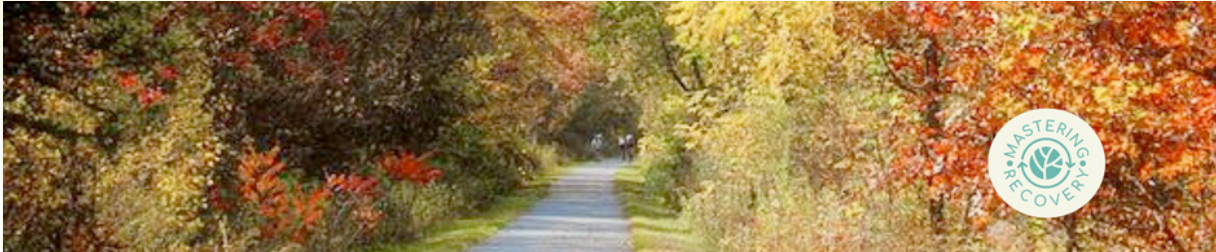


Mastering Recovery

Rooted in the Steps. Growing Through Connection

With Barry Lehman



#5.22– The Table of Grace
November 26, 2025

What I'm Thinking



The Table We Build Together



Thanksgiving always makes me think about tables — not just the ones we gather around for a meal, but the ones we gather around for life.

Tables of laughter.

Tables of memory.

Tables where things went well... and tables where they didn't.

But this week, I'm thinking about the Table of Grace — the table recovery sets before us long before the holiday arrives.

- A place where gratitude isn't a once-a-year ritual, but a way of being present to the life we've been given.
- A place where nobody has to be perfect, and everybody gets a seat.
- A place where grace becomes something we practice, not just something we believe in.

At this table, gratitude isn't an emotion — it's a rhythm, a posture, a way of living awake.



Practicing These Principles... at the Table

There's that line at the end of the Steps:

"...and practice these principles in all our affairs."

By the time we get to Step Twelve, the Steps aren't something we "work through" — they've started working through us.

The spiritual awakening becomes a way of seeing the world, and gratitude becomes one of its clearest signs.

Because gratitude practiced in recovery is not about ignoring the hard things.

It's not about pretending everything is fine.

It's about living with eyes wide open — seeing what's still good, what still matters, what still deserves our attention and care.

It's the recognition that grace has been here all along, showing up as:

- the friend who listens,
- the breath that slows us down,
- the chance to try again,
- the unexpected moment when we feel whole.

This is gratitude with depth.

Gratitude with roots.

Gratitude that grows into purpose — one small act of grace at a time.



Gratitude as Purpose, Gratitude as Practice

When we live recovery as a rhythm, purpose isn't a grand mission — it's a daily practice of grace in motion.

A kind word.

A repaired relationship.

A pause instead of a reaction.

A willingness to show up for someone else, even in small ways.

These are the quiet places where gratitude becomes embodied.

Where becoming alive becomes contagious.

Where practicing these principles becomes simply... living as who we truly are.

At the Table of Grace, purpose looks like paying attention to what brings life and leaning toward it.

It's letting gratitude deepen our connections — with ourselves, with others, and with the world we once kept at a distance.

This is where recovery becomes community.

Where gratitude becomes belonging.

Where hope grows roots.

✧ Reflection Prompt: A Thanksgiving Reflection

As you gather this week — around a meal, a memory, or even a quiet moment alone — consider what the Table of Grace looks like for you.

- Who has helped you get here this year?
- What small tenderness has carried you through a hard season?
- What part of your life is asking for a little more gratitude and a little less perfection?
- Where is grace quietly inviting you to take a next small step?

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Gratitude, at its heart, is not about being thankful for everything — but being faithful in everything



✓ Taking a Step Beyond

**It's not joy that makes us grateful;
it's gratitude that makes us joyful.**

— David Steindl-Rast



✧ Looking Ahead — Rooted in Grace, Growing Together

As November draws to a close, we step into the season where grace takes on its deepest form: shared life. December will explore how spirituality is less about beliefs and more about belonging — how grace becomes real when it becomes mutual.

But for now — may this week's table be a reminder:

Grace is already here.
And gratitude is how we learn to taste it.

◆ Circles Connection

At last Wednesday's Circle of Hope we dug a little deeper into the theme of November, "staying grounded when things get busy." We started by laughing;

- You know you're too busy when you're living "one day at a time", but your calendar is booked into March.

We laughed and then admitted that sometimes being busy is actually a way of avoiding the discomfort of something we don't want to face.



🕯 Closing Reflection

May you find yourself welcomed at every table of grace this week —
the ones set with abundance,
and the ones set with simple, honest presence.

May gratitude steady your steps,
may connection warm your heart,
and may grace guide you gently into the days ahead.

Happy Thanksgiving,
— Barry

Email me. I always look forward to hearing from you.

✉ *Do you like the newsletter? Forward it to a friend or colleague!*



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Wherever you are in the journey—
come back to what grounds you.
You're not alone.

