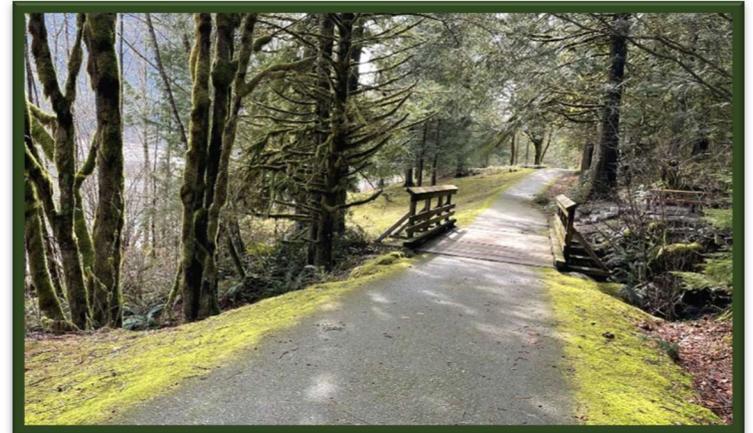


LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



APRIL 2022

These meditations are available online
for computer, tablets, and smart phones
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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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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

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY Daily Meditations

APRIL 2022

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

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.

YOU WILL HAVE TROUBLE..... BUT I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD

At what point in our lives did we desire to improve our conscious contact with God? Maybe it was at the point when we admitted we were powerless over our dependency and our life was unmanageable. Maybe it was when a tragic event happened to a loved one. Maybe we just knew there was more to this life than what we have known. Jesus told us in this world we would have trouble and He was not wrong because the world is passing away, but those who obey what God says will live forever.

I have told you these things so that you can have peace in me. In this world you will have troubles. But be brave! I have defeated the world! The world is passing away, and all the things that people want in the world are passing away. But whoever does what God wants will live forever. (John 16:33; 1 John 2:17 ERV)

In this world we are living in an environment that is hostile to the ways of God and most people choose to live according to what is right in their own eyes, just as we did. The Scriptures tell us of God's mercy and compassion and how He knew we were helpless to redeem ourselves from sin by trying to obey the law, so He sent His son Jesus into the world not to judge it, but to provide a way to save us and restore us to Himself.

The law was without power because it was made weak by our sinful selves. But God did what the law could not do: He sent his own Son to earth with the same human life that everyone else uses for sin. God sent him to be an offering to pay for sin. So God used a human life to destroy sin. (Romans 8:3 ERV)

Jesus overcame worldly ways and the devil's temptation to sin. He lived a perfect life. Jesus' righteous life is ascribed to us who believe His death was for our sin and His resurrection is our power over death, which is the penalty for sin.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for sending Jesus into the world so I could be free from the power of sin and live with You forever in that place He has gone to prepare for me. Amen

***Jesus said:
In this world
you will have
troubles. But
be brave! I
have defeated
the world!***

John 16:33 ERV

APRIL 2, 2022

SUPPORTIVE

NOTES

When we are not feeling good about ourselves or our performance and someone takes the time to encourage us with kind words, we immediately start to feel better. Kind words are like scaffolding that helps support our confidence as we keep moving forward. Early recovery is not easy and requires patience amid the chaos. If we have been in recovery for a time, we need to continue to be patient with ourselves and supportive of those who are just newbies on the path. "Rome was not built in a day" is a true saying.

Kind words are like scaffolding that helps support our confidence as we keep moving forward.

Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones. (Proverbs 16:24 NKJV)

Attending recovery meetings is a way to be supported and to support others. Being truthful about where we are at or what we are learning may help another person. Honouring each person's role is important as well as following the principle of "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Doing our best not to provoke anger in others is one more way to be caring. We need to bless and pray for each other. God instructed that His people should be blessed with the following words:

May the Lord bless you and take good care of you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26 NIRV)

When we pray for discernment in how to bless a person, God will give us the appropriate words to say. If we follow the path of seeking God's input, all our words will be supportive and an encouragement to those who hear them.

Let us stop judging one another. Instead, decide not to put anything in the way of a brother or sister. Don't put anything in their way that would make them trip and fall. (Romans 14:13 NIRV)

Prayer: Loving God, Please keep me from causing a person to stumble by the words I speak. Set a watch over my mouth so that my words are always sweet to another's soul and health to their whole body. Help me to be like scaffolding, supportive in all my ways. Amen

APRIL 30, 2022

MOVING AWAY FROM BEING ALOOF AND ISOLATED

Addiction is a disease of isolation. That's not news to those of us who have spent time there. The challenge for us is to do what is necessary to become willing to attach emotionally to others in the right way. We need to leave behind the false impressions we like to give when we are aloof and pretending to be fine. When someone says, "It's all good," it seldom is. When we hear ourselves saying it, it's time to look below the surface and sort out what's really going on.

Those of us who had care givers who were inconsistent or deficient in their care and support of us are usually fearful of any future pain or abandonment, and this keeps us from coming close to another person. Many of us suffer from various forms of "attachment disorder." How can we approach people for who they are today rather than seeing them as those we related to with pain in our past?

So also we are many persons. But in Christ we are one body. And each part of the body belongs to all the other parts.

Romans 12:5 NIRV

But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:7 NLT)

The Scriptures promise that as we walk in the Light with our will and our life surrendered to God, and practice His principles in all our affairs, we will be empowered to share our lives with others. We don't even have to do it perfectly. God knows we will make mistakes and promises that His power makes up for our weakness.

Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9 NLT)

God's plan for us is loving relationship with Him and with others, supporting and being supported, just like the various parts of our body support each other as they work together for our good. We can ask God to help us be willing to give up our tendency to be aloof and isolated and move into His perfect plan for our lives.

So you are no longer outsiders and strangers. You are citizens together with God's people. You are also members of God's family. (Ephesians 2:19 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to move away from being aloof and isolated and learn how to live in loving relationship with You and with others. Amen

APRIL 3, 2022

STEP ONE – MY LIFE IS UNMANAGEABLE

Why do we continue to do things our own way when it obviously isn't working? Someone has defined insanity as repeatedly doing the same action while expecting a different result. Someone else has coined a slogan that says, "If nothing changes, nothing changes." Doing life on our own without God has led us into empty, lonely, and shame-filled places.

In order for us to understand just how unmanageable our life is without God and how powerless we are to fix ourselves, the Bible uses a clear picture that contrasts a fountain of fresh flowing water with an old container – a cistern – that is dirty and cracked and doesn't even hold the rain water that has flowed into it.

God explains, ***"My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water."*** (Jeremiah 2:13 NIV)

We've responded to our felt needs with defective short-term solutions and ended up with a more frustrating level of need. While we are filling our lives with chaos and thrashing around in our own panic and distractions, we'll never know real life. God desires to provide power and guidance through His Holy Spirit, so we can have a peaceful and meaningful life that is fruitful and satisfying.

Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." (John 7:37-38 NIV)

Whether we are early in recovery or we've been clean and sober for a time, we need what God is offering us each day. We need to be filled up with God's life-giving truth and the refreshing power of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I don't want my life to remain stale or chaotic and ask that You work in me each day so I may live in the reality of what life brings. Please give me the courage and strength to follow Your direction in all my affairs. Amen

Whether we are early in recovery or we've been clean and sober for a time, we need what God is offering us each day.

GOD'S PROTECTION – SHIELD OF FAITH

God gives us a number of “tools in our toolbox” so we can navigate each day successfully. One important tool is the shield of faith.

Hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. (Ephesians 6:16 NLT)

God is the one who has the know-how and the power to help us find sobriety, and more importantly, to find a life which is truly worth being sober to enjoy. The evil one will intentionally seek us out and hurl all sorts of accusations concerning things we have done in the past. He will also lie to us to make us believe that changing our ways is impossible for “losers like us.” However, God tells us that we can have faith in His goodness and His commitment to our good that will stop all those fiery darts. Our job is to simply come to God, believe that He’s there and that as we turn our will and our life over to His care, He will strengthen us to make all the necessary changes.

***I entrust
my spirit
into your
hand.***

***Rescue me,
Lord, for
you are a
faithful
God.***

Psalm 31:5 NLT

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. (Hebrews 11:6 NLT)

We need to come to God, trusting that He is there and there for us. Even if it takes an hour, a day, a week, or even a bit longer for certain things to get worked out, we can have the peace and security of knowing that with God’s help we will see His goodness expressed in our hearts and circumstances.

***The LORD your God is with you; his power gives you victory.
The LORD will take delight in you, and in his love he will give***

you new life. He will sing and be joyful over you. (Zephaniah 3:17 GNT)

No matter what our thoughts say, what others say, or the evil one tries to tell us, if we will hold up the shield of faith in what God says, we can be confident that God will give us victory after victory and we will experience the new life which we long for.

Prayer: Loving God, No matter what I face today, You will be with me. You love me without condition. Your love never fails. I have nothing to prove to you today, nothing to accomplish in order to earn your love. You care about me and desire to give me good gifts. I accept all that You have for me and put my faith and trust in You today. Amen

STEP FOUR – FEARLESS FOCUS ON MYSELF

When we come to Step 4 in the 12-Step program we are asked to focus on ourselves and make a searching and fearless moral inventory. We are not to focus on anyone else or on the impact they may have had on our lives. We are to concentrate on ourselves and truthfully admit that it was our own decision making that got us to where we are today. We are the ones who chose our way of life and in some instances ignored any good advice that others may have offered us.

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. (Proverbs 4:20-22 NLT)

The reason we look at ourselves is to measure how our judgment measures up with the principles contained in the Scriptures as recorded in the Bible. Taking responsibility for our actions is a step in the right direction. As we look at situations where we made irresponsible choices, we can assess our thinking process at that time and give some thought as to why we chose the route we did. In some instances, we may have acted without even thinking about the consequences.

We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:4-5 NLT)

Most of us want to avoid self-examination. It is much easier to blame others for the harm they caused us, and which we believe contributed to our defects of character. It is true that some of us suffered traumatic events which we tried to mask with all sorts of sedatives. Masking the grief will not bring about health. We need to speak about what happened with a trusted friend or counselor and allow recovery to begin. Our wounds will not heal until we give them to Jesus who took them upon Himself.

Come to me, all you who are tired and are carrying heavy loads. I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to be honest in my self-evaluation and allow the healing process of my life with You in recovery to begin. Amen

***Taking
responsibility
for our
actions
is a step
in the right
direction.***

A NAGGING SENSE OF GUILT

Many of us are plagued throughout the day with a nagging sense of guilt. Where do these feelings come from? What should we do with them? Guilt feels like a shadow that has settled on our hearts. We long for the sunshine of joy and freedom but each time we think we are approaching it, guilt seems to cast a shadow over our thoughts and emotions and drags us down.

Sometimes the guilt comes because of things we have done that we know we should not have done. The Bible tells us that all of us have done things we ought not to have done and have failed to do things which we should have done.

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. If we claim to be without sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. (Romans 3:23 NLT, 1 John 1:8 NIV)

When Jesus says our wrongs are forgiven, they are truly forgiven.

We all have our own set of wrongs, but one set is not any more difficult for God to forgive than another. Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for all sin.

If you kept a record of our sins, who could escape being condemned? But you forgive us so that we should stand in awe of you. (Psalm 130:3-4 GNB)

God wants us to admit we did wrong, be sorry about what we have done, and desire to change our ways. The path forward is to ask for God's forgiveness, receive it, and then move ahead. Any lingering guilt over issues which God has forgiven is false guilt which comes from accusation of the devil as he tries to entrap us. When Jesus says our wrongs are forgiven, they are truly forgiven. We need to agree with

God that we are forgiven and purposefully re-align our thoughts and emotions with God's reliable assurance that the debt for sin is settled.

Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. (Psalm 32:5 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I have done wrong. I admit I have harmed others and lived in my own self-will rather than following Your will and Your ways. Please forgive me and wash me clean from all my offences. Today I put my trust in what Jesus has done for me on the cross and receive forgiveness and a fresh start from You. Amen

ANTICIPATION

Our anticipation of future events is positive when we expect something good is about to happen, such as going out to see a show, taking a holiday trip, or doing something else we really like to do. At other times our anticipation of what is about to happen brings fear and anxiety. It may be a situation where we have done wrong and are expecting punishment or just the ongoing chaos of living in a dysfunctional lifestyle. Our emotions go up and down according to the outcome we are anticipating. In recovery, how can we live at peace in the middle of the ups and downs of life?

Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, But a good word makes it glad. (Proverbs 12:25 NKJV)

When we are in trouble God invites us to call on Him. We read stories in the Bible of people who were anticipating trouble from their enemies and how God answered their petitions and prayers. We learn from these stories that God cares for His people. If we have given our will and life over to the care of God, do we anticipate that He will help us in our time of need? The answer to that question should be a resounding "YES".

Your way is perfect, Lord, and your word is correct. You are a shield for those who run to you for help. (2 Samuel 22:31 CEV)

Our attitude has a major impact on how we succeed in living life to the full. Seeing God as our Heavenly Father who knows what is best for us will cause us to anticipate that goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our life. If we hold to this viewpoint, we will truly soar like an eagle and get a much larger view of life with God in recovery.

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John 14:27 NKJV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your Word gives me hope that I can trust You to work all things together for my good. Help me to anticipate this in every situation that I may encounter. Amen

Our attitude has a major impact on how we succeed in living life to the full.

GOD GIVES HOPE

We hope for all sorts of things. When we struggle with life, we hope we can make it through one more day. When we manage to get through the door and begin our recovery, we hope we can stick around and really live well in sobriety. Hope is that feeling or desire, or even expectation, that a certain thing can happen.

The problem with finding and maintaining hope is, what we hope for is not seen today. We have heard good news. In the hope that it is true, we reach out to make it our own. The Bible describes it this way:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13 NIV

Hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is unfailing love. His redemption overflows. (Psalm 130:7 NLT)

Every day we need to invite God to fill us with hope that is based on His unfailing promises and His ability to carry out what He says He will do. This is how we come to believe that a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity and this is the way we come to live in hope.

Prayer: Loving God, Please fill me with Your love, joy and peace so that I can trust in You, and overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen

But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. (Romans 8:24-25 NIV)

Although it may take time for all God's promises to come alive in us we have God's sure and steadfast promise to pin our hopes on.

But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine. (Psalm 33:18-19 NIV)

We do not have to rely on our own efforts and hope that the good things we do will outweigh the bad. No, our hope is based on God's unfailing love for us that will pick us up, dust us off, and set us on the right path over and over again as we choose to surrender our will and our life into His care. It's in God's truth and in His ability to deliver us from sin that we can dare to have hope today.

MISSING THE POINT ABOUT MISTAKES

Trying to be perfect is a mean task master yet many of us live in the fear of making mistakes and hide in shame and addictive behaviour when we stumble.

Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. (Proverbs 11:2 NLT)

Mistakes are a part of life. Thomas Edison failed 100 times before he finally got the light bulb right. Henry Ford went broke 5 times before he successfully manufactured and sold cars. Michael Jordan missed more than 9000 shots during his famous basketball career, including 26 times he was given the ball at the last second of the game and missed. Life is full of mistakes, but the winners are those who learn from them and try again.

The Lord takes good care of all those who fall. He lifts up all those who feel helpless. (Psalm 145:14 NIRV)

To learn from our mistakes means we look at what we have done wrong and think about how we might improve our future efforts. We need to do the best we can. We need to be humble and ask questions or seek professional help when we do not know something. We need to give our attention to what we are doing and avoid distractions. We need to learn from those who have been successful and ask for input from those who have walked the path we are on. We need to take time to reflect on a task or on our day and see if anything went wrong, and if something did, promptly admit it.

Even if good people fall seven times, they will get back up. (Proverbs 24:16a CEV)

If we make a mistake the worst thing we can do is pretend it never happened. It does no good to bluster our way around it or try to hide it. The quicker we admit we got it wrong, the quicker we can build on the lesson learned. Let's get active and try, and then try again, until we get things right.

If you don't confess your sins, you will be a failure. But God will be merciful if you confess your sins and give them up. (Proverbs 28:13 CEV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to see my mistakes from Your perspective. When I stumble help me to learn the lesson I need to learn, get up, live in today, and move on with You. Amen

Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance

Proverbs 1:5 NIV

COMMUNITY – TOGETHER WE CAN

Sobriety and living in recovery is never a one-person activity. As the old saying goes, “It takes a community to raise a child,” and it takes a community to help a person stay clean and sober and find a new life. God’s plan has always been that we share our lives with one another. God acted on this principle by sending Jesus to earth to show His great love for us and then He gave the Holy Spirit to empower and encourage us. As followers of Christ who are embracing His love and walking in His ways, God invites us to do as He has done and love and care for others as He has loved and cared for us.

And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity — all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved. (ACTS 2:44-47 NLT)

Share each other’s burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.

***Galatians 6:2
NLT***

In the early days of people following Jesus, they knew the importance of being together, of sharing with one another, of supporting each other, of praying and praising God together. As they did these things, others saw something in these people that stirred their desire to change their ways and seek this life they were witnessing in the community of faith.

Since we become like the company we keep, it is important to have friends we respect. This is also the reason that involvement in a support group is important for personal growth. When we are struggling in a certain area, it is helpful to know that we are not alone and that others are open to sharing our pain. It is also helpful to hear fellow strugglers share ways that have

encouraged them to overcome the obstacles of complete honesty, perseverance, and accountability.

You, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith. And you must show mercy to those whose faith is wavering. Rescue others by snatching them from the flames of judgment. Show mercy to still others, but do so with great caution, hating the sins that contaminate their lives. (Jude 1:20a, 22-23 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for the life I have with You in recovery and for the community of people I have found. Help me to be humble enough to receive help and to be available to help others as we all grow together with You in our new life in recovery. Amen

WOUNDS

Part of being human is experiencing some wounding. It may be a scraped knee from falling, a burned finger from touching something hot, or a variety of other things that injure us. These skin wounds often need cleaning, application of a medicinal salve, a bandage, and time to heal.

We also may experience wounding in our souls that comes from betrayal, rejection, abuse, sin, disappointment, and regret. Although we might tell others and try to convince ourselves that we are not wounded, fear and anger, self-hatred and inability to forgive, addiction and anxiety, are all evidence of the hidden wounds in our soul. Living successfully in recovery has a lot to do with identifying and taking care of our wounds.

He himself [Jesus] bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. (1 Peter 2:24 NIV)

Jesus cared so much about the wounds He knew we would experience that He suffered and died for us on the cross. His death and resurrection and our trust in Him opens the way for us to find freedom from every wound.

Just as physical wounds need to be cleaned in order to heal, so our hearts need cleansing and the healing that only Jesus can bring. God will wash us clean from our sin if we ask. After a skin wound is cleaned, an antiseptic salve is applied to protect the wound and assist in healing. When we read the Bible and fill our hearts with who God says we are, our souls find protection from the damage of the evil one’s lies. We put a bandage on a wound to protect it, changing it as often as necessary until new skin covers the wound. Similarly, we must look after our souls as we heal because the devil looks around to see what other lies and harm he can inflict.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. He sent out his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 John 1:9; Psalm 107:20; 1 Peter 5:8 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for caring about my wounds. Cleanse me, heal me, protect me from the evil one. I trust You to make me whole. Amen

***Heal me,
Lord,
and I
will be
healed;
save me
and I
will be
saved.
(Jeremiah
17:14 NIV)***

STEP TWO – CAN JESUS BE TRUSTED AS A HIGHER POWER?

The Bible is a wonderful source of support for us and contains many stories about the compassion Jesus showed to those He encountered. As we turn to Jesus, we can be sure that He will generously give the same kindness and support to us.

One day a man came to Jesus and asked him to help his young son. He said to Jesus, **“Have mercy on us and help us, if you can.” “What do you mean, ‘if I can’?” Jesus asked. “Anything is possible if a person believes.” The father instantly cried out, “I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!”** (Mark 9:22b-24 NLT)

When we face our powerlessness over addiction and the unmanageability of our lives, we can begin the process of recovery by asking Jesus to help us have faith in Him, just like this man did. Jesus set the son free and restored him to his father. God awaits an invitation from us to restore the loving relationship He planned for us to have with Him from the beginning of time.

As we begin to trust in Jesus and His unfailing love for us, we will come to realize how God truly meant life to be lived.

Recovery and eternal life will be ours when we renounce our rebellion and believe in the one God sent to save us. The one God sent was His beloved son Jesus. We can know what God is like by getting to know Jesus and learning from Him and from His teachings.

Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” (John 6:28-29 NIV)

As we begin to trust in Jesus and His unfailing love for us, we will come to realize how God truly meant life to be lived.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I come to You and ask for Your help to believe that a power greater than myself will restore me to sanity and give me the new life I desire. Amen

THE POWER OF A GLIMMER OF HOPE

My guilt overwhelms me—it is a burden too heavy to bear. My wounds fester and stink because of my foolish sins. I am bent over and racked with pain. All day long I walk around filled with grief. A raging fever burns within me, and my health is broken. I am exhausted and completely crushed. My groans come from an anguished heart. (Psalm 38:4-8 NLT)

This could be a graphic picture of one who has sunk low in their addiction and been trapped there for some time. Our inner pain and guilt are heavy. Our physical bodies are a mess. Our health is broken. We are filled with grief over all we have lost. Exhaustion overwhelms us. The anguish of what has been, what could have been, and what will never be, fills our minds.

You know what I long for, Lord; you hear my every sigh. My heart beats wildly, my strength fails, and I am going blind. My loved ones and friends stay away, fearing my disease. Even my own family stands at a distance. Meanwhile, my enemies lay traps to kill me. Those who wish me harm make plans to ruin me. (Psalm 38:9-12a NLT)

Somehow, even though we felt abandoned by our loved ones and were filled with fear about what our enemies might do to us, a new thought came. Who knows why? Did someone offer a prayer on our behalf that God would make Himself known to us? Did we remember something we heard in a meeting in some soup kitchen when we could hardly stay awake? Did we remember something from a childhood Sunday School experience? Who knows how, but the kindness of God seeped into our dark minds, and we began to long for something more than we were currently experiencing. How amazing it is that God met us in that dark state and has brought us to this day in recovery? The job is not finished but we have another day to go forward in the care of God.

The kindness of God seeps into our dark minds and we begin to long for something more than we are currently experiencing.

For I am waiting for you, O Lord. You must answer for me, O Lord my God. ... I confess my sins; I am deeply sorry for what I have done. Come quickly to help me, O Lord my savior. (Psalm 38:15, 18, 22 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, I am so grateful for all you've done for me. I can't do life on my own. Today I choose for life with You. How could I do otherwise? Amen

STEP THREE – JOURNEYING WITH GOD

When we turn our will and life over to the care of God, we are admitting that we cannot do life on our own and from this day forward are willing to let God direct our lives. We are aware of the wrongs we have done while we lived in self-will, the harm we have caused to our loved ones and friends, and the condemnation we have brought on ourselves. Now we are choosing to surrender our whole person – body, mind, and spirit, into God’s care. We say to God, “I am Yours. You have paid the price to give me new life. Now do with me as You will.”

So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. (Romans 12:1 MSG)

As we journey with Him, God will care for us and keep us safe on the path we have chosen.

God knows our hearts and when we are sincere about living a new life in the power of the Holy Spirit, it delights God’s heart. God is patient and kind and has compassion on us when we are feeling weak about obeying His word. If we ask Him, He will help us. He will show us things that are well-pleasing to Him, things that we may never have thought about or considered.

So let us never stop offering to God our praise through Jesus. Let us talk openly about our faith in him. Then our words will be like an offering to God. Don’t forget to do good. Don’t forget to share with others. God is pleased with those kinds of offerings. (Hebrews 13:15-16 NIRV)

Our minds may not be in tune with God’s word in every area yet, but we have God’s mighty Power working in us to help us get to know and do what pleases Him. Our God is a tender Father who is patient and kind. As we journey with Him, God will care for us and keep us safe on our chosen path.

Every word of God is perfect. He is like a shield to those who trust in him. He keeps them safe. (Proverbs 30:5 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for caring for me and guiding me in the way I should go. Please help me to obey Your word in everything I do. Amen

WISDOM – TRUSTING GOD TO MAKE THE RIGHT CALL

When we see those with evil plans prosper, we often wonder why God would allow them to do so. We hear stories about slum landlords who fail to keep their buildings clean and safe and do not seem to care about the well-being of their tenants. God is not pleased when people behave like this. People think that God does not see, but He does, and He will be the righteous judge of the motives and actions of each person.

Do not fret because of evildoers or be envious of the wicked, for the evildoer has no future hope, and the lamp of the wicked will be snuffed out. (Proverbs 24:19-20 NIV)

Evil actions are the result of lack of care for others. Sometimes we look the other way when someone needs help. The wisdom that Jesus gives is to, “Love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and love our neighbour as ourselves.” Instead of this, we pray and seek to get what is best for us and for our own use. The Bible teaches us to use whatever gifts God gives to do good and share with others and promises that we will reap what we sow. Do we want to reap a harvest of wickedness or a harvest of good?

Don’t say, “I didn’t know it!” God can read your mind. He watches each of us and knows our thoughts. And God will pay us back for what we do. (Proverbs 24:12 CEV)

Many of us in recovery still suffer from unforgiveness towards those who have harmed us. We do not seem to be able to let go of vengeful thoughts. This causes us to be tied to the painful event like an elephant tied to a stake and we remain restricted by the pain we could easily be freed from. The wise person lets go of their unforgiveness and turns their offenders over to God who is the wisest judge and will take the right action in all situations.

Don’t rejoice when your enemies fall; don’t be happy when they stumble. For the Lord will be displeased with you and will turn his anger away from them. (Proverbs 24:17-18 NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, Please fill my heart with Your love and give me the desire to forgive those who have harmed me. Set me free from all that hinders my new life with You. Amen

The wisdom that Jesus gives is to, “Love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and to love our neighbour as ourselves.”

PALM SUNDAY

The day we call Palm Sunday was foretold in the Jewish scriptures hundreds of years before it happened. The religious scholars in Jerusalem on that day would have known the prophesy but they failed to relate it to what was happening. As Jesus instructed them, His followers found a donkey which the owners allowed to be borrowed and taken to Jesus because they were told, "The Lord has need of him." The disciples threw their clothes on the colt and Jesus sat on him. The people who had gathered spread their clothes on the road as Jesus rode along and, at the Mount of Olives, they began to praise God for all the mighty works they had seen Jesus do.

Do we praise God for those things that have taken place, and continue to believe and hope for those things God has promised, but are yet to come?

Rejoice, rejoice, people of Zion! Shout for joy, you people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you! He comes triumphant and victorious, but humble and riding on a donkey—on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zechariah 9:9 GNT)

Jesus fulfilled many prophecies about His life and death. How would the writers of the Scriptures have known things about Jesus hundreds of years before He was even born? Why would the owner of the donkey allow the disciples to take it? Why would a donkey on whom no one has ever sat be calm enough to let Jesus sit on its back? The crowds were full of praise for the things Jesus had done among them. The Jewish religious leaders, who were offended by this display of worship, asked Jesus to stop the people praising God.

He (Jesus) came closer to the city, and when he saw it, he wept over it, saying, "If you only knew today what is needed for peace! But now you cannot see it!" (Luke 19:41-42 GNT)

Jesus knew that His death and resurrection were required for our peace, and for the peace of the Jewish leaders, even though they didn't recognize their need. Jesus knew the time of His death was near and He carried through to the end.

As we increase our conscious contact with God, do we praise Him for those things that have taken place, and continue to believe and hope for those things God has promised, but are yet to come?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank You for restoring me in body, mind and spirit and for giving me Your peace which passes all understanding. You are worthy of my praise and adoration. Help me to persevere and believe for those things yet to come. Amen

WISDOM: RETRAIN AND REPOSITION

Coming out of addiction and living in sobriety is always challenging and should be lived one day at a time. Our dependency kept us busy fulfilling its demands and now we need to learn new ways of healthy living. Our bodies are in a state of shock. We miss the familiar ways of addictive life and the people who used to be around us. New beginnings always require planning and, if we are to move from one place to the next, it is wise to seek help from others.

Leave your simple ways behind and begin to live; learn to use good judgment. Wisdom will multiply your days and add years to your life. (Proverbs 9:6, 11 NLT)

Living in recovery requires that we keep away from our old stomping grounds and from the people who are still living there. Initially we may think that seeing a familiar face might be good for us and that we might be able to influence one of our former acquaintances to also seek recovery. It is more likely that they will lead us back into addiction than we will influence them for good. It is much wiser to seek the company of someone who has been in recovery for a time and can share their experience in avoiding the pitfalls that lead to relapse.

So don't bother correcting mockers; they will only hate you. But correct the wise, and they will love you. Instruct the wise, and they will be even wiser. Teach the righteous, and they will learn even more. (Proverbs 9:8-9 NLT)

Evaluating our life may bring guilt and shame and stifle new growth unless we choose to repent and give our will and life over to the care of God. Jesus died in our place so we could be free from the penalty of sin. When we know and accept that the things we cannot change are forgiven by God, we will be able to move forward in recovery because, through Jesus, we have been reconciled to God.

Fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment. (Proverbs 9:10 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I'm not afraid to leave my past behind because I know You will care for me and teach me to use good judgment. Amen

Leave your simple ways behind and begin to live; learn to use good judgment.

Proverbs 9:6 NLT

ENDURE TO THE END

When we plan an airplane journey we usually do so with an optimistic approach. We trust the airplane is mechanically sound and the pilot has been trained to fly the plane and handle any turbulence that comes. When we begin our life with God in recovery, we are also optimistic of reaching our destination. Where we start from is just the beginning of our journey and we need to know there may be obstacles along the way. Just like the plane journey we may experience turbulence. When we experience a “bumpy” ride, whom will we trust?

But those who remain faithful to the end will be saved. (Mark 13:13b ERV)

So let us not become tired of doing good; for if we do not give up, the time will come when we will reap the harvest.

Galatians 6:9 GNT

When there is turbulence on a plane journey, all the passengers are relying on the pilot to do what is necessary to lessen the impact and get them safely to their destination. The cabin crew may assist the passengers with their seat belts or help calm them when the turbulence is severe. When challenges to our recovery journey show up, we need to rely on our Heavenly Father to keep us safe in the middle of the storm. Other people such as friends or sponsors may encourage us by praying with us about our predicament and telling us to hang on while the storm rages, for the storm will surely pass.

We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful. Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know. (James 5:11; Jeremiah 33:3 NASB)

No one would think of jumping out of an airplane when experiencing severe turbulence and, when times get tough, no one should think of opting out of their life with God in recovery. The Scriptures tell us not to dwell on earthly things. We need to remember that any darkness that obscures our way will pass for the true light is shining on us and will overcome the darkness.

Think about things that are in heaven. Don't think about things that are only on earth. You died. Now your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:2-3 NIRV)

Prayer: Gracious Father, Thank You for giving me new life and for strengthening me to endure to the end regardless of the circumstances that come my way. Amen

MAKING AMENDS

O God have mercy on me, for people are hounding me. My foes attack me all day long. I am constantly hounded by those who slander me, and many are boldly attacking me. But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you. I praise God for what he has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me? (Psalm 56:1-4 NLT)

In our life in addiction, we offended many people – family, friends, and even strangers. We lived to meet the needs of our dependency and were concerned only with ourselves. We neglected others' needs. We lied, cheated, and even stole from those around us. We made enemies by our actions. Some people avoided us because of our behaviour.

When we are ready to make amends, we make a list of all persons we have harmed. Just thinking about this may cause fear to arise within us because of the impact our addictive behaviour has had on those who are listed. We fear that they will not be as willing as God to forgive us for what we have done.

In these challenging moments, like the writer of the Psalm, we trust in God: ***“I praise God for what He has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me?”*** (Psalm 56:4 NLT)

When we put our hand into the hand of God, He will strengthen and support us as we become willing to make amends to those we have harmed. God is always with us. We need never face our problems alone.

See, God has come to save me. I will trust in him and not be afraid. The Lord God is my strength and my song; he has given me victory. (Isaiah 12:2 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your mercy and unfailing love for me. When I am afraid to complete any of the assigned tasks I will trust in You to strengthen and give me the courage to do so. Amen

When we put our hand into the hand of God, He will strengthen and support us as we become willing to make amends to those we have harmed.

CONSEQUENCES

Many of us know from personal experience, and from what we have seen and heard from others, that the consequences of a lifestyle of drug or alcohol misuse can be devastating. Across North America the death toll is exceptionally high from opioid overdose. Long term health effects include liver disease, cancer, and heart disease. We also know that others are damaged through crime, violence, and stress. Many of us have a history with our family and loved ones that we are still trying to sort out.

You cannot fool God, so don't make a fool of yourself! You will harvest what you plant.

Galatians 6:7 CEV

But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes. (1 John 2:11 ESV)

One of the consequences of living a destructive lifestyle is simply the sense of lostness we experience. We don't know where we are at or where we are going. It's like being blinded by darkness. Without the turning of our will and our lives over to the care of God, that darkness will end with us dying and going out to an eternity without God.

He will guard the feet of his faithful servants, but the wicked will be silenced in the place of darkness. It is not by strength that one prevails. (1 Samuel 2:9 NIV)

As clearly as there are horrific consequences to a life of sin and destruction, we can take heart that an amazing outcome will follow the choice to surrender our will and life to God and live under His care and protection.

It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. (Isaiah 59:2, 1 John 1:9 NLT)

God is ready and willing to work with us to sort and deal with our former sinfulness. He is ready to bless us with new life, with peace, with strength, with freedom, and with life forever with Him in heaven.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You know where I lived in the darkness of my soul. I ask for Your forgiveness and Your help to live in a new way. Give me the grace and strength I need to do what it takes to sort things out with You and with those I have harmed. Amen

REACTING TO STRESS

Stress has become a universal problem and many medical professionals consider it an underlying cause of numerous health issues. In our personal lives, pressure and stress can come from a variety of sources: family trouble, financial difficulty, job pressure, health issues and other factors.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4 NIV)

There are many reactions to everyday stresses. Some people try to ignore the problem in the hope that the irritation will go away. Some internalize the pressure seeking to suppress it. Others crumble emotionally, giving way to despair and depression or addictive behaviour.

One of the best responses we can have to stress is to pray. This one seems obvious, but sometimes it's harder than it seems. Praying requires us to focus on who God is and what God is doing rather than obsessing on the problem.

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. (Philippians 4:6 NLT)

God will never permit circumstances to break or shatter us. He knows our limitations and will not allow us to be overloaded beyond what we can bear. Rather, He seeks to use our stressful times as opportunities for us to gain His perspective, lean on His strength, and develop perseverance with which to endure life's ups and downs.

He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. (Isaiah 40:29 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for always being there. When my life has lots of stressful events and some days feel overwhelming, I invite You to come and strengthen me in the midst of my circumstances. Help me to see things from Your perspective. Help me to rest in Your promise to make a way through each situation, even when I think there is no way. Lord, in stressful times, help me to draw close to You and choose to trust and honour You in everything I do and say. Amen

One of the best responses we can have to stress is to pray.

HEALING FOR OUR HEARTS AND BODIES

Every day of our lives, and especially when we come into recovery, we need the healing power of God to bring us to new life. Our bodies and our relationships are broken, and had we continued in our chaotic lifestyle, we might have died. To fulfill the demands of our dependency, we alienated our friends and family and abandoned all sense of right and wrong. We need help and we know it!

Have the gates of death been shown to you? Have you seen the gates of the deepest darkness? (Job 38:17 NIV)

The above words were spoken by God to Job who was being persecuted by Satan and was in deep distress. Job needed the healing power of God to restore health to his body and to deal with the traumatic events of his life. Does that sound familiar? One

thing we know from the Scriptures is that Satan wants to steal, kill, and destroy us, whereas Jesus went to the gates of deepest darkness and death on our behalf. Jesus took the sin of the world upon Himself and tasted death for everyone, so we never have to. The choice of whom we will serve is ours alone.

He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.

Psalm 147:3 NIV

But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. (Hebrews 2:9 NIV)

When we begin to make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves, we can often see where we began to go down the wrong path. Most of us needed healing from the harm we suffered, or from the harm which was a product of our sensitivity to what was being said or done to us, or to those around us. Instead of seeking healing for our hurts we chose to allow the character defects of resentment, revenge, rage, anger, and bitterness govern our lives. Through Jesus, God made provision for us to be forgiven, healed, and restored to life. Are we entirely ready to do what is right and allow God to bind up our broken hearts and heal all our wounds?

You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. (1 Corinthians 6:19b-20 NIV)

Prayer: Loving God, I am entirely ready to have You remove all my character defects. Please heal and restore me to new life. My desire is to honour You and others in all I do. Amen

SEEING IT THROUGH TO COMPLETION

How many of us begin a job and see it through to completion? Some of us who have attempted recovery in the past and failed have a fear of never being able to change our old ways. In the Bible we read of Hezekiah who became King of Judah. He forsook the old ways of the nation under his father and worked to turn the nation back to God. He also made plans to restore the temple of the Lord and scheduled a time to celebrate completion.

Everything he took up, whether it had to do with worship in God's Temple or the carrying out of God's Law and Commandments, he did well in a spirit of prayerful worship. He was a great success. (2 Chronicles 31:21 MSG)

If we determine to follow God's principles, as Hezekiah did, we will find great success in all we do. We set ourselves up for failure when we neglect to seek God's guidance through prayerful worship and petition and only half-heartedly do those things required of us in our recovery program. When we decisively give our will and life over to the care of God, He gives us a new life and the power to do those things that please Him. We know that life on our own does not lead to a purposeful life, so why not seek to follow God's principles in all our affairs and allow Him to begin a new work in us?

God is the one who began this good work in you, and I am certain that he won't stop before it is complete on the day that Christ Jesus returns. (Philippians 1:6 CEV)

God has promised to be with us on the path ahead and, if we desire to be complete in Him, we need to seek His direction in all that we do. We need to admit that we have defects of character and become willing to allow God to remove them and bring healing and restoration to those places in us that have been wounded.

Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. (2 Corinthians 13:11 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is to live the purposeful life You have prepared for me. Please strengthen me by the Power of Your Holy Spirit to stay the course so I can truly be complete in You. Amen

Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace.

2 Corinthians 13:11b

LOVE IS NOT RUDE

Rudeness shows itself in our speech and actions towards others. It consists of inappropriate words spoken or disrespectful behavior. Rudeness may show itself in an unwillingness to accept tradition, or in not caring about offending others by what we say. It also shows itself in selfish ambition and in a disinterest in helping others. Some of us, when we are not at ease in a situation, may unintentionally be rude or even deliberately offensive.

Be sincere in your love for others. Hate everything that is evil and hold tight to everything that is good. Love each other as brothers and sisters and honor others more than you do yourself. (Romans 12:9-10 CEV)

Consideration and kindness in all our words and actions will go a long way to helping us establish lasting friendships.

In recovery we attempt to focus our minds on those things that will help us develop healthy relationships with one another. Rather than isolating ourselves from people or events where we feel awkward, we need to learn what is expected in certain situations and become cooperative. We also need to let go of offhand remarks and gossip about those who follow traditions we are not familiar with. Consideration and kindness in all our words and actions will go a long way to helping us establish lasting friendships.

Don't mistreat someone who has mistreated you. But try to earn the respect of others, and do your best to live at peace with everyone. (Romans 12:17-18 CEV)

Love is never rude. The Bible tells us that we will reap what we sow. Who among us wants to reap disrespect or humiliation? Let's make it a point to take personal inventory each day and choose to change the things we can, especially if we have a tendency to be uncaringly rude.

My prayer for you is that you will overflow more and more with love for others, and at the same time keep on growing in spiritual knowledge and insight. (Philippians 1:9 TLB)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to let go of those things that are part of my corrupt nature, especially rudeness. Help me to treat my friends and neighbours with respect and compassion and truly love and care for them as You love and care for me. Amen

DRY DRUNK OR LIVING SOBER

Being a "dry drunk" is a term used to describe a person whose current actions and attitude remain the same as when they were drinking. Without a substance to medicate the pain, they still hurt. If a person simply stops drinking or drugging and fails to address their underlying issues, they can easily get into a situation where relapse is looming. For example, if our way of dealing with anger or rejection is a problem we have never dealt with, we could end up ruining a new relationship, adding to our grief, and bringing on the desire to medicate again.

See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be just as full of light as when a lamp shines its light on you. (Luke 11:35-36 NIV)

Some telltale signs of being a dry drunk include: being rigid; angry, resentful, or sarcastic; having extreme mood swings; full of self-pity with a tendency to blame others; nothing is ever seen to be good enough; a general sense of boredom and dissatisfaction with 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)

Jesus wants to heal us and set us free from living as a dry drunk. Accepting His mercy and forgiveness is enough to heal us and make us feel safe plus have enough left over to offer the same to others. It's only in the strength of God's love and acceptance that we are able to do the hard work of exposing our character defects and become willing to hand them over to God who, when we are ready, will remove them from us. Then we will be free to live in the way God intends us to.

Prayer: Loving God, I know it displeases You when I don't bother to deal with my character defects. I don't want to live in that bondage any longer. I release myself and my hurts and resentments into Your hands for healing and restoration. Help me to change so I can live in Your love and be supported in every area of my life. Amen.

Being a "dry drunk" is a term used to describe a person whose current actions and attitude remain the same as when they were drinking.

THE EASTER QUESTION

Most of Jesus' friends abandoned Him before He died on the cross. After His death they huddled together in a locked room wondering what to do next. In their grief and sorrow, they were sure that the troubles that awaited them outside the room were more than they could endure. They didn't know how to go forward because Jesus was dead, and they had no hope -- or so they thought. While they sat in that room, an incredible thing happened. Jesus appeared to them.

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. (John 20:19-20)

Will we, like Thomas, come to realize that something incredible takes place when we ask Jesus to show us who He truly is?

Jesus gave them convincing proof that He was truly alive. He was not just a ghost or a delusion but a person they could feel and touch. He was alive! Wonder, joy and peace filled their hearts. However, one of Jesus' disciples named Thomas was not with the others when Jesus first made an appearance to them. When they told Thomas that Jesus was alive and that they had seen Him, he doubted that it was true.

Like Thomas, some of us have known the discouragement of hopes dashed and opportunities lost. In our broken fearful lives, we doubt the presence of God to help us.

A week later Jesus came again when they were all together, including Thomas. Jesus did not judge Thomas for having doubts but invited Him to, "**Stop doubting and believe.**" Jesus also told Thomas, "**Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**" (John 20:29 NIV)

Will we, like Thomas, come to realize that something incredible takes place when we ask Jesus to show us who He truly is?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Forgive me for doubting who You are and what You have done for me. Help me to be like Thomas who stopped doubting and believed. Amen

GOOD FRIDAY – GOD'S GOOD PLAN IN GOD'S GOOD TIME

We often give up on God before His plan, in His perfect timing, takes effect. Jesus death on Good Friday came before His resurrection on Easter Sunday. Things looked hopeless during the time between those two events, but God was in charge. God had a plan and God had the power to carry out His plan no matter the evil and destruction the devil unleashed.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. (Isaiah 55:8 NIV)

God's plan has always been that Jesus would die on the cross to pay the price for our sins. Before God created the world, He knew that regardless of their good intentions, humans would sin, and they would need a saviour who would forgive their sins and give them new life. Jesus was punished and killed for sins He didn't commit. Jesus was beaten and mocked and mistreated because of the anger and jealousy and baggage others carried. Jesus was perfect, but He suffered death because His Father loved us so much and the price of our sin, which is death, had to be paid. Because of the things Jesus suffered, He can sympathize with us, and relate to all of our suffering.

No one takes my life from me. I give it up willingly! I have the power to give it up and the power to receive it back again, just as my Father commanded me to do. (John 10:18 CEV)

God's plan went into place and was worked out at just the right time. The cross of Jesus reminds us that God's ways are different from ours and, while God's timing might be different from ours, God's timing is always perfect.

At just the right time Christ died for ungodly people. He died for us when we had no power of our own. (Romans 5:6 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for giving me new life through the death and resurrection of Jesus. I am forever humbled by Jesus' obedience to death, even death on a cross. Help me to live each day obedient to Your word, Your ways, and Your timing, trusting that you will make all things right as I surrender to Your will. Thank You for working all things together for good in my life. May all I do and say glorify Your Holy Name. Amen

Here is how God has shown his love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8 NIRV

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

Our experience of love and satisfaction in life is tied directly to being obedient to the ways of God. Jesus described that way for us in these words: ***If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.*** (Luke 9:23-24 NLT)

During His life on earth Jesus said many times that He came to do the will of His Father. The night before he went to the cross over 2000 years ago, His prayer of commitment was, ***“Not my will but Yours be done.”*** Jesus’ words and actions through His trial, suffering, and death on the cross, confirm His surrender to complete the work He came to earth to do. When times are tough for us we can be confident that, as surely as God raised Jesus from the dead, He will be with us. He will never leave nor forsake us. We, like Jesus, need to surrender to God’s way no matter how difficult it might be. This is the gift of Jesus to us. Let’s not waste it.

Our experience of love and satisfaction in life is tied directly to being obedient to the ways of God.

Jesus explained: ***My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*** (John 4:34, Ephesians 6:6, Romans 12:2 NLT)

Jesus laid all His rights down so the plan of God could be fulfilled for you and me. Will we be followers of Jesus and lay down whatever God asks of us? If we are willing to do so, we will experience a satisfying life here on earth, and eternal life in the place Jesus has gone to prepare for us. Let’s not waste what Jesus did on our behalf.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I am forever grateful for what You did to free me from the bondage of sin. Please help me to follow You in all my ways so that Your good, pleasing and perfect will for my life may be evident in all I do and say. Amen

HAPPY EASTER – JESUS IS ALIVE

Jesus is risen from the dead! Because He lives, we also shall live. My life and my recovery have hope because of this truth. All sin – from the beginning of time to the end of time – was laid on Jesus and not even the awful weight of death for these sins could hold Him down. Jesus’ resurrection demonstrates that no sin or evil, no pain or brokenness could overcome the power and love of God for those who are in Christ 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)

No matter how miserable or fearsome our lives may have been, not even the weight of that can hold us down when Jesus Christ fills us with life. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is in us when we completely renounce our former ways and give our will and life over to the care of God. Are we willing to surrender ourselves?

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 seems impossible for us, is only impossible when God is not involved. When we truly seek God, things happen that are beyond all that we could ask for or imagine. God’s ways are more generous than we ever dared to hope. God’s power is stronger than anything we have previously encountered. God’s kindness to us is more than any loving response we’ve ever experienced.

When we invite Jesus into our lives He brings power with solutions and hope. He fills us with His Holy Spirit. He fills us with peace and joy.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I believe that the death and resurrection of Jesus gives evidence of the fact that You have power over sin and death. Today, I turn my will and my life over to Your care and ask that You make me alive in my spirit. Teach me Your ways and give me the desire and the power to follow You every day of my life. Amen

Jesus’ resurrection demonstrates that no sin or evil, no pain or brokenness could overcome the power and love of God for those who are in Christ Jesus.