

**LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY**

# **Daily Meditations**



**AUGUST 2022**



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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***

## SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

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



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

### PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

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

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### Daily Meditations

**AUGUST 2022**

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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ***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.*

## FORGIVEN LITTLE – SHOWS LITTLE LOVE

When we have made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves and admitted to God, ourselves, and another human being the exact nature of our wrongs, do we see ourselves, in comparison to others, as more worthy or less worthy of God's forgiveness? Comparing ourselves to what we know about others has its limitation as they, like many of us, may be holding back on secret sins they are unwilling to reveal. Jesus said the following words about one woman who, through His teaching, had been made aware of her many sins and unashamedly worshipped at His feet because of His forgiveness.

***“Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.” “I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”***

(Luke 7:47; Mark 2:10a NIV)

This event took place at a dinner in the house of a Jewish leader named Simon who began to judge both the woman and Jesus for permitting this expression of her gratitude for His forgiveness of her sin. Could it be that some of us are like Simon and judge others for how we interpret the motive for what they do, rather than seeing ourselves for who we truly are when we pass judgment on another? Do we hold to sin that we refuse to confess, rather than repenting of it and seeking freedom from its power? Do we refuse to forgive those who have harmed us rather than receiving the freedom of forgiveness? Do we end up loving little because we have been forgiven little? Do we worship Jesus for all He has done on our behalf?

***But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.”***

*Luke 7:47b NIV*

***Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter. Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us.*** (Mark 3:28; Ephesians 5:1-2a NIV)

Through the finished work of Jesus, we are encouraged to repent of our sins and be forgiven. We then become children of God who live in the grace and favour of our Heavenly Father. Let's determine in our hearts to love others as God loves us and be forever grateful that we, who have been forgiven much, truly can love much.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I humbly ask You to forgive all my sins so I can thrive in Your love and love others as you love me. Amen***

## LIVING BEYOND INTOLERANCE

An important character strength to develop is tolerance – being patient, understanding, and accepting of something different. We live in a world where there is a mixture of many cultures and behaviours, traditions and beliefs. The things one family values may be quite different from that of another. For many of us, part of the challenge to be tolerant with others is in learning how to be patient with those who are at a different place in recovery than we are.

Too often we may expect others to take our weaknesses into account regardless of the impact we are having on the community. Sometimes our expectation may be that others find a clean and sober life exactly the same way we did. Truth is, we all come into this new life with God in recovery from different places on the path. God loves all of us. Jesus paid the price for the wrongs of all of us. God invites all of us to His table.

**Be  
tolerant  
with one  
another  
and  
forgive  
one  
another**

Jesus confronted a group of people, who themselves weren't perfect, yet they were condemning a woman for her wrongs, wanting to stone her to death. His advice to them was:

*So he [Jesus] stood up and said to them, "Has any one of you not sinned? Then you be the first to throw a stone at her." ...Those who heard what he had said began to go away. They left one at a time, the older ones first ... Jesus stood up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Hasn't anyone found you guilty?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then I don't find you guilty either," Jesus said. "Go now and leave your life of sin." (John 8:7-11 NIRV)*

Colossians 3:13  
GNB

Jesus calls all of us to stop sinning and receive forgiveness. To show respect and tolerance doesn't nullify the need for change, but it does help each of us to remember that we are all on equal footing. We would do well to just focus on making an inventory of our own character defects and simply love others, blessing them and praying that they will find the forgiveness and healing Jesus is offering them.

***Be tolerant with one another and forgive one another whenever any of you has a complaint against someone else. You must forgive one another just as the Lord has forgiven you.*** (Colossians 3:13 GNT)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, at my worst You treated me with compassion and mercy. Help me to walk with respect and humility among those who live and act differently from what I value. Help us all to come to You for forgiveness and new life. Amen*

## MAKING MISTAKES

Often when we begin our new life with God in recovery, we get discouraged because we feel we are unable to control the urges of our old nature. But, as we choose to believe and act on the precious promises God has made to us, the new nature we have put on will develop and we will experience more control of our thoughts and behaviours. We have a Power greater than ourselves working in us to help us avoid making the mistakes our old nature is demanding.

***For as you know him better, he will give you, through his great power, everything you need for living a truly good life: he even shares his own glory and his own goodness with us!*** (2 Peter 1:3 TLB)

We all suffer from making mistakes. We like to please ourselves and unwise decisions come from self-serving. When we turned our will and life over to God, we were made new in the spirit of our minds so, when reckless thoughts cloud our thinking, we need to pray and uphold the promises God has made to us. We have died to self and have been made alive in Jesus to live lives that are pleasing to God.

***He died for all so that all who live — having received eternal life from him — might live no longer for themselves, to please themselves, but to spend their lives pleasing Christ who died and rose again for them.*** (2 Corinthians 5:15 TLB)

The Power greater than ourselves who lives within us is the transforming grace of the Holy Spirit. He is the one who renews our mind to make it conform to the will of God. We progress away from pleasing ourselves and making mistakes when we fix our mind on Jesus, the One who is faithful to perfect our faith.

***Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think. Then you will learn from your own experience how his ways will really satisfy you.*** (Romans 12:2 TLB)

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, Please renew my mind by the Power of Your Holy Spirit so that Your life-giving words may cause me to obey You in all I do and say. Amen*

***We have a  
Power  
greater than  
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avoid  
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old nature is  
demanding.***

## HUNGER AND THIRST

Those of us who are recovering from the mess of our lives know there is a hunger and thirst within us for something more than what life has offered us so far. We acknowledge that on our own we are powerless to change our situation and need to reach out to God for help to move forward in life and recovery.

***You gave them bread from heaven when they were hungry and water from the rock when they were thirsty. You commanded them to go and take possession of the land you had sworn to give them.*** (Nehemiah 9:15 NLT)

***Just as our bodies hunger and thirst after food and water, so our spirit hungers and thirsts to be filled with the living God.***

We call out to God because we've been unable to find anything in this world that gives us lasting satisfaction. We tried alcohol, drugs, sex, pornography, even our best efforts to be good, but nothing gave us lasting contentment. There truly is only one thing that satisfies our souls and that is a relationship with the God who created us. Without God in our lives, our inner being will never be at peace.

***Lord, I want you to save me. Your teachings make me happy. Let me live to praise you. Let me find the help I need in your laws. I have wandered away like a lost sheep. Come and find me. I am your servant, and I have not forgotten your commands.*** (Psalm 119:174-176 ERV)

Just as our bodies hunger and thirst after food and water, so our spirit hungers and thirsts to be filled with the living God. When our relationship with God is restored through belief in the finished work of Jesus on the cross, we begin to get to know God and His ways. The more time we spend with God, the more our hearts will be filled with His love, joy and peace. As we make a habit of obeying God's principles, we will experience contentment and satisfaction.

***Seven times a day I praise You, Because of Your righteous judgments. Great peace have those who love Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble.*** (Psalm 119:164-165 NKJV)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is for peace to reign in the deepest recesses of my soul. Give me a hunger and thirst for Your word. I know that if I obey Your laws, the longings of my soul will be satisfied. Please help me! Amen***

## STEP FIVE – COMING CLEAN ABOUT IT ALL

The exact nature of our wrongs is rooted in the lie that our problems are caused by what is around us rather than what is within us. It's time that we admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being that our way of dealing with problems does not solve them. Doing things our way actually creates greater problems for us and for those around us. It's time to admit that we cannot do life on our own and need to seek God's help.

***Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path. I've promised it once, and I'll promise it again: I will obey your righteous regulations. I have suffered much, O Lord; restore my life again as you promised.*** (Psalm 119:105-107 NLT)

God's direction needs to be our first choice rather than our "choice of last resort." We need to learn from God's word and listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit within us. We need to heed the advice of mentors and others who have faithfully walked with God for a time. With God's help, we need to put into practice all that we have learned.

It's time to agree with God about the exact nature of our wrongs. It's time to admit that wrong is wrong and that we are guilty of wrong thinking and wrong behaving. When we finally face the reality of our sins, it is helpful to recall God's kind and merciful nature. No sin is too great to be forgiven because Jesus gave His life to pay the complete cost, even though it was very high, death on the cross.

***If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. 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.*** (1 John 1:8-9 NLT).

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit that I cannot do life on my own and that I need Your help. I repent and turn away from my independent, self-centered way of living and choose to trust You. Please help me find the path to a meaningful, purposeful life. Amen***

***The exact nature of our wrongs is rooted in the lie that our problems are caused by what is around us rather than what is within us.***

## A BULLET PROOF VEST LIKE NO OTHER

With reference to the armour worn by soldiers in Jesus' time His followers were encouraged to put on a "breastplate of righteousness" as part of what would protect them spiritually each day. In our day we might be looking at a bullet-proof vest. What's important is that this protection covers the important parts of the body – the heart, lungs, and other organs necessary for life.

***Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. (Ephesians 6:14 NLT)***

***Put on the belt  
of truth and  
the body armor  
of God's  
righteousness.***

*Ephesians 6:16 NLT*

Righteousness has to do with being right in God's eyes. We spend a lot of time trying to look right for this or that person, but the only one who matters is God. To be right in God's eyes we must get our attention focused on something other than what the evil one will hold before us to tempt us throughout the day. We'll have to turn away from approval seeking and humbly live in this day for God's purpose. That's the strategy of Step 11 as we seek through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out.

One simple example of putting on this breastplate of righteousness is to be someone who lives for peace rather than expressing anger. The turmoil produced physically from anger in our souls is toxic to our vital organs. No wonder we need to protect ourselves from it if we want to live well.

***Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness. (James 1:20, 3:18 NLT)***

In our overly aggravated world where we might identify our angry response as being justified, God encourages us to choose another way. God will give us everything we need today to live for peace and in so doing, be covered with what God says is "bullet proof" spiritual protection.

*Prayer: Loving God, we want to live in the protection of Your righteousness and peace today. Help us to see situations from Your perspective and give ourselves to seeking Your direction in all we do and say. Amen*

## GROWING AND CHANGING

There are seasons in each of our lives which are fruitful and others which are not. Some plants and trees are evergreen and always have the appearance of life in them. Other trees and shrubs look rather drab and dead in the winter months. Then, as the season changes, they come to life as leaves begin to bud and grow, change colour, and produce fruit. When we feel drab and spiritually dead, we may be envious of those who always appear evergreen and have life in them. At these times we need to trust God and acknowledge that He has unique plans for each season of our lives.

***God, you are the one who saves us. We will trust in you. Then we won't be afraid. Lord, you are the one who gives us strength. You are the one who keeps us safe. Lord, you have saved us. (Isaiah 12:2 NIRV)***

God wants our lives to be filled with fruitfulness. He has created us with life giving abilities and talents. When our lives are lived in the care of God, His Holy Spirit works in us to produce abundant and good fruit at the right time.

***Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that does not produce fruit. He also trims every branch that produces fruit to prepare it to produce even more. (John 15:1-2 ERV)***

The purpose of our lives may have been lost under the brush and weeds of addiction, but God will remove or heal everything that takes away life and growth. It takes the seasoned eye of a gardener to know what's still alive and healthy and what needs to be pruned. It takes God's wisdom to identify the character defects and shortcomings that restrict our growth. Are we willing to allow God to prune us in order that we might have life and fruitfulness in His Kingdom?

***But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Glory be to him, now and forever! Amen. (2 Peter 3:18 ERV)***

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I give You permission to prune me so that I may grow in grace and the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour and be fruitful for Your Kingdom. Amen*

***It takes God's  
wisdom to  
identify the  
character  
defects and  
shortcomings  
that restrict  
our growth.***

## CHARACTER DEFECT OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

In our life in addiction we became self-centered and uncaring in our attitude towards life and everyone around us. We had no regard for our employer or the requirements of our job. We mismanaged our money and our family responsibilities were of no consequence to us. Compassion and respect for others were non-existent and we made rude and thoughtless remarks about people, even those who were trying to help us. Our disregard for the safety of others was also shown in activities such as, walking or driving against light signals or driving a vehicle while under the influence of drugs or alcohol or both. We were acting in very irresponsible ways.

**God wants to teach us not only to look out for our own interests, but also for the interests of others.**

***You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes— for as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the Lord your God is giving you.*** (Deuteronomy 12:8-9 NKJV)

While we were still acting in irresponsible ways God was watching out for us. God prepared a life of rest and an inheritance for each of us so we could love and care for our neighbours. He invites each of us to receive the gift of this new life with Him. How can we fulfill God's command to love others if we have never received His love and care for us? It's like trying to turn on the light when the lamp has not been plugged into the power. Perhaps as children we never learned how to be responsible for our own actions. God is ready and willing to teach us how we should not just look out for our own interests, but also for the interests of others.

***And so I am giving a new commandment to you now—love each other just as much as I love you. Your strong love for each other will prove to the world that you are my disciples.*** (John 13:34-35 TLB)

When we humbly acknowledge the exact nature of our wrongs, we can ask God to remove the character defect of irresponsibility and ask Him to teach us how to love and care for others as He loves and cares for us.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that I have been very irresponsible and thoughtless in my dealings with others. Please help me to be accountable to You as I amend my ways. Amen*

## WHAT A RELIEF!

We feel many things in recovery. Some emotions are positive and others negative. There are feelings of fear and uncertainty about the future and guilt and shame over things done wrong in the past. If we pay attention, we will also notice feelings of joy and relief at having finally escaped our addiction and come clean about our need for help.

***This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!*** (2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT)

What a relief to know we do not have to pretend any more but can accept that there are parts of our life that really caused us pain. Now we can speak about that pain and share with those who have experienced similar issues and understand what we are going through. We all have things we can't understand and circumstances where we don't know how to cope, but we don't have to hide it anymore. We can admit we are human and need the support of others who are willing to share their experience, strength, and hope with us. What a relief!!

God assures us: ***“My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.*** (2 Corinthians 12:9 NLT)

Our God who called out to us until we heard His voice and responded will be with us every day as we move forward. We will all make mistakes along the way but His love for us is everlasting. His kindness extended to us is unfailing. What a relief!!

***The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.”*** (Jeremiah 31:3 NIV)

We do not know what the future holds, but God does. He has a good plan for our lives and will reveal it to us one day at a time. What joy! What relief!!

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I reject the pressure of trying to do life on my own. I know I can't! I know I need you! Thank you for being there for me and for accepting me in all my weaknesses, and for taking me forward in Your good plan for my life. Amen*

***God is our protection and source of strength. He is always ready to help us in times of trouble.***

*Psalms 46:1 ERV*

## NO GOD GREATER THAN THIS ONE

A popular song that's been sung in churches around the world the last few years includes the lines, "Way-Maker, Miracle-Worker, Promise-Keeper, Light-in-my-Darkness, My God, that is who You are." All of these are wonderful descriptions and titles for God, our Creator. Where do we get such names?

**Jesus said: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."** (John 14:6 NIV)

**"Way-Maker, Miracle-Worker, Promise-Keeper, Light-in-my-Darkness, My God, that is who You are."**

We need a God who can make a new way for us because we have not managed, on our own, to find a way that we want to continue to walk on, nor that anyone else would want either.

**Many believed in his [Jesus] name, when they saw the miracles which he did.** (John 2:23 KJV)

The Bible is full of eye-witness accounts of Jesus showing His power over sickness, death, nature, and evil spirits. In whatever way we need God's intervention today, He's able and willing to provide for our needs.

**God is not a man, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through?** (Numbers 23:19 NLT)

No one has failed at keeping promises more than us and yet our God never makes a promise that He doesn't keep. God's Word, God's promises are the sure and steady anchor for us as we go forward in recovery. His Word is our light that leads to new life.

**Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."** (John 8:12 NLT)

*Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for being our God and for being who You truly are. You are a way-maker, miracle-worker, promise-keeper, light-in-my-darkness, that is who You are. Help me to walk in the light of Your love today. Amen*

## BLESSING OTHERS BRINGS DEEP SATISFACTION

Sometimes we choose not to bless someone because we judge them as unworthy. They may be in a lifestyle which does not meet with our approval or may have different opinions than us on religion, politics, cultural matters, or whatever we see as not meeting the criteria that we want to bless. Instead of judging others, blessings should flow from hearts that have been changed by the generous love of God for all people, including us.

**Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud, or rude. Love isn't selfish or quick tempered. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do. Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil. Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting.** (1 Corinthians 13:4-7 CEV)

Accepting and receiving the love that God has for us will help us overcome our reluctance to be a blessing to others. If we feel we are lacking in love, we need to ask God to teach us how to love like He does. Blessings flow automatically from a heart that is filled with the love and kindness of God. Blessing others will bring peace and deep satisfaction to our own souls.

**By everything I did, I showed how you should work to help everyone who is weak. Remember that our Lord Jesus said, "More blessings come from giving than from receiving."** (Acts 20:35 CEV)

The Lord is well pleased with us when we seek to help others who are less fortunate than ourselves. When we lived a dysfunctional lifestyle of addiction we were blessed when others supplied us with food and shelter. These people did not know us, but they cared about our needs. Now it is our turn to bless others. A gentle smile can lift someone's spirit. An encouraging word may make someone's day. Helping someone with what they are doing may lessen their load. Praying for someone's concerns will show we care. There are so many ways we can bless others. Today, let's look around and notice a person we can bless. As we lay on our beds this evening we can then reflect on and perhaps pray for those we have blessed and allow deep satisfaction to fill our souls.

*Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to be less concerned with my own needs and agenda. Teach me how to love and bless others as You have greatly loved and blessed me. Amen*

**Blessings flow automatically from a heart that is filled with the love and kindness of God.**

## GAINING INTEREST IN OTHERS

The contrast of destructive self-centeredness in active addiction with the healthy lifestyle of supporting one another in recovery is clearly expressed in Promise 7 of AA: *We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.* Learning and growing in our recovery, sharing our experience, strength, and hope are ways we fulfill this principle. Long before this was brought to the attention of recovering alcoholics, God told His believers this was the way to live.

***Don't just think about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and in what they are doing. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*** (Philippians 2:4 TLB, Colossians 3:16 ESV)

***We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.***

We help each other by giving time and attention to one another. One of the greatest gifts we can give is a listening ear and time for someone to get whatever is troubling them off their chest and out into the open. We need to slow down and pay attention to others around us, lending a helping hand as needed rather than merrily going along doing our own thing. Even though it is not always convenient, and it is often hard work, there is something very satisfying about caring for others in a way that strengthens and builds them up.

***Promise 7 - AA***

When we carry the message, as Step 12 encourages us to do, we make ourselves vulnerable as we share our own struggles related to the journey of getting to know God and finding sobriety. By sharing our experience, we provide common ground for someone to find themselves at a starting point for moving ahead. This "gaining interest in others" is so important that when Jesus boiled down all the teaching of the Scriptures into two commandments, this was one of them. The success of our life and our recovery depend on living our lives this way.

***Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."*** (Matthew 22:37-40 NLT)

***Prayer: Lord Jesus, You put your own interests aside and left heaven to come here to die for my sins. Help me to be more like You and become more interested in others and less self-focused. Amen***

## REDUCING SELF-CENTEREDNESS

The Big Book of AA describes the significance of our problem with selfishness in this way: *"There often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His [God's] aid. Many of us had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but we could not live up to them even though we would have liked to. Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God's help."* (Big Book pages 62-63)

The Bible confirms what the Big Book says about needing God to help us deal with the destructive problem of selfishness and other shortcomings we have.

***By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life ... because of his glory and excellence, 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)

God is God and we are not. Trying to be God and run our own affairs didn't work in addiction and it won't work in recovery. God is the one needs to be in charge. The more we practice letting God's Word, and His plans and purposes shape our daily activities, the less self-obsessed we will be and the more fulfilling our work and relationships will become.

***In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.*** (2 Peter 1:5-7 NLT)

***Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for helping me deal with my selfishness. I surrender myself to Your will and Your ways. Be the director of my life. Work Your will in me and through me so that I might share in Your divine nature. Amen***

***"Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God's help."***  
(Big Book of AA)

## HEAR AND DO

How many of us ended up in an unmanageable lifestyle because we refused to follow the guidance given to us by caregivers, friends, and others? Some of us thought we could party our way to the good life while others thought they could work their way. The truth is the good life includes work and play together with many other principles. Jesus said that if we hear and do what He says, we will be like a wise man who built his house on the solid foundation of a rock.

**Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.** (Matthew 7:24-25 ESV)

**Jesus said that if we hear and do what He says, we will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.**

Many materials go into building a house, but the most important part of any building structure starts with the foundation that will support it. If we take time to hear and do what Jesus says, we will build our life on a solid foundation. If we ignore what Jesus says, like the foolish man who built his house on sand, the storms of life will cause what we have built to collapse.

**And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.** (Matthew 7:26-27 ESV)

Both persons had the same materials available, but one was not willing to listen to, and do, what the Master Builder said, and ended up wasting his life on what was not eternal.

**My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh.** (Proverbs 4:20-22 ESV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I choose to be attentive to what You have to say and to build my life on the solid foundation of Your Word. Please help me to practice Your principles in all my affairs Amen*

## WHO'S TO BLAME

When we have been consciously walking in the ways of God for a time and a disaster strikes, we often think that we must have done something wrong to deserve what has occurred. Our trouble could be caused by a natural disaster, a road accident, a disease, or something else. Some may ask "Why would God allow this in your life?" The writer of the following Psalm, along with others, was taken captive to a foreign land. Their captors tormented and insulted them and their God by asking them to sing happy songs about their far off homeland.

**Alongside Babylon's rivers we sat on the banks; we cried and cried, remembering the good old days in Zion. Alongside the quaking aspens we stacked our unplayed harps; That's where our captors demanded songs, sarcastic and mocking: "Sing us a happy Zion song!" Oh, how could we ever sing God's song in this wasteland?** (Psalm 137:1-5 MSG)

When something evil happens to a person, or a nation, why is God blamed? Even those who say they do not believe there is a God will blame Him for tragedies that happen. Some of us who ended up in addiction blamed God for the events of our lives that caused us pain. The trouble is, we blame the wrong person. Jesus said it is the thief, Satan, who comes to steal, kill, and destroy.

When Jesus heard about two different disasters – Pilate killing some Galileans while they were worshipping and eighteen people who were crushed and killed when a tower in Siloam fell – He asked the people if they thought these people were worse sinners than other people. Then Jesus clarified the issue and said: **They were not. But I tell you if you don't decide now to change your lives, you will all be destroyed too!**" (Luke 13:5 ERV)

Like the captors in the above Psalm, some people mock God and the people who believe in God. In times of trouble, if people ask us "Where is your God in this", we can say with assurance, God is on His throne looking down on His creation to see whose eyes are turned towards Him so He can send them help.

*Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for being with me in every circumstance I encounter. In good times and in times of trouble, help me to trust that You care for me. Amen*

**In times of trouble, ... we can say with assurance, God is on His throne looking down on His creation to see whose eyes are turned towards Him.**

## STEP EIGHT – WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS

Making a list of persons we have harmed is intimidating but becoming willing to make amends to all of them seems like too much to ask of us. This step is challenging because we must look at the harm we have caused, and it generally involves family members and others who have been close to us. Without God in our lives, we will struggle to be willing to complete this step, but with God all things are possible.

***So, if you are about to place your gift on the altar and remember that someone is angry with you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. Make peace with that person, then come back and offer your gift to God.*** (Matthew 5:23-24 CEV)

***Be kind and merciful, and forgive others, just as God forgave you because of Christ.***

*Ephesians 4:32 CEV*

Jesus taught the above principle long before the 12-Step program was founded. He knew that to be completely free of our past we needed to make amends to those we had harmed. When Jesus went to the house of Zacchaeus the tax collector, many people who had been harmed by Zacchaeus murmured against Jesus because they said He had gone to be the guest of a sinner. Zacchaeus, however, became a changed man when He met Jesus and he volunteered to make amends to those he had harmed.

***Later that day Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "I will give half of my property to the poor. And I will now pay back four times as much to everyone I have ever cheated".*** (Luke 19:8 CEV)

There is no doubt that when we have given our will and life over to the care of God and accepted Jesus as our Saviour, all our sins are forgiven. Now we have freedom from the control of the evil one. As children of God, strengthened by the Power of the Holy Spirit, we need to humbly allow others to see how we regretfully view our past actions towards them and want to make amends.

***Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.*** (Philippians 2:12b-13 NLT)

***Prayer: Lord Jesus, Please give me the desire and power to complete this Step and, according to Your Word, help me make peace with those I have harmed. Amen***

## STRAIGHTEN UP AND FLY RIGHT

The saying "Straighten Up and Fly Right" has been around since Nat King Cole wrote and recorded a song with this title many years ago. At various times in our life, and certainly when we come into recovery, we need to get serious, get focused on healthy things and start behaving in new ways. People may tell us we need to get our lives in order but as long as we stubbornly refuse to do so, we are on a fast course to trouble and heartbreak.

***Whoever stubbornly refuses to accept criticism will suddenly be destroyed beyond recovery.*** (Proverbs 29:1 NLT)

God kindly wrote down everything we need to know in order to live well, including how to correct our course when we are going wrong. That is why we need to read the Scriptures and apply what we read to our attitude, words, and behaviour.

***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)

The inventory of Bible principles is what God will use when we stand before Him and He evaluates our lives. Now is the time to not just know what the right thing to do is but to adjust our behaviour accordingly.

***Words alone will not discipline a servant; the words may be understood, but they are not heeded. Jesus asked: "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' but you don't do what I say?"*** (Proverbs 29:19, Luke 6:46 ERV)

The Bible illustrates this point using children. Parents who truly care for their children guide, direct, and discipline them as needed. The child who grows up in the knowledge of what is right learns from being disciplined.

Some of us may not have been given this training or, in our arrogance and rebellion, ignored what we learned and went our own way. Now would be a good time to develop a humble heart, seek correction, and straighten up and fly right.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for my stubborn rebellious ways. Help me to welcome input from Your Word each day and to quickly put Your principles into practice. Amen***

***Discipline your children, and they will give you peace of mind and will make your heart glad.***

*(Proverbs 29:17 NLT)*

## STEP SIX - HOW CAN CHARACTER DEFECTS BE REMOVED?

As we plan a time and place to draw near to God and bring our inventory of character defects before Him, we can ask God to do what is necessary in us so that they can be removed. When we ask with sincerity, God will do as we ask.

*He has not punished us as we deserve for all our sins, for his mercy toward those who fear and honor him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our sins as far away from us as the east is from the west.* (Psalm 103:10-12 TLB)

***We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.***

*Step 6 of AA Big Book*

Unfortunately for us the evil one, who has been our master for years, wants to remain in that position. He will challenge us about who we are in Christ Jesus, just like he challenged Jesus about being the Son of God. The truth is that on our own we are vulnerable, but God has given us a Power greater than ourselves to enable us to stop chasing after our evil desires and instead do what pleases Him. God faithfully does His part. He gives us the desire to let go of practices that are harmful to us and empowers us to walk in a new way. Our part is to trust and obey God's principles as recorded in the Bible and live our lives doing those things that please God.

***Never give up. Eagerly follow the Holy Spirit and serve the Lord. Let your hope make you glad. Be patient in time of trouble and never stop praying.*** (Romans 12:11-12 CEV)

Victory over Satan will be achieved as we put on the armor of God and stand firm on God's word. From the Scriptures we will learn new ways of doing things. Our character defects will be replaced by honorable living and our faith will increase as we recognize God's power at work in us to change us.

***So stand strong with the belt of truth tied around your waist, and on your chest wear the protection of right living. On your feet wear the Good News of peace to help you stand strong. And also use the shield of faith with which you can stop all the burning arrows that come from the Evil One. Accept God's salvation as your helmet. And take the sword of the Spirit—that sword is the teaching of God.*** (Ephesians 6:14-17 ERV)

*Prayer: Loving God, I am thankful that You are willing and have the Power to remove all my character defects. Please increase my confidence that I can truly have a future with hope. Amen*

## PLANNING WELL AND WORKING THE PLAN

God has a plan for our life each day that is meaningful, purposeful, and joyful. There is a work for us to do today that will bless others and give us deep satisfaction. God is not only interested in what we do, but why we do it. Our circumstances may not change immediately but when we seek God's direction and help in what we have planned, we can safely leave the outcome with Him.

***People think that whatever they do is right, but the Lord judges their reason for doing it. Turn to the Lord for help in everything you do, and you will be successful. People can plan what they want to do, but it is the Lord who guides their steps.*** (Proverbs 16:2-3, 9 ERV)

We can pray at any time during the day, but there is something special about beginning the day with God in prayer, bringing our plans before Him, and intentionally seeking His guidance. Everything will flow better when we do that, even though we may encounter challenges along the way. When we are conscious of God being with us and are seeking His help, positive solutions will come more quickly and easily.

***Good people try to avoid evil. They watch what they do and protect themselves. Good things happen to those who learn from their experiences, and the Lord blesses those who trust him.*** (Proverbs 16:17, 20 ERV)

As we move forward, we are encouraged to do those things that we can do, so our plans will succeed. We are all blessed with a sense of what is right or wrong, above-board or shady. We need to pay attention to that knowledge and seek protection when we become aware of others operating in that way. We may not do things perfectly, but we can learn from our experiences and trust that God will bless us when we pick ourselves up and move on from any failure or disappointment.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to trust You with my plans and follow Your guidance in all I do. Give me discernment to recognize when things are going wrong and to learn from my disappointments and failures rather than quit. Amen*

***We may not do things perfectly, but we are to learn from our experiences and trust that God will bless us when we pick ourselves up and move on from any failure or disappointment.***

## REPENT AND BELIEVE

When we gave our will and life over to the care of God, what was our motivation? Were we feeling remorseful about our unmanageable lifestyle or were we truly convicted of the error of our ways and came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity? To be remorseful about what we have done in the past may seem respectable but it can destroy us, because it causes us to carry a load of guilt. If we admit our wrongful actions and truly desire to change our ways, then we need to do what Jesus said, “repent and believe.” We will then have the Power greater than ourselves to help us change the direction of our lives.

***We need to do what Jesus said, “repent and believe.” We will then have the Power greater than ourselves to help us change the direction of our lives.***

***Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:14b, 15 NIV)***

As we journey away from our unmanageable lifestyle, some of us may choose the “remorseful road” and others the “repent and believe road.” On the remorseful road we carry our past wrongs in our hearts and, and easily get tired and weary because of the weight of the guilt we are carrying. On the repent and believe road, we confess our wrongdoing to God and leave our heavy baggage at the cross where the blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin.

***Godly sadness causes us to turn away from our sins and be saved. And we are certainly not sorry about that! But worldly sadness brings death. (2 Corinthians 7:10 NIRV)***

When Satan, the accuser of God’s children, comes to cause us trouble over our past, we remind him that he has no charges against us, for even though the wages of sin is death, Jesus gave His life and paid the debt of sin we owed.

***God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV)***

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you that I am washed clean of my past wrongs for I have repented of my sin and believe You will show me the path of life to fullness of joy. Amen***

## IS IT REALLY WORTH IT TO DO THINGS GOD’S WAY?

Now that we are seeking to act with honesty in all our affairs, it's discouraging to face obstacles in our path while we see others lying and manipulating and getting what they want without the hassle we are experiencing. Is it really worth doing things God's way? We are not the first ones to experience inconvenience and suffering as we wait for God to bring about His good plan for our life. Thousands of years ago the writer of these words in the Bible had a similar experience.

***But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence. All day long I have been afflicted and every morning brings new punishments. (Psalm 73:2-3, 13-14 NIV)***

We do not have to lie about having raw thoughts and emotions but we need to learn what to do with them. Along with the writer of these words we need to bring our observations and feelings before God and ask Him to show us what's going on in us and how we are meant to respond.

***When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. (Psalm 73:16-17 NIV)***

Only God is able to help us see things in perspective and give us wisdom to know what we ought to do. Over and over again God promises to give us a future with hope when we faithfully put our trust in Him. Whatever we see others do is only one event in time, but God knows the impact of their choices down the line and we don't.

God, in His wisdom, will quiet our hearts and show us how to find rest and security. We often won't see the result of our obedience in the moment but if we open our heart to God and reaffirm our trust in His goodness in our lives, God will be delighted to give us the strength we need for today and provide what we need for tomorrow – in ways we might expect – or maybe in some even better, though surprising ways.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, You are good and You are wise. Help me to trust Your care for me and Your promise to give me a future with hope, regardless of what I see happening in the lives of others. Amen***

***My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.***

***(Psalm 73:26 NIV)***

## TRANSITION

Transition is difficult. It requires that we leave something behind and move into something new. What is known to us is comfortable, even though it may not be good for us and certainly is no longer what is best for us. Everything that grows goes through transition. A seed is put in the ground and it dies in order that a new life form can begin to grow. A flower or fruit develops and is picked and unless the fruit is used for food, both will wither and die. On a farm, dead plants are often plowed back into the ground to provide nutrients for the next crop to come. Transition takes place from one season to the next.

***I am creating something new. There it is! Do you see it? I have put roads in deserts, streams in thirsty lands.***

*Isaiah 43:19 CEV*

Without God's promise to teach and guide us in the way we should live and watch over us, the burden of this new way of life would be too great for us. That is why it is important to remember every day of our lives that we are powerless and that on our own our life is unmanageable. Each day it is necessary for us to take time to read the Scriptures and to get to know the God who can restore us to sanity and moment by moment, day by day, practice turning our will and our life over to His care.

*Prayer: Loving God, as I face this day, give me the strength and courage to make whatever transition is necessary in my heart, in my thinking, and even in my circumstances so that my character defects will go and Your will becomes the desire of my heart in all my affairs. Amen*

***The Lord will lead you. He himself is with you. He will not fail you or leave you. Don't worry. Don't be afraid!***  
(Deuteronomy 31:8 ERV)

In recovery we are transitioning not only from the misuse of substances, but also from things like a lifestyle of isolation to one of looking for and accepting peer support. We're moving from trying to figure out the "big questions of life" about meaning and purpose on our own to consulting God and learning how God answers those questions. We are transitioning from avoiding the pain in our hearts to confronting it and receiving comfort and healing. We are moving away from impulsive and obsessive thinking to gratitude and solid solutions which develop as we pray and learn – and the list goes on.

***The Lord says, "I will teach you and guide you in the way you should live. I will watch over you and be your guide.*** (Psalm 32:8 ERV)

## EXCELLENCE – VERSUS – PERFECTIONISM

All of us want to be successful and to be able to do things well. We accept the affirmation we receive for a job well done or a goal achieved, and so we should. Unfortunately for some of us, we set goals that are unreasonable and then find it impossible to celebrate progress rather than perfection.

While it's important that we do our best within the limits we have of time, talent, and resources, we need to recognize that perfectionism is something quite different and is much more sinister. Excellence is the noble effort any of us make to "*live one day at a time, one moment at a time, accepting hardship as a pathway to peace.*" Perfectionism is that fear-driven approval-seeking obsessive pressure that threatens to overwhelm us until we are defeated.

***And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.*** (Hebrews 12:1b-2a; 5:8-9, NIV)

What comfort these words from the Bible give us. Only Jesus is perfect and we are not Jesus. We find perfection by trusting in the finished work of the only person who was perfect. Jesus is the "perfecter of our faith." The Bible is full of imperfect characters like us who were loved and redeemed by the one true God.

God is not looking for perfection in us but rather that we have faith in the perfect work of His beloved Son. God desires obedience to His word as our focus. He wants us to acknowledge our failures and have an open heart to His forgiveness, His cleansing, and His restoration. That is life at its best for whoever chooses it.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to live well, but I know that I can't do life perfectly. You know that too and so You sent Jesus to suffer and die for my sins so I could receive forgiveness and healing for the failures You knew I would experience. I put my trust once more in You, for only in Your power can I live a life of excellence and joy. Amen*

***We find our perfection by trusting in the finished work of the only person who was perfect.***

## LAMP AND LIGHT

When we first came to admit that our lives were unmanageable and made a decision to turn our will and life over to the care of God, how much did we know about God? Most of us knew very little about Him, but God knew a lot about us. The Bible was written for our benefit so we would have a manual that would teach us about the love of the God who created us and also instruct us in His life-giving truth that will help guide us on our way to a meaningful and purposeful life. Unfortunately, and for many reasons, many of us were unfamiliar with what was written for our good and we walked in ways that brought us into darkness rather than light.

***Your word is like a lamp that shows me the way. It is like a light that guides me.***

*Psalm 119:105 NIRV*

***Your word is like a lamp that shows me the way. It is like a light that guides me. 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 training us to do what is right.*** (Psalm 119:105; 2 Timothy 3:16 NIRV)

Lamps are put in strategic places to bring light, so that people will see what is ahead and therefore not stumble and fall. The light of the lamp guides us away from those things that may cause us harm. The Word of God is like that. As we improve our conscious contact with God and pray for the knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry it out, God, through His Word, will be our lamp and our light to give us the guidance that we need. By immersing ourselves in God's Word, we will have light to avoid the stumbling blocks that prevent our way forward.

***When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life.*** (Proverbs 6:22-23 NIV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for providing the Scriptures that help me know You, and Your ways, and also instruct me in the truth that keeps me from stumbling in my way forward in recovery. Amen,*

## START AT THE BEGINNING

When a building is at the planning stage, blueprints need to be drawn up and submitted to the local district council for approval permits. As the work proceeds, a building inspector will review the work at strategic steps on the way to ensure the work adheres to the plans submitted. The inspector will also note any defects in the work done and require that these be put right before the work continues. These inspections are required to ensure that the building is complete and sufficient for its future use.

When we give our will and life over to God's care, we also need to follow established practices if we are to be complete and sufficient for use in the Kingdom of God.

***You accepted Christ Jesus as Lord, so continue to live following him. You must depend on Christ only, drawing life and strength from him. Just as you were taught the truth, continue to grow stronger in your understanding of it.*** (Colossians 2:6-7a ERV)

The first step in any building process is to clear the land and dig down to the bedrock for the foundation. If this is done properly, the building will be stable. Our bedrock is the written Word of God and Jesus is the cornerstone. When we seek to improve our knowledge of the Scriptures and put the principles we learn into practice then we are building our lives on a solid foundation.

***Because of these things, the Lord God says, "I will put a rock—a cornerstone—in the ground in Zion. This will be a very precious stone. Everything will be built on this very important rock. Anyone who trusts in that rock will not be disappointed."*** (Isaiah 28:16 ERV)

Being repentant of our sin, not just being remorseful or sad about the consequences of what we have done, is the place where we start to build our solid foundation in Christ. If we leave some of the rubble from our past, then the foundation will not be stable, and the building will not be complete or approved by God.

***What people say about themselves means nothing. What counts is whether the Lord says they have done well.*** (2 Corinthians 10:18 ERV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me lay the foundation of my life on the bedrock of what Jesus has done for me. My desire is to become perfect and complete, ready for Your service. Amen*

***You accepted Christ Jesus as Lord, so continue to live following him. You must depend on Christ only, drawing life and strength from him.***

## LOVE NEVER GIVES UP

We are told in the Bible that love never fails, but in our relationships with others we often fail to love. One day our friend is the greatest person in the world and the next day they do something to offend us and they become our enemy. We are fickle in our love for others. The love of God is quite different from the love we have towards one another.

***Here is how you can tell the difference between God's children and the devil's children. Anyone who doesn't do what is right isn't God's child. And anyone who doesn't love their brother or sister isn't God's child either.***

(1 John 3:10 NIRV)

***God broke through with His unfailing love. He never gave up on us even when we refused to obey Him or even acknowledge that He existed.***

Before we gave our will and life over to the care of God, we were habitual sinners and did not love or care much for those around us. Our dependency became our first love and all our relationships suffered because we gave our all to what helped us exist in our unmanageable lifestyle. In the pit of our addiction, God broke through with His unfailing love. He never gave up on us even when we refused to obey Him or even acknowledge that He existed.

***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 3:1a NIV)

Would we care about others if they were not pleasing us? In our rebellion, God still cared about us and was not willing that any of us should perish, but that all of us would have the opportunity to be saved. He gave Jesus, His beloved son, to pay the penalty for our sin

and redeem us from our bondage to the evil one.

As children of God, our love for others should cause us to be tolerant with them even when they are disinterested in our testimony about the goodness of God. We should remember that love never fails, and we should never give up on them. Remember, with God, all things are possible.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to love others with the same love that You have for me. Teach me Your ways and help me to never give up on anyone. Amen***

## THE FIRST STEP IN OVERCOMING MISTAKES IS TO ADMIT TO THEM

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***

***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.***

## DEALING WITH HEALTH ISSUES

Many of us struggle with health issues both in our bodies and in our minds. The Bible tells us that, whatever we allow our minds to dwell on has a major impact on our physical well-being. God's desire is that we prosper as we obey the principles in His Word. God wants us to be in good health and have a cheerful heart which He says brings healing to our body and soul. God also informs us that a person with a crushed heart will struggle with sickness and depression.

*Beloved friend, I pray that you are prospering in every way and that you continually enjoy good health, just as your soul is prospering. A joyful, cheerful*

*heart brings healing to both body and soul. But the one whose heart is crushed struggles with sickness and depression.* (3 John 1:2: Proverbs 17:22 TPT)

**God wants us to be in good health and have a cheerful heart which He says brings healing to our body and soul.**

When we were in addiction, we thought that drugs, alcohol, unhealthy relationships, or all of them together, would help us have a good life. However, we were wrong in our assessment because dependencies never bring relief or healing to troubled souls. They increase the need for more of the same numbing medication. If we continue medicating ourselves and doing what is right in our own eyes, Satan will work to enslave us to whatever we substitute for God's goodness.

*Even though I've seen their ways, I will heal them. I will guide them forward and repay them with comfort, giving mourners the language of praise.* (Isaiah 57:18 TPT)

When we commit to following the ways of the Lord, He promises healing and freedom from whatever has caused us harm. Our part is to improve our conscious contact with God through prayer and meditation on the Scriptures, and to apply the principles we learn in all our affairs. God invites us to share in his great goodness and will give us the will and the power to do what pleases Him.

*Everything in the Scriptures is God's Word. All of it is useful for teaching and helping people and for correcting them and showing them how to live.* (2 Timothy 3:16 CEV)

*Prayer: Gracious God, I am truly blessed that You want me to share in Your goodness. Please give me the will and desire to learn and then do what pleases You. Amen*

## JUDGE NOT

Wherever people heard Jesus was, they sought Him out. One day Jesus went to the seacoast and a multitude gathered to hear Him teach, and to seek healing for their diseases. We are truly blessed that in the Bible we can read most things that Jesus taught on that day, and that His healing power remains available to us who have given our will and life over to God's care. One of the things Jesus taught the people that day is, do not judge others.

*"Judge not, and you will not be judged."* (Luke 6:37a ESV)

How many of us are quick to judge others for what they say or do? Are we so pure in word and deed ourselves that we can righteously judge others for what they say or do? On another day some Jewish leaders brought a woman whom they said was caught in the very act of adultery and asked Him to judge whether she should receive the punishment of Moses' law and be stoned to death.

*The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?"* (John 8:3-5 ESV)

Were they really interested in upholding the law of Moses? If they were, they would also have brought the man with whom she was caught in this adulterous act, for Moses' law says they shall both be put to death.

Who knows what their actual grievance was, but Jesus' judgment was that a person who is without sin should be the first to throw a stone at her.

*And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her."* (John 8:7 ESV)

They all left without a stone being thrown and Jesus told the woman to *"go and sin no more"*. Perhaps we all need to remember what Jesus' requirement is when we justify ourselves and carelessly throw stones at another.

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, You alone are the righteous judge. Rather than being judgmental towards others, please help me be compassionate and understanding. Amen*

***Rather than being judgmental towards others, please help me be compassionate and understanding.***

## GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

Jesus' followers weren't sure how to pray and so they asked Jesus to teach them. He gave them the words of the famous "Lord's Prayer" and today we want to think about the line that says, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Jesus taught us to come to God and ask for our daily needs. From the early pages of the Bible, and all the way through to the very end, we have teaching and examples of God providing what was needed. We are told to simply ask, trusting His good heart towards us, and giving thanks for what we have already received.

***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)

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We can't just rub our hands together though and think we can ask for anything at all. God wants to provide what we need, but He's also a loving father who's not going to send us things that are harmful for us altogether or not helpful at this time in our development. Only God knows how to sort all that out.

***You sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.*** (Matthew 7:11 NLT)

We also need to be careful to check our motives when we are bringing our requests to God. We live in a world of self-centered self-satisfying agendas and our own thinking is impacted. Part of our new life in recovery is trusting God to reshape our thinking so we recognize what our true needs are.

***When you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.*** (James 4:3 NLT)

What we can hold securely is the fact that God is our Heavenly Father who is able and willing to care for us each day and provide for us as we walk with Him and trust Him for good gifts. They may be different than what we asked for, but we can be assured that they will be exactly what we need.

***Prayer: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen***

## STEP SEVEN -THE COST OF REMOVING MY SHORTCOMINGS

In Step-7 we humbly come before God and ask Him to remove all our shortcomings. We can do this because we have given our will and life over to the care of God. We have admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of the wrongs we have done. So, when we ask, we can expect God to be faithful to remove them.

***How? you ask. In Christ. God put the wrong on him who never did anything wrong, so we could be put right with God.*** (2 Corinthians 5:21 MSG)

We were the ones who messed up our lives so why would God choose not to punish us for what we have done? He knew that we could not live the life He had prepared for us, so He sent Jesus into the world to live the life we could not live – a life free from sin. Jesus never did anything wrong, therefore, His sacrifice of Himself was sufficient to wipe out the sins of the whole world. Those who fail to receive the gift of God through Jesus will bear the punishment for their own sins while we who come to Him with a repentant heart and ask for forgiveness will not.

***This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. 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 3:16-17 MSG)

Jesus came so we could have meaning and purpose in our lives. When we humbly come before God and ask Him to remove our shortcomings, we can also ask Him to give us the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out. Through prayer and meditation on the Scriptures we can get to know Jesus and gain knowledge on how to live a perfect life in the Power that is greater than ourselves.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am thankful that Jesus came into the world to pay the price for my sins. Through prayer and meditation, help me to know more about Jesus and Your love for me that brought Him into the world, so that I could be reconciled to You and live with You forever. Amen***

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