

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY



Daily Meditations



AUGUST 2019

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*Partners in Hope Recovery Society
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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.*

For your personal print copy send your request to:

Visit us at www.partnersinhope.ca or write to us at:

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

Email: pihrecovery@gmail.com

Phone or text: 604-215-0335



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AUGUST 2019

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Evelyn Leeburn, Elsie Quick

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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VOLUME 04, NUMBER 08

THURSDAY, AUGUST 1, 2019

GOD'S PLAN

God has a plan for my life that is meaningful, purposeful and joyful. When we read the Bible, we become aware of God's plan for this earth and its people. The Bible records how, throughout time, God has achieved his purposes through people. The birth of Jesus, His life, His death, and His resurrection were foretold centuries before He was even born into the world.

Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14 NKJV)

Just like God had a plan for Jesus' life He also has a plan for our lives. He knows the beginning and the end. God's desire is that we walk in the plan He has for us, but He will not override our will and force us to do so. That is what is so wonderful about Jesus. He chose to obey God's plan in all His ways, even going to death on a cross. Jesus knew He had a choice whether He would die for our sins or not. As a human, Jesus struggled but won the victory over His own will. How are we doing that? Are we wrestling with the demands of the world, our flesh, and the devil?

Jesus shows us what to do, He prayed: ***"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."*** (Luke 22:42 NIV)

As God's adopted children, we have His protection over every area of our life and the Holy Spirit's wisdom and guidance in all our affairs. Each event that we trust God to direct becomes part of the fulfillment of His good plan for our lives. When we disobey His principles and choose to opt out of His will for us, like any good Father, God will correct us. God is the great weaver of the tapestry of our lives and works every thread together for our good and His glory.

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. And you will agree that what he wants is right. His plan is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:2 NIRV)

Prayer: Gracious Father, Thank you for adopting me as Your child. Help me to seek Your ways in all my affairs and to quickly respond to the way You are leading me. Amen

God has a plan for my life that is meaningful purposeful and joyful.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 2, 2019

ADDICTION AND THE WHOLE PERSON

We are spiritual beings who have a soul and live in a body. God created us to work perfectly only when we are filled with His Spirit. We can't think and choose correctly unless we have the life of God in us. On our own we live stressed and obsessed while trying to experience pleasure or fix something that has gone wrong. Over and over again our efforts end in disaster. Without God, we just don't know how life works.

But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means. (1 Corinthians 2:14 NLT)

But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.
(1 Corinthians 6:17 NLT)

Many cars need a clear fluid (gasoline) in their engines in order to run well and transport people from place to place. While water (a clear fluid) is much cheaper than gasoline and more readily available, if we put it into the gas tank of our car, we will destroy the car's engine and it will not perform as it should. All clear fluids do not have the same purpose.

At our core we are spiritual beings, so in order to live well we need to find a spiritual solution for what's going on in our lives. Trying to fill ourselves up with work, sex, money or pleasure of any kind will only break us down. We need the Spirit of God who alone can fill us with life and give us true understanding of how life works.

Jesus replied, "I assure you no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So, don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.' (John 3:5-7 NLT)

When we invite God into our lives, He makes us alive by the power of His Holy Spirit and fills us with life-giving truth. Only then will we begin to think and feel differently, and out of that will flow new ways of choosing and behaving. Everything changes when we become spiritually alive.

Prayer: Loving God, on my own I'm ruining the beautiful life You have created me to live. I need a spiritual solution to solve my addiction issues. Come into my life and make me alive spiritually so the rest of me can know freedom and wholeness. Amen

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 2019

SINCERITY

A sincere person is one who is honest, who doesn't create false impressions, and who doesn't operate with selfish motives. What you see is what you get. They do the right thing for the right reasons. They don't have a hidden agenda.

My words come from an upright heart; my lips sincerely speak what I know.
(Job 33:3 NIV)

The meaning of the word sincere comes from the ancient practice of pottery making. If rocks were not sifted out of the clay, pots would have defects and deceitful potters would fill the small holes with wax. Later, when the buyer heated the pot, the wax would melt, and the pot would leak. Good potters, whose clay was sifted, would write on their pots "sine cera" – without wax. Are we as genuine on the inside as we try to portray on the outside? God wants us to know who we are in relationship with Him and then live that out with truth and grace in all our human relationships.

The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. (1 Timothy 1:5 NIV)

We need to say what we mean and mean what we say without lies or exaggerations or evasiveness. We need to be honest about what we think or feel – expressing ourselves with respect and politeness for sure -- but not thinking one thing and intentionally saying something else. To be sincere is to "walk the walk not just talk the talk."

For us to live before God and others with sincerity of heart, we need to practice being honest in all our affairs and not merely seek to gain advantage for ourselves. When we are impressed with something that has been done right, we should give a compliment with sincerity. When we have done something wrong, we should take responsibility and apologize with sincere regret and a willingness to make things right. With God's help we can live as a person of sincerity today.

Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God's grace. (2 Corinthians 1:12 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please work in me so that any character defects that would keep me from being sincere are brought to light and removed. Amen

Are we as genuine on the inside as we try to portray on the outside?

SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 2019

SUNDAY PSALM – COPING WITH ANXIETY OR DEPRESSION

When we first come into recovery, we may have feelings of anxiety or depression. For some time we have been medicating ourselves with a substance or perhaps were involved in an unhealthy relationship in order to find relief from the unease we felt inside. Now in recovery, we have given our will and our life over to the care of God and are coming to believe that there might be hope for a better life. However, the physical change we were expecting may not be keeping up with our expectations. We may feel oppressed by something that we cannot explain but know it causes our minds to be darkened by its presence. If we share with those who have gone through the recovery process, we will find that we are not alone in having experienced this darkness of soul. We need to seek God's comfort in this situation and stand strong in the truth that Jesus has all power over heaven and earth and has rescued us from the dominion of darkness.

Even though our feelings may go up and down, there is nothing that can hide us from God's presence.

"Be still and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world." The Lord of Heaven's Armies is here among us; the God of Israel is our fortress. (Psalm 46:10-11 NLT)

Because we are struggling, we may conclude that God is no longer with us, or that He does not exist, and we are facing this overpowering darkness alone. This is what the evil one would have us believe. The Bible tells us that as children of God we cannot be outside of His presence. He is in the highest heavens and in the lowest hell. Even though our feelings may go up and down, there is nothing that can hide us from God's presence.

Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault. (Jude 24 NLT)

Jesus is with us through the darkest valley of anxiety and depression and when we get to the other side, we will give thanks that He was with us all the way.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank You for being with me when tension and unease cause me anxiety. I am forever grateful that You are always with me and give me the strength to stand on the truth of Your word and to be an overcomer. Amen

MONDAY, AUGUST 5, 2019

ADMITTED TO OURSELVES

It is often difficult to admit to ourselves the exact nature of the wrongs we have committed. We may believe that our actions were in response to the hurt others inflicted on us or the result of wanting to be accepted by our peers. However, whatever caused us to harm ourselves and others, and brought us to the place where our lives are unmanageable, these are the very things that God wants to bring into the light so that we may be forgiven and restored to new life.

Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. (Hebrews 12:12-13 NKJV)

Through Jesus, God has made a way for us to be forgiven for all our sins. God wants us to be healed and set free from all the hurts we have endured, and from those we have caused others. Are we willing to receive from God all He wants to give us?

As God's co-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. (2 Corinthians 6:1-2 NIV)

We are often challenged to understand our own hearts but if we ask God to show us the root cause of our behaviour, He will expose those things that keep us in bondage to our old ways.

He does what is right for those who have been hurt. He gives food to the hungry. The Lord frees people locked up in prison. The Lord makes the blind see again. The Lord helps those who are in trouble. The Lord loves those who do right. (Psalm 145:7-8 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that I struggle to admit even to myself the harm I have caused others. Please help me see beyond my actions and give me understanding of what caused me to rebel against Your ways. Amen

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TUESDAY, AUGUST 6, 2019

PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS

What do "people, places, and things" have to do with living well with God in recovery today? Our minds remember and associate strong emotions with people, places, and things. These powerful emotions can trigger the obsession to use. It's not always drug paraphernalia, a drinking buddy, or passing by a familiar bar that triggers these emotions. While it's important to do what is in our power to limit situations like these that bring triggers, it's even more important to acknowledge our powerlessness over events around us that will impact us.

The world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever. (1 John 2:16-17 NLT)

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crave.***

Each day, it's important to remind ourselves that God is in control. He has a wonderful day planned for us that is more fulfilling than the temporary feelings we experienced when we were drinking and using.

You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever. (Psalm 16:11 NLT)

1 John 2:17 NLT Whether it's anxiety, fear, or stress that is triggering our thoughts of using, we need to bring it all to God and trust God to provide a solution and support us in our journey. We are powerless over people, places, and things but we are not alone anymore. God is with us. God is for us. God will make a way where there seems to be no way.

I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears. When doubts filled my mind, your comfort gave me renewed hope and cheer. Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. (Psalm 34:4; 94:19; 23:4; NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to live in the conscious awareness of Your compassionate presence with me in every situation. Help me to hear Your voice when people, places, or things trigger me in negative ways. I ask You to keep holding onto my hand as You assure me that "this too shall pass." Amen

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 2019

RESCUING IN RELATIONSHIPS

Some of us slid into destructive and addictive lifestyles out of a desire to have friends and companions to belong to. We longed to have people around us to enrich our lives and to be able to do the same for them. Some of us attempted to support and rescue others from the effects of their dysfunctional lifestyle. In the beginning we were gracious and happy to be a friend and offer our support but, as time moved along and the chaos continued, we became progressively critical and unhappy with our situation.

If someone who is wise tries to settle a problem with a fool, the fool will argue and say stupid things, and they will never agree. (Proverbs 29:9 ERV)

Too many of us remain in unhealthy relationships because we are afraid of the impact our withdrawal may have on the person we are trying to support. We put up with their constant unhappiness, physical or mental abuse, substance abuse, financial chaos, medical issues etc. etc. We ignore the opinion of others that we are powerless in the situation. Perhaps our own identity is in the role of staying connected to their world, and we fear change. Compulsive rescuers, in a roundabout way, may be seeking to support their own shortcomings.

Whoever hides their sins will not be successful, but whoever confesses their sins and stops doing wrong will receive mercy. People who respect others will be blessed, but stubborn people will have plenty of troubles. (Proverbs 28:13-14 ERV)

Through Jesus, God has already made provision to rescue each of us from a life burdened down by sin. By surrendering to God, we gain wisdom in all our affairs through obeying the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If we humbly ask God to remove all our shortcomings, our relationship with others will grow and be healthy.

Let's take a good look at the way we're living and reorder our lives under God. (Lamentations 3:40 MSG)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You alone are the giver of new life. Help me to accept the things I cannot change and change the things I can. I ask You for discernment and wisdom in all my affairs so I may know the difference. Amen

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 2019

TAKING, AS JESUS DID, THIS SINFUL WORLD AS IT IS

The process of recovery is a time to find peace while also accepting life as it is. Life isn't always fair. It isn't always predictable or controllable. When we become willing to face the hurts we have experienced and consider our reaction to them, then we come closer to changing our thought patterns and response to troubling situations. Jesus came into this sinful world, not to judge it for what it was, but to put it right.

God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again. (John 3:17 MSG)

We can't change the fact that our world is imperfect, but we can choose our attitude.

We can't change the fact that our world is imperfect but we can choose our attitude. There are many injustices in life. Good people suffer sickness and all sorts of problems. Wicked people prosper from unrighteous acts and appear to have all their earthly needs met. Jesus took this sinful world as it was and suffered and died to give new life to its inhabitants. God graciously says that whoever believes in Jesus will not perish but have everlasting life, and that includes His enemies.

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. (Matthew 5:44-45 NIV)

All of us have made bad choices and walked paths that have caused us pain. Life with God in recovery teaches us to think and act in new ways. Are we willing to accept this world as it is and do what God has called us to do to make it a better place for us and for our community? Today, let's focus on ways to change those things we can.

When anyone is in Christ, it is a whole new world. The old things are gone; suddenly, everything is new! (2 Corinthians 5:17 ERV)

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to take this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it. Give me the courage and wisdom to accept the things I cannot change and, with Your help, change the things I can. Amen

FRIDAY, AUGUST 9, 2019

SEEKING PLEASURE

God designed humans with a natural desire to pursue pleasure. Pleasure was to come from our intimate relationship with God and then overflow into our human relationships and experiences.

You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. (Psalm 16:11 NIV)

The problem is, we get consumed with desire for things that only bring temporary satisfaction. Seeking pleasure above all else has been described down through the ages as the focus of fools rather than that of the wise. Whether it is avoiding work, failing to listen to the wisdom of another, or planning and scheming to get ahead, these are described as things that bring temporary pleasure and, in the end, also bring trouble. Our addiction and the chaos of life it brings certainly fits into this category.

A fool finds pleasure in wicked schemes, but a person of understanding delights in wisdom. Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions. Whoever loves pleasure will become poor; whoever loves wine and olive oil will never be rich. (Proverbs 10:23, 18:2, 21:17 NIV)

We often experience pleasure by giving it to others. God gets great pleasure in adopting us into His family and who of us doesn't find joy in knowing that we are loved and belong.

God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. (Ephesians 1:5 NLT)

Whether it's tasting that first cup of coffee in the morning or laying our head on the pillow at night, let's be mindful of God's goodness and all the simple pleasures that fill our day.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to listen to Your guidance so I live on the path that leads to joy and satisfaction each day. Help me to live in Your presence and experience pleasure that is so much more fulfilling than anything addiction has to offer. Amen

Seeking pleasure above all else has been described down through the ages as the focus of fools rather than that of the wise.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10, 2019

PRIDE

Our pride often keeps us from asking for what we need. We may have grown up in a family where we were consistently ignored or disappointed. Perhaps our needs were seldom met. Some of us reacted by becoming self-sufficient and determined that we would never ask anyone for help. Jesus, who knows we will not succeed on our own, tells us to not just ask, but to keep on asking for help. Only the work of God's Holy Spirit in us will enable us to become healthy people.

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. (Luke 11:9-10 NIV)

Pride born out of hurt shows up when we refuse to acknowledge our need for help. Sooner or later the independent road we are choosing will take us back to active addiction. Are we willing to humbly admit that there is another way – a better way – to deal with the brokenness inside us? This way begins with giving our will and life over to the care of God.

Only the work of God's Holy Spirit in us will enable us to become healthy people.

Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. Pride leads to conflict; those who take advice are wise. Human pride will be humbled, and human arrogance will be brought down. Only the Lord will be exalted on that day of judgment. (Proverbs 11:2, 13:10, Isaiah 2:17 NLT)

The challenge for us is giving up our prideful effort to be self-sufficient. We really don't know what is best for us. God alone has the solutions to living life to the full. These principles are recorded in the Bible. We must be persistent and ask repeatedly for help until all the tangled threads of our problems are sorted. God's promise to us is that everyone who turns from their independent ways and seeks healing and freedom through Jesus' finished work on the cross will find it.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for being prideful and for thinking I could live a joyful life in recovery without You, and without those who counsel and mentor me. Thank You for pursuing me with Your unfailing love. I surrender my will and life to You and choose to follow Your directions in all my affairs. Amen

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 2019

SUNDAY PSALM – THE GOOD LIFE

Addiction for many of us focused on trying to find happiness in all the wrong places and things. Some of us thought that escaping pain would bring happiness. Others, who didn't have a lot of pain, sought pleasure. God, however, shows us the way to true happiness. He lays out a path for us to follow that is good. He also reveals traps and obstacles that we are to avoid along the way.

Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do. But not the wicked! They are like worthless chaff, scattered by the wind. They will be condemned at the time of judgment. Sinners will have no place among the godly. For the Lord watches over the path of the godly, but the path of the wicked leads to destruction. (Psalm 1:1-6 NLT)

We are programmed every day by media and in conversation with others to believe that the good life comes from doing what we want, when we want. God says the good life comes from spending time with Him, letting His words fill our hearts and His Spirit guide us in the way we should go. It's easy to just drift along with the crowd without giving much thought to what we say or do. When we behave in this way, God says we are just like dust on a windy day that gets blown around.

God invites us to recover the life He created us to live, a life that is strengthened by His word and fruitful as a healthy tree planted along a riverbank. God wants our lives to bless others. When difficult times come, God wants to refresh us and help us prosper. God invites us to freedom and purity of heart as we follow His ways and live under the protection of His watchful eye.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to listen to You and follow your ways so I may joyfully live under the protection of your watchful eye and experience the fullness of life you desire me to have. Amen

God says the good life comes from spending time with Him, letting His words fill our hearts and His Spirit instruct us in the way we should go.

MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 2019

READY FOR GOD TO REMOVE

The purpose of Step 6 of the 12-Step program is to help us address those personal defects of character that result from our discontentment with life. Through our personal inventory, we have become aware of our flawed belief system and dysfunctional behaviour patterns and are willing to make changes. We are ready to have God remove all our coping mechanisms. Becoming entirely ready is the key to our willingness to change the way we think and act.

Keep me from cheating and telling lies. Be kind to me and teach me your law. I have chosen to be faithful to you. I put my trust in your laws. (Psalm 119:29-30 NIRV)

We are changing our ways, and new life is developing in us, every time we ask God to remove a character defect.

Character defects are often developed through many years of struggling to survive. We tend to feel at home with what is familiar to us, even while desiring a better life. God is willing to give us the desire and the power to complete the task of changing if we wholeheartedly turn our will and our life over to His care. God will not only help us defeat our fear of change but will enable us to become willing to have Him remove all our defects of character so we can progress further than we ever thought possible.

I taught Ephraim to walk. I took them up in my arms. But they did not realize I was the one who took care of them. I led them with kindness and love. I was to them like a person who lifts a little child to their cheek. I bent down and fed them. (Hosea 11:3-4 NIRV)

Character defects often slip away one at a time as we surrender ourselves to the ways of God. When we notice one of our defects in operation, we can invite God to help us change our thinking and enable us to choose His way of communicating. We are changing our ways and new life is developing in us every time we ask God to remove a character defect rather than acting on it.

Teach me your ways, O Lord, that I may live according to your truth! Grant me purity of heart, so that I may honor you. (Psalm 86:11 NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, I am entirely ready to have You remove all my defects of character. Teach me Your ways that I may live in Your truth. Amen

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2019

I AM A WALKING MIRACLE

“I am a walking miracle” is a slogan we often hear said in recovery meetings. It’s repeated because we are amazed at the change God has made in our lives. Each of us knows that it is nothing short of a miracle to be who we are today, compared to who we once were.

Many of us can testify that when we came into recovery, we were powerless over our problems and dependencies. Daily living was totally unmanageable. The thing that brought us to recovery was that we began to believe we could find a power greater than ourselves who could restore us to sanity.

God has sent his special servant Jesus. He sent him to you first. He sent him to bless you by causing each of you to turn away from your evil ways. (Acts 3:26 ERV)

When we were stumbling around in the darkness, we were unaware of the provision God had made for us. We did not know, or chose not to believe, that God desired to have a relationship with us. When we wholeheartedly gave our will and life over to God’s care, we came to experience that we had someone to watch over us, someone who really knew us and cared for us. We also became aware that we were sealed with God’s Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our inheritance as a child of God.

Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22 NKJV)

What a privilege to be in the care of Almighty God. When a child of God considers where they have come from, and who they are right now, no wonder they proclaim, “I am a walking miracle”.

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 1:5b-6 NKJV)

Prayer: Gracious Father, I don't know why You love me, but You do. Thank You for raising me to new heights with You. Amen

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2019

WHEAT AND WEEDS

The Bible contains a story that is reflected in the slogan, “Live and let live.”

God's kingdom is like a man who planted good seed in his field. That night, while everyone was asleep, the man's enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat and then left. Later, the wheat grew, and heads of grain grew on the plants. But at the same time the weeds also grew. Then the man's servants came to him and said, 'You planted good seed in your field. Where did the weeds come from?' 'The man answered, 'An enemy planted weeds.' 'The servants asked, 'Do you want us to go and pull up the weeds?' He answered, 'No, because when you pull up the weeds, you might also pull up the wheat. Let the weeds and the wheat grow together until the harvest time. At the harvest time I will tell the workers this: First, gather the weeds and tie them together to be burned. Then gather the wheat and bring it to my barn.' (Matthew 13:24-30 ERV)

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The kind of weeds sown by the enemy looked very much like the wheat until it was almost time for harvesting.

Whether it is in recovery circles or just in daily life we will bump into all sorts of people who think and live quite differently from us. We need to guard our recovery by paying attention to what we need to do to keep our hearts right with God and with others. It’s so easy to be distracted by what others are doing or what is wrong in a familiar area. We need to make amends to others when we have harmed them, even when they haven’t apologized for ways they’ve wronged us. We need to live in truth, even as we observe others get ahead by being less than honest. We need to be respectful of others, regardless of their wrong attitude or angry words.

God’s counsel to us today is, “live and let live”, because He has a plan to take care of the weeds. When the time is right, all will be revealed. Our responsibility is to live well with God and share the message of how He sustains us in our recovery. God is in control. God is with us. God is for us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am so glad You know what is right and true and that I can give those things that concern me to You. Help me to keep my focus on Your will for my life and to follow You in all my ways. Help me to live and let live without judgment. Amen.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 2019

THE ABILITY TO ENJOY

In the past, one of the lies we bought into was that the party life was where the greatest enjoyment of life was to be found. Later, caught in the slavery of our addiction, we found out just how wrong we had been. The good news is that it is not too late to have a life that gives us joy. In fact, it's the life that God created us to live. As we surrender our will and our life into God's care, we have the assurance of ever-deepening joy and well-being coming alive in us.

And it is a good thing to receive wealth from God and the good health to enjoy it. To enjoy your work and accept your lot in life—this is indeed a gift from God. (Ecclesiastes 5:19 NLT)

This doesn't mean that we won't have problems to face and challenges to overcome and emotions that go along with that. However, it does mean that in any ordinary day, each of us will find ourselves becoming more and more aware of things we are grateful for. We will recognize beauty in ways we previously missed. We will feel the joy of honouring and being honoured as we notice and celebrate growth in one another. We will laugh at our mistakes instead of being lost in fear and shame because of them. Surrendering to God and receiving forgiveness for our sin and rebellion will bring us relief, freedom, and joy. We will be amazed at what Jesus achieved for us on the cross and through His resurrection. Simple pleasures will bring a smile to our hearts as well as our faces.

For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17 NLT)

As we allow ourselves to be embraced by the love of God throughout each day, fear and insecurity will slip away and the ability to enjoy work, family, nature, and recreation will fill us up. We will have the ability to enjoy life to the full.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for calling me to a life that is filled with goodness, peace, and joy. I surrender my life and this day into Your hands and trust You for ongoing healing. I give thanks for the ability to enjoy all the good gifts You are giving me. Amen

***As we
surrender
our will and
our life into
God's care,
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in us.***

FRIDAY, AUGUST 16, 2019

FEELING VULNERABLE AND HELPLESS

Life in recovery is about living in truth, and the truth is that on our own our hearts are vulnerable. We struggle with fear and often feel powerless. We are assured by God and trusted people in recovery that there is a good way forward – a way that is grounded in the truth God is with us and we are never alone.

I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2 NIV)

***We
entrust
ourselves
and our
memories
to Jesus
who
promises
to work
all these
things
together
for our
good.***

Feelings of pain and loss, loneliness, frustration, grief and dissatisfaction surface and we feel unable to cope. If we desire to live the life we are longing for, then our familiar response of hiding our feelings and weakness will have to change. How do we overcome that? As honestly as we know how we name our vulnerability to past painful events. We entrust ourselves to Jesus who promises to work everything together for our good. We bring the wounded areas in our soul to Him and in faith, receive healing and wholeness.

By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him ... he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires. (2 Peter 1:3-4 NLT)

How can we activate "everything we need for living a godly life"? It's not a complicated process. 1) We get to know God's promises by reading the Bible. 2) We practice "speaking truth to ourselves" rather than simply reacting to how we are feeling. 3) We put God's principles into daily practice no matter how we are feeling. Little by little we discover that peace and freedom come. Our emotions quiet down and we begin to feel safe and grow stronger.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I often feel vulnerable and afraid, but Your word says You give strength to the weary and increase power to the weak. Please strengthen me according to Your word. Amen

SATURDAY, AUGUST 17, 2019

CHARACTER STRENGTH – BEING THOROUGH

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely. (How It Works, Big Book)

One of the great indicators of success in maintaining sobriety is being thorough. Old timers in the program tell us that it was the things they failed to deal with that tripped them up. Things changed only when they were willing to come completely clean, became willing to have God remove all their defects of character, and make amends for all the trouble caused in their relationships. It didn't happen in a day but the willingness to get on with the job and stick with it until it was done – being thorough – has been key to their sobriety.

Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them. (Psalm 119:140 NIV)

God sets the pattern for us by being thorough in what He has done. He gave us His written word of truth in the Bible, and He gave us Jesus, the living truth. Forgiveness and cleansing of our sins is thorough when we put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

He gave himself for us. By doing that, he set us free from all evil. He wanted to make us pure. He wanted us to be his very own people. He wanted us to desire to do what is good. (Titus 2:14 NIRV)

Walking the path of life with God in recovery is clearly laid out for us in God's word, so we are "thoroughly equipped" to be people of integrity and good work.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NIV)

What dark corner of our soul needs the light of God's truth today? What needs sorting out, so we are being thorough in making things right in all our affairs?

Prayer: Gracious Father, I want to be thorough in everything I do. Help me to let go of my old ideas and fix my eyes on Your word and be intent on following You in all my ways. Amen

***Forgiveness
and
cleansing of
our sins is
thorough
when we
put our
faith and
trust in
Jesus Christ.***

SUNDAY, AUGUST 18, 2019

SUNDAY PSALM – MY HIDING PLACE

In our addiction, the substance or habit we used to help numb the fear and shame we felt became our hiding place. We wanted to block out any memory of the distressing events of our past that caused us to feel vulnerable or fearful.

At various times we mistakenly felt that we were in control and could handle whatever circumstances came our way. We looked to ourselves, someone else, or some agency to solve our difficulties. We neglected to look to God, the only one who could help us.

O Lord, I have come to you for protection; don't let me be disgraced. Save me and rescue me, for you do what is right. Turn your ear to listen to me and set me free. Be my rock of safety where I can always hide. Give the order to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress. (Psalm 71:1-3 NLT)

***When we
seek God,
He will
listen to
our
prayers
and He
will be our
safe place
to rest for
a while.***

The writer of the above Psalm prayed and sought protection and practical help from the Living God. He also asked that He would not be disgraced. He requested freedom and stability, realizing that only God could provide the help he needed when life was unmanageable.

We also can come before God and ask Him to help us when we are feeling vulnerable and life's circumstances are beyond our ability to handle them. When we seek God, He will listen to our prayers and He will be our safe place to rest for a while. No situation or person is equal to the power that God puts forward on our behalf. We can cast all our anxiety on Him for He cares for us.

You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book. My enemies will retreat when I call to you for help. This I know: God is on my side! (Psalm 56:8-9 NLT)

The Lord has invited us to call on Him when we are in trouble and He will show us what to do. Let's draw near to God today and allow Him to care for us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for not coming to You when I need comfort and protection. Help me to trust that You alone are my fortress of strength and that You will free me from all my fears. Amen

MONDAY, AUGUST 19, 2019

REMOVING ALL MY DEFECTS

God is willing, and more than able, to remove all our defects of character if we humbly ask Him. However, we cannot expect to experience God's transforming power in our lives if we remain proud and unwilling to admit that we are helpless apart from him. If we decide what we think needs to go and tell God how we expect Him to act, God will simply allow us to go forward and find out what happens when we base our life on our own limited understanding.

The Lord is good and does what is right; he shows the proper path to those who go astray. He leads the humble in doing right, teaching them his way. The Lord leads with unfailing love and faithfulness all who keep his covenant and obey his demands. (Psalm 25:8-10 NLT)

Only God, in His infinite wisdom, has correct solutions for dealing with our defects of character. We can't ask for God's help to remove our shortcomings just once and expect to be done with it. We must be persistent and ask repeatedly as the need arises. The work of removing our revealed shortcomings is a process which will continue until we become more like Jesus in all our ways.

The process of having our shortcomings removed is activated when we admit our dependence on God and become willing to receive ongoing direction from Him as well as feedback from others.

Though the Lord is great, he cares for the humble, but he keeps his distance from the proud. Though I am surrounded by troubles, you will protect me from the anger of my enemies. You reach out your hand, and the power of your right hand saves me. The Lord will work out his plans for my life—for your faithful love, O Lord, endures forever. (Psalm 138:6-8 NLT)

Character flaws are transformed into character strengths as we repeatedly lay down our way of thinking and believing and embrace God's way.

Prayer: Loving Father, Thank you for your commitment to remove all my defects of character as I willingly surrender my will and my life into your care. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit, so that I may rely on His strength and guidance to walk in freedom from my past. Change my thinking and believing until I am secure in your goodness. Amen

***Only God,
in His
infinite
wisdom,
has correct
solutions
for dealing
with our
defects of
character.***

TUESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2019

TAKE NOTE AND BEHAVE ACCORDINGLY

Just for today I will take note of one helpful thing God is saying to me and seek to behave accordingly.

What is God saying and how can I know it is God speaking? God speaks to us as we read the Bible. It's helpful before we begin to read the Bible to ask God to help us hear what He wants to speak to us through the scriptures we are reading. We can expect a phrase or a sentence to encourage or challenge us. This is God's way of bringing something to our attention that He wants us to take note of.

God has breathed life into all Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right. (2 Timothy 3:16 NIRV)

***As long
as our
heart is
open and
we are
willing to
take
note, God
is willing
to speak
to us.***

God reveals Himself to us through Jesus, so it's important to regularly look at what Jesus said and what He did.

In the past, God spoke to our people through the prophets. He spoke at many times. He spoke in different ways. But in these last days, he has spoken to us through his Son. (Hebrews 1:1-2 NIRV)

Nature is full of ways that God speaks to us. It doesn't take more than a few minutes of walking, or observing, or listening, to have our hearts drawn to something greater than ourselves. We can simply ask, "God what is it about You that you are showing me in what I'm seeing right now?"

God's eternal power and character cannot be seen. But from the beginning of creation, God has shown what these are like by all he has made. (Romans 1:20 CEV)

God is speaking to us through what others say, through music we hear or sing, and through circumstances as they unfold. As long as our hearts are open and we are willing to take note, God is willing to speak to us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, open my ears and my heart to recognize You speaking to me. Help me to take note of what You are saying and behave accordingly. Amen

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2019

SUFFERING FOR DOING THE RIGHT THING

Living with God in recovery often presents difficult challenges such as: waiting for something we feel desperately in need of right now; not retaliating with anger when someone harms us; living with less when we could scam our way into having more; facing the consequences of revealing a difficult truth. In spite of the immediate pain we may feel, God promises that we will be blessed when we make the right choice and do the right thing.

Blessed are those who suffer for doing what is right. The kingdom of heaven belongs to them. (Matthew 5:10 NIRV)

The greatest example of this is Jesus. He had done no wrong and did not deserve punishment and death. Yet, to pay the penalty for our sins, Jesus was willing to be nailed to a cross and die there. While He was suffering on that cross, many who watched or just passed by made fun of Him. Jesus knew that the Father's plan for Him was to offer up His life, so others could be forgiven, and they could receive an eternal relationship with their Heavenly Father. So, in spite of the false evidence spoken against Him, the suffering, and the mocking, Jesus willingly stayed on the cross.

Those who passed by shouted at Jesus and made fun of him. They shook their heads. In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders made fun of him. "He saved others," they said. "But he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross! Then we will believe in him. In the same way the rebels who were being crucified with Jesus also made fun of him. (Matthew 27:39, 41-42, 44 NIRV)

You and I will never have to suffer to the degree that Jesus did. When we are inconvenienced and a bit unpopular because we choose to do things God's way rather than the world's way, it's good to remember that God knows best. Jesus was later raised up with honour and glory for His obedience. You and I will also be blessed by God as we persevere and do what is right.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Suffering is never easy to endure. Help me to choose what is right rather than what is convenient. Help me to honour You in all my ways rather than simply going along with the crowd. Amen

***Living with
God in
recovery
often
presents
difficult
challenges***

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2019

PAYING IT FORWARD

Living a life of goodness, peace, and joy reflects the Kingdom of God within us. As God pours out His blessings upon us, we need to let those blessings overflow to others. For example, when we encounter someone who is troubled and in need of compassion and encouragement, we are to comfort them with the same comfort we have received. God promises that as we give to others He will pour even more back into our lives.

Give away your life; you'll find life given back, but not merely given back—given back with bonus and blessing. Giving, not getting, is the way. Generosity begets generosity. (Luke 6:38 MSG)

A person with goodness in their heart will naturally share that goodness with others. Blessings and curses cannot come from the same heart. When we pray, we often ask God to forgive us our sins as we forgive the sins of others. Whether we choose to forgive others, or not, will have a major impact on our lives. Holding on to grudges is the soil that allows bitterness to grow in our hearts. When we choose to let go of bitterness and resolve to keep ourselves free from this controlling weed, we will be surprised by joy.

Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:31-32 NLT)

As we accept God's amazing grace, and then grace others, we will experience the joy and security of the generous life God always intended us to have.

Make sure no one gets left out of God's generosity. Keep a sharp eye out for weeds of bitter discontent. A thistle or two gone to seed can ruin a whole garden in no time. (Hebrews 12:14 MSG)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You are a God of unfailing love and faithfulness. Help me to follow Your principles in all my affairs and to bless others as I have been blessed by You. Amen

***God
promises
that as we
give to
others, He
will pour
even more
back into
our lives.***

FRIDAY, AUGUST 23, 2019

LOW SELF-ESTEEM

Many of us suffer from low self-esteem. This disorder comes directly from the enemy of our souls. The enemy wants to discourage us, so he keeps our focus on things that cause us anxiety. Our motivation becomes depressed, and we forget to seek God in all our ways. We take off the robes of righteousness we have been given and put on the rags of worry and fear. If we call out to God as He tells us to, He will surely answer us and show us a way out of the gridlock we have locked ourselves into.

Be good to me while I am alive. Do this so that I may obey your word. Open my eyes so that I can see the wonderful truths in your law. (Psalm 119:17-18 NIRV)

When we feel that no one cares about us, we talk ourselves into harmful situations. We see our future without seeing God in it. We look for love in all the wrong places instead of trusting God to guide us in the way we should go. We allow our minds to conjure up scenarios that are not real and see family and friends as the cause of our problems. God alone is the answer to our dilemma. People are not.

Lord my God, I prayed to you, and you healed me. (Psalm 30:2 ERV)

When our thoughts are self-focused, we drift into low self-esteem. Each day we are reminded of our own limitations and the limitations of others who prove to have insufficient power to help us. This is a time to turn to God, our Higher Power, who has limitless power to help us in our time of need.

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1 John 3:1 NIV)

Living in the truth of God's love and care for us and acknowledging that we are His precious children is the sure cure for low self-esteem.

Prayer: Gracious Father, Forgive me for not looking to You to provide for me. You have promised that I will lack no good thing. Help me to keep my eyes fixed on You. Amen

Living in the truth of God's love and care for us and acknowledging that we are His precious children is the sure cure for low self-esteem.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24, 2019

CHARACTER DEFECT – LYING

The Bible makes it clear that God detests lying. In our addiction, most of the time, we did not speak the truth. We also lied by being silent in some situations and thereby giving false impressions of the truth. There are various reasons why we lied, some of which are: to get what we wanted; to protect ourselves; to protect others; to get out of trouble. There is a slogan that says, "We are most like the devil when we lie."

Do not steal. Do not tell lies. Do not cheat one another. The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in those who tell the truth. (Leviticus 19:11; Proverbs 12:22 NLT)

It is sad when someone is a compulsive liar. People around them know they cannot be relied on to tell the truth. Some of us were once like that. We tried to paint word pictures of ourselves that were glowing and got angry with others when they saw right through us. Thank God He brought us to that place where we were able to see the truth. We came to acknowledge that we were powerless over our dependencies and that our life had become unmanageable. In recovery we are encouraged to tell the truth even though it can sometimes be painful.

We are most like the devil when we lie.

An honest witness tells the truth; a false witness tells lies. Truthful words stand the test of time, but lies are soon exposed. (Proverbs 12:17, 19 NLT)

Our lives will be transformed if we are willing to bring all the events of our past into the light of God's forgiveness and healing grace. Covering up certain incidents is being untruthful and puts us back into the darkness where we are subject to relapse. Why not reveal those things that have the power to oppress us and receive forgiveness and healing? We can then build a new life on the foundation of the truth of God's word.

And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight. (2 Peter 3:14 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, I have fallen short in so many ways, please help me build my life on the truth of Your word. Amen

SUNDAY, AUGUST 25, 2019

SUNDAY PSALM – A DIVIDED HEART

Each of us who have given our will and life over to the care of God may doubt that God has the power to help us overcome our powerlessness over our dependencies. When a problem arises, we first attempt to solve the situation by ourselves or perhaps with another person. Why do we bypass praying to God who knows all things and has promised to answer us? Why do we have a divided heart regarding God's faithfulness to act on our behalf?

Anyone who plays on a sports team knows the coach is the one to whom they report for training and direction. How might the team coach react if we played the way we thought was best or went to another player or coach for direction? We would be bypassing the one who has power in this situation.

You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you. Hear my prayer, Lord; listen to my cry for mercy. When I am in distress, I call to you, because you answer me. Among the gods there is none like you, Lord; no deeds can compare with yours. All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, Lord; they will bring glory to your name. For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God. Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever. For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths, from the realm of the dead. (Psalm 86:11-13 NIV)

Are we willing to believe and act according to the dependable word of God in all our affairs? The person who wrote the above Psalm asked God to teach him His ways and to give him an undivided heart. If we are unbelieving of God's power to change our lives, perhaps we also need to ask God to teach us His ways and give us an undivided heart. If we do, we can rely on God's faithfulness.

Prayer: Gracious God, Teach me Your way and give me an undivided heart. Help me to trust and rely on Your power and faithfulness. Amen

**Are we
willing to
believe and
act
according
to the
dependable
word of
God in all
our affairs?**

MONDAY, AUGUST 26, 2019

WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS

Broken relationships are a significant issue in most relapses back into active addiction. We need to invite God to work in us so we can recognize those things that impact how we relate to others. As we look at the past it's important to acknowledge pain in a relationship, accept responsibility for our part in how things went wrong, and become willing to forgive the other person involved. These are all important aspects of living out what we began in Step 8 when we became willing to make amends to all those we had harmed.

Make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. (Philippians 2:2-4 NLT)

**God not
only heals
but will
make
something
good out
of even the
most
traumatic
events.**

God knows completely about each painful and fearful memory we have whether we were aware of Him being with us at the time the incident happened or not. Knowing this makes it easier for us to face those memories. God already knows what happened. He knows the impact it had on us and others and He's longing to help each of us do what is right to get things sorted out and healed. God knows. God cares. God not only heals but will make something good out of even the most traumatic events.

Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us. Let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. (1 John 4:11-12, 1 John 3:18 NLT)

Others have failed us and we have failed others too. As we receive healing and comfort from God, we'll become secure enough to forgive others who have harmed us and acknowledge our own failure to act in loving ways.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for creating me to live in loving relationship with You and others. Thank you for Jesus, whose death on the cross for my sins made loving relationships possible. Your word says there is no fear in love and that Your perfect love casts out all my fear. Help me become willing to make amends to those people I have harmed. Amen

TUESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2019

GRATITUDE – FOR THE SIMPLE/UNCOMPLICATED

Everyday life has its challenges but each day is also filled with many simple pleasures. One of the best and most effective ways to lift our spirits and change our outlook is to focus on positive things and be grateful.

Everything that God made is good. Nothing he made should be refused if it is accepted with thanks to him. Everything he created is made holy. (1 Timothy 4:4-5 ERV)

In many parts of the world today people will hear bombs falling, bullets whistling past, and sirens from emergency vehicles. Most of us will not have to face that today. Statistics tell us that 780 million people do not have access to safe drinking water today. Do we? We may not have the body of Superman or Wonder Woman after years of punishing it, but there are things we can do today. In most cases, we also have support for areas of disability we are experiencing.

I always thank my God for you because of the grace that he has given you through Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 1:4 ERV)

Recovery is a journey of recognizing our powerlessness, and our character defects. It's about co-operating with God as we experience more and more restoration. When we don't do things perfectly, notice our failings, and seek change, isn't it wonderful that God chooses to pour out His gifts of forgiveness, healing, and guidance on us. God accepts us. God blesses us. This is His amazing grace to us through Jesus Christ.

Whether it's a cup of tea, a quiet moment of reflection, or the hundred other little gifts scattered into our day, let's give thanks for how God has worked in the complicated chaos we gave Him and how in return He has given us a new life of simple grace.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to recognize the many beautiful gifts I have today. Give me eyes to see and a grateful heart to appreciate the simple pleasures all around me. Amen

One of the best and most effective ways to lift our spirits and change our outlook is to focus on positive things and be grateful.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2019

NATURE – FISHING

The long days of summer are beginning to wind down. During the past few months many folks have enjoyed fishing in the early morning or late into the evening. Whether it is standing in hip boots in a river or sitting in a small boat or canoe on a lake there is something restful and life-giving about recreational fishing. The sights and sounds of nature are all around and the thrill of reeling in a fish contributes to an inner sense of well-being. Some people fish for a living and spend long hours or days on the ocean bringing in a catch that will provide food to feed themselves and their families.

One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” And they left their nets at once and followed him. (Matthew 4:18-20 CEV)

Jesus chose some fishermen to accompany Him while he was here on earth. He invited them to leave their fishing nets and to follow Him so they could become “fishers of men.”

As we move along in recovery, part of our healing process is recognizing the call of God in our lives, (a spiritual awakening) and the desire to share the love of God with others. The forgiveness we have received through Jesus has changed us. The story of how God has transformed our lives will attract others and perhaps give them hope for their own sobriety. This is how we are meant to be “fishers of men.”

The first fishermen disciples chose to leave everything behind to follow Jesus. Their joy of living with Jesus was the story they shared. This is the same invitation God makes to us today – surrender to God, experience the joy, share the message.

Prayer: Loving God, help me to hear Your voice, follow You and learn how to attract others to the new life You are offering all of us. Help me be a “fisher of men”. Amen

THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 2019

ENCOURAGEMENT

To encourage means to inspire confidence in another. Speaking words of encouragement to someone will help them come to a fuller awareness of their strengths as they live life in recovery in relationship with Jesus.

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.
(Hebrews 10:24 NLT)

As people who are awakening to new life in recovery, we have the wonderful opportunity of seeing positive change in ourselves and others. Instead of using people for our own selfish gain we can be those who notice others and speak words of encouragement to them. We can help them see their growth and the potential God sees in them.

The words of the godly encourage many, but fools are destroyed by their lack of common sense. (Proverbs 10:21 NLT)

We can stand with each other when the tough times come, as they surely will, and be a support for one another. We don't have to be co-dependent "fixers" in order to stand with someone and lend a hand. It will likely mean that we are inconvenienced for a bit, and that's a shift for us from being self-centered to serving God and others. Being helpful is a character quality that God wants to develop in us. When we sincerely care, maybe we just listen and pray, but that is often the very encouragement someone needs.

Those of us who are strong and able in the faith need to step in and lend a hand to those who falter, and not just do what is most convenient for us. Strength is for service, not status. Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, "How can I help?" (Romans 15:1-2 MSG)

Prayer: Thank you Jesus for this day in recovery and the companions You've given me on the journey. Help me to be a person who encourages and supports those around me. Help me to extend my hands to serve the need of others. Give me wisdom and discernment to know the difference between help and co-dependence. Amen

Being helpful is a character quality that God wants to develop in us.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 2019

DON'T JUDGE

Each day we make judgment calls about what to do, or not to do. We judge whether an activity is right or wrong and then choose to participate, or not. We may object to anyone judging us if they think our decision is unwise. In the past, family and friends made a judgment and spoke with us about the chaos of our addictive behaviour only to have us get angry and respond with "Don't judge me." Jesus did say, "Do not judge," but He said a lot more along with those words which people often fail to pay attention to.

Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults— unless, of course, you want the same treatment. That critical spirit has a way of boomeranging. (Matthew 7:1-2 MSG)

If we sit in self-righteous judgment, we can only expect to be judged in the same way we judge. The critical spirit boomerangs, so we all need to be aware of how we treat each other.

We need to have a spirit of humility to see our own defects.

Why do you notice the small piece of dust that is in your friend's eye, but you don't notice the big piece of wood that is in your own? Why do you say to your friend, 'Let me take that piece of dust out of your eye'? Look at yourself first! You still have that big piece of wood in your own eye. (Matthew 7:3-4 ERV)

We need to have a spirit of humility to see our own defects. When we see our own lives through the lens of a searching and moral inventory, how can we then criticize and fail to show compassion to others? On the last day, every one of us will be judged on our acceptance of Jesus and our obedience to the scriptures. Have we considered if we are ready to be judged?

Jesus said: ***I don't judge a person who hears my words but does not obey them. I didn't come to judge the world. I came to save the world. But there is a judge for anyone who does not accept me and my words. These words I have spoken will judge them on the last day.*** (John 12:47-48 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to obey Your word and Your ways in all my affairs. Teach me to be more like Jesus. Amen

SATURDAY, AUGUST 31, 2019

NOTES

HUNGRY ANGRY LONELY TIRED

Across recovery circles we've been exposed to the word "HALT" (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired) and its significance in our recovery. The need to take care of these powerful feelings will lessen our vulnerability to relapse.

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. (Psalm 23:1-3 NIV)

Being hungry can express itself in many ways. Besides being hungry for food we can be hungry for companionship, or for simple recognition of our personhood. We can be hungry for affirmation that the efforts we made were worth something, even if the result we wanted is not possible at this time.

We cannot expect to go through life without feeling angry. Unfair unjust things take place in life. God's way of helping us approach times of anger is to offer us healing for our hurts and forgiveness to wash away the destructive forces of resentment and bitterness. In our moments of anger, we can turn to God who desires to help us use what's going on for something good.

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord. (Acts 3:19 NIV)

Closely related to the feeling of hunger identified above is loneliness. God promises to be the friend that understands when no one else does and will care for us through every step of our journey. Opening our hearts to receive what God is offering us is an important way to deal with feeling lonely.

The tiredness that results from a hard day's work is a good tired, but it still needs attending to. There is tiredness that results from demands that seem never-ending or challenges that don't seem to be working out. Whatever our source of tiredness, God wants us to bring our burdens to Him and find rest for our souls.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to recognize when I am hungry, angry, lonely, or tired and turn to You, so You can care for me and refresh me. Amen

***I will give
rest to
those
who are
tired. I
will
satisfy
those
who are
weak.
(Jeremiah
31:25 NIRV)***

NOTES

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.

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