

LIFE WITH  GOD IN RECOVERY

# Daily Meditations



December 2017

These meditations are available online  
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at:

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

*Come and learn and grow with us:*

***Christian 12-Step Recovery Meeting***  
***Wednesdays, 7:00 pm***  
*325 6<sup>th</sup> Street*  
*New Westminster, BC*

***Christian 12-Step Recovery Meeting***  
***Thursdays, 7:30 pm***  
*543 Powell Street*  
*Vancouver, BC*

**We want to hear from you.**

Visit us at [www.partnersinhope.ca](http://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](mailto:pihrecovery@gmail.com)

Phone or text: 604-215-0335

*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

# 2017

## January

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## LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY Daily Meditations

DECEMBER 2017

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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.*

# NOTES

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2017

## GOD IS LISTENING

How are we expected to know what is right? How do we know what is wrong? What is helpful? What is harmful? How can we be sure that we are making the right choices? God knew we would need help in this area and gave us moral laws that instruct us how to live a purposeful satisfying life. The Bible tells us that God has a plan for each person's life and, if we seek Him, He will give us the wisdom we need to make wise choices in each step of our journey.

***Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track.*** (Proverbs 3:5-6 MSG)

One of the practices we are encouraged to maintain in recovery is taking daily inventory with God. This practice is intended for us to reflect on the happenings of each day. We inventory what we have done right. We inventory what we have done wrong. We also look at those events which we know have the potential to draw us back into the darkness, resentment and shame that we have been journeying away from. The purpose of a daily inventory is to expose, and if necessary deal with, any shortcomings that might cause us or someone else to stumble.

***See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.*** (Hebrews 12:15 NIV)

As we review the events of our day, let's be aware that God's presence was with us wherever we went. Let's ask Him, to help us accept those things we cannot change, for the courage to change those things we can, and for the wisdom to know the difference.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am glad that You are with me wherever I go and that You are able to keep me from stumbling. My desire is to bring glory to Your name in all I do and say. Please shelter me from all harm and guide me into the path of peace. Amen***

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***God has a plan  
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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2017

## IS GOD'S AGENDA MY AGENDA?

Jesus said that we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and love our neighbour as ourselves. At the end of each day we should take inventory as to how well we fulfilled that agenda. When we do an honest assessment of our lives, we can be pleased with those things we managed to do well. In those areas where we know we fell short we can ask God to help us improve. God encourages and sustains us as we daily determine to follow His ways.

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***Jesus said that we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and love our neighbour as ourselves. At the end of each day we should take inventory as to how well we fulfilled that agenda.***

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***See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.*** (Hebrews 3:12-13 NIV)

Are we evaluating our lives based on God's word? Did we wake up this morning loving God with all our heart and seeking to know and be a part of what God wants to do through us today? Was that the agenda we set for the day? Did we ask God for guidance in those things we planned to do? Were we conscious of God being with us as we carried out those planned events. God's word assures us that when we call upon Him for help that He will be there.

***Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.*** (Matthew 6:34 MSG)

As we go through each day it's good to ask God for help with everything we plan to do. We may be surprised at what He will show us.

***Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.*** (Jeremiah 33:3 NIV)

*Prayer: Loving God, Help me to fix my thoughts on You as I set my agenda for each day. May I be ever aware of Your presence with me to guide and direct me in all my affairs. Amen*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2017

## TRANSITIONING FROM ONE YEAR TO THE NEXT

In just a few hours the new calendar year will be upon us. On what basis can we hope to have a better year than we had in the past one? We sometimes feel overwhelmed at the beginning of a new year because we have so much stuff to wade through, so many unanswered questions in our minds, and so many painful things in our hearts. If we have come and gone from recovery in the past, then we are often concerned about our ability to maintain peace and joy in sobriety for any length of time.

God's answer is very positive, very simple and very direct. It comes in the form of an invitation: ***Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit.*** (Ezekiel 18:30-31 NIV)

This year will very quickly become the old year and we are unable to change anything that happened in it. As we wait for the countdown to the new year, it's good to reflect on what God offers to give us in the coming year -- a new heart and a new spirit. In fact, God says we will become a new person.

***Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion*** (2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT, Philippians 1:6 NIV)

This coming year is a fresh opportunity to go deeper in our experience of coming to believe that a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. We can't fix ourselves, but God can. *"God could and would if He were sought."* This is the hope shared by one recovering friend to another. This is the promise that God makes to us this New Year's Eve.

*Prayer: Loving God, As I enter this new year I choose to leave my past with you. I lay down my fears and resentments. I receive Your comfort, Your forgiveness, and Your healing. I have confidence in Your assurance that You will complete the good work you have begun in me. Amen*

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***This coming year is a fresh opportunity to go deeper in our experience of coming to believe that a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity***

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2017

## HOPE FOR WHAT CONCERNS ME TODAY

Troubles come, sometimes one on top of another. Pressure builds. Sadness deepens. We ask, “where is God in the middle of our troubles?” As we move towards the new year it’s important to not forget what we have just celebrated. Jesus left the light and splendor of heaven and broke into the darkness and chaos of life on this planet to bring hope and peace to those who put their trust in Him.

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***In every situation, we do the things we know to be right and good, then wait prayerfully in God's care and protection until the problem is resolved.***

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***This is GOD's Message, the God who made earth, made it livable and lasting, known everywhere as GOD: 'Call to me and I will answer you. I'll tell you marvelous and wondrous things that you could never figure out on your own.'*** (Jeremiah 33:2-3 MSG)

Jesus longs to care, comfort, and strengthen us in our times of vulnerability. If we ask for His guidance, He will show us the right way to handle any problem we may encounter. He may show us new ways to resolve the issue, ways we have never even thought about or considered.

***Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me; You will stretch out Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, And Your right hand will save me. The Lord will perfect that which concerns me.*** (Psalm 138:7-8 NKJV)

What is different about us when we have given our will and life over to the care of God is that we know, and believe, that there is hope and a solution to any problem, because God is with us. In every situation,

we do the things we know to be right and good, then wait prayerfully in God's care and protection until the problem is resolved. We refuse to give in to hopelessness that says nothing works and nothing will ever change. We keep looking to God and His amazing promise to perfectly fulfill His good purposes in everything that concerns us.

***Prayer: Gracious God, I choose to stand with You and trust You to perfectly fulfill Your good purpose in everything that concerns me today. Amen***

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2017

## MY HIDING PLACE

In our addiction, the substance or habit we used to help numb the fear and shame we felt over the distressing events of our past, became our hiding place. Our desire was to block out any memory that caused us to feel vulnerable. When our addiction had control of us, we mistakenly felt that **we** were in control and could handle whatever circumstances came our way. We looked to ourselves or some other entity to solve our difficulties and 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)

The writer of the above Psalm prayed and sought protection from the Living God. He also asked that He would not be disgraced. We also can come before God and ask Him to help us when we are feeling vulnerable. When we seek God, He will listen to our prayers and He will be our safe place to hide. Our God is a mighty fortress and nothing on earth is His equal. 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. Why not draw near to God today and allow Him to care for you?

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for not coming to You when I needed comfort and protection. Please be my fortress of strength and set me free from all my fears. Amen***

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***When we seek God, He will listen to our prayers and He will be our safe place to hide.***

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MONDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2017

## STEP TEN – MEASURING MY PROGRESS

Taking a regular inventory helps us maintain a balanced view of our progress. We need to remind ourselves of our strengths, our weaknesses, and the areas where we remain vulnerable. Reviewing our day on a regular basis helps us keep our focus on the path we desire to be on. It will also reveal any area where we may have been sidetracked by a person or event that we allowed to negatively influence our behaviour.

When compiling our inventory, we need to ask ourselves and truthfully answer questions such as: What happened today that gave me joy? Did I consider the needs of those I encountered? What unmet needs do I have? How did I give generously and share with others today? Is there any drift in my thinking? How am I welcoming God's guidance rather than living in my own self-will?

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***Where we have been wrong or our behaviour has been harmful, it's important to admit it and take any necessary action.***

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***Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.*** (Romans 12:3 NLT)

Our life with God in recovery should be one of continual learning and growing. We need to be discerning as we reflect on our motives and behaviour in situations that arise. When our actions or attitudes conflict with God's principles, we need to re-align our ways with God's word and, we need to do it sooner rather than later. Where we have been wrong or our behaviour has been harmful, it's important to admit it and take any

necessary action. Where possible, we need to make amends. This will help build character in us as we live in community as God intended.

***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 2:12-13 NLT)

*Prayer: Loving God, Help me to see where I have fallen short of living as a person who honours You and others. Help me to make amends according to Your word. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are my God and Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. Amen*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2017

## NO DIRTY LAUNDRY

One day while the prophet Isaiah was praying, he saw a vision of God sitting on his throne in heaven. In the brightness of God's purity, Isaiah saw his own sinfulness and the wrong doing of others around him. The perfection and holiness and beauty of God illuminated Isaiah's view of everything, including himself. Isaiah's first response was one of hopelessness and doom because he saw the darkness and filth of his sin.

***I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.*** (Isaiah 6:5 NIV)

As we come out of addiction into recovery, some of us are afraid to approach God because of our "dirty laundry." God is kind. He doesn't use shame to humiliate us. He has no desire to demean us. God has always been aware of the sin we are only now becoming aware of as we wake up in recovery. In His great kindness He has provided Jesus, the solution to our sin and shame. This is what we celebrate during the Christmas season.

We can't wash ourselves clean enough to come before God. On our own we can't do anything about the ugliness of our attitude, words, and actions. God washes us clean when we turn from our sin and accept Jesus as our Saviour and Lord. God not only forgives us, He empowers us to live well and then sends us out as messengers of hope among others who are struggling just like we were.

***Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!*** (Matthew 5:16, Romans 10:15 NIV)

Let's put on the clean clothes God is providing us and joyfully offer dignity and hope to others by sharing the good news. God forgives. God heals. God restores us to fullness of life.

*Prayer: Thank you God for cleaning up my dirty laundry. Help me to live this beautiful new life as Your messenger of hope to others. Amen*

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***Let's put on the clean clothes God is providing us and joyfully offer dignity and hope to others by sharing the good news.***

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2017

## STANDING FIRM

As we watch the news on television these days we realize that some things never seem to change. Nations make alliances with each other and then undo them as they become dissatisfied with the consequences. What does all of this have to do with us as we approach a new year?

This is a time to remember that God is in control and will fulfill His purposes. There is much more going on in the world than what we see and hear in the daily news. When we call on God in our personal challenges and crises, we are assured that He will help us and bring about those things He has promised. Even when

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***When we call on God in our personal challenges and crises, we are assured that He will help us and bring about those things He has promised.***

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people think they have failed to live up to the potential God has for them, God is unwavering in working out His purposes for those who commit their will and life into His care.

***For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.*** (Psalm 33:9-11 NIV)

For us to find peace in this fragile and sometimes frightening world, we must continue to have faith in God's ultimate control. The invitation to us in this week between Christmas and the New Year is to reaffirm our trust in God's promises and His ability to bring about His purposes no matter how chaotic things appear to be. Our

part is to stand firm with God, trust His word and His vision. When God says that we will not be overwhelmed, He means it. When God says He will make a way where there seems to be no way, He is able to do just that.

***When the storm has swept by, the wicked are gone, but the righteous stand firm forever.*** (Proverbs 10:15 NIV)

***Prayer: Jesus, You truly are the Prince of Peace. During this "in between time," come and live in me and strengthen me as I follow You in all my ways. Amen***

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2017

## STEP TEN – MY LIFE REFLECTED IN GOD'S MIRROR

Suppose we looked in a mirror and found we had something smeared around our mouth. We would be foolish if we didn't immediately wash our face and clean up the problem. In the same way, we need to routinely look at ourselves with a spiritual mirror. When we are aware of a problem that could lead to relapse in our recovery, we need to take corrective action as soon as we become aware of it. If we don't, the problem will not go away just because we refuse to deal with it.

***But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like.*** (James 1:22-24 NLT)

Whether we are doing an official Step 10 inventory or just reflecting on our life with God in recovery, it's good to include one or two of the following questions:

Was love my motivation? ***You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.'*** And, ***'Love your neighbor as yourself.*** (Luke 10:27 NLT)

What was I thinking? ***And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.*** (Philippians 4:8-9 NLT)

When I reflect on God's standards, did I live today according to His principles? ***But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere.*** (James 3:17 NLT)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to be mindful of Your unfailing love for me as I once again turn my will and life over to Your care. Strengthen my resolve to follow Your principles and walk in Your ways. Amen***

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***When we are aware of a problem that could lead to relapse in our recovery, we need to take corrective action as soon as we become aware of it.***

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2017

## STEP TEN – TOOLS FOR REFLECTION AND GROWTH

What tools am I using to help me assess, reflect, learn, and grow in my recovery? Whatever the tool, the standards we must use are God's principles because they are life giving.

We live in a world that says, "If it feels good do it." In our addiction, many of us sought after destructive things believing they would deaden our anxiety or pain and help us feel better. In recovery, we are invited to measure our quality of life based on God's goodness and the true meaning and purpose He brings to our lives. Many of God's principles for life do not feed our "feel good fast" addictive personality. We struggle to do what is right while preferring to do what is most convenient. One of the purposes of a continual Step 10 inventory is to help us recognize our ongoing temptation to live what we believe is a "softer, easier way of life".

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**What tools  
am I using  
to help me  
assess,  
reflect,  
learn, and  
grow in my  
recovery?**

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***For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.*** (Hebrews 4:12-13 NLT)

There are several ways to take inventory: 1) SPOT CHECK INVENTORY: In each situation where we begin to experience things not going well, we pause and list what appears to be right and what seems to be wrong. 2) DAILY INVENTORY: At the end of each day we talk with God about the events of our day and listen for His encouragement, His correction, and His instruction. 3) PERIODIC CHECK-UP INVENTORY: On a regular basis we take some time alone or in the company of a sponsor or adviser to make a careful review of our progress.

***Prayer: Gracious God, May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Amen*** (Psalm 19:14 NLT)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2017

## THE LONG WAIT

How long would we be willing to wait for God to show us the fulfillment of His plans?

God made a promise that He would send someone to rescue Anna and her people. For more than 60 years Anna waited for the fulfillment of the promise. While she waited she trusted God and served Him. She didn't get angry and complain and give up on God in frustration. She just did the simple things she knew to do, one day at a time and waited.

***Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher, and she was very old. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years. Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer. She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem.*** (Luke 2:36-38 NLT)

We may don't how long we need to wait for the fulfillment of God's plan for our lives. It probably won't be sixty years. What we need to understand today is that God's plans are perfect and God's time is right. God wants us to walk with Him and do the ordinary things He has instructed us to do, even in the middle of difficult circumstances. As we do that we experience the best life possible today and make ourselves available to all God has planned for us.

***The Lord is good to those who depend on him, to those who search for him. So it is good to wait quietly for salvation from the Lord.*** (Lamentations 3:25-26 NLT)

As this year comes to an end and we move into the next, let's focus on today and trust God's plan and God's timing for our future.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I find it hard to wait. Help me to trust Your promises and simply do the next right thing. Amen***

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**What we  
need to  
understand is  
that God's  
plans are  
perfect, and  
God's time is  
right.**

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2017

## THE GOD OF CHRISTMAS WHO IS WITH US NOW

The presents have been opened. Most of the turkey has been eaten. With Christmas Eve and Christmas Day behind us, it's a good time to review our daily life, our relationships, and even our hopes and dreams for the coming year.

God is righteous, and His wisdom is infinite. There's nothing harsh or unkind in God's nature. We were created to be like God, but sin spoiled God's creation.

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***The joy of the Christmas story is that Jesus came close to us to show us God's love and to make a way for us to come out of our sin and brokenness.***

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As we've gathered in family groups or with friends to celebrate Christmas, many of us have witnessed sinful ways at work. We are called to love each other, yet we still say and do things that disappoint and anger one another. Sometimes a gathering can be ruined by the bitterness related to a past event that someone is unable to forgive.

We are sinful broken people living in a sinful broken world. The joy of the Christmas story is that Jesus came close to us to show us God's love and to make a way for us to come out of our sin and brokenness.

***For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.*** (Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:8 NLT)

Many new devices and gadgets received as gifts need to be powered up or have batteries installed. The new life God is offering us requires that we invite Jesus into our lives and connect to His power through the Holy Spirit. As we meditate on His word, in the Bible, God will teach us how our lives are meant to be lived and will support and direct us as we seek Him in all our ways.

***The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.*** (Psalm 32:8 NLT)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for the gift of new life You are offering me. I am willing to enter into this new life and allow You to guide and direct me in all my ways. Amen***

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2017

## LIVING THE WAY GOD INTENDED

What are some of the "issues" we should reflect on as we gauge our moving from a self-centered life to one of a loving relationship with God and our neighbour? God's Word helps us sort out some of these important considerations.

***And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever." Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.*** (2 Corinthians 9:8-10 NIV)

We all have gifts and we are all working to correct character defects. Much of what we think we can do, or even how we do it, may reflect our flawed thinking from the past. God has blessed us with new life, so we can now be a blessing to others. We may not feel strong enough, or that we have much to give but, if we use what God has given us, He will help us do more good than we ever thought possible.

***Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.*** (Ephesians 3:20 NLT)

Do we, with gratitude, take the time to acknowledge the many gifts that are all around us? Are we using our gifts and talents to serve God and our neighbor? Are we prideful or humble, anxious or peaceful? Are we living a balanced life with God, our family, and our neighbours?

God will help us live life to the full as we submit our ways to Him and faithfully follow His direction. We know this journey is one of progress not perfection. Let's not hold back in serving God and others because we think we are inadequate. Let's live by faith and not by sight!

***Prayer: Change my heart O God and make it ever true to Your word. Amen***

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***What are some of the "issues" we should reflect on as we gauge our moving from a self-centered life to one of a loving relationship with God and our neighbour?***

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2017

## SUBMITTING TO GOD

Most of the time we estimate what we and others can or cannot do based on what we know and have seen. God or others may ask us to do something that we are fearful to do, because we know what is going on inside our heads.

***Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*** (James 4:7-8a; 1 Thess. 5:18 NIV)

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***Our strength comes from God alone and, if we listen to Him and submit to His ways, we will accomplish more than we could ever have thought or dreamed possible.***

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In an event recorded in the Bible, God called Gideon a "Mighty Warrior" even though he was threshing wheat in a winepress while hiding from the Midianites who were enemies of Israel. Gideon never thought of himself as a "Mighty Warrior" and doubted He could ever achieve very much.

***Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior." "Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? ... But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian." The Lord turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?" "Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but how***

***can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.***" (Judges 6:11b-15 NIV)

Gideon was doubtful, but eventually submitted to God and was given the strength to defeat the enemies of Israel. With God all things are possible. As we journey in our relationship with God, we will find that our strength comes from Him alone and, if we listen to Him and submit to His ways, we will accomplish more than we could ever have thought or dreamed possible.

***Prayer: Loving God, I am weak, but You show Yourself strong on behalf of Your children. Help me to confidently use my gifts according to Your purpose for my life. Amen***

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2017

## CHRISTMAS – NOT JUST A HOLIDAY

Why do we celebrate Christmas? Why not just settle for a winter holiday of Santa and snow and parties and gifts? Those of us who believe in Jesus celebrate Christmas because we know He came to earth as a helpless human baby so that He might deliver us from the penalty of our sin. Jesus willingly set aside all His rights in heaven to take on human flesh and live as an obedient servant to the living God. He fulfilled God's plan of salvation for sinful, suffering, and broken human beings.

***Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.*** (Philippians 2:6-8 NLT)

God embraces us as His children when we turn from stubborn self-will and trust Jesus to set us free from our sin. The gift Jesus came to give us, that we celebrate at Christmas, is life with God, now and forever. God also guides and directs us in this new life and gives us the power to do what is right.

***GOD made my life complete when I placed all the pieces before him. When I got my act together, he gave me a fresh start. Now I'm alert to GOD's ways; I don't take God for granted. Every day I review the ways he works; I try not to miss a trick. I feel put back together, and I'm watching my step. GOD rewrote the text of my life when I opened the book of my heart to his eyes.*** (Psalm 18:20-24 MSG)

We don't leave gifts under the Christmas tree unopened. We open them and enjoy them now. Life with Jesus is a gift to be opened today and enjoyed now and for eternity.

***Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for Jesus our Saviour, born into the world to give us a new life filled with peace. Amen***

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***The gift Jesus came to give us, that we celebrate at Christmas, is life with God, now and forever.***

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2017

## ENCOUNTERING GOD

Encounters with the living God inevitably bring fear. On the night Jesus was born the angels had to reassure the shepherds, "Don't be afraid!" Once the shepherds realized that the angels of God wanted to communicate with them, they were willing to hear and then to seek the Christ child. Our Holy and Almighty God is a personal God who wants to share His plans with us. When we put our faith in Him, His perfect love will cast out all fear. We need not fear an unknown future for Jesus is Immanuel, God with us.

*And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.*

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**God's  
desire is  
that we  
receive His  
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which casts  
out all fear.**

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*But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger...."*

*When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. (Luke 2:8-12, 15-16 NIV)*

God's desire is that we receive His gift of love which casts out all fear. God seeks people who are attentive to who He is, what He does, and why He does it. God wants us to experience His unfailing love for us. Will we come to Him? Will we recognize Him? Will we respond to His love? Will we share the interests of His heart and allow Him to share in the interests of ours?

This Christmas, let's encounter the love of God through Jesus. Let's come close and experience the wonder of His presence with us.

*Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for sending Jesus into the world so that our relationship with You might be restored. Amen*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2017

## HONOURING GOD WITH MY BODY

God made our bodies to be a home for His Spirit. It goes against the "wisdom of the world" to acknowledge the truth that our bodies are not our own but belong to God. Life with God in recovery gives us the opportunity to explore and live this truth.

***Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NLT)***

It's important that we keep a healthy balance in all our activities, not just in those related to our addictive habits. Anything can become a demanding passion when we allow it to become the primary focus of our life. Exercise and food, healthy socializing and sleep are important components of a recovered life but they, in themselves don't give us life. Even healthy activities can become addictive if they are foremost in our thoughts and consume most of our time. As His beloved children we are to honour God in all we do and say.

God's word tells us: ***Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. (Ephesians 4:29 NLT)***

Attitude and words are also important indicators of whether our bodies are being used as a home for God's Holy Spirit. We need to deal with complaining, fault finding, persistent arguing, blaming etc. The poison of bitter resentment and grudges needs to be cleansed from our system. Are we spending more time talking about problems than seeking possible solutions? Does our attitude and speech encourage others?

Let's make every effort to cleanse God's Holy Temple and live a life that is pure and holy in His sight.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Cleanse me from secret sins and make me a vessel worthy for Your service. Amen*

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2017

## DOING GREAT THINGS

Each Sunday we usually reflect on a Psalm, which is a poem from God's word. Today we find encouragement from a poem/song sung by Mary, Jesus' mother when she was told that she had been chosen by God to give birth to Jesus.

***Filled with wonder at all the amazing things God was about to do in her, Mary sings: "Oh, how my soul praises the Lord. How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior! For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed. For the Mighty One is holy, and he has done great things for me.*** (Luke 1:46-49 NLT)

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***God  
created  
us to do  
good and  
to be a  
blessing  
to others.***

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Mary hadn't yet given birth but, knowing how trustworthy God is, Mary believed and rejoiced in His plan for her life. God chooses us, not because we are people with lots of money and influence, but because we are willing to trust that, even though we feel insignificant and powerless, He can do the amazing things He promised in and through us. Our part is to commit our will and our life to His care.

Some of us drifted into addiction because we felt no one took any notice of us. We didn't seem to have anything to offer that others desired. We were not aware that God created us for a purpose. Even though Mary had other plans, God had a purpose for Mary's life and He worked out the things that concerned her. He enabled His plan to be

fulfilled in her life. God created us to do good and to be a blessing to others. God will work out those things that concern us. He is able to fulfill His plan for our lives.

***Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often.*** (Luke 2:19 NLT)

Thankfully it's not how powerful or how smart we are that gets the job done. It's going forward with the Mighty One who does great things for us and through us.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, we praise you with joy today because you have taken notice of us and are doing great things for us and through us. Amen***

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2017

## A CROWDED CHRISTMAS

Two days before Christmas and it seems like it's crowded and busy everywhere. Traffic on the roads is clogged. Airports are full of people. Long lineups of people wait to have their purchases scanned and pay for them. People, people everywhere!

Jesus was born into a busy crowded world. His parents, along with thousands of others had to leave their hometown and travel several days on foot to get to the crowded city of Bethlehem so the census ordered by the Roman government could be taken. Mary was nine months pregnant. When she and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, all the available rooms in the inns were full. The only place that Mary and Joseph could find to rest in was in a cave which housed animals. In that cave with smelly animals all around, Jesus was born.

When the world around us is busy, it's easy to feel forgotten and uncared for. The needs we have go unseen and unmet by others. We are left alone to sort out challenges that are made harder by the many events of the holiday season. Life for us is unmanageable and we are faced with our own powerlessness.

***Now may the Lord of peace himself give you his peace at all times and in every situation. The Lord be with you all.*** (2 Thessalonians 3:16 NLT)

Whatever we are feeling during these busy times before Christmas Day, God invites us to stop and take a break and be filled with His peace and presence. The birth of Jesus Christ tells us clearly that God sees us, cares about us, and if invited, will come close to us. Jesus became a human being and entered into our experiences and our pain. He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses. God is with us.

***"Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God.*** (Psalm 40:1 NKJV)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us not to be caught up in the mad rush of these pre-Christmas days but to take this day, one moment at a time, and give thanks for your love and grace in sending Jesus into the world. Amen***

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2017

## ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS ...

Growing up I remember hearing the cute Christmas song, "All I want for Christmas is my two front teeth, my two front teeth, see my two front teeth! Gee, if I could only have my two front teeth, then I could wish you "Merry Christmas." I haven't heard it anywhere recently except in my own head. It started me thinking, though, about the things we desire. Christmas is a time when many people think about what they want Santa to bring them and what they hope might be under the Christmas tree on Christmas morning. If we just receive this or that gift, we think our life will be fulfilled.

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**We  
experience  
fulfillment  
only when  
God's desires  
become our  
desires.**

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The truth is, we experience fulfillment only when God's desires become our desires. How does this happen? Our desires begin to change when we surrender our lives to God and sincerely choose to have him remove our selfishness. Jesus, who always desired to do God's will, comes to live in us and changes us, from the inside out, so we are more and more like Him. Jesus makes us righteous and acceptable to God and only then to do experience the reality of having what we've always desired.

**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)

Jesus demonstrated, by His life and death, that when God's will is our desire, the results ultimately are positive. **But our High Priest offered himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down in the place of honor at God's right hand.** (Hebrews 10:12 NLT)

As we approach Christmas, God invites us to become those who desire to do His will always, in every area of our life. As we make this fundamental shift in our thinking and behaving we will experience the kind of satisfaction Jesus spoke about when He said, **"My food, is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."** (John 4:34 NIV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is to do Your will and to walk in Your ways. Please strengthen me in Your power to do what pleases You. Amen*

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2017

## STEP ELEVEN – CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH OUR LOVING GOD

In the beginning God created us to live in conscious contact with Him. His desire for us is to know Him and His unfailing love for us. God wants us to walk securely in the knowledge that He watches over us. God wants us to share our life's experiences with Him. Are we seeking conscious contact with this amazing God?

***I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. We love because he first loved us. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer. How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand!*** (Song of Solomon 6:3, 1 John 4:16, 19, 1 Peter 3:12a NIV, Psalm 139:17-18 NLT)

God cares for us and the things that matter to us. The God who holds all creation together rejoices over us with singing. God desire is that we realize how precious we are to Him and to see ourselves in the light of His unfailing love. The greatest demonstration of how precious we are in God's sight is that He allowed His only beloved son Jesus to redeem us with His life's blood. Are we living in conscious awareness of this great love?

***Give thanks to the Lord and proclaim His greatness. Let the whole world know what He has done. ... Search for the Lord and for his strength; continually seek him. Remember the wonders he has performed, his miracles, and the rulings he has given*** (Psalm 105:1, 4-5 NLT)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to consciously live in your loving care today. Help me to grow in my trust in You and in my desire to follow Your principles in all I do and say. Amen*

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**God created us  
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for us.**

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2017

## STEP ELEVEN – CONSCIOUS CONTACT WHEN WE FEEL OVERWHELMED

God has a good, pleasing and perfect plan for our life. Through His word, as recorded in the Bible, God is communicating His heart of love for us and His desire for us to spend eternity with Him. Reading and meditating on scripture informs us of all that God has done and promises to do for us, when we believe and receive the fullness of life He offers through Jesus.

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**Reading and meditating on scripture informs us of all that God has done and promises to do for us, when we believe and receive the fullness of life He offers through Jesus.**

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***I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*** (Ephesians 3:16-19 NIV)

Life doesn't always happen according to our plans and sometimes life is overwhelming. In the past we used our addictions as a hiding place. In recovery, we need a safe place where we can shelter from the storms of life. God is that safe place. As we turn our attention to His Word and seek through prayer and meditation to experience His presence and hear His voice, He will calm our fears and show us a safe way to proceed.

***Those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.*** (Isaiah 40:31 NLT)

It's important that we take time each day to speak with God in prayer. We can thank Him for all that He has done and ask Him for wisdom and strength to do what is on our agenda for today. God is always available to us. Are we available to God? Are we daily living in conscious contact with God, praying only for the knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out?

*Prayer: Thank You God that when I call on You, You are always near. Help me to be aware of Your presence with me in everything I undertake to do. Amen*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2017

## AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME

***The Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us').*** (Isaiah 7:14 NLT)

We have just read a promise God gave to His people hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus. At just the right time, this promise was fulfilled. From many scriptures recorded in the Bible, we have conclusive evidence that God has a time for His plans to be fulfilled. He will neither be too late nor too early. God will act, at just the right time.

***All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet: "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'" When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife.*** (Matthew 1:22-24 NLT)

In the Bible God has given us examples of patience and timeliness on which we can reflect. God has promised to wipe away every tear from our eyes and gather faithful people to Himself. He patiently waits for us to turn to Him and surrender our lives of selfishness and sin. He won't wait forever, but He is waiting until the season of invitation is complete. Jesus was born at God's designated time. Jesus died for us and took the punishment for our sins. At just the right time He opened the door to God's saving grace so that we would be ready when He comes again for us to spend eternity with Him.

***"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly."*** (Romans 5:6 NIV)

Today is a good time to reflect on God's promises in the Bible and remind ourselves that, at just the right time, God will bring them all to pass for simple trusting people like us.

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

*Prayer: Loving God, Help me to believe and trust that at just the right time You will make perfect all that concerns me. Amen*

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**At just the right time, God will bring to pass what He has said.**

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## MISSING THE MEANING

Christmas decorations have been up for weeks. Many malls have prepared a winter wonderland, a special "North Pole" room for Santa to greet his friends. In some places a nativity scene with figures of Mary and Joseph, some shepherds, and the baby Jesus may also be seen. It's good that some merchants still recognize the true reason for the season.

***The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize***

***him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.*** (John 1:9-12 NLT)

***Let's fill this season with direction and meaning as we include Jesus in our thoughts and activities today, and every day.***

So many people, and perhaps even we ourselves, are so pre-occupied with preparations surrounding Christmas that we ignore Jesus. Shoppers are busy deciding whether to buy gifts in the mall or online. Some are exhausted by the demands of the season and others struggle with loneliness. Some of us may be preoccupied with shame and guilt about being in a position in life where we are distant from our family, or perhaps financially unable to provide for our kids.

Today is a wonderful opportunity to intentionally leave behind the busyness of the season and spend time with God. Jesus is the reason for the season. Let's invite His presence into our lives. Let's simplify the things that need doing. Let's shift from exhausting activity to the joy of being receivers of God's generous love. Let's fill this season with direction and meaning as we include Jesus in

our thoughts and activities today, and every day.

***In those days and at that time I will raise up a righteous descendant from King David's line. He will do what is just and right throughout the land.*** (Jeremiah 33:15 NLT)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for the gift of Jesus to the world. Help us choose to celebrate that Jesus is Immanuel, God with us. Amen***

## STEP TWELVE – GIVE IT AWAY

A common recovery saying is that "you must give it away in order to keep it". How are we to live this out today?

***The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, for the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the Lord's favor has come ... he will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair.*** (Isaiah 61:1-3 NLT)

Our new life, free of the destructive dependencies of the past, is a living witness that recovery is attainable. Whether we are sitting at a recovery meeting or simply interacting with others, we are in contact with hurting people who need to know how to find a new way of life. God is giving us the assignment of sharing our own experience, strength, and hope in His power to set people free from the bondage of addiction. If we make ourselves available to God He will strengthen us to reach out and encourage others.

In God's plan, what we have received we are to share with others. When we remember and share our own path to recovery, we are made more conscious of the fact that God has guided us each step of the way. We bring hope to others who don't know where to turn when we share our journey with them. Today, as on our first day in recovery, we know that we are powerless without God. When we placed our will and our life into His care, we saw a power greater than ourselves in action. Others encouraged us as we heard story after story of God's faithful companionship on the recovery journey. To share with others, we don't have to pretend we know more than we know or have experienced. God wants us to use our experience of life in recovery with Him to bring hope to others.

***Prayer: Thank you Lord for this day with you in recovery. Help me to recognize the opportunities you are putting before me to share my experience, strength, and hope with others. Amen***

***God wants us to use our experience of life in recovery with Him to bring hope to others.***

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2017

## STEP TWELVE – SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

God wants to give us more than sobriety. He wants to give us life. The purpose of the Twelve Steps of AA is to bring us to an awareness of God's presence in our lives and awaken us to the purpose and plan God has for us. The desire to seek God in all our affairs is the outcome of "having had a spiritual awakening".

Only union with God, through Jesus, satisfies the deep desire within us to belong. Believing in the truth of the word of God as revealed in the Bible, gives us the confidence we need to live a life filled with meaning and purpose. The Holy Spirit working in us gives us the desire and the power to do those things that please God.

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***The purpose of the Twelve Steps of AA is to bring us to an awareness of God's presence in our lives and awaken us to the purpose and plan God has for us***

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***It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to the Most High. It is good to proclaim your unfailing love in the morning, your faithfulness in the evening, You thrill me, Lord, with all you have done for me! I sing for joy because of what you have done.*** (Psalm 92:1-2, 4 NLT)

Only a spiritual awakening could bring us to the place where we believe that a relationship with the Living God is possible. Only a spiritual awakening could enable us to take a "leap of faith" into this amazing intimacy with the God who has been working in us to restore us to sanity. Understanding this is what gives us rest, gives us comfort, gives us peace.

The reality of our intimate relationship with God affirms deeply within us that our future will be fine, that circumstances are just circumstances that, together with God, can be worked out and overcome. This is what makes life worth living. This is the life experience we've always desired and now find in the embrace of the Living God.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You, that through Jesus, You made a way for forgiveness of my sins and restoration of my relationship with You. By the power of Your Holy Spirit, awaken my heart and mind to Your presence ever with me. Amen***

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2017

## WALKING WARILY OR TAKING STEPS TENDERLY

Christmas lights brighten the dark evenings of December and are a reminder to us that no matter how dark this season may be, the coming of Jesus into the world brought light and hope and joy. Jesus is the light of the world. Jesus is the reason for the season.

***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)

If we call on Him, God will be our shelter in times of trouble. Where there is darkness, God will bring light. When we walk with Him, He will lead us to the pathway of peace. In the past we walked alone in our darkness. Now that God is with us, we need never face our problems alone. God may not be physically visible, but we have His Word that He watches over us and will keep us from harm.

***I am GOD, your God, who teaches you how to live right and well. I show you what to do, where to go. If you had listened all along to what I told you, your life would have flowed full like a river, blessings rolling in like waves from the sea.*** (Isaiah 48:17-18 MSG)

When we welcome the light of Christ on our circumstances, His truth shines brightly and overcomes the darkness of our soul. As Christmas lights need to be plugged in and turned on for their beauty to be seen, so we need to be connected to God through faith in Jesus Christ, to be filled up with light. As we obey God's principles and are plugged into the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, we will shine brightly through any darkness we may encounter.

***Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace."*** (Luke 1:78-79 NLT)

***Prayer: Light of the World, Guide me out of darkness and lead me into God's glorious light and peace. Amen***

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***As we obey God's principles, and are plugged into the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, we will shine brightly through any darkness we may encounter.***

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MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2017

## LIGHT IN MY DARKNESS, PEACE FOR MY SOUL

In this season of the year, we prepare our hearts for the annual celebration of Christ's birth. For some of us, Christmas may stir up grief over Christmases past. Dysfunctional family activities, addiction, poverty and loneliness are all part of our world today. God saw the despair of nations and in His wisdom sent His son to be with us. Jesus is the promised liberator for those who walk in the darkness of sin.

Hundreds of years before Jesus was born Isaiah prophesied, "***The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.***" (Isaiah 9:2 NLT) We are the people on whom the light of God's love is now shining and for whom this great prophesy was fulfilled.

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***God  
promises us  
light in our  
darkness and  
peace when  
the storms of  
life rage.***

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Some of us may feel that no one understands or cares about us. The truth is, God both understands and cares. The birth of Jesus Christ loudly conveys God's unfailing love for us. Through Jesus' humanity, He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses.

***This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.*** (Hebrews 4:15-16 NLT)

In times of trouble God reminds us to call on Him. God promises us light in our darkness and peace when the storms of life rage. God is our refuge, and He will drive out the enemy before us.

***I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.*** (Isaiah 42:16 NIV)

When we feel helpless and life seems unmanageable, it is time once again to turn our will and our life over to God's care.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for bringing light to my darkness and allowing me to cast all my anxiety on You for You are the strength of my life. Amen***

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2017

## TAKING THE DRAG OUT OF OUR DAY

***What sorrow for those who drag their sins behind them with ropes made of lies, who drag wickedness behind them like a cart! What sorrow for those who say that evil is good and good is evil, that dark is light and light is dark, that bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter. What sorrow for those who are wise in their own eyes and think themselves so clever. What sorrow for those who are heroes at drinking wine and boast about all the alcohol they can hold.*** (Isaiah 5:18, 21-22 NLT)

It's a challenge for us to live with integrity in all areas of our lives. Lying in certain circumstances seems to be a necessity and is acceptable in some cultures. Many believe it's the way the system works whether it be in the political arena or simply dealing with a welfare officer.

God knows any part of our life that is based on lies will become a problem in our future. In our addiction we witnessed the chaos and pain that lying brought on us, and on our loved ones. Just as "one drink is too many and a thousand is not enough" so it is with lies. A lie may achieve something in the moment that we want to see happen, but the impact may cause lasting pain and sorrow in our lives.

***I know, my God, that you examine our hearts and rejoice when you find integrity there. You know I have done all this with good motives.*** (1 Chronicles 29:17 NLT)

Life with God in recovery is about following the example of Jesus who is full of unfailing love, mercy, grace, and truth. It's only in living in His way of truth that we receive the abundant blessings that our hearts desire.

***Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another.*** (John 14:6, 1:14a,16, NLT)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please forgive and free me from the sin of lying. Help me to live a life of integrity so that I may receive from You, one gracious blessing after another. Amen***

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problem in  
our future***

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2017

## ORDINARY DAY IN AN ORDINARY WEEK

Is it possible that God could do something so wonderful in us today that our lives would impact history for the Kingdom of God? How can we live in this ordinary day that will make us available to the extraordinary?

***Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!***  
(Luke 1:45 NIV)

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***Just like  
Mary, this  
ordinary day  
may become  
a not-so-  
ordinary day  
if we are  
willing to  
embrace  
God's plan for  
us and God's  
work in us.***

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God had an extraordinary day planned for Mary and He sent the angel Gabriel to tell her, she would bear God's Son and give birth to the Saviour of the world. While shock, confusion and fear may have been some of her initial feelings, Mary was quick to embrace God's plan for her. She responded to the angel's news by saying, ***"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled."*** (Luke 1:38 NIV)

Mary saw herself as the Lord's servant, willing to do whatever He asked. She wasn't concerned about what her parents might think, or even her friends, Mary's confidence was in her knowledge of God and His perfect love for her.

God has wonderful plans for each one of us just like He had for Mary. His plans may be gradually revealed to us as we follow Him, or they may jump into our lives in an instant. God's plans for Mary were shocking, inconvenient and beyond all that she could ever have thought or imagined.

The work that God has planned for us may be emerging with amazing revelation or it may be quietly growing and developing in our heart. Either way, today is an extraordinary day because the living God is making His good plans clear to us. Just like Mary, this ordinary day may become a not-so-ordinary day if we are willing to embrace God's plan for us and allow God to work in us.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, together with Mary we pray, "May your word to me be fulfilled." Help me to trust You to do extraordinary things with my ordinary life. Amen***

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2017

## TRUSTING GOD

Trust in God is foundational for trust in our relationship with others. We make a choice to live with integrity in our families, our friendships, and our work relationships. Even when a relationship may be challenged, trust can always be maintained if God is at the center of it.

Mary and Joseph, in the Christmas story, are examples of those who trusted what God said. Months before their planned wedding, Mary became pregnant. Because Joseph knew that this was not his child he assumed that Mary had been unfaithful to him. Though he was troubled by Mary's pregnancy and could have harmed her, he made a decision to break off the engagement as mercifully as he possibly could.

God, who through the power of the Holy Spirit had caused Mary to conceive this child, sent an angel to explain to Joseph what had taken place in Mary. Because Joseph believed God, he was willing to change his plans.

***This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 1:18-20 NIV)***

Are we behaving as people of integrity in our relationships? Are we asking God for His guidance in the decisions we make and seeking His direction in how we relate to another person? Are we willing to offer forgiveness and live in peace with a person as God walks us through a challenge to the relationship?

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to be a person who trusts You as I seek to build relationship with others. Give me eyes to see and ears to hear as I follow wise counsel from Your word and from others who faithfully follow You. Amen***

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