

BREATHING UNDER WATER: WE JOURNEY TOGETHER

Steps 6 & 7: Becoming Willing

KEY IDEA: We are changed not by effort, but by openness to grace.

Transformation begins in willingness. This week, as we continue our exploration and shared conversation about “Breathing Under Water: Spirituality and the Twelve Steps,” we dive into the themes of readiness and humble asking. Asking God is a mysterious and powerful act. In the Lord’s prayer, we ask for our daily bread. In our daily living, we ask God for wholeness and to open our hearts to the work God is already doing within us.

Below are some questions for you and your family and friends to consider, through contemplation, journaling, or in meaningful conversation.

1. Prayers of petition, when we call out to God for help, are one of the most common forms of prayer. What experiences do you have with prayer? What role does a sense of “entitlement” and/or humility play when you ask something of God? Why is the act of asking important?
2. Change starts with a willingness to move out of the places where we feel stuck, to move beyond shame and resistance, and embrace an understanding that God’s grace is at work in our lives, even when the change we seek seems slow and uncertain. What advice or wisdom would you offer someone who is seeking to understand how God can change people and transform the world?
3. When we pray, we don’t ask to change God, but to – honestly and sincerely – have God change us. When is a time in your life when you have truly “let go, and let God”? What did this “surrender” feel like? What keeps you from turning things over to God? How might you more deeply align your life with God’s will?

In *Breathing Under Water*, Father Richard Rohr writes: “Don’t dare go after the faults yourself or you will go after the wrong thing – or more commonly, a clever substitute for the real thing. God removes our shortcomings and fills us with something much better, more luminous and more satisfying.” What do you sense in your life is the “real thing” that God might be calling you to address?



Father Rohr also writes, “How we do life is our real and final truth, not what we believe.” This week, reflect upon what you believe and care about most deeply, then, with your beliefs in mind, take one positive action that makes a difference. Be a living prayer.



FROM AGE TO AGE: Sharing Intergenerationally

God is always at work in our lives and the world. It's important to sometimes stop and notice how God changes things and the good things God offers by taking a moment for gratitude. Our lives are gifts, we can respond with appreciation and thanks.

As a family or individually, it's good to intentionally pause for praise and thanksgiving. You may wish to put a jar or box on a table and, each day, people can write down what they're thankful for on a slip of paper and place it in the jar. At the end of the month, read them aloud. Or, at bedtime, simply ask one another, "What made you smile today?"



There are many creative ways to note and share your blessings. The important thing is to intentionally adopt "an attitude of gratitude" and help each other recognize that God is present.

INVITATION TO MYSTERY

Our feelings about change and growth are big. Faith is big. God is even bigger. This week, think large. On an oversized piece of paper, draw, doodle, paint, collage, write, or in any way you feel creatively inspired, explore the many paradoxes of faith, the opposites, dichotomies and mysteries that shape our lives.

From light to dark, action to contemplation, freedom to obedience, simplicity to complexity, strength to weakness, grace to works, doubt to certainty, mourning to joy, and a hundred other points on life's continuums, let your imagination run wild as you explore how faith is defined by the coexistence of seemingly opposite ideas and emotions. Where do you find the presence of the Holy Spirit amid this experience? How can you trust grace more deeply as you open yourself to God to grow in humility, courage and compassion? Faith, it's said, comes alive in paradoxes, apparent contradictions that resolve into deeper spiritual truths.

These paradoxes can be invitations into a deeper relationship with God. What paradox resonates with you today?

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE *BREATHING UNDER WATER* SERIES AND TO ACCESS MORE RESOURCES SCAN THE QR CODE.

