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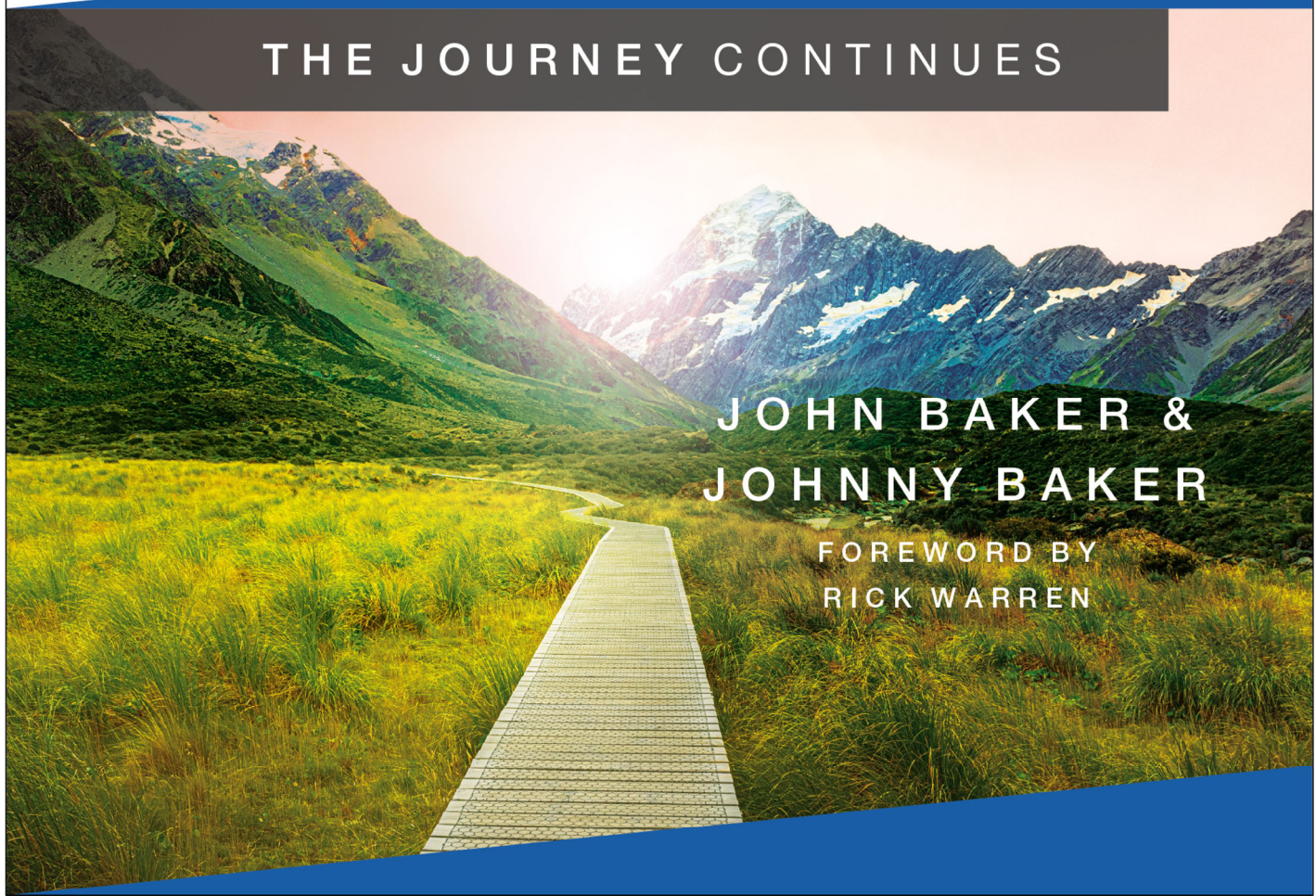
PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

6

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

JOHN BAKER &
JOHNNY BAKER

FOREWORD BY
RICK WARREN



Celebrate Recovery®

Asking God to Grow My Character

The Journey Continues

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE 6

John Baker is the founder of Celebrate Recovery®, a ministry started at Saddleback Church. It is estimated that over the last 25 years more than 1.5 million people have gone through this Christ-centered recovery program. There are currently over 27,000 churches that have weekly Celebrate Recovery meetings.

John has been on staff since Celebrate Recovery started. He has served as the Pastor of Membership, the Pastor of Ministries, and is currently the Pastor of Saddleback Church's Signature Ministries. He is also serving as one of the nine Elder Pastors at Saddleback. John is a nationally known speaker and trainer in helping churches start Celebrate Recovery ministries.

John's writing accomplishments include Celebrate Recovery's *The Journey Begins* Curriculum, *Life's Healing Choices*, the *Celebrate Recovery Study Bible* (general editor), and *The Landing* and *Celebration Place* (coauthor). John's newest books are *Your First Step to Celebrate Recovery* and *The Celebrate Recovery Devotional* (coauthor).

John and his wife Cheryl, the cofounder of Celebrate Recovery, have been married for more than four decades and have served together in Celebrate Recovery since the beginning. They have two adult children, Laura and Johnny, and five grandchildren.

Johnny Baker has been on staff at Celebrate Recovery since 2004 and has been the Pastor of Celebrate Recovery at Saddleback Church since 2012. As an adult child of an alcoholic who chose to become an alcoholic himself, Johnny is passionate about breaking the cycle of dysfunction in his family and helping other families find the tools that will lead to healing and openness. He knows that because of Jesus Christ, and by continuing to stay active in Celebrate Recovery, Maggie, Chloe, and Jimmy—his three children—will never see him drink. Johnny is a nationally recognized speaker, trainer, and teacher of Celebrate Recovery. He is a coauthor of the *Celebrate Recovery Daily Devotional*, *Celebration Place*, and *The Landing*, and is an associate editor of the *Celebrate Recovery Study Bible*. He has been married since 2000 to his wife Jeni, who serves alongside him in Celebrate Recovery.

Celebrate Recovery[®]

Asking God to Grow My Character

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE 6

The Journey Continues

NEW CURRICULUM!

A recovery program based on eight
principles from the Beatitudes

JOHN BAKER & JOHNNY BAKER

FOREWORD BY RICK WARREN

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This title is also available as a Zondervan ebook.

Requests for information should be addressed to:

Zondervan, 3900 Sparks Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546

ISBN 978-0-310-13148-9 (softcover)

ISBN 978-0-310-13149-6 (ebook)

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Cover design: *Brand Navigation*

Cover photography: *123rf.com*

First Printing May 2016 / Printed in the United States of America

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FOREWORD

The best known ministry at Saddleback Church — that is going to last for easily 100, maybe 200 years — started when a guy, who was a drunk, came to me with a 13-page letter. And that ministry is called Celebrate Recovery®.

Now, let me just put this in perspective. This may be Saddleback's greatest contribution to the world. Over 20,000 people have completed the step studies at Saddleback's Celebrate Recovery. Over three and a half million people worldwide have gone through a Celebrate Recovery step study.

Right now, around the world, 27,000 churches are using Saddleback's ministry called Celebrate Recovery — 27,000 churches! It is so successful that Celebrate Recovery is the official recovery program in 44 state and federal prison systems. It has been translated into 20 different languages.

Do you think John Baker, when he came to see me in my office many years ago and said, "I've got an idea for a ministry, Pastor Rick," imagined it would be affecting three and a half million people in 27,000 churches? No. You have no idea what God wants to do through you. You may have the next big ministry idea. You may have the next Celebrate Recovery dwelling in you — a ministry that could be started and reproduced to bless the whole world. One guy, out of his own pain, starts a ministry that now affects tens of thousands of churches and millions of people.

Rick Warren

*(Excerpted from Pastor Warren's talk at Angel
Stadium on Saddleback's 35th anniversary)*

INTRODUCTION

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

Welcome to the next step study in *The Journey Continues*. You are about to revisit Principle 4 and all it entails. Remember, Principle 4 says, “Openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.” Here in Participant’s Guide 6, *Asking God to Grow My Character*, you will once again dig into the work of Principle 4.

You’ll begin by taking a look at what makes, and what makes you, a good sponsor and servant leader. You will look at the truth you have discovered about yourself from prior step study groups, and then you will begin a fresh, new Spiritual Inventory. There are three brand new lessons on the Inventory to help you get writing again. There’s even a brand new worksheet, called “Pro’s from My Inventory,” designed to help you keep track of all the good things you have done and that God has done through you since starting Celebrate Recovery. If you have a copy of a past inventory, you’ll want to have it close by.

This is a chance for you to dig deeper into existing recovery issues and any new issues that have arisen since completing a *The Journey Begins* group. Remember all of the victory you experienced from your initial inventory, and expect God to do great things in your life during this one, too.

John Baker
Johnny Baker

THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

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. (Step 1)
"Happy are those who know that 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.** (Step 2)
"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.** (Step 3)
"Happy are the meek." (Matthew 5:5)
4. **Openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.** (Steps 4 and 5)
"Happy are the pure in heart." (Matthew 5:8)
5. **Voluntarily submit to any and all changes God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects.** (Steps 6 and 7)
"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 when possible, except when to do so would harm them or others.** (Steps 8 and 9)
"Happy are the merciful." (Matthew 5:7)
"Happy are the peacemakers." (Matthew 5:9)
7. **Reserve a 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.** (Steps 10 and 11)
8. **Yield myself to God to be used to bring this Good News to others, both by my example and my words.** (Step 12)
"Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires." (Matthew 5:10)

TWELVE STEPS AND THEIR BIBLICAL COMPARISONS*

1. We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and compulsive behaviors, that our lives had become unmanageable. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.

“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 2:1)

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 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 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 (we 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

*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

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

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)

Please begin your time together by reading “The Fourth Step, Day 90” from the *Celebrate Recovery Daily Devotional*.

The road to recovery is not meant to be traveled alone. As we discovered in *The Journey Begins*, we actually needed three major relationships. First and most important is our relationship with Jesus Christ. In addition, we found that everyone needs relationships with the people in their recovery group. Last, everyone needs a relationship with a sponsor and/or accountability partner/team. Identifying a sponsor and/or accountability partner/team was especially important before beginning Principles 4 through 6, in which we worked on getting right with God, ourselves, and others.

Principle 4 is all about getting rid of our “truth decay.” It’s all about coming clean! Proverbs 15:14 tells us, “A wise person is hungry for the truth, while a fool feeds on trash” (NLT).

Are you ready to feed on the truth about your life? Well then, it’s time to take out the trash! That trash can get pretty heavy at times, so we learned in *The Journey Begins* that we shouldn’t handle it alone. We all needed a genuine mentor, coach, or in recovery terms, a sponsor and/or an accountability partner/team.

Now that we are in *The Journey Continues*, we will find a few new facets of this lesson. First, it’s time for us to step out and sponsor other people who are beginning their recovery journey. Also, we may find that we have stepped away from our sponsors or accountability partner/team and need to find new people to support us on the road to recovery. Here are some qualities to look for in the people we need to support us and to provide for the people we will help.

On a personal note, I would strongly suggest that everyone has both a sponsor and an accountability partner/team. Why? Because if we only have one person we can turn to when temptation comes, we could be in trouble. What if we can’t reach our sponsor at the moment we are fighting relapse? If we have both a sponsor and accountability partner/team, our chances of getting help increase. Also, I have seen many situations between a sponsor and the person being sponsored become a very unhealthy, dependent relationship. Remember, we are to place that dependency on Christ’s power, not our sponsor’s finite power.

—John Baker

SPONSOR

S — Servant leader

Sponsors should not be dictators. They lead from the freedom they have experienced in living out the steps and principles.

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45)

P — Power comes from God, not from the sponsor

We need to keep our relationships healthy. As sponsors, it’s important to make sure we are giving godly advice. This is why having accountability partners is such a good idea. They can help us make sure that our sponsors are doing the same with us.

“So that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power.” (1 Corinthians 2:5)

O — Open to share their recovery journey

Sponsors need to be transparent. Remember, we are all works in progress. Sponsors need to be persons of integrity.

“Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out.” (Proverbs 10:9)

Integrity means that if our private life was suddenly exposed, we’d have no reason to be ashamed or embarrassed. Integrity means our outward life is consistent with our inner convictions.

— Billy Graham

N—Nonjudgmental

Our role as a sponsor is not to judge those we sponsor, but to guide them by encouraging them and by challenging them. Sponsors need to be role models.

“Don’t judge others, or you will be judged. You will be judged in the same way that you judge others, and the amount you give to others will be given to you.” (Matthew 7:1–2, NCV)

S—Still growing in their relationship with God

Sponsors need to be living out Principles 7 and 8 on a daily basis. We need to be active in our own recovery.

“Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better.” (Colossians 1:10, NLT)

O—Objectivity

Getting too close to the individuals we sponsor can be counterproductive and develop into an unhealthy, codependent relationship.

“So that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.” (1 Thessalonians 4:12)

R—Reachable

Sponsors need to be available 24/7 for the individuals they sponsor. We need to be there when the individuals we are sponsoring are going through a crisis.

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.” (2 Timothy 2:2)



Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. How has your sponsor helped you with a recent issue? Be specific and provide a detailed account.
2. How many individuals are you currently sponsoring? And what are some of the tools you are using to help and encourage them?
3. How do you rely on God's wisdom to help you be a loving and effective sponsor? Give several examples.

7. How do you ensure your relationship with those you sponsor remains healthy and objective? How do you keep it from becoming a codependent relationship?
8. How have you been able to maintain a healthy relationship with your sponsor? Be specific.
9. How do you keep yourself available for those you sponsor who need to reach you in times of crisis? And just as importantly, how do you establish healthy boundaries with those you sponsor?

Prayer

Dear God, thank You for our group. We want to continue to break free from our hurts, hang-ups, and habits, and continue to grow closer to You. Thank You for the leaders You have provided. Thank You that You love us all, no matter where we are in our recovery. Show me the person(s) You have prepared for me to sponsor. Help us to establish an honest and loving relationship that honors You and helps both me and those I sponsor grow stronger in You. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.