

Celebrate Recovery<sup>®</sup>

Taking an Honest  
and Spiritual Inventory

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE 2

John Baker is the founder of Celebrate Recovery®, a ministry born out of the heart of Saddleback Church. Over the last twenty years, more than 11,500 individuals have gone through this Christ-centered recovery program at Saddleback. The Celebrate Recovery program is now being used in over 20,000 churches nationwide. In 1993, John and Pastor Rick Warren wrote the Celebrate Recovery curriculum which has been published and translated into twenty-three languages.

John began serving at Saddleback as a lay pastor in 1991. In 1992, he was asked to join the Saddleback Church staff as the Director of Small Groups and Recovery. In 1995, his responsibilities increased as he became the Pastor of Membership. In this position, John's responsibilities included pastoral counseling, pastoral care, Celebrate Recovery, support groups, small groups, and family, singles, and recreation ministries. In 1996, he oversaw the development of Saddleback's lay counseling ministry.

In June 1997, John became the Pastor of Ministries, responsible for the recruitment, training, and deployment of church members to serve in one of the more than 156 different ministries at Saddleback.

In 2001, Rick Warren asked John to become the Pastor of Celebrate Recovery. This is John's shape, his passion, and his calling. In addition, he is part of Saddleback's Purpose Driven team. John is a nationally known speaker and trainer in helping churches start Celebrate Recovery ministries. These ministries, in thousands of churches, reach out not only to their congregations but also to their communities in helping those dealing with a hurt, hang-up, or habit.

John and his wife, Cheryl, have been married over forty years and have served together in Celebrate Recovery since 1991. They have two adult children, Laura and Johnny. Laura and her husband, Brian, have twins. Johnny and his wife, Jeni, have three children.

REVISED EDITION

# Celebrate Recovery<sup>®</sup>

## Taking an Honest and Spiritual Inventory

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE 2

A recovery program based on  
eight principles from the Beatitudes

JOHN BAKER

FOREWORD BY RICK WARREN



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## ZONDERVAN

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# CONTENTS

*Foreword by Rick Warren / 7*

*Introduction / 8*

The Road to Recovery:  
Eight Principles Based on the Beatitudes / 9

Twelve Steps and Their Biblical Comparisons / 10

Serenity Prayer / 12

Celebrate Recovery's Small Group Guidelines / 13

Lesson 7: Sponsor / 15

Lesson 8: Moral / 20

Lesson 9: Inventory / 26

Lesson 10: Spiritual Inventory Part 1 / 32

Lesson 11: Spiritual Inventory Part 2 / 41

*Afterword / 48*



## FOREWORD BY RICK WARREN

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You've undoubtedly heard the expression "Time heals all wounds." Unfortunately, it isn't true. As a pastor I frequently talk with people who are still carrying hurts from thirty or forty years ago. The truth is, time often makes things worse. Wounds that are left untended fester and spread infection throughout your entire body. Time only extends the pain if the problem isn't dealt with.

Celebrate Recovery® is a biblical and balanced program that can help you overcome your hurts, habits, and hang-ups. Based on the actual words of Jesus rather than psychological theory, this recovery program is more effective in helping people change than anything else I've seen or heard of. Over the years I've witnessed how the Holy Spirit has used this program to transform literally thousands of lives at Saddleback Church and help people grow toward full Christlike maturity.

Perhaps you are familiar with the classic 12-Step program of AA and other groups. While undoubtedly many lives have been helped through the 12 Steps, I've always been uncomfortable with that program's vagueness about the nature of God, the saving power of Jesus Christ, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. So I began an intense study of the Scriptures to discover what God had to say about "recovery." To my amazement, I found the principles of recovery — in their logical order — given by Christ in His most famous message, the Sermon on the Mount.

My study resulted in a ten-week series of messages called "The Road to Recovery." During that series my associate pastor John Baker developed the four participant's guides, which became the heart of our Celebrate Recovery program.

As you work through these participant's guides, I trust that you will come to realize many benefits from this program. Most of all, however, my prayer for you is that, through Celebrate Recovery, you will find deep peace and lasting freedom in Jesus Christ as you walk your own road to recovery.

Dr. Rick Warren  
Senior Pastor, Saddleback Church

# INTRODUCTION

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The purpose of Celebrate Recovery® is to allow us to become free from life's hurts, hang-ups, and habits. By working through the eight principles of recovery based on the Beatitudes, with Jesus Christ as our Higher Power, we can and will change! We will begin to experience the true peace and serenity that we have been seeking. We will no longer need to rely on our dysfunctional, compulsive, and addictive behaviors as a temporary "fix" for our pain.

By applying the biblical principles of conviction, conversion, surrender, confession, restitution, prayer, quiet time, witnessing, and helping one another found within the eight principles, we will restore or develop stronger relationships with others and God.

You have completed the first three principles to the best of your ability: you have "gotten right with God." Now as you prepare to work Principle 4, you begin the journey of "getting right with yourself" (Principles 4 – 5).

After each lesson, there is an exercise for you to complete. Answer each question to the best of your ability. Don't worry about what you think the answer *should* be. Pray and then write down the answer from your heart. Remember John 8:32: "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

**An important word of caution:** Do not begin this principle without a sponsor or a strong accountability partner (these are explained in Lesson 7)! You need someone you trust to help keep you balanced during this step, not to do the work for you. Nobody can do that except you. But you need encouragement from someone who will support your progress and keep you accountable. That's what this program is all about.

After you have completed the exercise, share it with someone that you trust. Your group, an accountability partner, your sponsor or a close friend in recovery are all safe choices. You do not recover from your hurts, hang-ups, and habits from just attending recovery meetings. You must work and live the principles!

In His steps,  
John Baker



# THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

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## Eight Principles Based on the Beatitudes

By Pastor Rick Warren

1. **Realize** I'm not God. I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life is unmanageable.  
*"Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor."*  
(Matthew 5:3)
2. **Earnestly** believe that God exists, that I matter to Him, and that He has the power to help me recover.  
*"Happy are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."*  
(Matthew 5:4)
3. **Consciously** choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control.  
*"Happy are the meek."* (Matthew 5:5)
4. **Openly** examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.  
*"Happy are the pure in heart."* (Matthew 5:8)
5. **Voluntarily** submit to every change God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects.  
*"Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires."*  
(Matthew 5:6)
6. **Evaluate** all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others, except when to do so would harm them or others.  
*"Happy are the merciful."* (Matthew 5:7)  
*"Happy are the peacemakers."* (Matthew 5:9)
7. **Reserve** a daily time with God for self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will.
8. **Yield** myself to God to be used to bring this Good News to others, both by my example and by my words.  
*"Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires."* (Matthew 5:10)

# TWELVE STEPS AND THEIR BIBLICAL COMPARISONS\*

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1. We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and compulsive behaviors, that our lives had become unmanageable.

*“For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.” (Romans 7:18)*

2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

*“For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.” (Philippians 2:13)*

3. We made a decision to turn our lives and our wills over to the care of God.

*“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship.” (Romans 12:1)*

4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

*“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD.” (Lamentations 3:40)*

5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

*“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” (James 5:16)*

6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

*“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”  
(James 4:10)*

7. We humbly asked Him to remove all our shortcomings.

*"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)*

8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

*"Do to others as you would have them do to you." (Luke 6:31)*

9. We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

*"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5:23 – 24)*

10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

*"So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" (1 Corinthians 10:12)*

11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and power to carry that out.

*"Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly." (Colossians 3:16)*

12. Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps, we try to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

*"Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted." (Galatians 6:1)*

\* Throughout this material, you will notice several references to the Christ-centered 12 Steps. Our prayer is that Celebrate Recovery will create a bridge to the millions of people who are familiar with the secular 12 Steps (I acknowledge the use of some material from the 12 Suggested Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous) and in so doing, introduce them to the one and only true Higher Power, Jesus Christ. Once they begin that relationship, asking Christ into their hearts as Lord and Savior, true healing and recovery can begin!

# SERENITY PRAYER

If you have attended secular recovery programs, you have seen the first four lines of the “Prayer for Serenity.” The following is the complete prayer. I encourage you to pray it daily as you work through the principles!

## **Prayer for Serenity**

*God, grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change,  
the courage to change the things I can,  
and the wisdom to know the difference.  
Living one day at a time,  
enjoying one moment at a time ;  
accepting hardship as a pathway to peace ;  
taking, as Jesus did,  
this sinful world as it is,  
not as I would have it ;  
trusting that You will make all things right  
if I surrender to Your will ;  
so that I may be reasonably happy in this life  
and supremely happy with You forever in the next.  
Amen.*

Reinhold Niebuhr

# CELEBRATE RECOVERY'S SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES

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The following five guidelines will ensure that your small group is a safe place. They need to be read at the beginning of every meeting.

1. Keep your sharing focused on your own thoughts and feelings. Limit your sharing to three to five minutes.
2. There is NO cross talk. Cross talk is when two individuals engage in conversation excluding all others. Each person is free to express his or her feelings without interruptions.
3. We are here to support one another, not “fix” another.
4. Anonymity and confidentiality are basic requirements. What is shared in the group stays in the group. The only exception is when someone threatens to injure themselves or others.
5. Offensive language has no place in a Christ-centered recovery group.



# SPONSOR

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**Principle 4:** Openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.

*“Happy are the pure in heart.” (Matthew 5:8)*

**Step 4:** We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

*“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD.” (Lamentations 3:40)*

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## Think About It

You’ve heard the word “sponsor” for a few weeks now. I’m sure you have at least a vague idea of what a sponsor is, but maybe you’re wondering why you even need one.

Why do I need a sponsor and/ or an accountability partner?

There are three reasons why having a sponsor is vital.

**Having a sponsor and/or accountability partner is biblical.**

*“Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. But if someone is alone . . . there is no one to help him. . . . Two people can resist an attack that would defeat one person alone.” (Ecclesiastes 4:9 – 12, GNT)*

*“As iron sharpens iron, one person sharpens another.”  
(Proverbs 27:17)*

**Having a sponsor and/or accountability partner is a key part of your recovery program.**

Your recovery program has four key elements to success:

- To the best of your ability, maintain your **honest** view of reality as you *work* each principle. The best way to ensure this is to have a sponsor and develop a strong accountability support team.
- Make recovery group **meetings** a priority in your schedule. Knowing that a sponsor or accountability partner will be there to greet you or notice that you’re not there is an added incentive to attend.
- Maintain your **spiritual program** with Jesus Christ, through prayer, meditation, and studying His Word.
- Get involved in **service**, which includes serving as a sponsor (after you have completed all eight principles) or accountability partner.

**Having a sponsor and/or an accountability partner is the best guard against relapse.**

By providing feedback to keep you on track, a sponsor and/or accountability partner can see your old dysfunctional hurts, hang-ups, and habits beginning to return, and point them out to you quickly. He or she can confront you with truth and love without placing shame or guilt.

**What are the qualities of a sponsor?**

*“Though good advice lies deep within a counselor’s heart, the wise man will draw it out.” (Proverbs 20:5, TLB)*

When you are selecting a possible sponsor, look for the following qualities:

1. Does his walk match his talk? Is he living by the eight principles?
2. Does she have a growing relationship with Jesus Christ?
3. Does he express the desire to help others on the “road to recovery?”
4. Does she show compassion, care, and hope, but not pity?



5. Is he a good listener?
6. Is she strong enough to confront your denial or procrastination?
7. Does he offer suggestions?
8. Can she share her own current struggles with others?

### What is the role of a sponsor?

1. She can be there to discuss issues in detail that are too personal or would take too much time in a meeting.
2. He is available in times of crisis or potential relapse.
3. She serves as a sounding board by providing an objective point of view.
4. He is there to encourage you to work the principles at your own speed. He does not work the steps for you!
5. Most important, she attempts to model the lifestyle resulting from working the eight principles.
6. A sponsor can resign or can be fired.

### How do I find a sponsor and/or an accountability partner?

First, your sponsor or accountability partner **MUST** be of the same sex as you. After you have narrowed the field down with that requirement, listen to people share. Do you relate to or resonate with what is spoken? Ask others in your group to go out for coffee after the meeting. Get to know the person before you ask him or her to be your sponsor or accountability partner!

If you ask someone to be your sponsor or accountability partner and that person says no, do not take it as a personal rejection. Ask someone else. You can even ask for a “temporary” sponsor or accountability partner.

Ask God to lead you to the sponsor and/or accountability partner of His choosing. He already has someone in mind for you.

### What is the difference between a sponsor and an accountability partner?

A sponsor is someone who has completed the four participant’s guides. He or she has worked through the eight principles and the 12 Steps. The main goal of this relationship is to choose someone to guide you through the program.

An accountability partner is someone you ask to hold you accountable for certain areas of your recovery or issues, such as meeting attendance, journaling, and so forth. This person can be at the same level of recovery as you are, unlike a sponsor, who should have completed the eight principles or 12 Steps. The main goal of this relationship is to encourage one another. You can even form an accountability team of three or four.

The accountability partner or group acts as the “team,” whereas the sponsor’s role is that of a “coach.”



### **Write About It**

1. Why is it important for you to have a support team?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What qualities are you looking for in a sponsor?

3. How have you attempted to find a sponsor/accountability partner?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What are some new places and ways you can try to find a sponsor/accountability partner?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What is the difference between a sponsor and an accountability partner?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. List the names and phone numbers of possible sponsors or accountability partners. These should be individuals you have met on your “Road to Recovery” who have touched you in the sharing of their experiences, strengths, and hopes.