what has happened in our lives, about what is happening now, and about what could happen in the future. We cannot change the
past nor can we have control of the future. Everything in our lives is in God’s plan. He is sovereign and He is in control. In Matthew, Jesus tells us to look at the birds:

...neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single cubit to his life’s span? And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin.... Do not be anxious then, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘With what shall we clothe ourselves? (Matthew 6:26-28, 31)

God knows we need these things, and He will provide them for us. Jesus continues by reassuring us,

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“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matthew 6:33-34).
“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).

On the night He was betrayed, Jesus said to His apostles, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35).

Jesus said in John 15:17, “This I command you, that you love one another.” Paul said “love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.” Many people live a defeated life that they believe will never change. When they live like this, they discourage others who are pursuing a closer relationship with God. Some unbelievers have accepted the false idea we cannot get close to God; they believe He is too mysterious, Holy, and unreachable. God is awesome and mysterious and we need to remember that. Because He is so awesome, He can at the same time be the Holy God, Supreme Being, and our Comforter and Counselor. He is able to get close to us and come to us in our need. God is always there for us. It’s a matter of you accepting Him. If you repent and
confess your sins, and believe in your heart and confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord, you will be saved (Romans 10: 9-10).

As you read in step two, Jesus said that the Ten Commandments are based on two commands: Love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself. In Galatians 5:14 it is written, “For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” Again in I John 4:8, “The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

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† Step five is Love.

We see now that the steps to The Cure of Souls are:

1. Rejection of sin
2. Confession
3. Forgiveness
4. Faith
5. Love

The next chapter examines prayer, our means of direct and constant communication with God. Though God always knows what is happening in our lives, He desires a relationship with us. Prayer is the way to have a direct and personal relationship.
Step 6: Prayer

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

~Philippians 4:6

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The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls is a progression of spiritual growth for the one who desires wholeness. As you go through each step, you may have a tendency to stop or to become content with the progress you have made. We have looked at Scripture about sin, confession, forgiveness, mercy, and love. Understanding and living with the attitudes described in the Word would be a great accomplishment, and even if we were able to master those, there is much more to learn about God and our relationship with Him.

We are accustomed to living by our feelings and senses. Because of this, it takes time to learn to live a life in the Spirit, which is the life God designed for us. We must talk with God and learn how to listen to Him through His Word and His Holy Spirit. This is prayer; it is the way we can have communication with God, and it is the next step in The Cure of Souls—a most critical step.
Through prayer, we can know God’s purpose for our life, we can ask God for direction and help, and we can gain strength and knowledge for living. Paul said in Romans 15:30, “Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.”

Even Jesus communicated with God through prayer. In Scripture we read of a time before Jesus began His ministry when He was directed by the Spirit to go into the desert for 40 days and nights. During this time, He prayed and fasted. Many times throughout His days on earth, He would find a place to be alone to pray. Even the night before He was betrayed in the garden, He prayed while His disciples kept falling asleep. Through prayer, Jesus had direct access to His Father, and anyone who wants a closer relationship with God must also pray. Scripture tells us that “the prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much” (James 5:16). But prayer is not about us getting things from God. It is about a personal relationship with God as we seek Him and obey His will. This is the reason we were created and He desires this from each one of us.

At one time or another all people in life will ask, “What is my purpose here? What is my life
Prayer

about?” We must continually remind ourselves that God created us for His purposes. He has a specific purpose for everyone and we can know His purpose for us by simply asking Him to reveal it. Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV) tells us, “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.’” Paul’s letter to the Ephesians also speaks of what our purpose is: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). God created us for a relationship and communication with Him, and He has work for us to do.

God gives us hope, which allows us to understand there is a reason and a purpose for every experience and every situation. We know God has a plan and He has the power to accomplish whatever He desires. It should be comforting to know God is in control. First Corinthians 2:5 says, “that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.”

Prayer is more than simply talking to God; it is a conversation. We can talk to God out loud or in our thoughts; He hears both. We can talk to God just like we talk to anyone else. We do not have to worry about our lack of ability to express our feel-
ings or thoughts in words because we have God’s spirit in us to help us as we communicate. When we communicate with God, there is absolutely no chance of being misunderstood; there is no chance of praying wrong. He sees our heart and He knows all of the things in our heart, even the things we haven’t admitted to ourselves. Still, in spite of His complete knowledge of us, He accepts us just as we are and right where we are. His longing desire is for us to humble ourselves and come to Him openly without pretense. However, this is often very difficult for us. Many people believe they have to act a certain way or be “good enough” to approach God. This is wrong. He wants us to come to Him as we are—today, right now. He wants to show us His love as we talk to Him in prayer. He wants us to pray and seek Him and His will for our lives.

One of God’s desires is to meet all of our needs, and He will. The most important thing to God, however, is our relationship with Him. If our prayer time with God is filled by our requests for material things or complaining about our circumstances of life, or if we just use the time to mechanically repeat or recite empty words, we haven’t furthered our relationship. The Lord tells us, “And you will seek Me and find Me, when you
search for me with all your heart. And I will be found by you” (Jeremiah 29:13-14).

On those days when we are least interested, pressured, or feeling like we’re just too busy, we especially need to stop, quiet our physical bodies, and spend some time talking to God. “But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4).

**A Psalm of David:** “Hear my prayer, O Lord, Give ear to my supplications! Answer me in Thy faithfulness, in Thy righteousness!” (Psalm 143:1).

“O Thou who dost hear prayer, To Thee all men come.” (Psalm 65:2).

If it is our true heart’s desire to know Him, God is faithful to help us. A relationship like this does not happen immediately; it’s not instantaneous. Like all relationships, it takes time to develop. Dedication to prayerfully studying the scriptures that tell us about God, and also making the time to spend alone with Him in prayer will communicate a heart that wants to know Him.

“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving” (Colossians 4:2).

The following are prayers from scripture and
The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls

from great men and women of God. They give us some insight about the love these people had for our heavenly father.

A Psalm of David:
The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me. Thou dost prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; Thou hast anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalm 23)

When Mary, the mother of Jesus, was given the news of her “work” for the Lord, her response shows a heart that longs to please Him: “I am the Lord’s servant,” In a prayer known as the Magnificat, Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said.” Then the angel left her (Luke 1:38 NIV).
When Mary talks to her relative, Elizabeth, about what God is doing through her life, she joyfully expresses herself. “And Mary said: ‘My soul exalts the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondslave; For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed. For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And Holy is His name. And His mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear Him. He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. He has brought down rulers from their thrones, And has exalted those who were humble. He has filled the hungry with good things; And sent away the rich empty-handed. He has given help to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy, As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his offspring forever.’” (Luke 1:46–56)

The author of *The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls* says this same prayer every morning as he puts on his Crucifix:

Lord Jesus Christ, Savior of my soul, fill me with the Holy Spirit; surround me with your angels; grant me an overflowing abundance
of Your wisdom, strength, courage, and grace so that I may carry out the will of God our Father while I am in this life and in the eternal life to come.

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Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi for Peace

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; Where there is injury, pardon; Where there is doubt, faith; Where there is despair, hope; Where there is darkness, light; Where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console; To be understood, as to understand; To be loved, as to love; For it is in giving that we receive; It is in pardoning that we are pardoned; And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.”

In Matthew, we learn that our Father knows what we need even before we ask Him. We are directed to pray, “Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy
will be done. On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Matthew 6: 9-13).

“And when you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners, in order to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full” (Matthew 6:5).

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† Step six, then, is to pray, and to pray “without ceasing.”

The steps to The Cure of Souls now include:
1. Rejection of sin
2. Confession
3. Forgiveness
4. Faith
5. Love
6. Prayer

A final thought about prayer: You know many people who pray for things, and they don’t happen, they happen too slow, or something else
entirely happens. If you have not started at the very beginning by rejecting sin, by continually committing the same sins or other sins, you will not begin *The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls*. God cannot condone sin. Therefore, rid yourself of sin. Faithfully follow the progression outlined here, and God will hear your prayers. If your prayers are in union with the will of God, they will be answered. Sometimes the answer will surprise us, confuse us, or perplex us. But we have to believe and know in our hearts that God’s will is best for us. As Jesus prayed on the night He was betrayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39).

God is the Mystery of Mysteries, and in the next chapter we will examine His Holiness. Our goal should be to live a quiet and peaceful life serving God and loving others while maintaining a relationship with Him. Achieving a life of prayer and contentment is truly a product of allowing God to live in us.
PSALM 70*
Prayer for Divine Help

The leader; of David. For remember to rescue me, O God, come quickly to help me. Rejoice and be glad in your victory, o my soul, and with a loud voice sing praise to God. O Lord, You have freed my soul from trouble; You have lifted me up from all my foes; You have rescued me from my enemies. You have turned back in disgrace the haughty eyes of all who say, “Aha!” those who say, “Turn back in disgrace all those who seek my ruin, those who desire my harm.” O Lord, may all who seek you be glad and rejoice in you; may those who long for you be glad and glad in your salvation. God be glory!
Step 7: Holiness
“You shall be Holy, for I am Holy”

~1 Peter 1:16

† † †

Many believers will not venture past the first six steps of The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls to actually live in the spiritual realm, Holiness. They become satisfied with the strides they’ve made in their relationship with Jesus and decide to go no further. It is sad to see them get so close to the heart of God and yet settle for something less than the best God offers, which is intimate communion with the Holy Trinity—The Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Even though we will continue to be sojourners on the earth with all its problems, temptations, and injustices until our days are completed here, we have the opportunity to live in the spiritual realm, a truly exciting life. It is here that we experience the freedom spoken of in Scripture.

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim
liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners. (Isaiah 61:1)

In his book, *The Pursuit of Holiness*, Jerry Bridges encourages Believers to have the attitude of walking in obedience—not victory. Bridges continues, “Obedience is oriented toward God; victory is oriented toward self…. There is a subtle, self-centered attitude at the root of many of our difficulties with sin. Until we face this attitude and deal with it we will not consistently walk in Holiness.”

The one who lives in the spiritual realm knows a nearness to God that is intimate and enduring. It is a closeness that brings the two into a union. The will of the person living in the spiritual realm will be the same as the will of God; the focus is on the Savior and the Kingdom of God.

In his book, Bridges states, “Holiness is not a series of do’s and don’ts, but conformity to the character of God and obedience to the will of God.” To truly be on the path to The Cure of Souls, and ultimately Holiness, you first go through *The 7 Steps of The Cure of Souls*: rejection of sin, confession, forgiveness, faith, love, prayer, and then Holiness. You need to be diligent to continue to pray, read the Scripture, and love one
another while living a peaceful life. You may need to seek a Curate who can offer spiritual direction. You must learn how to commune with God intimately and personally. Achieving a true closeness with God, spending time with Him in prayerful meditation, and experiencing Him, is Holiness.

Jesus spoke continually to His followers and the disciples about the Father and the Kingdom of the Father. The physical senses cannot comprehend what He laboriously worked to relay about the Kingdom of Heaven to all who would listen. There is an unseen world and God beckons us to step inside. That world is the world of God, the world of the Spirit, the supernatural.

Getting to know God on this very deep level takes time. In our world today, we have become accustomed to wanting many things and wanting them quickly. We live in a fast-paced world of cell phones, email, and instant messenger. We microwave our food for only seconds; we expect the drive-through at a fast food restaurant to only take minutes; and in the realm of technology, we are impatient if a download from the Internet takes as many as thirty seconds. Our lives are crowded with more and more activities. We expect God to instantly answer our every whim. It’s an attitude of what can God do for us rather than
what we can do for God.

In order to know God on the level where we can truly experience Him, we have to take the time to spend in Scripture getting to know God in His Holiness. This is the most wonderful mystery; though, we will never really be able to understand Him with our human limitations. Spending dedicated time in prayer and reading God’s word will give us opportunity to experience God’s Holiness. Nurturing our relationship with God will only make it stronger. Reading Scripture and praying are the two fundamental paths to Holiness.

† † †

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:1-2).

The counsel that Jesus gives us reveals God’s truth and Holiness. We are told by the world to “do whatever we want as long as no one else is
hurt.” We are told to aggressively seek riches and power. The advice from Jesus is: “For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it” (Luke 9:24).

The apostle Paul encourages us to shift our focus from the things of this world to the Holiness of God. “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything is worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

The Beatitudes are an excellent example of how to live life. They provide a blue print to Holiness:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the gentle, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of
righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely on account of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:3-12)

As humans, we try to describe the Holiness of God, but because we know only human things, our ideas are inadequate to try to describe who He is. “All our language about God is an attempt to express the inexpressible.”³ Dennie Tamburello explains this paradox well. “On the one hand, we need personal imagery for God, because we are in a relationship with the God of love. On the other hand, we need to keep in mind that God does not fit any of our images exactly, and in fact is beyond all images and all categorical descriptions.”⁴ Tamburello goes on to say we need to learn more humility in terms of what we claim to know about God…. We need to recognize our need to stand humbly before the Mystery of Mysteries.”⁵ This Holy God has called us to live a life of Holiness in union with Him. Having a relationship with Him will follow when we take The 7 Steps to The Cure
of Souls with true conviction in each step.

We will not achieve spiritual growth or a supernatural union with God if we are unwilling to take the time in prayer and Scripture reading. We say a prayer during our drive to work, if we remember to at all. Many of us want to be all God desires for us to be, but we want it to happen quickly. We cannot fathom what it might have been like to wander the desert for forty years, and when we pray, we would like for God to answer us within the next few hours. Even days get to be too long for us to wait. However, God’s methods for growing us spiritually are gradual and progressive. Experiencing God’s Holiness also involves our response to correction. Hebrews 12:10 reveals that “He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His Holiness.”

To be holy, you must live a holy life. Every day you must be in constant prayer. This does not mean that you can simply read someone else’s prayer, but rather that you will talk to God, seek understanding, and seek His will. God does not want vain repetition in your prayer, but communication and union with Him.

Each day you need to devote yourself to the reading of Scripture, and be kind to others with your words and actions. Be gentle in your ways.
The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls

Jesus said that He desires mercy, not sacrifice. You must show mercy to others. You must live the Ten Commandments and follow the Sermon on the Mount.

You must love your neighbor as yourself. You must give up those things the world uses to enslave you. Instead, you must love, for God is love and God alone is Holy. The more you can love, the closer this will bring you to Holiness.

God makes a way for us to live in Holiness with Him, but we must accept responsibility for our actions and turn away from sin. He gives us a way to do that: “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Believers must take responsibility for their growth into a place of Holiness. “Too often we say we are ‘defeated’ by this or that sin. No, we are not defeated; we are simply disobedient!” Once we are to the point of knowing God better and having a relationship with Him, we aren’t living in victory or defeat, we are living either in obedience or disobedience.

“For they disciplined us for a short time as
seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His Holiness” (Hebrews 12:10).

As we have discussed in *The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls*, we have steadily progressed from one precept to another. “For He says, ‘Order on order, order on order, Line on line, line on line, A little here, a little there’” (Isaiah 28:10).

There may be times when you will have to go through some steps again; you might have difficulty with only one or two, but living *The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls* will establish a life of Holiness for you. Having a personal relationship with the Lord takes time, and it does not just happen. You have to take the necessary steps to make it happen! “If you seek Him with all your heart, He will be found by you!” (Jeremiah 29:13-14).

Ultimately, we seek to experience God’s Holiness as He reveals His mystery to us. We must depend upon a relationship with Him as well as relationships with other Believers. By loving one another, we can achieve The Cure of Souls.

1. Rejection of sin
2. Confession
3. Forgiveness
4. Faith
The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls

5. Love  
6. Prayer  
7. Holiness

*The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls* has been a journey into understanding the causes (mystery) of human suffering, which is sin. The unveiling (revelation) and The Cure of Souls is the knowledge that unconfessed sin is at the center of the cause of pain, suffering, and distress. The acknowledgement and rejection of sin, and the taking of *The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls* will bring us closer to the mystical union with God and eternal life in His presence. Souls who spend their life in Holiness and love will transform other souls.

† † † †

Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way where I am going (John 14: 1-4).
Appendix A – History of Cure of Souls

I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken, and strengthen the sick…

~Ezekial 34:16

† † †

We have learned that The Cure of Souls is much more than overcoming personal emotional problems or simply striving for self-improvement. In the early church, a Curate’s position was similar to a shepherd’s as he guided the people of the church and helped them. Even today, though they may not have the title of “Curate,” there are people in the church holding this position. We need to find the modern-day Curates and discover how they can help us.

The Cure of Souls can be traced to our very beginnings. We view God as the Father of The Cure of Souls. He was involved in healing the wounded souls even in the early days after the fall of mankind when the initial need for healing was birthed. It is characteristic of the loving Father’s heart that He desires for His children to walk in wholeness and completeness.

God was the first Curate when He sought out the injured souls and talked with them about the
The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls

sin they had committed. After Adam and Eve sinned, they hid from God. Sin makes it necessary for our souls to be cured (healed). He gave Adam and Eve opportunity to confess their sins and to ask forgiveness. He desires for us to be in harmonious relationship with Him.

We see the same pattern when the Lord spoke to Cain. “Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?’” (Genesis 4:6). Even before Cain’s sin of murder, God talked with him about his anger and his disobedience, giving him an opportunity to Cure his Soul. Cain did not take the opportunity God gave him to talk about his anger, and he ended up murdering his own brother Abel.

God uses people as Curates. When God began to lead His chosen people, the Israelites, He gave charge of their souls to Moses. Moses became the intermediary between the people and the God of Heaven. God continued reaching out to the objects of His love by instructing them, through Moses, Aaron, and then Jacob and through many others who came after, as well as those who assisted along the way. Today’s Curate is also a person who loves God and who has the same goals to help others understand.

The image of “shepherds” in the Old Testament
History of Cure of Souls

gives us a clear picture of what the job of a Curate is. In his book, *The Cure of Souls*, David Benner explains how shepherds took their sheep to places of safety where nourishment could be found. Shepherds are “characterized by compassion, courage, and a mixture of tenderness and toughness.” In the New Testament, it is Christ who is our Great Shepherd. Benner explains that Jesus is “the guide and protector of his sheep and who lays down his life for them.”¹ The care that God instituted in the beginning with Adam and Eve was a simple direction for a life of wholeness and completeness in relationship with God and each other. The sinfulness of man corrupted this model by replacing it, diluting it, and complicating it with man’s thoughts and selfish desires. An example of this corruption is the structure for soul care in the period before Greek civilization, possibly before 2000 BC. Soul care at this time was primarily a function of patrolling the masses to make sure they were adhering to the prevailing interpretation of the Law or Torah. This was carried out by four classes of holy men known as priests, scribes, prophets, and wise men.

The church carried the burden of caring for souls for many years. Throughout the Gospels, we see Jesus in the role of Curate as He ministered to

¹
the people. When Jesus came preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, He told the people that God wanted them to be obedient. More importantly, God wanted their hearts and souls to be in harmony with Him and that even when they sinned (made mistakes, were disobedient, fell short), He would forgive them and heal their injured souls. Jesus brought back the original message of healing that God had displayed in the garden when He provided coverings for Adam and Eve to conceal their nakedness.

The Scripture refers to Jesus as being the Curate of our souls: “For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls” (1 Peter 2:25). Jesus ministered healing of the soul to all who would receive Him. He gave a model to be followed by His disciples. The disciples multiplied this model and spread its message to the world. Groups of believers gathered together to help each other and to seek God in unity. Even when they were being persecuted because they were not following the desires of the men in authority at that time, their numbers grew. More and more men, women, and children believed in the God of Heaven and creation and the message of love. The mystery of their increase is revealed in their love for one another and
caring for one another’s souls. This is what kept God’s hand of protection upon them.

The disciples, the original church founders, taught this belief system based upon caring for each other to the clergy, and it has been passed down from generation to generation. In Acts chapter 6, Disciples were appointed to care for the needs of the people. Also, women were appointed as Deaconesses to help baptize other women and to minister to their needs.

Later, the Early Eastern Orthodox Church had spiritually mature men in the position of Curate to work as spiritual leaders for people who needed guidance, and in the fourth and fifth centuries, The Cure of Souls is recorded by the Desert Fathers in Egypt, Syria, and Palestine. The holy men would be sought out for advice and counsel to help the people know God better and overcome the human frailties that cause sickness of the soul. Having a leader or director to guide in the spiritual pilgrimage of life is of great importance. Bergsten reminds us, “As early as the time of Gregory the Great a fully developed office for the care of souls had been prepared and was included in his pastoral rules.”
The Curate

We have a hero, the most heroic sort of hero, the common garden variety of hero: the Curate. We have read about Curates toiling quietly in the village churches in fourteenth-century England, providing spiritual comfort to comfortless victims of the plague, extending hospitality to pilgrims, administering the sacraments in cold and damp sanctuaries, carving out their own special place in the life of the village.\(^5\)

†††

The Curate held a position in the church, which was a subordinate position under the pastor, priest or vicar, and he was able to communicate with the parishioners on more familiar terms. He was available to hear confession, to give counsel from the scriptures, and to comfort when needed. The modern Curate inherited the role of The Cure of Souls from the beginning of recorded time.

In his work, *Healing Priests: Priesthood as a Model of Healing*, Saunders proposed that we begin to use the term “Curate” again to denote someone who is involved in the pastoral work of the “cure of souls.” He says, “How we address our ordained clergy affects the expectations we
place on them. The titles of Rector, Priest, Father, Chaplain, Padre, Cleric, Man of Prayer, Pastor, Minister, Elder, Religious, Churchman, and Curate all demand different tasks of the same person.”

Eugene Peterson believes the Sabbath work of the minister has changed little through time (preaching, teaching and celebrating the sacraments), and the work between Sabbaths should also remain the same. That is “discovering the meaning of Scripture, developing a life of prayer, guiding growth into maturity.” The “cure of souls” is what pastoral work has been called through history.

Blair and Sharpe present the following history in their book, *Pastoral Care before the Parish*:

Nearly all priests and clerics in minor orders living in England between 700 and 1000 a.d. were based in central places: actual or nascent towns. They resided in those communities and were generally called ministers; but whether they followed some elements of a daily rule, or were simply the more common clerical team ministries, their status and organization did not segregate them definitively from the laity of the
immediate environs and surrounding inter-
land. On the contrary, for they were the
inheritors of the dual tradition of
Christianity: that of the recluse who flees the
corruption of the world, and that of the imi-
tator of Christ’s life on earth. While the
Christian church has always held the former
in high regard, the latter has, since apostolic
times, continued to be recognized as the
more widely relevant model. Holy men and
women are often forced to strike a balance
between the two types of life, if their impact
is to be felt outside themselves. The clerical
communities of Anglo-Saxon England were
in many cases located at points of maximum
visibility. As urban life gathered momentum
in these central places, the increasing con-
course of the laity ensured that the teaching
and practical example of the clergy would
act as a leaven throughout secular society.8

The curate then, as Balmform states, is:

“Like the physician of the body, but in a
field even more delicate and complicated
that the doctor's, he has to be the teacher,
counselor, shepherd of all sorts and condi-
tions of men. He is always liable to be called upon, and there is no forty-hour week for the physician of souls. He may be summoned to minister to a dying saint, close to God and spiritually far more advanced than himself, and pass on at once to teach a class of children or listen to some unhappy woman’s sordid tale of domestic misery. The tax upon his recourses, his patience, and his sympathy, his charity and knowledge, is heavy and it is endless. There are no simple answers, and no official forms to be passed over the counter in dealing with human souls.”

Jinkins and Jinkins remind us, though, that

...the word “cure,” perhaps surprisingly, does not mean primarily ‘to make well’ or ‘to restore to health.’ Although we all recognize pastoral ministry, in a real sense, to involve a ‘healing’ dimension, a concern to assist parishioners to achieve a sense of wholeness, the primary meaning of this ‘cure’ refers to the exercise of administrative power. The term ‘cure’ from which the word ‘Curate’ derives its meaning has a Latin and French
background and means ‘to have charge over.’\textsuperscript{10}

[Middle English curat, from Medieval Latin cürätus, from Late Latin cüra, \textit{spiritual charge}, from Latin, care.]

† † †

We also read of caring for the souls of others in the Scriptures. Galatians 6:1-2 state, “Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.” Part of The Cure of Souls requires that we help keep one another accountable and away from sin.

Gary Almy, M.D. explains, “From the time of the Reformation, soul care involved not only outward sins but more importantly the inward person and the state of his soul.”\textsuperscript{11}

Paul Mizzi discusses the pastor’s role in the responsibilities of the Curate:

The office of pastor has to do with the care, the nourishment and spiritual well being, the protection and oversight of souls, to see
that Christ is indeed and effectively, and in an ever-increasing measure, their Prophet, Priest, and King. Christ Himself is the Chief Shepherd; He leads His people through the wise counsel of the pastor. The pastor studies the mind of Christ in Scripture and seeks to present the same in a relevant and effective way to the modern man. Ironically speaking though, in the past “the cure of souls” was seen to be “the parson’s job.” The inroads of psychiatry have been such that today the pastor is virtually divested from his responsibility, and “said” by the mental health establishment to be incompetent for such a task, as curing souls is. This is a major seduction in the church today. We need to wake up to the challenge and affirm that men and women of God are fully equipped for the task to cure souls if he depends on the wisdom of God as presented in Scripture. With the blessing of the Holy Spirit, and by the command of Christ, he is able to cure souls.12

Balmform also expands on the role of the curate and how it is not limited to preaching when he says, “The priest (or minister) does not go into
the pulpit to commend his own views on things in general. He will need to learn and practice the arts of the speaker, the teacher, and the counselor. But primarily his preaching is a real mediatory office, a showing of Jesus Christ to men. He must always, even when he uses to the full all the personal gifts he may have, point men away from himself to the divine Lord of the Church. His art must be directed to this one objective, the turning of men’s hearts and minds to Christ as the way, the truth, and the life.”

As the church and Christian thinking and influence declined, new methods of healing the soul were invented to take the place of the Curate’s work. Psychiatry and psychoanalysis began to displace the role of the Curate, and people began to view the care for mental and emotional healing as separate from spiritual health.

Psychology had its initiation into the academic setting at the end of the 1800s. The study of man’s emotional, mental, and spiritual makeup became a “science” that has increased in popularity at a rapid rate since its introduction. The Rev. Fulton J. Sheen’s book, *Peace of Soul*, examines an analysis of the soul throughout time:
All through the ages there has been some sort of psychoanalysis – an analysis of the psyche, or soul, along with the search for the mental causes of all kinds of human troubles. The ancient Greeks thought that the basis of normal life, of wisdom, and of sanity was “Know thyself.” Socrates spoke of the need to “take care of one’s soul”; and the Greek words for his saying are precisely “therapy of the soul.” … Saint Augustine is rightly considered the father of self-analysis in psychology, although scientific psychology, or the science of mental phenomena, originated with Aristotle.\textsuperscript{15}

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Throughout history, God has provided soul shepherds or Curates to help us individually and as the group known as the body of Christ or the church. They help us to understand His communication with us through the scriptures and to break those down into usable tools for training us in righteousness. God speaks to us in many ways – through the Scriptures, through other people who are in relation with Him and us, and He communicates with us personally through the leading of the Holy Spirit.
Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit to be our constant companion and to comfort us, to rebuke us, and to empower us. Throughout the course of The Cure of the Soul, the Holy Spirit will convict us of sin and guide us on the path to righteousness. As He sheds the light of the truth, which is God, into our lives, we get a faint revelation of the mystery of God, which will strengthen our faith, and we accept that God and His plan is far superior to anything we can produce on our own. Once we see that faint revelation of the mystery of God, the true God, it’s easier to relinquish control of our lives and progress through the seven steps toward living in Holiness with God.

For Further Reading


Guntrip, H. *Mental Pain and the Cure of the*


Appendix B

The Society for The Cure of Souls

An Association of Christians Dedicated to the Teachings of Jesus Christ.

_The Society for The Cure of Souls_ is a Christian organization based on the precepts of Scripture to encourage, pray for, equip, and recognize men and women who desire to serve God through serving others. This organization centers on helping believers and helping those who wish to become believers to live their lives fully devoted to God through the ministry of The Cure of Souls. _The Society for The Cure of Souls_ was initiated to bring people together to encourage and equip them through learning together and sharing with one another.

The Purpose of _The Society for The Cure of Souls_

The purpose of _The Society for The Cure of Souls_ is to meet the challenges of the 21st Century by reviving the church’s traditional mission, The Cure of Souls. The church is not a building or a particular denomination but the body of believers.
We can change the world by saving one soul at a time, beginning with ourselves. The following prayer is a model for a commitment to The Cure of Souls:

Almighty God, I stand before Thee, as a believer in Jesus Christ. I acknowledge before Thee that I have failed to live a Christ-centered life. I recognize, O Lord, that I am to encourage love of one another. I promise to seek healing for my soul, that the world may be healed one soul at a time, beginning with me. Touch us, O Lord, and restore unto us your peace and love that passes all understanding.

**Who May Join**
Any person for whom Jesus Christ is the Lord of their life, and personal Savior—and who believes that Holy Scripture is the inerrant word of God, and that Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life—may join *The Society for The Cure of Souls*. At a minimum, we also ask that you believe in the Apostles Creed.
Apostles’ Creed

1. I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:
2. And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord:
3. Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary:
4. Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried: He descended into hell:
5. The third day he rose again from the dead:
6. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty:
7. From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead:
8. I believe in the Holy Spirit:
9. I believe in the holy catholic church:* the communion of saints:
10. The forgiveness of sins:
11. The resurrection of the body:

*The word catholic does not mean the Roman Catholic Church, but means the “Universal” church of believers in our Savior Jesus Christ.
Your Invitation to Join *The Society for The Cure of Souls*

*The Society for The Cure of Souls* invites followers of Jesus Christ and believers in the principles of Scripture who (1) are committed to continual learning of the precepts of Scripture; (2) desire to be devoted to the ministry of healing wounded souls through spiritual direction, mentoring, and spiritual friendship; and (3) seek to encourage and support others who care for souls.

An early English Separatist said that if God reveals a truth or need to you, He has chosen you to do something about it. If you see that the world has need of Curates of Souls, God has called you to fill the role.

**Membership Levels**

**Member**

As a member, you commit yourself to a program of daily unsupervised Scripture reading and prayer. The soul is the center of our being and is mentioned in the Bible over 200 times. The Bible teaches about the soul and how Jesus and the apostles went about curing the souls of people who sought their help. We can remind the world...
through our word and example that Christ should be central in everyone’s life and in society as a whole. Learning is the first level in *The Society for The Cure of Souls*. As a member, you will promise to study Scripture and pray so that you may bring light into a troubled world.

A member may be one who has no experience, formal education or training in the field but desires to study and learn the deeper mysteries of Scripture. A person may stay at the member level indefinitely or, through an approved mentorship, may be promoted to the next level of membership upon the recommendation of his or her Curate or Spiritual Director.

To be considered at the Spiritual Director level, you must be committed to daily prayer and scripture reading. Those who lack the experience may instead do a mentorship with a Curate who will serve as your Spiritual Director and mentor. The length of the mentorship will vary and is based on individual needs. Upon recommendation of the Curate, the member may be promoted to Spiritual Director.

There is no set length for the mentorship for a member who chooses to advance to the next level. Only when both the member and their Spiritual Director believe they are ready, may they move up
to the next level of membership. Usually no less than 1 year at the member level is required.

**Spiritual Director**

Any person may come directly into the membership at the level of Spiritual Director if they are already qualified. If you are not already qualified to be a Spiritual Director, then once you feel ready as a member after training with a Spiritual Director or Curate, you may share what you have learned with others who are seeking to know the love of Jesus Christ. As a Spiritual Director, you will share your knowledge of the soul and The Cure of Souls with individuals and groups.

Appointment or promotion to the Spiritual Director level is entirely at the discretion of the Society. The fact that a person meets the minimum requirements listed above does not mean that he or she is “entitled” to serve, or to continue serving, as a Spiritual Director.

**The Curate of Souls**

The Curate is a specialized caregiver for spiritual healing and empowering. The goal of *The Society for The Cure of Souls* is to provide Curates of Souls, clergy, counselors, priests, psychiatrists, psychologists, religious lay people, social workers,
Spiritual Directors, and life coaches with information they need to competently and confidently care for the souls of others.

A Curate must put Jesus Christ at the center of his or her life and must point others to Christ by living a Godly life committed to the study of scriptures. A Curate will maintain a quiet life of prayer, living the biblical principles and loving others as taught by our Lord, Jesus Christ through his most Holy Word. The Curate agrees to continue a lifetime of study of God’s Holy Word found in Scripture and develop his or her prayer life.

Appointment or promotion to the Curate level is entirely at the discretion of the Society. The fact that a person meets the minimum requirements listed above does not mean that he or she is “entitled” to serve, or to continue serving, as a Curate. A Curate member of *The Society for The Cure of Souls* may use “SCS” after their name. Curate is a religious title. The Curate member of the SCS must have valid ordination.

*The Society for The Cure of Souls* is not engaged in the practice of medicine, psychology, or any other licensed or regulated secular healing art, nor do any of its members, Spiritual Directors, Curates, officers, directors, employees or agents practice any such profession unless they are
licensed to do so. *The Society for The Cure of Souls* exists as a spiritual, religious, and educational resource only. It does not certify members or credential their competency.

**Member-in-Training:**
Through our “MIT” program, persons may enjoy many of the benefits of affiliation with the Society until they qualify for full membership in any of the categories of membership.

**Partner:**
Partners do what they can to sustain the society by making a monthly offering.

**Benefactor:**
A Benefactor of the Society pledges to make regular quarterly gifts, which the Society uses as a basis for planning future work.

**Patron:**
A Patron of *The Society for The Cure of Souls* pledges a monthly or annual tithe to the Society.

**The Benefits of Membership** in *The Society for The Cure of Souls*
First, we are all in need of soul care and can benefit from learning more about The Cure of Souls.

Second, we are not only called to save our own souls, but we are here to serve God and our brothers and sisters in Christ. In today’s world, Curates are needed. By becoming a member at any level, you can help and fulfill the great commission of spreading the good news of the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

Third, The Society for The Cure of Souls will offer mentors for those who wish to become Spiritual Directors or Curates. We are seeking ministers, priests, religious psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, counselors and lay people to be shepherds to others. The center of every person’s being is the soul, and the world is in need of those who can bring healing to the soul.

Fees:

There are minimum dues in the Society. Each person is asked to contribute additionally as God has prospered him or her. We ask you to prayerfully consider the needs of a broken and sinful world and the effect that we can have together in advancing the healing process. No one will be turned away because of a lack of funds.

There are no set fees to be paid by a member to
the Spiritual Director or Curate who is serving as his or her mentor. As a general rule, all contact between the member and the mentor should be at the expense of the member. In addition, the member may wish to make regular or occasional donations to the mentor to cover the latter’s out-of-pocket costs. However, these matters are between the individuals involved, according to the abilities and needs of each.

**Become a Charter Member Today**

Yes, I want to help change the world.

First, I promise to begin with myself by seeking knowledge concerning the soul through the study of the Holy Scriptures and the heritage of faith given to us by the Apostles and Saints through the ages and by daily pray for my own healing and others.

Second, I promise that, through study and prayer, I will share new knowledge and experience with others. We are called to spread the faith our soul has received from study and prayer to all who are in need.

Third, I seek to be a Good Samaritan to others who are in need.
Enclosed is my contribution of ____________

Name _______________________________________
Title _______________________________________
Address _______________________________________
City _________________________________________
State or Province _____________ Zip ______________
Country _________________________________
Email _______________________________________
Office Phone _______________________________
Home phone ________________________________
Cell Phone _________________________________
Pager _______________________________________

I desire to be a member at the level of

___ Member – $120 per year ($10 per month)
___ Spiritual Director – $180 per year ($15 per month)
___ Curate of Souls – $240 per year ($20 per month)
___ Partner – $120 per year ($10 per month)
___ Benefactor – $180 per year ($15 per month)
___ Patron – $240 per year ($20 per month)
___ Member in Training – $240 per year ($20 per month)

Persons may be members in more than one category such as member and a benefactor.

Check with your tax advisor about deducting dues and contributions from your income tax.
Please indicate below all schools you have attended:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
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<tr>
<td>Address of School</td>
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<td>Dates Attended</td>
</tr>
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<td>Credits or Degree</td>
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<td>Major Subject</td>
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Also, please attach copies of any ordination certificates or professional licenses you would like to have considered as part of your membership application.

I have not been convicted of any felonies. I will not use my membership in SCS as a way to avoid state licensing requirements. The SCS does not offer legal, medical, psychological, or financial advice, but is a religious, spiritual, and educational resource.

**Payment Information**

- Visa
- Mastercard

Credit Card Number

Expiration Date

Amount $

Signature

One time charge of

Charge _______ monthly to my credit card
Join online at: www.cureofsouls.com
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Fax: (417) 881-4702
Write: SCS • 2750 E. Sunshine • Springfield, MO 65804

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Please send me ______ copies of the book The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls:

☐ Also I would like to order the Sunday school Power Point CD with 8 one-week lessons that correspond to the chapters in The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls.

Total Cost $_______

Mail to:

The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls
2750 East Sunshine Street
Springfield, MO 65804-2047
Email: rloblock@aol.com or visit online at http://www.cureofsouls.com
End Notes

What Is The Cure of Souls?

Step 1: The Rejection of Sin
1 Bowring, Kelly. *Blessed Trinity Missal and Prayer*
Step 2: Confession


2 Ibid.


**Step 3: Forgiveness**
5 Ibid. 61, 121.

**Step 4: Faith**

**Step 5: Love**

**Step 6: Prayer**

**Step 7: Holiness**
2 Ibid, 69.
3 Tamburello, Dennis. *Ordinary Mysticism.* (39)
4 Ibid, 41.
5 Ibid, 42.
6 Bridges, Jerry. *The Pursuit of Holiness.* Navpress,
Appendix A


9 Blamford, Henry. *Christian Priesthood*. London:
What More Can I Do?

The Society for The Cure of Souls would be honored to have your support in the printing of this book in the form of a donation to The Society for The Cure of Souls. This is a non-profit association, and your donation will be used to further develop the Society and allow others to follow in the righteous path of God.

Each $10 donation will print one copy of *The 7 Steps to The Cure of Souls*. I would like to donate $____ to sponsor the printing of ____books.

You may also feel led to give an additional donation.
• Enclosed is a cash donation for $_______.
• Enclosed is a check for the amount $_______.
• I will be using a credit card to donate $_______.
  □ MasterCard   □ Visa   □ American Express

Credit Card Number ____________________________________________

Expiration Date _________________________________________________

Amount $ ______________________________________________________

Signature _______________________________________________________

One time charge of _____________________________________________

Charge _________ monthly to my credit card

The Society greatly appreciates any financial assistance that you contribute; it will be used to further God’s work. Thank you for your support. Go to www.cureofsouls.com to keep updated on the progress of this ministry.

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Fax: (417) 881-4702
Write: SCS • 2750 E. Sunshine • Springfield, MO 65804
…your faith has healed you, go in peace and be freed from your suffering (Mark 5:34).