

# ONE DAY AT A TIME



12 Step  
Program  
*for*  
Black  
Catholic Men



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Black Catholic Men*

By Fr. Roy A. Lee, PhD

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First Edition

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# TWELVE STEP PROGRAM

Many of us are familiar with twelve step programs, whose guiding principles are directed at the recovery from behavioral problems. The American Psychological Association unfolds this program in the following layers:

- ADMITTING THAT ONE CANNOT CONTROL ONE'S PROBLEMS
- RECOGNIZING A HIGHER POWER THAT CAN GIVE STRENGTH
- EXAMINING PAST ERRORS WITH THE HELP OF A SPONSOR (EXPERIENCED MEMBER)
- MAKING AMENDS FOR THESE ERRORS
- LEARNING TO LIVE A NEW LIFE WITH A NEW CODE OF BEHAVIOR
- HELPING OTHERS WHO SUFFER FROM THE SAME ALCOHOLISM, ADDICTIONS OR COMPULSIONS

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The Black Catholic Men's Conference uses the Twelve Step program foundation to help Black Catholic Men discover the serious problems in our community, and to empower them with the knowledge that they are the only people who can remedy these problems. In order for the Black man to understand his authentic self, he must recognize the existence of a problem and know that the cure for the problem can be found within himself. After meeting over the past 13 years, the Black Catholic Men's

Conference has gathered for prayer, reflection and interactive workshops gaining insight to the possible solutions to our collective concerns:

1. Admitting that some Black men — consciously or unconsciously — cannot control the conformity to governmental and/or nongovernmental institutions, which neither promote nor celebrate Black cultural identity and fail to acknowledge the contributions of Black people, unless it benefits those institutions.
  - a) Understand the W.E.B. DuBois philosophy of double consciousness and Harriett Tubman's underground railroad
  - b) Learning how to work with leaders who have limited understanding of Black people
  - c) Continue the conversation regarding reparations from the institutions that benefited from the free labor of enslaved Black people
  - d) Learning how to take the mask off, even if it exposes your vulnerabilities
  - e) Learning to relate to others in a manner that does not compromise your values
2. Admitting that our communities need self-awareness and consciousness of self
  - a) Education: offering classes in Black history, the Arts (songs of our people, dance, and drumming), Black people in scripture, Black psychology classes, Systematic Theology from a Black perspective, liturgy from a Black perspective, Youth tracks that reflect who we are as Black people, etc.

- b) On-going conversation about Black people and solutions to many of the challenges
  - c) On-going formation programs
  - d) Awareness and understanding of the tactics of the adversaries around us
  - e) Knowing your adversaries
  - f) Learning how to build bridges
  - g) Refusing to stand on the sidelines
3. Spiritual development that enhances and promotes maturity
- a) Understanding the importance of the sacramental life of the church
  - b) Enriching our spiritual celebrations to heighten our emotional energy
  - c) Jesus is the primary role model
  - d) We are called to transform the church as well as the world
  - e) Understand the divinity as well as the humanity of the church
  - f) Everything must be done by, with, and out of love
  - g) Recognizing the power of God in yourself
  - h) Be not afraid to be the agitator
  - i) Questioning everything
  - j) Growth comes through suffering
  - k) Men must be part of the virtues of kindness, gentleness, patience, love, etc.

4. Community based
  - a) The entire village is needed to raise our community
  - b) Serving one another is key to our success
  - c) Learning to make sacrifices for the greater good
  - d) Must be actively involved in our community and willing to get our hands dirty
  
5. Develop critical thinking skills
  - a) Thinking before you speak
  - b) Do not let your emotional intelligence be the guiding force for your decision making process
  
6. Returning to the community to enhance our community
  - a) Sharing your gifts and talents with our people
  - b) Each one teach one
  - c) Rebuilding WITH the community and not FOR the community
  
7. Conversation and recognition between the elders and youth
  - a) Inviting the elders to your table and recognizing their wisdom they bring to the table
  - b) Celebrating our elders
  - c) Choosing the elders for leading roles in our communities
  
8. Celebrating rituals that reflect Black men's spirituality
  - a) Celebrating the Sacrament of confirmation as another form to the rite of passage

- b) Incorporating the seven African principles in our celebrations
9. Loving self and loving others
- a) Stopping the violence in our communities
  - b) Empowering one another through words and actions
  - c) Economic empowerment by sharing gifts and talents
  - d) Civic Engagement
  - e) Spending our dollars in our own communities
10. When the opportunity arises to create total immersion of our traditions and culture
- a) Knowledge of our culture is necessary to celebrate our culture
  - b) Events should reflect the culture of Black people, together with the expectations that a wider audience may share and embrace our events. When we host events, our environment should totally reflect the culture of Black people, together with the expectations that a wider audience may share and embrace our events in the same way that we share and embrace their events
11. Mentoring the next generation
- a) Adults must leave behind a legacy for the youth
  - b) What are we leaving behind — leading by example
  - c) Must mentor the next generation



## 12. Accountability through Justice

- a) Understanding the role of sexuality, personal responsibility, and HIV in our community
- b) Celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage from a Black perspective
- c) Men being involved with their children's lives
- d) Men being present in family life
- e) Men representing a strong presence for the community
- f) Men showing positive and good examples
- g) Taking control of your lives
- h) Standing up for what you believe in
- i) Being involved with social justice issues

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The Black Catholic Men's Conference is organized around Catholic Social Teaching:

- Dignity of the Human Person
- Call to Family, Community and Participation
- Rights and Responsibilities
- Preferential Option for and with People who are Poor
- Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
- Solidarity
- Care for God's Creation

By Fr. Roy A. Lee, PhD

*(From visiting the workshops and listening to the voices from the Black Catholic Men's Conference, Philadelphia, 2016)*

## Black People in the Bible *(Not an Exhaustive List)*

**Asa** (*Found in the genealogy of Jesus*):

1 Kings 15:8-33	1 Chronicles 3:10	2 Chronicles 17:2
1 Kings 16:8	1 Chronicles 9:16	2 Chronicles 20:32
1 Kings 16:15	2 Chronicles 14:1-5	2 Chronicles 21:13
1 Kings 16:23	2 Chronicles 15:1-19	Matthew 1:7
1 Kings 16:41-51	2 Chronicles 16:1-14	

**Eded Melik** (*The Cushite who assisted the prophet Jeremiah*):

Jeremiah 38:1-13      Jeremiah 39:15-18

**Rufus** (*The son of Simon of Cyrene and friend of Paul*):

Acts 16:13              Mark 16:21

**Queen of Sheba** (*The African Queen who visits King Solomon*):

1 Kings 10:1-13

**Shishak** (*African king and warrior*):

1 Kings 11:40              2 Chronicles 12:1-16      1 Kings 14:25

**Simeon the Niger** (*A leader in the Church of Antioch which was the first church to call itself Christian, and the church from which Paul was called forth by the Holy Spirit*):

Acts 13:1

**Simon of Cyrene** (*carried the cross of Christ*):

Matthew 27:32          Mark 16:21          Luke 23:26

**Zerah** (*warrior and king*):

2 Chronicles 14:8-15

**Terms which refer to Black Africans:**

Cush/Cushite (an African country and its people)

Genesis 10:6-8          Psalm 7          Numbers 12:1-16\*

1 Chronicles 1:10

*\*(The story of the reaction of Aaron and Miriam to the marriage of their brother Moses to a Black woman)*

**Ethiopia/Ethiopian** (*an African country and its people*):

Genesis 2:13          2 Kings 19:9          Esther 1:1

Job 28:19          Esther 8:9          Psalm 68:31

Isaiah 18:1          Ezekiel 29:10          Nahum 3:9

Psalm 87:4          Isaiah 20:3-5          Ezekiel 30:4-5

Zephaniah 3:10          Isaiah 37:9          Ezekiel 38:5

Acts 8:27          Isaiah 43:3          Isaiah 45:14



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