

Begin a New Life

Four Universal Steps of Life Change
and Spiritual Transformation

*A Process for Making Conscious
and Intentional Life Choices*

Condensed Worksheets

Issue to be Processed

Date

Based on the Bible as Explained in the
Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg
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A Prayer from the Heart

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

The prayer is to be a request that the Lord have mercy on us,
give us the power to resist the things we've repented of, and
provide us an inclination and desire to do what is good.**

(Psalm 51:10; Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christianity* 539)

Step 2 Recognize and Acknowledge...

2.1 Recognize and Acknowledge Your Sin.

Are the things you've uncovered during self-examination harmful to your neighbor or yourself in any way? If so, in what way(s) are they harmful?

Do the things you've uncovered during self-examination break any of the Ten Commandments? If so, which Commandment do they seem *most* to break, and what are one or two ways in which they break it?

In addition to things you've listed above, are there any other truths that now come to mind, or that you search out and discover, which help reveal the true nature or quality of what you uncovered during self-examination? If so, what are they?

Given the above information and discoveries, what would you say is the true nature or quality of the thing you uncovered during self-examination—how would you briefly describe or encapsulate it? What *title* would you give it?

(Step 2 of this process concludes on the next page.)

2.2 Accept Responsibility.

What would you say of yourself in terms of personal responsibility or fault for this sin in your life—what part are you personally playing in its presence or persistence there?

(Step 2 of this process concludes on the next page.)

2.3 Confess Your Sin before the Lord.

Imagine yourself coming before the Lord God in a spirit of confession. Between you and him, what is now accomplished through the early parts of this process—self-examination, recognition, and acknowledgment—and what are you discovering is your state of mind and life, or your personal condition, through all of it?

Indeed I have sinned....

Father, I have sinned against heaven and in
your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.

The tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes
to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner."

The confession is to be that we see, recognize, and admit to our evils,
and that we are discovering that we are miserable sinners.

(Joshua 7:20; Luke 15:21; Luke 18:13; Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christianity* 539)

Step 3 Pray to the Lord

Beg for His Help and Power in Resisting It.

Take a moment to pray to the Lord. Ask and even beg for his divine help and power in resisting the sin you've discovered in yourself. This space is for those who wish to offer such a prayer in writing or record it when finished. (Note: If there are specific ways that you want or need the Lord to help or empower you, it may help to include these in your prayer.)

With God all things are possible.

The smallest amount of divine power is enough, every time it is called on, to tame instantly the entire devil's gang, even if it consisted of millions.

People who believe in God say to themselves,
"With God's help I will conquer this."
And they pray for it and obtain it.

Ask, and it will be given to you.

(Matthew 19:26; Emanuel Swedenborg, *Secrets of Heaven* 8626, *Charity* 203; Matthew 7:7)

Step 4 Begin a New Life

4.1 Stop Doing It...

(Having Completed Steps 1 through 3, Abstain from Your Sin...)

Following your prayer to the Lord for divine help and power, imagine that you are actively abstaining from your sin. Visualize yourself doing so in the moment. What do you see, hear, feel, or otherwise experience in your visualization, and what do you *do* to abstain?

4.2 ...And Live a New Life.

As in the previous step, imagine that you are actively abstaining from your sin. The moment you abstain, what do you feel inclined to do, and even a desire to do, that is new, different, and better, inspired by the Lord from within? Often this will be the direct opposite of what you've been doing up until now.

In addition to things you've listed above, are there any other truths that now come to mind, or that you search out and discover, which either confirm or help flesh out the new life you'll now begin? If so, what are they?

Now that you've started to abstain from your sin, imagine yourself *living* the new life outlined above. Visualize yourself doing so in the moment. What do you see, hear, feel, or otherwise experience in your visualization, and what are one or two things that you *do* as part of the new life?

(Step 4 of this process concludes on the next page.)

4.3 All of This is to Be Done as if You Were Doing It on Your Own.

What opens up for you as you reflect/meditate on the above words—*All of this is to be done as if you were doing it on your own*—especially at this point in the process, when you are actively abstaining from a sin, beginning a new life, and living it?

4.4 Do This Once Or Twice a Year When You Are About to Take Part in Holy Communion.

Imagine yourself coming to the Lord in a holy state of mind and taking part in this communion. What do you experience, or what opens up for you, as you do so—as you imagine eating the bread and drinking the wine of this holy act, taking in new elements of love and faith from the Lord, and making them your own? (Note: Such things can be yours when you actually take part in this communion, and as you move forward from there.)

4.5 Afterward, When the Sin You're Responsible for Recurs, Say to Yourself, "I Do Not Want This Because It is a Sin against God."

Any sin that you refrain from will tend to recur: it will tend to present itself to you again—even repeatedly—as an option for you to choose or reject. Imagine the sin you're now abstaining from recurring in this moment. Imagine speaking out against it in the words and for the reason given. In addition, you might imagine a host of angels or a group of good-hearted people gathered around you, all proclaiming with one voice, "*We do not want this because it is a sin against God.*"²⁴ What do you see, hear, feel, or otherwise experience as you stand in this gathering, join this chorus, and utter *these* words? Record your experience(s) in the space below.

Even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees.

If after self-examination we decide that we do not want an evil,
because it is a sin, then we are practicing a repentance that is true and deep.

When we see something evil in ourselves that we love and desire, and we know
what sin is, we can, if we beg for the Lord's help, stop willing it.

Then I will take the stony heart out of their flesh
and give them a heart of flesh.

(Matthew 3:10; Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christianity* 532, *Divine Providence* 278; Ezekiel 11:19)