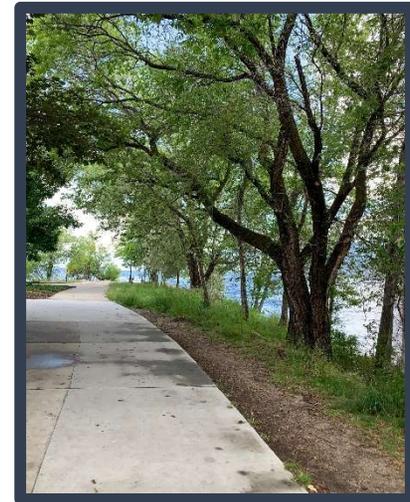


**LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY**

# **Daily Meditations**



**APRIL 2021**



These meditations are available online  
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at:

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*Partners in Hope Recovery Society  
is a Christian community  
outreach organization  
offering hope, support, and healing  
through Jesus Christ  
to victims of  
harmful circumstances and dependencies,  
as they reclaim the gift of their life.*

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Partners in Hope Recovery Society  
1906 – 615 Belmont Street, New Westminster, BC V3M 6A1

Email: [pihrecovery@gmail.com](mailto:pihrecovery@gmail.com)  
Phone or text: 604-215-0335

### **JUST FOR TODAY**

*Just for today I will try to live in conscious contact with God praying only for knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out.*

*Just for today I will strengthen my mind. I will take a few minutes to read and meditate on God's word, seeking God's perspective for my life today. I will take note of one helpful thing God is saying to me and seek to behave accordingly.*

*Just for today I will be joyful, optimistic, and grateful. I will take time to notice the gifts in me, in others, and in my surroundings and let the rest go.*

*Just for today I will adjust myself to what is and not try to adjust everything else to my desires. I will trust that God is working all things for good in my life.*

*Just for today I will be agreeable. I will not criticize, not find fault, and not try to improve or control anybody except myself. I will pray blessing on one person with whom I struggle to relate.*

*Just for today I will have a quiet half hour all by myself to relax and enjoy all that God is giving me.*

*Just for today I will be unafraid, believing that as I trust in God with all my heart and lean not on my own understanding, He will lead me along a good path.*

*Just for today I will seek to serve others with kindness, doing what is right, and walking humbly with God.*

***For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus,  
so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. Ephesians 2:10 NLT***

## SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

For a variety of reasons, many of us have an underlying structure of disorder that is damaging us and others. We invite God to show us the truth about ourselves so we can personally receive God's forgiveness to set us free and healing to make us strong.

<p><b>SUBSTANCE ADDICTIONS:</b></p> <p><b>Alcohol</b>  <b>Caffeine</b>  <b>Injected or smoked substances such as:</b>          Crack, Crystal Meth, Heroin  <b>Marijuana</b>  <b>Prescription Medications</b>  <b>Sugar</b>  <b>Tobacco</b></p>	<p><b>BEHAVIOUR ADDICTIONS:</b></p> <p><b>Anger/Rage/Bullying</b>  <b>Cutting</b>  <b>Crime</b>  <b>Eating Disorders:</b>          Bulimia, Anorexia,          Binging, Obesity  <b>Gambling</b>  <b>Hoarding</b>  <b>Sex/Pornography</b>  <b>Verbal Abuse:</b>          Gossip, Lying, Accusing          Blaming, Condemning  <b>Violence</b> (physical, verbal, cyber)</p>
<p><b>SOFT ADDICTIONS:</b></p> <p><b>Digital Use: (Time or Content)</b>          TV/Phone/Tablet; video games, Social Networking;          Cyber-bullying; Online shopping; Gambling,          Pornography  <b>Exercise</b>  <b>Food</b> (See Eating Disorders)  <b>Isolating/Sleep</b>  <b>Money: Debt/Fraud</b>  <b>Religion</b>  <b>Shopping</b>  <b>Sports</b>  <b>Work/Achievement</b></p>	<p><b>RELATIONSHIP ADDICTIONS:</b></p> <p><b>Abusive Relationships:</b>          Includes: Intimidation, Isolation,          Domination, Blaming, Humiliation,          Withholding, Forcing acts against          one's will  <b>Approval dependency</b>  <b>Attention Seeking</b>  <b>Codependence/Rescuing</b>  <b>Power/Control</b></p>

## PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

Loving God, Thank You for rescuing us from the dark power of Satan and bringing us into loving relationship with Your Son, Jesus. We ask for wisdom and understanding from Your Spirit in order to live as people who honour You. Heal us. Make us new. Make us strong followers of Christ. Root us deeply in Your love. We place our trust in Your power that can do far more in us than we dare ask or imagine. Amen.

## LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

### Daily Meditations

**APRIL 2021**

**CONTRIBUTING EDITORS**  
 Evelyn Leeburn, Elsie Quick

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**VOLUME 06, NUMBER 04**

## ***How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery***

*God created us to have a wonderful life. In love, God planned for us and carefully put us together. God has always been calling out to us to enter into a relationship of love with Him. He doesn't force us but He invites us. Many of us have learned what a painful and confusing wreck our lives become when we try to live independently from God. Today is a good day to begin to live the full and rich life God intended for us. Nothing in our past can keep us from this life, if we want it and choose for it.*

*The 12-Steps remind us that our lives are unmanageable without the loving care of God and that we can get to know and come to believe that He is a power greater than ourselves. As we turn our will and our lives over to God's care, we find a solid foundation upon which to build a new life.*

*When we confess our sin and brokenness to God, repent and turn towards God, He gives us new life. When we invite God to come into our lives we find that He is ready and waiting for us. A simple prayer like the following, offered sincerely, establishes this new relationship with God that will last forever.*

***God, my life is unmanageable without you. You created me to live in relationship with you. There really is no good way to live on my own. Forgive me for not including you. I turn from my independent ways and surrender my will and my life to you. Thank you Jesus for dying on the cross for my sins and making a way for me to have new life and be filled up with Your Holy Spirit. Come into my heart and wash me clean. Teach me to do your will. Transform my way of thinking. Strengthen me to obey You in all I do. Amen***

*If you prayed that prayer sincerely from your heart, God forgives you and receives you. God makes you His son or daughter. God wants to show you how to live well and give you strength to do that every day. We would love to provide you with some information to support you as you move forward in your journey with God. Please contact us. You'll find our contact information on the front cover of this booklet.*

## MAINTAINING HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

When we turned our will and life over to God many of us had hope for a quick turnaround in our lives. We failed to remember how many years it took to get us to this place in our lives. Some of us gave up all hope of recovery when we found ourselves struggling with life minus our dependency. For this reason, we must be aware that hope grows gradually as we wholeheartedly practice surrender of our “will” to the care of God, and repeatedly commit to obeying His principles in all our affairs.

***Everything written in the past was written to teach us. The Scriptures give us strength to go on. They encourage us and give us hope.*** (Romans 15:4 NIRV)

Our minds were previously programmed by our self-focused thinking and now need to be reprogrammed so they are in line with what the Bible teaches. To reprogram our minds, we acknowledge and repent of our misguided thinking and ask God to help us believe in our hearts and fill our minds with the knowledge of His Word, and give us the power to carry it out.

***We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience.*** (Colossians 1:9b-11 NIV)

***The Scriptures give us strength to go on. They encourage us and give us hope.***

***(Romans 15:4 NIRV)***

God has promised to help us and give us direction in the way we are to go. Laying down our will in favour of God’s will for our lives is the way to a meaningful, purposeful life. Maintaining our hope of change and being patient with ourselves is what will work in the long run. With God in our lives there really is hope for the future.

***Don’t live the way this world lives. Let your way of thinking be completely changed. Then you will be able to test what God wants for you.*** (Romans 12:2a NIRV)

***Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for giving me hope and a future. I choose to surrender my will to You and ask that You change my way of thinking. Amen***

FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 2021

# NOTES

## WHAT DOES JESUS' DEATH HAVE TO DO WITH ADDICTION?

What does Jesus death have to do with us? Well, maybe nothing and maybe everything – the choice is ours. Jesus is the only solution to our unmanageable problems of sin and brokenness.

***For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.***  
(Romans 3:23; 6:23 NLT)

***We can ignore the fact that Jesus died for us and perish with our problems or, we can choose to accept the gift of a life changing eternal relationship with the Living God.***

We can ignore the fact that Jesus died for us and perish with our problems or, we can choose to accept the gift of a life changing eternal relationship with the Living God. How do we do the latter?

We make a choice. We admit to God that our self-centered way of living does not work. We have cared only about ourselves and ignored the suffering of those around us. Now we choose to turn away from such behaviour. We admit our sins before God and ask Him to forgive us for living our lives for personal gratification. We receive God's forgiveness and the new life that He offers us through Jesus Christ. This is the act of turning our will and our life over to the care of God.

***For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.*** (Romans 5:10-11 NLT)

When we commit our lives to the care of God, God calls us His friends and fills us with His Holy Spirit. Today, let's bring ourselves – our will and our lives -- to the care of God. Let's embrace the life and healing that God is offering us.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for giving me new life through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Help me to die to self-will and my old ways of thinking and behaving. I ask You to reveal and remove all my defects of character. Help me to live each day obedient to Your word, Your way, and Your timing, trusting that you will make all things right as I surrender to Your will. Amen*

## DOING ALL WE CAN TO HAVE FAITH

Few people are more aware of their need for God's help to restore them to sanity than recovering addicts. We know how unmanageable our life has been and how powerless we are to stop the suffering and chaos. What a relief it has been to turn to God who was ready, willing, and able to receive and restore us.

***Do all you can to add to your life these things: to your faith add goodness; to your goodness add knowledge.*** (2 Peter 1:5b ERV)

There is a "God's part" and an "our part" to this new life we have. God sent Jesus into the world to die for our sins so that we might be free from the penalty of sin, which is death and eternal separation from God. Our part is to humbly admit our wrongs and receive forgiveness and the new life God is offering us. God has established spiritual principles for a life that is good, pleasing, and perfect. Our part is to get to know those principles and obey them. When our character defects cause us to stumble, we ask God to forgive us and help us change our ways.

***Do your best to please God. Be a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed.***

***(2 Timothy 2:15a NIRV)***

***It is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him. Faith comes from hearing the message. And the message that is heard is the message about Christ.*** (Hebrews 11:6 NLT, Romans 10:17 NIRV)

The Scriptures tell us that with God's help we will learn to have faith. How do we do that? We take time, at least daily, to learn what God's Word says. There are many printed devotionals, apps, audio podcasts, teachings on YouTube and elsewhere to help us understand the Bible. God's message to us is as near as our Bible, phone, or tablet.

At the heart of all our practices is faith: faith in God that He is good; faith in God's direction for our lives; faith in God's principles as the best path for us to follow; faith in God's power to help us take the next right step and do the next right thing; faith to put what we learn into practice in all our affairs.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, You are always with me and willing to provide what I need for a successful day. Help me to trust Your presence ever with me, Your power to change me, and Your wisdom to guide me in all my ways. Amen***

## CHARACTER STRENGTH – FAIR AND JUST

As we seek to live in recovery and face our troubles and challenges, it's easy to become discouraged and feel sorry for ourselves when things appear not to be fair. We see others get housing, get an opportunity for education or a job that we wish we could have. It doesn't seem fair that the system won't give us what we need when we need it. We think it's not fair when our family members won't trust us even though we tell them we've changed. (The fact that we may have cheated and stolen from them and lived for a long time in a destructive way, does not appear to come into our reckoning.) We complain that life is unfair. Where is God in the middle of all of this?

***The Lord is good and does what is right. He shows sinners the right way to live. He teaches his ways to humble people. He leads them with fairness.*** (Psalm 25:8-9 ERV)

God has a good plan for our lives and is willing and able to put it into effect. His priority is that we would come to know Him and have His character developed in us. God knows that when we live in His way rather than in our own way, we will experience joy and satisfaction. At times, that may mean not having as much money or as much independence as someone else because God is aware of certain character defects in us that need healing. God may allow us to stay in our current situation until we receive healing and are strong enough to live responsibly. Because of God's kindness and knowledge, He is keeping us from future harm. From our point of view, it seems unfair but from His viewpoint it is pure love and protection.

***God is fair, and he will remember all the work you have done. He will remember that you showed your love to him by helping his people and that you continue to help them.*** (Hebrews 6:10 ERV)

When we trust God and seek to live for Him in whatever circumstances we find ourselves in today, God will surely make a way forward for us and we will thank Him for His wisdom in all He has done.

***Prayer: Loving God, I dislike problems and feel that sometimes life is unfair. Help me to keep my focus on You and what You promise rather than on what I want. Help me to simply do what is right and trust that as I go forward You are working all things together for my good. Amen***

***God is fair, and he will remember all the work you have done.***

***Hebrews 6:10 ERV***

## EASTER SUNDAY – THE HIGHEST POWER

All of humankind's sin – from the beginning of time to the end of time – was laid on Jesus and not even the weight of that could hold him down. Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus' resurrection demonstrates that no darkness or evil, nor pain or brokenness, can overcome the power of God for those who believe in Jesus.

***I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.*** (Ephesians 1:19-20 NLT)

***What seems impossible for us to believe becomes possible when God is involved.***

No matter how fearsome or broken our lives seem to us, not even the weight of that can keep us down when we are in Christ. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is in us who completely surrender our will and our lives to God.

***But you, dear friends, carefully build yourselves up in this most holy faith by praying in the Holy Spirit, staying right at the center of God's love, keeping your arms open and outstretched, ready for the mercy of our Master, Jesus Christ. This is the unending life, the real life!*** (Jude 20-21 MSG)

What seems impossible for us to believe becomes possible when God is involved. When we invite God into a situation, things happen that are beyond all we could hope for or imagine. God's power is stronger than anything we have ever encountered. God's kindness is more tender than anything we may have experienced. When Jesus comes into our lives,

He brings power and solutions and hope for a new way of life. He fills us with His Holy Spirit. Believing that the Holy Spirit is within us – with unlimited power to meet every need and solve every problem – will enable all doubt about our recovery and our ability to deal with problems to be overcome.

***He saved us because of his mercy, and not because of any good things that we have done. God washed us by the power of the Holy Spirit. He gave us new birth and a fresh beginning.*** (Titus 3:5 CEV)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, You are God and You have the power to bring about change and healing in each life that is given over to You, including mine. Fill me with the mighty power of Your Holy Spirit so I can walk confidently in this new life You have given me. Amen***

## IT'S TIME TO TAKE A BREAK

Some sentences in the Bible are so meaningful that we just want to read them over and over again. Jesus' invitation to us today is one of those. We live in a world of busyness and stress where challenges both in us and in our circumstances seem so discouraging. At the time we are most weary, how comforting to hear the words of Jesus inviting us to come to Him and He will give us rest.

***Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*** (Matthew 11:28-29 NLT)

Some days it's difficult to watch the newscast and listen to more bad news. Covid-19 and other diseases, financial problems, protests, natural disasters, global warming, and on and on and on it goes. We get weary hearing it all. We feel we've been given a heavy burden to carry. Jesus does not wave a magic wand to rid us of the burdens we carry, nor does He encourage us to deny that problems exist, He invites us to live in the truth that He is in control. He has a way for us to do what is right, make a positive difference, and find rest for our souls. Who wouldn't want that?

***Lord, you will give perfect peace to those who commit themselves to be faithful to you. That's because they trust in you. It is useless to get up early and stay up late in order to earn a living. God takes care of his own, even while they sleep.*** (Isaiah 26:3 NIRV; Psalm 127:2 CEV)

Jesus invites us to come to Him and listen for His tender voice as He shows us the way forward together with Him. It won't be more than we can handle nor less than we can carry. He wants to give us gifts that we can use to bring blessings and support to others who are also weary and in need of care.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, You have not lost control of things even when it seems like many unsolvable situations exist. Help me to come to You with all my problems. I invite You to show me what I should undertake to do and what I should let go of; what I should attempt to resolve and what I should entrust to Your care. Give me strength to do the work You have prepared for me to do today. I choose to rest in the sure knowledge that You are at work in the world You created. Amen***

***At the time we are most weary, how comforting to hear the words of Jesus inviting us to come to Him and He will give us rest.***

## WISDOM FOR THE JOURNEY: TAKE ACTION NOW

*I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that I am responsible.* (Alcoholics Anonymous)

This “Responsibility Statement.” written for the A.A. international convention in Toronto in 1965 put words together that were of significance to A.A. Many of the principles of A.A. are rooted in truths from the Bible that were practiced by the founders. This willingness to respond to someone in need is one of those.

***It’s not our job to “fix anyone” but it is our God given responsibility to look with eyes of compassion and lend a hand to those around us.***

***Do everything you possibly can for those who need help. If your neighbor needs something you have, don’t say, “Come back tomorrow.” Give it to him immediately.*** (Proverbs 3:27-28 ERV)

Proverbs is a book of wise sayings and in it we are reminded to act for the good of others, to do it now, and not wait for a more convenient moment or another day. When Jesus spoke of those who showed by their actions that they were right with God, He revealed that the help they had given others was as if it had been done to Him.

***“Then those that are right with God will say, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You? When did we see You thirsty and give You a drink? When did we see You a stranger and give You a room? When did we see You had no clothes and we gave You clothes? And when did we see You sick or in prison and we came to You?’ Then the King will say, ‘For sure, I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of My brothers, you have done it to Me.’*** (Matthew 25:37-40 NLV)

It’s not our job to “fix anyone” but it is our God given responsibility to look with eyes of compassion and lend a hand to those around us. As we’ve been forgiven and purified by God, and supported in our journey by others, now it is our turn – whether we are one day into recovery or many decades – to lend a hand to another. The amazing thing is, as we make life a bit easier for someone else who is suffering, even though it may be inconvenient for us in the moment, we will find joy and contentment filling our own hearts and minds.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me change my self-centered focus. Give me eyes to see and a heart of compassion to take action today to respond to someone in need. Amen***

## DYSFUNCTIONAL THINKING – VICTIM MENTALITY

In recovery, as well as in addiction, one can have a victim mentality. A person with a victim mentality tells their life story with the intent of having people feel sorry for them. Through a person’s sympathy, they begin to control and manipulate that person. They will always seek others to meet their needs. They will not take responsibility for their own behaviour because they believe someone else is always to blame for things that go wrong in their life.

***Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death.*** (Proverbs 7:26-27 NIV)

God never intended for us to carry our own burdens or for that matter to manipulate others to carry them for us. No human person is equipped to handle the emotional and physical abuse of their own sin, never mind that of another. God saw the trouble that sin brought on all humankind and He had a plan to deal with it. Because of God’s great love for us, Jesus willingly came to fulfill God’s plan of redemption for all mankind.

***Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.*** (Isaiah 53:4-5 NKJV)

There is no need for any of us to be either a victim or a saviour. Jesus is the only one who can set us free from the disease of sin. When we find ourselves operating with a victim mentality or are trying to be a saviour, we need to let Jesus heal us and bring us peace.

***Let us throw off any sin that holds on to us so tightly. And let us keep on running the race marked out for us. Let us keep looking to Jesus. He is the one who started this journey of faith.*** (Hebrews 12 1b-2a NIRV)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to draw near to You for You alone can break the chains of bondage to sin that so easily entangle me. I want to receive all that You offer me through Jesus. Please set me free to run the race that You have marked out for me. Amen***

***If we have a victim mentality or are trying to be a saviour, we need to let Jesus heal us and bring us peace.***

## STEP SEVEN – HUMILITY

A humble person is grounded in a realistic view of who they are. They do not feel inferior to others but are overwhelmed by the undeserved goodness of God. If we truly believe that God cares, we no longer need to hide behind too much self-confidence or the burden of self-doubt. Our security is in the safety of God's acceptance and unfailing love for us.

***Investigate my life, O God, find out everything about me; Cross-examine and test me, get a clear picture of what I'm about; See for yourself whether I've done anything wrong— then guide me on the road to eternal life.*** (Psalm 139:23-24 MSG)

***Humility comes quietly to those who draw close to the Lord, trust in His goodness, and express that in their obedient behaviour.***

An attitude of humility allows us to accept our dependence on God and follow His directions. With humility of heart, we listen to God's warning signals and turn away from any familiar path that is harmful. Humility permits us to follow an unfamiliar path with our hand in the hand of God. Humility allows us to lay down everything that hinders our way forward. In humility we embrace God's principles because we believe they will ultimately produce fullness of life.

***My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body. Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.*** (Proverbs 4:20-23 NLT)

Humility comes quietly to those who draw close to the Lord, trust in His goodness, and express that in their obedient behaviour. The God of time and eternity who created us in love is always near to us and invites us to come close to His heart. With confidence, we can say, "God, here I am, I humbly ask you to remove all my shortcomings so I can relax in your presence now and always." There, with Him, we can finally live as people of integrity and peace.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for being with me when I grieve over the occurrences in my past. I am thankful that I do not have to face this sorrow alone. Today, I humbly ask you to remove all my shortcomings. Please hold me close to Your heart. Amen***

## A BRIGHT NEW WAY OF LIFE

We lost our way. That's an obvious fact. We fell into addiction and a destructive lifestyle. We hid in dark and isolated places. Sometimes that was in dark corners and streets, but even if it was under bright lights, we were still lost in dark places in our minds and hearts. We were lost in darkness and powerless to find a way to the light. Who can show us the way out of darkness into the light? Jesus says He is the light and if we follow Him, we won't have to walk in darkness but will have the light that gives life.

***"I am the way, the truth, and the life!" Jesus answered. "Without me, no one can go to the Father. I am the light for the world! Follow me, and you won't be walking in the dark. You will have the light that gives life."*** (John 14:6, John 8:12b CEV)

Darkness is not a thing of itself. Darkness is the absence of light. In pioneer days people lit a candle, put a glass orb around it, and the light spread out across the room. When we invite God to come and live in us, He is the light within that reflects brightness to those around us. As others see us living before them in the light of God's love, they will be drawn to that light. Darkness in our hearts and in our circumstances must give way to the light of Christ as surely as darkness leaves a room when we flip a switch and turn on a light.

In recovery, we can be taught to live in a new way by reading the Bible and learning about Jesus and how He lived. We can then follow His example. God's Holy Spirit will give us the power to live in this way. Jesus gives light and life for our journey, and He will get us to our destination. Jesus not only knows the way, He is the way.

***The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.*** (Romans 8:11 NLT)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for seeing me when I was lost in darkness and for sending Jesus to be the light to show me the way to life with You. I surrender myself to You and choose to follow Your plan for my life. I ask for Your Holy Spirit to empower me to do Your will and be a light to those who are around me. Amen***

***Simon Peter answered, "Lord, there is no one else that we can go to! Your words give eternal life."***

***John 6:68 CEV***

MONDAY, APRIL 26, 2021

## ATTITUDE

Our attitude can be like medicine that heals or like poison that kills. When we look at our circumstances, is our instant response positive or negative? When we look at those around us, do we first see their gifts or their faults?

***"My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the Lord. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9 NLT)***

***Our attitude can be like medicine that heals or like poison that kills.***

We are living in error when we believe our attitude is determined by our circumstances. Circumstances will sometimes be favorable and sometimes not but external factors have very little to do with our contentment. A good attitude is rooted in the truth that God is good every day and God is making that goodness available to us in every circumstance.

***And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28 NIV)***

What do we do when we find ourselves struggling with a negative perspective or a bad attitude? We need to recognize that a bad attitude comes from negative thinking which impacts our response to certain situations. Even though someone may trigger a hostile response in us, our attitude is our own, not theirs, and we need to submit that to God. Together with God, we can uncover the root cause

of our bad attitude and receive healing and release from its bondage.

***Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted and keep a humble attitude. (1 Peter 3:8 NLT)***

Choosing to remember God's goodness and His promises to us, is the foundation on which we build our faith, and maintain a positive attitude.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for my bad attitude towards You, towards others, and towards life in general. Help me understand the underlying root of my self-centered thinking and bad attitude so I may be set free from its bondage. Amen***

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2021

## FIGHT OR FLIGHT

When we are faced with a recurring problem, we often just want it to be over and done with. We may have disagreed with another person many times and each one has stood their ground. It is at times like this that we may choose either to flee the situation because we are weary and have no fight left in us or lash out and fight with accusations, blame, and intimidation.

***I said, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. I would flee far away and stay in the desert; I would hurry to my place of shelter, far from the tempest and storm. (Psalm 55:6-8 NIV)***

Strong arguments exist because each person is unwilling to see the situation from the other's point of view. In our addiction we thought we had the right to live as we pleased. Those who cared for us knew we were harming ourselves and tried to discuss how our actions were causing grief for them. To avoid being confronted with situations that we were at least partly responsible for, fight or flight seemed the only options.

***I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, according to their own thoughts. (Isaiah 65:2 NKJV)***

In some instances, when we see the mess another is making, we should pray hard and say nothing. Choosing to go their own way may be the result of a rebellious spirit and, until the person gets to a place of seeing the insanity of the situation, we are truly wasting our breath. If we choose to fight the battle, we need to do so in love and not accusation. We need to find a way to encourage the person to express what is going on inside them and then patiently work with them from that point of view. If we act in anger, we will likely lose the battle.

***For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:19 NLT)***

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, In any dispute, please help me to listen for Your wisdom and to understand how Your wonderful message of reconciliation can be applied. Amen***

***To avoid being confronted with situations that we were at least partly responsible for, fight or flight seemed the only options.***

## GROWING IN MATURITY

For most of us who have come from an unmanageable lifestyle and have chosen a recovery program with community gatherings, the change in our environment is intimidating. We are unfamiliar with meeting procedures and some of the words we hear seem like they are from a different language. Everything around us is quite different from what we have known and we feel immature and imperfect alongside these people who want to help us. What are we to do?

**Have two goals: wisdom—that is, knowing and doing right—and common sense. Don't let them slip away, for they fill you with living energy and bring you honor and respect.** (Proverbs 3:21-22 TLB)

**Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.**

Hebrews 5:14 NLT

All of us who are mature in recovery ways had to begin and grow through this phase of learning. The ways of God and the Scriptures were also unknown to us. We soon learnt that we could grow faster in the knowledge of meeting procedures and God's ways as we humbled ourselves and asked questions of those around us. A flower will grow from a planted seed when it is watered and fed. We will grow mature in the ways of God and recovery practices as we are watered and fed from the Scriptures and by those around us who are willing to share their experience, strength, and hope with us.

**Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.** (Hebrews 5:14 NLT)

As we grow in our recovery and become knowledgeable of what is morally excellent and what is evil, we may be shocked to learn that the ways of our culture are quite different from the ways of God. Having had a spiritual awakening, we have come to know that God's ways are higher than our ways and will lead us along a good path to a life that is good, pleasing, and perfect.

**Give me understanding and I will obey your instructions; I will put them into practice with all my heart.** (Psalm 119:34 NLT)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to be willing to learn when I feel overwhelmed by all that is new to me in recovery. Give me the will and desire to mature in my understanding of the Scriptures and the wisdom and power to do what You say. Amen*

## GOOD THINGS COME TO THOSE WHO WAIT

Many of us have heard the saying, "Good things come to those who wait." This proverb reminds us that if we are patient and keep on doing what we know to do, we will eventually achieve our goal. God's word has more to say about this.

**Good things come to those who do what is right. Joy comes to those whose hearts are honest. You who are godly, be glad because of what the Lord has done. Praise him, because his name is holy.** (Psalm 97:11-12 NIRV)

We do not have all the answers for our future and perhaps feel insecure about some of the unknowns. God's promise to us is, if we will follow Him and live with integrity doing what is right, He will fill our lives with good things and our hearts with joy. Not only that, but in our eternal life with God, after our bodies die and are put in the grave, we will experience wonderful things that are way beyond our ability to even think about or imagine, and we will enjoy these gifts forever.

**Some people live for God's glory, for honor, and for life that cannot be destroyed. They live for those things by always continuing to do good. God will give eternal life to them.** (Romans 2:7 ERV)

The best news of all is, God knows we are unable to continually live according to His principles, so He gives us the gift of His Holy Spirit who fills us with wisdom and the power to overcome our weaknesses and the temptations that we will face along the way.

**Even though you are evil, you know how to give good gifts to your children. How much more will your Father who is in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"** (Luke 11:13 NIRV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that I am weak when it comes to temptation. Please fill me with Your Holy Spirit so I have the wisdom to wait patiently for things to change and have the power to do what is right regardless of the circumstances I encounter. I want to live for Your honour and continue to do good one day at a time. Please help me! Amen*

**But put God's kingdom first. Do what he wants you to do. Then all those things will also be given to you.**

Matthew 6:33  
NIRV

## CHARACTER DEFECT: NOT FOLLOWING THROUGH

In “How It Works” we read and hear the words read regularly in meetings: *Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program.*” (Big Book of AA page 58). Anyone who has made an honest attempt at recovery knows how much hard work is involved. What gives us encouragement and hope is the knowledge that many people who do the work, succeed.

***For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.*** (Romans 15:4 NIV)

***Rarely  
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person fail  
who has  
thoroughly  
followed  
our path.***

***Big Book page  
58***

Clearing the wreckage of our past and rebuilding our character and our relationships isn't accomplished in a day. We can contribute to that goal every day, for sure, but effort over time is what is required to meet our long-term objective.

We can know all sorts of things about God as we come to believe that He is a power greater than ourselves who can restore us to sanity. We can even make a decision to turn our will and our life over to His care. The real test of our desire for recovery is the follow-through of putting God's word and the steps into practice one day at a time. Some days will be relatively easy and other days will require every bit of strength and commitment we can muster.

***Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble and keep on praying. So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.*** (Romans 12:12, Galatians 6:9 NLT)

Who of us enjoys doing a searching, fearless, and moral inventory and then admitting the exact nature of our wrongs? It's painful to come before God and ask for the removal of our character defects. Making a list of those we've harmed and setting out to make amends to them is threatening for most of us. However, God's promise and the experience strength and hope of those who have gone before us tells us that, as we follow the path and do things one step at a time, God will get us to our goal.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I often want the “quick fix” and find it hard to follow through on the challenging parts of becoming the person You created me to be. Help me to fix my eyes on the goal and please strengthen me to do the work required of me each day. Amen***

## A POSITIVE APPROACH TO FEELING BORED

In early recovery our positive expectations for a life free from crippling dependencies is huge. We are excited about what the future may hold and say we are willing to do whatever it takes to get our life back on track. As the weeks go on, our routine becomes dull and we find ourselves less enthusiastic than we once were. We start feeling sorry for ourselves and easily get angry with others. The truth is we are bored. We feel challenged and vulnerable in our new routine and have begun to focus on the old familiar patterns of life in addiction.

***We have all these great people around us as examples. Their lives tell us what faith means. So we, too, should run the race that is before us and never quit. We should remove from our lives anything that would slow us down and the sin that so often makes us fall.*** (Hebrews 12:1 ERV)

It is a fair question to ask ourselves why we are impatient and bored with where life is at today. Are we seeking out people who can help us understand what is going on within us, or do we just complain and blame? Anything in life worth having requires time to accomplish. Perhaps we could alter our routine and spend time helping others while we wait for things to happen for us. Telling ourselves that we are bored and feeling depressed does not produce change. When nothing changes, then nothing changes!

***Finally, my brothers and sisters, always think about what is true. Think about what is noble, right and pure. Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect. If anything is excellent or worthy of praise, think about those kinds of things.*** (Philippians 4:8 NIRV)

Boredom is brought about by lack of action. Perhaps we need to change our thought pattern and think about those things that are worthy of praise. Maybe we need to work on establishing conscious contact with God, praying for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out. Let's allow any boredom we experience to point us to deeper growth in our relationship with God and positive action in our recovery.

***Prayer: Loving Father, I admit that boredom is pushing me back into darkness, and I need help to remove it from my life. Please help me make wise decisions in the use of my time and help me to consider others and do those things that are pleasing to You. Amen***

***It is a fair  
question to  
ask  
ourselves  
why we are  
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and bored  
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life is at  
today.***

## CONFRONTING SELF-PITY

One of our natural responses to the pressure and challenges of life is to indulge in self-pity. Things are not going our way in our timeframe. A misunderstanding occurs and maybe harsh words are spoken. Someone else appears to be having it easier than us. In these, and many other situations, we are quick to feel sorry for ourselves and sink into the mud of “poor me.”

The question is not, “How do we avoid feeling self-pity?” because all of us will have these feelings at times. What would be more helpful is to ask ourselves, “What can I do to overcome self-pity and quickly get back on track?”

***Don't think of yourself more highly than you should. Be reasonable when you think about yourself. Keep in mind the faith God has given to each of you.*** (Romans 12:3b NIRV)

***What can I do to overcome self-pity and quickly get back on track?”***

God wants us to live in the truth about Him, about ourselves, and about our circumstances. When self-pity arises our first response should be to bring ourselves to God and let Him comfort and care for us. Then, in the security of God's love, we can sort out if this is our super-sensitivity to issues that need to settle down, or a misunderstanding that needs to be respectfully talked about, or a problem that we need God and others to help us deal with.

***My God will use his glorious riches to give you everything you need. He will do this through Christ Jesus. The Lord defends his people; he is kind to his servants.*** (Philippians 4:19, Psalm 135:14 ERV)

Self-pity is always harmful to our well-being. We need to acknowledge that God will defend us against any falsehood. Our part is to stand in the truth of the situation and not get dragged down by discouraging lies that foster self-pity. If we experience self-pity we can use it as a signal to reach out to God for help. We are assured that when we seek God, He will make all things right as we surrender to His will.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, When I face a problem or hear criticism, help me to take a broader view of the situation and not allow myself to fall into self-pity. Help me to stand on the truth of who You say I am and seek a solution which will bring peace and joy to all concerned. Amen*

## DON'T QUIT BEFORE THE MIRACLE HAPPENS

"Don't quit before the miracle happens" is a slogan that has been around Alcoholics Anonymous for quite a while. Someone has added this phrase to it, "Anything worthwhile takes time and patience." These words apply to more than choosing not to go back to our substance of choice.

***Be strong. Don't give up. God will reward you for your work. Let us not become tired of doing good. At the right time we will gather a crop if we don't give up.*** (2 Chronicles 15:7, Galatians 6:9 NIRV)

Good things take effort and patience. As cute as they are to watch, little folks playing hockey do more falling down on the ice than shooting pucks and scoring goals. Some of those little folks will stick with the game, and one day in the future, end up in the NHL. In between, there is lots of practice at the rink in the early morning hours of cold winter days, plus hours of training at a gym, and time watching videos of games, and so on. Everything worth doing takes time and patience.

Finding the life that God has planned for us is even more important than getting good at a sport. It takes time and practice to recognize what life looks like as a dependable person. We'll try some things and leave them behind. We'll struggle to do other things until we master them, and they become routine. New healthy behaviours take time to become normal actions. In one study it was found that on average it took 66 days for a new behaviour to become a normal part of a person's daily living.

God promises: ***Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.*** (Isaiah 41:10 NIRV)

God is working in us. Step Two reminds us that it is God who is restoring us to sanity. He will hold us steady and encourage us while we learn. Let's stick with God until the miracle happens.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me remember today that You are with me supporting and strengthening me as I establish new and healthy ways of living. Give me patience with myself and others as I grow and learn. Amen*

***New healthy behaviours take time to become normal actions.***

## HEALING PROMISED

Anyone who has struggled with addiction knows that their body and mind both need healing for there is no peace to be found in either. We used our dependency to give us courage to cope with fearful circumstances or to blot them out. God desires that we give our will and life over to His care so that we can be dependent on Him to cope with the events that life brings our way.

***Lord my God, I called out to you for help. And you healed me. Lord, you brought me up from the place of the dead. You kept me from going down into the pit.*** (Psalm 30:2-3 NIRV)

In His Word, God tells us repeatedly not to fear and that should be an indication of what He knows about our situations. God cares for us and wants to heal us so we can live life as He intended. How can we go about living as God intended?

***God promises to heal us and give us the power and strength we need to live the meaningful life we desire.***

***My son, pay attention to what I say. Listen closely to my words. Don't let them out of your sight. Keep them in your heart. They are life to those who find them. They are health to a person's whole body.*** (Proverbs 4:20-22 NIRV)

Satan is our enemy and will use whatever harms us to gain control over our destiny. Each person is visible in God's sight and He knows our name and our ways. God governs the world with wisdom and those who do the will and work of God are favoured in His sight. Do we watch others get healed and restored to new life and wonder why it does not happen to us? Who or what are we looking to for help that will

enable us to live the life we desire?

***Wealth and honor come from you. You are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power. You can give honor and strength to everyone.*** (1 Chronicles 29:12 NIRV)

God promises to heal us and give us the power and strength we need to live the meaningful life we desire. Why not seek a miracle from Him today?

***Prayer: Gracious God, For too long I have been looking in all the wrong places for the life I desire. Today I choose to commit my life to You for healing and restoration. Amen***

## WHO WILL STAND UP FOR ME?

Often when we are going through hard times we fail to call out to God for help. We are so focused on our problem that we think and talk about it continually instead of going to a quiet place to pray and seek God for His help. If God promises to help us in our time of need, why are we reluctant to seek Him?

***The Lord says, "The poor are being robbed. Those who are in need groan. So I will stand up to help them. I will keep them safe from those who tell lies about them." The words of the Lord are perfect. They are like silver made pure in a clay furnace. They are like gold made pure seven times over. Lord, you will keep needy people safe. You will always keep sinners from hurting us. Proud and sinful people walk around openly when the evil they do is praised by the human race.*** (Psalm 12:5-8 NIRV)

One reason we don't come to God when we are in trouble is that we are unsure if He will help us. Some of us would prefer to go to someone we can see rather than to God who we are unable to see, but whose presence is always with us. God has infinite power to help. The above scripture says that the Lord will stand up to help us and He will keep us safe from harm. Do we believe what God says in His word or do we doubt that He is able to fulfill what He says?

The above Psalm tells us that God's words are perfect. They are like silver or gold which has been made pure in a furnace. This means that we can be sure God's word is true and free of all error or falsehood. God's promises and His faithfulness in fulfilling what He has said is dependable. Jesus said that those who are weary and heavy laden should come to Him for rest.

***Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*** (Matthew 11:28 NIV)

Are we willing to come to Jesus who knows all about our troubles and desires to help or would we rather go to someone else? The choice is ours!

***Prayer: Loving God, Help me to believe that You do what you promise. When I am afraid help me to come to You and trust You to keep me safe from all harm. Fill my heart with courage and the confidence that You are always with me and will help in my time of need. Amen***

***The Lord will stand up to help us and He will keep us safe from harm.***

LIVING ONE DAY AT A TIME

A saying we often hear in unpredictable circumstances and in recovery circles is "live one day at a time." In many meetings someone will read "Just for Today" – a list of positive actions that we may choose to give focused attention to. When we pray the full version of the Serenity Prayer, we quickly come to a line that says, "living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time." God's Word encourages us to daily surrender our will and our life into His care.

***Trust in the Lord and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you.*** (Psalm 37:3-5 NLT)

***We are human beings confined within the slice of time we call today.***

To live one day at a time, it's essential that we continually come to God with a willingness and intention to surrender our will and our life into His care. What does that mean? What does a life surrendered to God look like? What steps can we take to implement God's ways in our daily lives? It's important that we confess our sins daily and receive God's forgiveness, mercy and fresh cleansing. Each day we have a new opportunity to make God's priorities our priorities.

***More than anything else, put God's work first and do what he wants. Then the other things will be yours as well.*** (Matthew 6:33 CEV)

Each day has the possibility of bringing something into our lives that we personally cannot change. We need to come to terms with the limitations of our humanity. We are human beings confined within the slice of time we call today. God has promised to take care of all our todays. We simply need to live one day at a time under God's guidance and care. If we do this, we are assured that God will work all things together for our good, and according to His plan for our lives.

*Prayer: Loving God, Thank you for the gift of this day. I choose to make your agenda my priority today. Help me to live one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time, trusting that You will make all things right as I surrender to Your will. Amen*

GENTLENESS – ONLY FOR THE STRONG

Strong people with a true sense of their identity are often the gentlest souls in our community. They don't have to pretend to have courage in loud aggressive ways because they are confident in who they are and what they believe. They know themselves to be imperfect and so they graciously make allowances for the faults of others. They know they are learning and growing, and they make space for others to do the same.

***A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare. Gentle words are a tree of life; a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.*** (Proverbs 15:1, 15:4, Ephesians 4:2 NLT)

People who are secure in themselves don't have to fight about every point. They can agree to disagree and be pleasant about it. They don't have to try to build themselves up by saying one thing to a person's face and then something else behind their backs. They are genuine people of integrity. Gentle people are some of the most admired by their colleagues and associates. Far from being weak, a gentle person exhibits a huge amount of self-control and patience.

***They [Leaders] must not slander anyone and must avoid quarreling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone. But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere.*** (Titus 3:2, James 3:17 NLT)

God invites us to leave harshness, super-sensitivity, sarcasm, and insincerity behind, and enter a settled life of harmony with His plan – a plan that promotes gentleness in all our dealings with others.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, You chose me to be holy and blameless in Your sight. My desire is to grow in grace and become known as a person who is tender hearted towards others. I want to be filled with kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Lord, I need Your help! Amen*

***People who are secure in themselves don't have to fight about every point.***

## STEP EIGHT – WHERE HAVE I CAUSED HARM?

We have all been hurt and let down by others. It's simply a part of being around humans. However, some of us are so focused on how we've been victimized and hurt that we fail to acknowledge how we have harmed others. To move forward in recovery, we must come to that place where we recognize the pain and brokenness in our relationships and deal with the harm caused to us, and by us.

***And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.*** (Matthew 7:3-5 NLT)

***We must come to that place where we recognize the pain and brokenness in our relationships and deal with the harm caused to us, and by us.***

When we humble ourselves and forgive others, God will do a deep work of restoration in us. Others have failed us, but we have failed others too. Others have not lived up to their good intentions and have caused us pain. We have caused others pain as well. Are we better than those who have harmed us? Obviously not! Did Jesus take the suffering of all the wrongs done to us and all wrongs done by us to the cross? Yes! If we forgive those who have harmed us, we ourselves will be forgiven for the harm we have caused others.

If we ask Him, God will teach us how our way of relating to others is different from His blueprint for loving relationships. God will prompt us to recall particular people and circumstances where we have caused harm. Writing down what happened, outlining our part in the event, and accepting responsibility for the wrong we did,

will begin our healing process.

Today is another opportunity to ask God for forgiveness and healing so we can become willing to make amends to the individuals we have harmed.

***Prayer: Loving God, As You have forgiven me, I choose to forgive those who have harmed me. Your word says there is no fear in love, and I believe Your perfect love will cast out all my fear and help me become willing to make amends to those I have harmed. Amen***

## JUST FOR TODAY – I WILL TRY TO LIVE IN CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD

*Just for today I will try to live in conscious contact with God praying only for knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out.*

Our lives matter to God. The details of our day are important to him. He wants to give us direction. He wants to support us and protect us. God enjoys spending time with us and He is pleased when we spend time with him. God enjoys it when we “chat it up” with him. Until we realize how much God loves us and cares about the details of our lives, we won't want to pray to him. Until we sincerely believe that he has completely forgiven us, we will be ashamed to face him.

***Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always. This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.*** (1 Chronicles 16:11, 1 John 5:14 NIV)

What might it look like to have a chat with God today?

- ☞ Find a place where you can be undisturbed and free from distractions.
- ☞ Tell God your thoughts and feelings.
- ☞ Listen carefully. God has messages for you.
- ☞ Share your day with God as you would with a friend confiding in Him your experiences as it progresses.
- ☞ Review your day with God. What went wrong? What went right? Ask for forgiveness and make amends as necessary.
- ☞ Ask for any needed healing.
- ☞ Ask God for knowledge of his will for you and the power to carry it out.

***I call on you, my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer.*** (Psalm 17:6 NIV)

No one understands and cares for us more than God. Only God has the wisdom to give us reliable direction as to how today will fit together with the past, the present, and the future He has planned for us.

***Prayer: Loving God, I am so grateful that you care for me and are interested in the details of my life. Thank you for the strength and courage to walk in Your ways as You reveal Your will to me. Amen***

***Pray diligently. Stay alert, with your eyes wide open in gratitude. Don't forget to pray for us.***

Colossians  
4:2-3 MSG

## CARRYING THE MESSAGE BY ACTING WISELY

The book of Proverbs in the Bible is a collection of wise sayings for us to learn and put into practice. Proverbs chapter 11 has 31 sayings covering a wide range of topics that contrast right and wrong and good and evil. The sayings address things like honesty, pride, gossip, keeping secrets, being kind, family relationships, and use of our money. Many of these sayings have promises attached to them such as:

***If we choose to do the right thing, we not only find the life we long to have but will have a positive influence on others as well.***

***If you do the right thing, honesty will be your guide. But if you are crooked, you will be trapped by your own dishonesty. Dishonest people use gossip to destroy their neighbors; good people are protected by their own good sense. Kindness is rewarded—but if you are cruel, you hurt yourself. Try hard to do right, and you will win friends; go looking for trouble, and you will find it.*** (Proverbs 11:3, 9, 17, 27 CEV)

These are helpful descriptions of the behavioural choices we make and the positive or negative results that come from our actions.

Close to the end of the chapter is a sentence that encourages us to live right by reminding us that if we choose to do the right thing, we not only find the life we long to have but will have a positive influence on others as well.

***Live right, and you will eat from the life-giving tree. And if you act wisely, others will follow.*** (Proverbs 11:30 CEV)

In recovery groups, we talk about carrying the message to others and sharing our experience, strength, and hope with them. Too often we think this is all about the words we speak. While it is important and helpful to attend meetings and share our story with others, these wise sayings from Proverbs suggest that an especially powerful way to carry the message to others is to live well and do what is right in God's eyes. It is certainly a way to live the "attraction rather than promotion" principle.

***Prayer: Loving God, help me to carry the message well by practicing Your principles in all my affairs. Help me to live with honesty, kindness, and transparency before You and others, praying only for knowledge of Your will and the power to carry it out. Amen***

## GRATITUDE AT EVERY STAGE OF THE JOURNEY

In sharing our recovery journey at meetings, we often look at the model of "what life was like in addiction, what happened, and what does life look like now." In each of these stages of our recovery journey it does us good to acknowledge God's input into what went on and thank Him for all He has done.

***Thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.*** (1 Corinthians 15:57 NLT)

Only God could have brought us to a place where we recognized that we were powerless and that our lives had become unmanageable. God, in His wisdom, brought someone across our path to share a message of hope with us or He simply stirred a desire in us for something other than what we were living. God gave us the strength and courage to seek help and here we are. One day at a time, one moment at a time God gives us sobriety and a new life worth living. Have we taken time today to thank God for all of this?

***But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. Everything you say and everything you do should be done for Jesus your Lord. And in all you do, give thanks to God the Father through Jesus.*** (Romans 6:17 NIV, Colossians 3:17 ERV)

There's no doubt that the power of our addiction brought us to a place of being a slave to our drug of choice and to a lifestyle of doing whatever met our needs, regardless of the harm caused to others. That slavery was broken by the power of God as we put our trust in the forgiveness and healing that Jesus achieved for us on the cross.

As we have studied God's word and put His principles into practice in all our affairs, we have found freedom to speak and behave in new ways that we never could have imagined. We can wake up each day with a heart filled with gratitude and offer our experience, strength, and hope to others.

***Prayer: Loving God, I can't begin to tell you how grateful I am for what You have done for me. Each breath I take is a gift from You. I don't want to take my sobriety for granted. Today, and every day, I want to thank You for my life and my recovery. Amen***

***It does us good to acknowledge God's input into what went on and thank Him for all He has done.***

SUNDAY PSALM – THE KINDNESS OF GOD

SAFEGUARDING OUR NEW LIFE

When we have admitted to ourselves and another human being the harm we have caused, the next step is to ask God to forgive us and free us from our self-centered way of living. We need to switch from doing what is right in our own eyes to following the ways of God.

When we repent of our sin and surrender our will and life over to the care of God, amazing things happen. We are born again to a new life through the death and resurrection of Jesus. By our belief in Jesus, we become co-inheritors of the Kingdom of God and have a part to play in the plan of God for the community He has placed us in. When we receive Jesus into our lives, our lives are complete in Him.

**The love and kindness of God is available to everyone who surrenders their will and life to Him. Are we truly willing to believe and receive?**

*We have sinned, even as our ancestors did; we have done wrong and acted wickedly. When our ancestors were in Egypt, they gave no thought to your miracles; they did not remember your many kindnesses, and they rebelled by the sea, the Red Sea. Yet he saved them for his name's sake, to make his mighty power known ... He saved them from the hand of the foe; from the hand of the enemy he redeemed them. Then they believed his promises and sang his praise.* (Psalm 106:6-8, 10,12 NIV)

The effects of nations choosing not to follow God are visible all around us. Pride rules in human hearts and people come to believe that they know better than their Creator what is best for them. Some choose to believe that God does not exist and that faith in God is just a crutch for the weak. Others choose to believe that following God will not lead to a meaningful, purposeful life.

*And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.* (Hebrews 11:6 NIV)

The love and kindness of God is available to everyone who surrenders their will and life to Him. He will rescue anyone who turns to Him for help and puts their trust in the truth of His written word. Are we willing to believe God and receive new life from Him today?

*Prayer: Loving God, I want to believe You are real and trust You with all my heart. Please help me to remember Your love and kindness towards me so I may joyfully follow Your ways in everything I say and do. Amen*

*Don't tell lies to each other; it was your old life with all its wickedness that did that sort of thing; now it is dead and gone. You are living a brand new kind of life that is continually learning more and more of what is right, and trying constantly to be more and more like Christ who created this new life within you.* (Colossians 3:9-10 TLB)

In the past year and months of the Covid-19 pandemic, the lives of people throughout the world have changed dramatically. Each country has been trying to minimize infection of their residents by putting laws and restrictions in place for their protection. There is a penalty to pay when people disobey these laws and restrictions.

God wants to protect His people from the stubborn infection of sin in their lives. In the Bible He tells us what is good for us and what will cause us harm. If we disobey God's laws, there is also a penalty to pay.

*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* (Romans 6:23 TLB)

We need to pay attention to what God says in His Word. We need to put in place His laws that will protect us and those around us from the infection of sin. We have been made complete in Jesus and we want to safeguard our lives from everything that would cause damaging infection.

*Give up your evil ways and start thinking pure thoughts. And be faithful to me! Do you really want to be put to death for your sins?* (Ezekiel 18:31 CEV)

*Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for Jesus, who by His finished work on earth, made me complete in You. Please let my faith in Jesus be expressed in my actions towards others. Amen*

**God wants to protect His people from the stubborn infection of sin in their lives.**

## DESIRE TO CHANGE

Whether in Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous, Tradition three highlights that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking or using.

Jesus tells us: ***Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.*** (Matthew 26:41 NIV, Philippians 2:13 NLT)

***As we  
experience  
conscious  
contact  
with God,  
He  
faithfully  
changes  
our  
desires.***

Most of us find it is not difficult to dislike the suffering and upheaval we experience alongside our using and drinking. It really takes an act of God, though, to change our desire to not drink or use again. It really is a miracle that God can work in us so the obsession to pick up is removed. We're told that we can expect a "daily reprieve" as we maintain our life with God on a daily basis. We need God's help to be sober today. We need our actions to reflect God's principles, so inner change will show in our desire to obey.

As we add one day of sobriety to another, we notice change around us. Our relationships are more joyful and peaceful. We experience some success in things we are doing and confidence begins to grow in us. The blur in our minds begins to clear. We find ourselves laughing and enjoying simple pleasures. All these things added together strengthen our desire to not drink or use.

Underneath all of this is the fact that, as we experience conscious contact with God, He faithfully changes our desires. The more we do what God says works, the more we experience the peace of God and a sense of well-being deep in our soul. Life with God in recovery is showing itself to be sweeter and more desirable than a life of drinking or using.

***Find your delight in the Lord. Then he will give you everything your heart really wants. Live by the Holy Spirit's power. Then you will not do what your desires controlled by sin want you to do.*** (Psalm 37:4, Galatians 5:16 NIRV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, change me from the inside out. Help me to enjoy the blessings of today but most of all help me to delight in living in Your ways and experience that life with You is sweeter and more desirable than a life of drinking or using. Amen*

## GAINING AND PRACTICING DISCRETION

In the Big Book of AA, we are advised to use discretion in knowing how much time and attention to give to any one situation in comparison to another situation where someone might benefit in their desire to recover if given more time and support. Employers are encouraged to use discretion in how they approach those employees they want to help, even in mentioning the Big Book. We are cautioned to use discretion when making our Step 9 amends to people, and to do so only when it would not further injure them or others.

To show discretion is to know the right thing to do in a situation and behave in such a way that we don't cause offense. Quite the challenge. Thankfully, the Bible is very clear about how we can gain wisdom and practice discretion.

***For the Lord grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity. He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him. Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will find the right way to go. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy. Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you.*** (Proverbs 2:6-10 NLT, Proverbs 2:11 NIV)

***Discretion is a life-giving fountain to those who possess it, but discipline is wasted on fools.***

***Proverbs 16:22 NLT***

We know that on our own we are powerless to maintain healthy boundaries, think before we speak, and to know what's best in complicated situations. God's promise is that He will give us common sense, will protect us, will show us the way that is just and fair, and will even fill us with joy as we walk this journey. We only get wisdom and discretion by improving our conscious contact with God through prayer and meditation, and by practicing His principles in all our affairs. In other words, we learn by journeying with God, obeying what He says works, and then benefiting from the lessons we learn as we see the results. Discretion doesn't come in a moment. It comes from prayer, experience, integrity, and surrender to God's will.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to show wisdom and discretion in all my affairs. Help me practice knowledge of Your ways in each situation I encounter today. When I should be silent, help me to not speak. Where I need to practice healthy boundaries, help me to do so. Help me to learn the lessons You are providing as I walk with You each day. Amen*