

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



December 2021

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to victims of
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as they reclaim the gift of their life.*

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2021

LIGHT IN MY DARKNESS, PEACE FOR MY SOUL

This is the season of the year when 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 the world we live in. God saw the despair of the nations and, in His wisdom, sent His son to be with us. Jesus is the promised Saviour for all who have walked in the darkness of addiction and 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 is fulfilled.

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 expresses God's unfailing love and care for us. Because He took on human flesh Jesus can understand and 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)

When troubles come, God tells us to call on Him and He will bring light into our darkness and peace into our souls, no matter the storms of life raging all around us. God is our refuge and strength and together with Him, we 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. If we do, God will make the rough places smooth.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for allowing me to cast all my anxiety on You and for caring for me when I need it most. As I trust that You are in control, please give me the strength to persevere through any trials that may come my way. Amen

God will bring light into our darkness and peace into our souls when the storms of life are raging all around us.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2021

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 would 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)

God had an extraordinary day planned for Mary when He sent the angel Gabriel to tell her she would conceive 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. Her response to the angel's news was, "***I am the Lord's servant,***" ***Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled."*** (Luke 1:38a 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 leap 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 God has planned for us to do 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 known 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 I pray, "May your word to me be fulfilled." Help me to trust You and embrace the extraordinary things You desire to do in my ordinary life. Amen

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.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2021

THE JOY OF NEGATIVE MEMORIES TRANSFORMED

Dis harmony in our family, addiction, poverty, loneliness or other conflicts may have been part of our story. However, regardless of the many disappointments we may have experienced, God knows and cares about where we are today, and He wants to help.

Forget about what's happened; don't keep going over old history. Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand-new. It's bursting out! Don't you see it? There it is! I'm making a road through the desert, rivers in the badlands. (Isaiah 43:18-19 MSG)

At certain times in the past, life for us may have been painful and we were powerless to do anything about it. We felt unnoticed by family members and others and determined in our hearts that no one really understood or cared about us. The truth is, God sees, God understands, and God cares about us. Jesus the only begotten Son of God, entered our human experience and identifies with our pain. One of the titles given to Jesus is "Immanuel", which means God with us.

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. Anyone who trusts in him is acquitted; anyone who refuses to trust him has long since been under the death sentence without knowing it. (John 3:16-18 MSG)

God's invitation to us today is to turn our negative memories and regrets over to Him and let Him heal our hearts. We can give God the pain of our past and receive from Him a purposeful future. What a great exchange! This is the gift that Christmas brings to each person.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for the gift of Jesus. May I ever be mindful that Jesus came that I might have life and have it to the full. Amen

God's invitation to us today is to turn our negative memories and regrets over to Him and let Him heal our hearts.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2021

LIVING SECURELY IN TIMES OF CRISIS

In these days of the Covid-19 pandemic, many of us have been feeling insecure. Our way of life has been disrupted and now we are required to follow new sets of rules and procedures in order to keep ourselves and others safe. At times like these, where can we find security? At the time of Jesus' birth Mary and Joseph experienced a time of disruption due to a Roman ruler who wanted to count the people in the acquired Roman territory where they lived. They are examples of how we might look to the living God for mercy and grace in our time of need.

He always gives mercy to those who worship him. He reached out his arm and showed his power. He scattered those who are proud and think great things about themselves. He brought down rulers from their thrones and raised up the humble people. He filled the hungry with good things, but he sent the rich away with nothing. (Luke 1:50-53 ERV)

Those of us who continue to walk with God find security in our daily conscious contact with Him.

Some of us, while living unmanageable lives, cried out to the God of our understanding to help us. Even though we had distanced ourselves from God because of our sin, He turned His ear to hear our prayer and through Jesus brought us to new life. God's kindness and unfailing love for us took us to that place where we felt secure in giving our will and life over to His care. God is a merciful God who sent Jesus into the world not to judge us for what we have done, but to pay the penalty so we could be set free.

God sent his Son into the world. He did not send him to judge the world guilty, but to save the world through him. (John 3:17 ERV)

Those of us who continue to walk with God find security in our daily conscious contact with Him. God is always with us, so we need never face our problems alone. Together with God any difficulty can be worked out and overcome.

Because the poor are plundered, because the needy groan, I will now arise," says the Lord; "I will place him in the safety for which he longs." (Psalm 12:5 ESV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I know when I have conscious contact with You and follow Your ways, I am always secure. Help me to keep my eyes fixed on You. Amen

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2021

DOING GREAT THINGS

Each Sunday we normally 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 through 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)

Mary hadn't yet given birth but, knowing how trustworthy God is, Mary believed and rejoiced in God's plan for her. She said, “Yes” and was willing to follow God's plan before she even knew all the details. In fact, what she did know seemed to point to problems on the horizon as the plan was fulfilled.

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, God can still accomplish through us the amazing things He has promised. Our part is to commit our will and our life into His care and allow God's Word to guide us in all we do and say.

Some of us drifted into addiction because we felt no one took any notice of us. We didn't seem to have anything in us that others might desire. 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.

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

God created us to do good and to be a blessing to others. If we allow Him to guide us, God will fulfill His plan for our lives and work out whatever concerns us. Thankfully it's not how powerful 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, I praise you with joy today because you have taken notice of me and are doing great things in me and through me. Amen

***God
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to do
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to be a
blessing to
each
other.***

MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2021

JUST FOR TODAY – STOP CONTROLLING

Just for today I will be agreeable. I will not criticize, not find fault, and not try to improve or control anybody except myself.

Why is it easier to see where others need to improve rather than see our own need? Why are we irritated by the shortcomings of others and yet unable to see our own?

Brothers and sisters, what if someone is caught in a sin? Then you who live by the Spirit should correct that person. Do it in a gentle way. But be careful. You could be tempted too. (Galatians 6:1 NIRV)

We all have blind spots in our character that cause us not to see the impact our words and actions have on others. We may have lived in a certain way for so long that our conscience is not affected by our conduct towards others. Perhaps we have trained ourselves to live by our feelings and when we get hurt by someone else's character defects it greatly impacts us. This doesn't make other's wrongs worse than ours or our wrongs more excusable. It tells us that we have certain habits, character defects and harmful actions, that need to be re-shaped by God's principles.

Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not want what belongs to others. It does not brag. It is not proud. It does not dishonor other people. It does not look out for its own interests. It does not easily become angry. It does not keep track of other people's wrongs. Love is not happy with evil. But it is full of joy when the truth is spoken. It always protects. It always trusts. It always hopes. It never gives up. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7 NIRV)

God calls us to get rid of our character defects. He wants us to be filled with love and compassion towards others. We can safely leave others in God's hands while we get busy on the long list of changes we need to make. When we ask Him, God will help us improve our behaviour and enable us to live agreeably with others who, like us, are less than perfect.

Prayer: Loving God, it's so easy to get angry and criticize others. Please reveal to me any way my behaviour is not in keeping with Your principles of love and compassion. Give me the humility to stay focused on the changes I need to make and leave others in Your care. Amen

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2021

SOBRIETY AND MIRACLES

We talk about experiencing miracles in recovery. What is a miracle? It's a joyful and pretty surprising event that can't be explained by natural laws and is therefore considered to be the work of God. How many of the following miracles have we experienced? Physical and emotional healing, restored relationships, the opportunity to be a positive role model and support in the life of another struggler, a string of sober days that lead to a milestone celebration. Today we give thanks to God for the miracles we have already experienced and the many more we are promised from the God who loves us more than we will ever be able to understand.

Faith in Jesus' name put this man, whose condition you know so well, on his feet—yes, faith and nothing but faith put this man healed and whole right before your eyes. (Acts 3:16 MSG)

We come into recovery with little more than desperation and a bit of hope that because we've seen some others get sober maybe someone can help us get sober too. If we ask Him, God will work in our life way beyond our expectations. He will give us new life so that we can become the person He created us to be. He will fill us with His mighty Power and make us whole.

I ask the Father with his great glory to give you the power to be strong in your spirits. He will give you that strength through his Spirit. I pray that Christ will live in your hearts because of your faith. I pray that your life will be strong in love and be built on love. Then you can be filled with everything God has for you. (Ephesians 3:16-17, 19b ERV)

New life in recovery is a work that takes place from the inside out. When we invite Him, God's Spirit comes to live in us. Where we were formerly dead in our sins, God brings life. There's no greater miracle than sins forgiven and new life. We get to express this in many wonderful ways each day as we put God's principles into practice in all our affairs.

Prayer: Thank You God for the daily miracle of You living in me and helping me be the person You created me to be. This is life beyond all my expectations. I want to keep on reaching out to You so I can be filled with Your love, and peace, and every blessing You have for me. Amen

***Today we
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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2021

GUILT – THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

Lots of us are thinking about gifts – giving and receiving. There's a gift that's mentioned often in recovery circles: "Guilt – the gift that keeps on giving." Guilt reminds us of our wrongful actions and thoughts. How we wish it wouldn't.

God made us with a conscience where guilt reveals to us our wrongdoing. The Bible records that the first humans knew they had done wrong when they disobeyed God's instructions. Because of their guilt, they hid from God and tried to cover themselves. We, at times, continue to act just like the first humans.

Neither of them accepted the blame for what they had done but tried to place the blame on another.

***God made us
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God said to the man, ...Did you eat fruit from that special tree? I told you not to eat from that tree!" The man said, "The woman you put here with me gave me fruit from that tree. So I ate it." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What have you done?" She said, "The snake tricked me, so I ate the fruit." (Genesis 3:11-13 ERV)

Guilt can become a true gift to us when it reminds us to deal with our wrongdoing so that we can be at peace with God, ourselves, and others. If we do not deal with our wrongdoing, guilt will fester and turn to shame. It is shame that causes us many problems. Sometimes we try to overcome the shame we feel by justifying the offence or by using our substance of choice to help us feel better. Neither of these options work. When we repent and confess to God what we have done, He will forgive us and we will be freed from harmful shame. Then we will have a pure heart to go to those we have harmed and seek reconciliation.

Our God, you bless everyone whose sins you forgive and wipe away. You bless them by saying, "You told me your sins, without trying to hide them, and now I forgive you." (Psalm 32:1-2 CEV)

Guilt is a blessing that keeps on giving when we repent and seek forgiveness for the wrongs we have done and ask God to remove all our shortcomings.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to quickly deal with guilt when I have done wrong. Also, help me to forgive others for their wrongful acts just like you have forgiven me. Amen

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2021

CONFIDENCE

God has given gifts to everyone; no one has been left out. God has a plan for our lives and He will equip us with everything we need to fulfill that plan. The gifts He gives us are not solely for our own benefit but are to be used in serving and caring for others. The first step in developing confidence in using our gifts is acknowledging that God is our creator and each one of us is individually gifted with the qualities God desires for us to use in His service.

Lord ... You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. (Psalm 139:13-14 NLT)

In order to improve our confidence, we will need to demonstrate to ourselves that we can achieve what we set out to do. How do we do that? We ask God to direct us and help us and then we step out and do something we haven't done before. We leave the safety and security of our comfort zone in order to achieve something new. This might mean having a talk with a counselor or pastor, signing up for a class, volunteering our time, doing service work in a support group, participating in a Bible fellowship group, applying for a job or training course, etc. We will never grow in confidence if we stay in our comfort zone.

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)

As we participate in what God has planned for us to do God promises to help us. Are we willing to step forward, confident in who God says we are? Are we willing to follow the plan He has for us? Today, will we resolve to exchange our old pessimistic self for the new confident self who is created in God's likeness?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for the good plan You have for my life and the gifts you have given me to fulfill it. Help me to know that plan and fill me with Your power to carry it out. Amen

The first step in developing confidence in using our gifts is acknowledging that God is our creator and each one of us is individually gifted with the qualities God desires for us to use in His service.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2021

SURRENDERED TO YOUR WILL

When you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. I will be found by you," says the Lord. "I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. (Jeremiah 29:12-14a NLT)

Living with God in recovery and following the twelve steps is a spiritual journey that requires spiritual commitment. Surrendering our will to God is not simply a one-time decision, it is an on-going process of continuous surrender. Life practices we've known in addiction will be challenged by the word of God. We may think they are unconnected to our recovery because they are not specifically drug or alcohol related. However, they may have directly contributed to the problems that led us into addictive behaviour. As we daily choose to follow God's principles in all our affairs, our thinking and behaving will change, and life will improve.

When we face conflict between God's way of life and life as we've known it, we will need to abandon our flawed thinking and allow God to teach us new ways.

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)

We need help in understanding how to be in healthy relationship with God and others. Particularly in the early years of recovery when we face conflict between God's way of life and life as we've known it, we need to abandon our flawed thinking and allow God to teach us new ways. We need to stand firm against our desires and feelings at any given moment so we can persevere through to victory over our familiar way of handling situations. God is aware of what we are going through and, if we call on Him for help, He will strengthen us to do what is right. God knows the path to real life for us. Our own way is truly harmful and deadly. How many times have we proven that?

Even though it is inconvenient, and perhaps momentarily uncomfortable, today is another opportunity for us to consider surrendering our will and life to the care of God and allowing Him to lead us on a new path.

Throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. (Ephesians 4:22-23 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please give me the will and desire to do what pleases You. Amen

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2021

DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY

Repentance involves reviewing the things we have done and admitting that we have not lived up to our own moral standard, let alone to God's standard. We have come to despise our harmful ways and regret the sorrow our actions have caused our loved ones and ourselves. Repentance includes having a deep desire to change and do things differently.

After I strayed, I repented; after I came to understand, I beat my breast. I was ashamed and humiliated because I bore the disgrace of my youth. (Jeremiah 31:19 NIV)

Feeling sorry for the way we have handled our affairs and for the people we have hurt, is not repentance. Repentance is the strong desire to change our actions and the way we live. In the past we lived self-centered lives and never thought about others, or about God and His ways. We just did what was right in our own eyes. Now we are willing to admit that our lives are unmanageable and that on our own, we are powerless to change. We desire to know this power greater than ourselves who can restore us to sanity.

The Spirit of the God who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you. So the God who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your bodies. He will do this because of his Spirit who lives in you. (Romans 8:11 NIRV)

When we are truly repentant and turn our will and life over to the care of God He forgives us and the Holy Spirit comes to live within us. The Holy Spirit is the power that strengthens us to follow the ways of God and is the higher power who restores us to sanity. With the Holy Spirit at work within us, we have the desire and the power to change and be the person God created us to be.

Prayer: Loving God, I repent of my sins and turn to You. Thank You for Jesus whose death gave me new life and for the Holy Spirit who lives in me and strengthens me to live according to Your word. I am eternally grateful for Your provision. Amen

Repentance includes having a deep desire to change and do things differently.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2021

KNOWING, LOVING, AND WORSHIPPING GOD

What is worship? Worship is the giving of honour to God for who He is and in recognition of all that He has done for us. There are many reasons to worship God and we are told to do it in the beauty of Holiness. We worship God because He made us and because He is Holy, righteous, and able to save us from all evil.

Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. (Psalm 29:2 NKJV)

God knew us before we were even formed in our mother's womb. That means He knows our parents and the biological make up of who we are. Some of us may not know who our parents are, but God knows. Often the pain of not knowing who our biological parents are may cause us to feel insecure about who we are. When we give our will and life over to the care of God, we become children of our Heavenly Father and, in whatever way we feel incomplete, He will make us complete. To know God is to love and worship Him because He cares about who we are and everything we do.

To know God is to love and worship Him because He cares about who we are and everything we do.

All you people who worship God, come and I will tell you what he has done for me. I cried out to him for help, and I praised him. If I had been hiding sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened to me. (Psalm 66:16-18 ERV)

When we listen to God's wisdom and obey, we will see the incredible results that obedience brings, and our mouths will be filled with praise. When we fail to honour God's guidance and things do not turn out right, we are troubled by our disobedience and may even be afraid to approach God for forgiveness. God's word tells us that when we confess our sin, He is faithful to forgive us, and make us right with Him again. What a wonderful God we serve, He truly is worthy of our worship and praise.

Christ had no sin, but God made him become sin so that in Christ we could be right with God. (2 Corinthians 5:21 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You are worthy to be worshipped and praised for all You have done for me. You truly are a God who loves and cares for Your precious children. Amen

MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2021

FILLED WITH WONDER

The Christmas season is one that can be filled with wonder. It's not just about the excitement we see in the eyes of children as they see lights and presents and think about Santa Claus. It is about allowing our hearts and minds to be opened to the wonder of what actually happened that first Christmas when Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. (Luke 2:18-20 NIV)

It is amazing that the God who created the heavens and the earth cared so much for us that He was willing to be born as a vulnerable baby and know the experience of life on earth. He did this so He could bless and save us by becoming our substitute and taking upon Himself the punishment for our sins. The birth of any baby fills us with awe and wonder but the birth of Jesus was even more amazing because of who Jesus is and the glory He set aside to come and redeem mankind from their sin.

Just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:19 NIV)

Too often we get jaded and disappointed by events and situations that don't turn out the way we want them to. Perhaps it's time to allow the great things that God has done to fill us with wonder and amazement. This God is beyond our wildest imagination and stands ready to gift us with His power and presence this Christmas season. Our part is to simply turn our will and life over to God's care and then watch in wonder and amazement at what He does on our behalf.

Many, Lord my God, are the wonders you have done, the things you planned for us. (Psalm 40:5a NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Fill my heart with Your love so I can be open to the wonder of journeying together with You as You reveal Your amazing plan for my life. Amen

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2021

REAL CHANGE

About eight hundred years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, God foretold His birth through the prophet Isaiah. In the Bible, in the book of Isaiah, we see specific details about Jesus – his birth, his life, and his death. These prophecies are astonishingly accurate with how these events unfolded centuries later.

Out of the stump of David's family will grow a shoot—yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root and the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. He will delight in obeying the Lord. He will not judge by appearance nor make a decision based on hearsay. (Isaiah 11:1-3 NLT)

Developing good character is important as we grow in our recovery and Isaiah helps us learn some trustworthy things about the visible aspects of Jesus' life and what Jesus was like on the inside. When we come into recovery, we may not look a whole lot different on the outside than we did while in addiction. Some of us will clean up and gain some weight but others of us will look pretty much the same. The real changes are those that happen on the inside.

***The real
changes
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the inside.***

We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. (Colossians 1:9 NLT)

We need God's Spirit in us so we can be wise, have understanding, and have the strength to walk in God's will for our lives. Our decisions in the past were fueled by pain and heartbreak and therefore based on faulty thinking. Now God's divine power has given us everything we need to make wise and appropriate decisions.

As we approach Christmas, it's wonderful to know that God's gift to us is His Holy Spirit who makes the essential changes in our heart. These changes result in us being equipped for a whole new way of living in the light of God's love.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for coming to live in me. Continue to fill me with wisdom and understanding and change me from the inside out. Amen

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2021

GOD HAS A PLAN FOR YOU

The birth of Jesus was fulfilled at a unique time in history. The known world was temporarily at peace after being beaten into submission by a brutal Roman army. It was at this time that Caesar Augustus decided that a list should be made of everyone in the whole Roman world. This required each person to go to their hometown to be registered. The Bible tells us that both Mary and Joseph were living in Nazareth and were of the line of David, so they were required to return to their hometown of Bethlehem to be counted.

Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. (Luke 2:4-5 NKJV)

It was an uphill journey to get to their destination but Joseph, together with his pregnant wife, had no choice due to the Roman decree. Amid what seemed like random circumstances, Mary and Joseph were actually fulfilling God's plan for their lives. Friends and family may encourage us to get clean and sober but starting what appears to be an uphill journey seems overwhelming to us. Maybe it's helpful today to consider that just starting this journey, no matter what circumstances we are currently facing, may turn out to be the beginning of fulfilling God's plan for our lives.

You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11 NKJV)

God used a Roman ruler to move Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem to fulfill His plan of where Jesus was to be born. He may be using our current circumstances to move us into His plan for our future. Are we willing to listen to those around us who are concerned for our well-being? God is pursuing us with His unfailing love, why not choose to begin our journey to sobriety today, and start walking on the path to a meaningful, purposeful life?

Prayer: Gracious God, I want to know You more and be comforted by Your love and care. Please help me to forget those things that are behind and, together with You, begin the journey that will fulfill Your purpose for my life. Amen

***You will
show me the
path of life;
In Your
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fullness of
joy; At Your
right hand
are
pleasures
forevermore.***

Psalm 16:11 NKJV

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2021

LIVING THE PROMISE

As we work our recovery program we find that life changes. Nothing happens in an instant but when we reflect on a month, or 90 days, or a year or more and compare the person we once were with the person we are now, the transformation is striking. One area where we notice this change is given to us in the eleventh AA Promise when it says, "*We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.*"

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
(John 8:31-32 NIV)

This change comes about as we give our will and life over to God's care and receive His healing and guidance. As we do the work of coming to truth in Steps 4 and 5 and then let go of the resentments and defects of character that have plagued us for so long, we give God a chance to introduce us to the person He created us to be. We also get to know the plan He has prepared for our lives. Whenever we live in the truth of who we really are we experience freedom and that results in us intuitively knowing how to handle situations that used to baffle us.

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will. (Romans 12:2b NIV)

As we've heard the truth of God's word and the witness of those who have shared their experience, strength, and hope with us, our own thinking and understanding of life has changed. Every time we give God an opportunity to heal an old wound, we get stronger, and our minds become clearer. We put God's principles into practice and experience the joy of witnessing for ourselves how trustworthy He is. One situation after another that used to baffle us is now an opportunity to see how good and pleasing and perfectly things will work out when we live in God's will and follow His ways.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to walk in the freedom of Your truth. Thank you for the opportunity to live one day at a time as the person You created me to be. My hope is to enjoy Your presence ever with me and to fulfill the good plan You have for my life. Amen

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2021

HOUSING FOR THE HOMELESS

Some of us have had the experience of being homeless while we lived in our dysfunctional lifestyle. The emptiness of heart and the loneliness we felt took us to the lowest hell. What evil took us down the road to that place? Whose power will restore us to sanity and give us a place that we can call home forever?

I'm asking the Lord for only one thing. Here is what I want. I want to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. I want to look at the beauty of the Lord. I want to worship him in his temple. (Psalm 27:4 NIRV)

When we called out to God, who we somehow understood was able to help us, we knew we were powerless to do anything for ourselves. Perhaps we obtained shelter in an overnight facility or were able to get into a recovery house. Perhaps we ended up in a correctional facility. Wherever it was, it was a starting place to get to know Jesus who also knows what it is like to have no place to lay His head.

And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." (Luke 9:58 NKJV)

Jesus came to earth and was born in a shelter for animals because there was no room for Him in the inn. Jesus never owned any property. He was stripped of the clothes He was wearing before He died on a cross for our sins. He was buried in a borrowed tomb. He was raised to life again and returned to the glory of heaven. He is now preparing eternal housing for all who believe in His name. In the meantime, while we live on this earth, He will make His home with us and be with us wherever we may be.

Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them. We will come to them and make our home with them. There are many rooms in my Father's house, and I am going to prepare a place for you." (John 14:23 NIRV, John 14:2a GNT,)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, In this world I may have problems securing the housing I need but I have hope because God has promised, from His abundant riches, to supply all my needs. I am thankful that, wherever my home is here on earth You are always with me. Amen

***Whose
power will
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and give us
a place that
we can call
home
forever?***

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2021

ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS ...

Growing up many of us 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.'" The words of that song may start us thinking about what we would like to find under the Christmas tree on Christmas morning. Many of us think if we just had this or that gift, then our life would be fulfilled.

The truth is, we experience fulfillment only when God's desires become our desires. How does this happen? Our desires start to change when we give our will and our life over to the care of God. Through Jesus' finished work on earth, our relationship with God is restored and we are made righteous and acceptable in God's sight. We become precious children of our Heavenly Father. We ask God to help us turn away from our self-centered ways and begin to follow His ways in all our affairs. As we follow God's will for us, the power of His Holy Spirit changes us from the inside out and we grow to be more like Jesus in all our ways. We then experience the joy of having life in all its fullness restored to us.

***We
experience
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God's
desires
become
our
desires.***

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 through His life and by His death that when God's will is our desire, the outcome is always 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 wholeheartedly follow His principles in every area of our lives. 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 by the power of Your Holy Spirit to do what pleases You. Amen

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2021

CITIZENS IN A NEW KINGDOM

Your kingdom will never end, and you will rule forever. The Lord can be trusted in all that he says. He is loyal in all that he does. The Lord lifts up people who have fallen. He helps those who are in trouble. All living things look to you for their food, and you give them their food at the right time. You open your hands and give every living thing all that it needs. Everything the Lord does is good. Everything he does shows how loyal he is. The Lord is near to everyone who sincerely calls to him for help. He listens to his followers and does what they want. He answers their prayers and saves them. (Psalm 145:13-19 ERV)

The kingdom of God is an everlasting kingdom in which we, who have given our will and lives over to the care of God, are citizens. Through Jesus we have been reconciled to our Heavenly Father. While we are here on earth, we are to be God's representatives of Christ's heavenly kingdom. God wants to work in us and through us to help us become the persons He created us to be and to be a blessing to others. That means allowing the Holy Spirit to teach us and guide us in the ways of God. It also means getting rid of the self-centered desires of our earthly flesh.

The above Psalm lists the human need for things like food, shelter, comfort, and protection and states that God will provide these at just the right time. God truly is a faithful loving God who is near to those who call on Him for help. Jesus, God's only begotten son, humbled Himself and came to earth as a man. Jesus said that those who have seen Him have seen His Father.

In the Bible, we read about the life of Jesus and can only imagine what joy awaits us when we finally reach our heavenly home. The Bible tells us it has not even entered the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love Him. Do we have a passport issued by the Kingdom of Heaven? Are we experiencing the joy and satisfaction of serving the King of kings and Lord of lords in our life in recovery today?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for loving me enough to send Jesus into the world to restore my relationship with You. I am blessed to know that, as Your beloved child, I have the deposit of the Holy Spirit living in me, guaranteeing what is to come. Amen

The kingdom of God is an everlasting kingdom in which we, who have given our will and lives over to the care of God, are citizens.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2021

GOD'S WILL REVEALED

Prayer to our gracious God and daily meditation on His word are positive practices that will form the foundation for the rebuilding of our lives. As we take time out each day to be with God, we don't just learn facts about Him, we get to know His character and His ways. As we draw closer to God, we discover that we have a loving friend who knew us before we were born, knows all about us, and cares deeply for us.

There are "friends" who destroy each other, but a real friend sticks closer than a brother. (Proverbs 18:24 NLT)

God created us with a deep longing for intimate personal sharing and understanding, trusting and being trusted. God wants us to first fulfill these desires through relationship with Him. In our relationship with others, we often may feel close to them and at other times disconnected and lonely. God desires that we speak heart to heart with Him about these things that really matter.

The LORD confides in those who fear Him; He makes His covenant known to them. (Psalm 25:14 NIV)

The prayer and meditation to which Step 11 invites us is more than just trying to figure out God's plan for us. Meditation and reading scripture reveal to us the nature of God and all the promises He has made to us. Underneath all our "spiritual exercises" is God's desire to affirm His unending love for us.

But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. (Jude 20-21 NIV)

Improving our conscious contact with God will strengthen our faith as we seek Him in all our ways and practice His principles in all our affairs.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your unending love for me. I ask for strength to live as a person who honours You in all my ways. Draw me closer to You that I might embrace and act upon those things that are Your heart's desire. Amen

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2021

FAVoured AND WILLING

When we give our life over to the care of God, we often think that things will go smoothly from that point onwards. When we have problems, we often think God has forgotten us and may be angry over something we have done. From the account of peoples' lives in the Bible it appears God's way is to encourage each person to believe He has a plan for their life and trust Him to complete it. When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary the chosen mother of Jesus, he said to her:

"Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" (Luke 1:28. NKJV)

We may think that favour with God means blissful happiness and blue skies all the way. The visitation of the angel Gabriel to favoured Mary did not make her life easier. In fact, it caused trouble for her. Nevertheless, it was the purpose and plan of God for Mary's life. Can any of us imagine telling our fiancé or being told by our fiancé, "an angel told me I am favoured by God, and will conceive a child by the power of the Holy Spirit?"

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35 NKJV)

Mary truly was a virtuous woman and God used her for the purpose of bearing His son Jesus. However, it took a visit from an Angel to convince Joseph, Mary's fiancé, that what had happened to her was accomplished by the power of God. When God speaks to us concerning our future, it often seems like "pie in the sky" because we feel unworthy of His plan for our life, or because we think that what God says is impossible. God does amazing things, and absolutely nothing is impossible with Him. Are we willing to trust and obey what He says to us?

I have swept away your sins like a cloud. I have scattered your offenses like the morning mist. Oh, return to me, for I have paid the price to set you free." (Isaiah 44:22 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for sending Jesus into the world to save me and set me free. Help me to believe that what I think is impossible, is truly possible with You. Amen

***God's way
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complete
it.***

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2021

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 other scriptures recorded in the Bible we also have solid evidence that God has set a time for each of 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)

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

In the Bible God has given us examples of patience and timeliness on which we can reflect. He has promised to gather His faithful people to Himself and wipe away every tear from their eyes. He patiently waits for us to come 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 took upon Himself the deserved punishment for our sins and paid the penalty of death for us. At just the right time Jesus opened the door to God's saving grace so that when He comes to take us home to spend eternity with Him, we will be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

"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 day to reflect on God's promises in the Bible and remind ourselves that, at just the right time, God will fulfill His promises to simple 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. I am eternally grateful that You care for me. Amen

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2021

CHRISTMAS BLUES

Christmas is often a lonely time for some of us. We see others gathering and enjoying festivities that we, for many reasons, cannot be a part of. The worldwide COVID-19 epidemic has also added to the loneliness of many by the limitation of certain gatherings. However, in the midst of our current circumstances, we can find joy to celebrate the most amazing birth the world has ever known when, through prayer and meditation, we have conscious contact with the God who loves and cares for us.

Let me tell you how happy God has made me! For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and draped about me the robe of righteousness. (Isaiah 61:10a TLB)

Before a very pregnant Mary gave birth, she and Joseph had to leave Nazareth where they were living and travel to their former hometown of Bethlehem because a census was ordered by their Roman rulers. It would appear none of their relatives were living in Bethlehem, or perhaps were not available to them, as they had to find their own accommodation after a very arduous journey. Mary and Joseph took the only place available to them which was an animal shelter, and Mary gave birth to Jesus and laid Him in a manger.

While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:6-7 NASB)

Did God know Jesus would be born in an animal shelter without any earthly family or friends to support the new parents? Nothing is said in the Bible of their reaction at this time, but they would soon know that God had not forgotten them for angels visited nearby shepherds to proclaim Jesus' birth. The shepherds then came and visited Mary and Joseph and the new baby, and suddenly they were not alone.

Can a mother forget the infant at her breast, walk away from the baby she bore? But even if mothers forget, I'd never forget you—never. (Isaiah 49:15 MSG)

Prayer: Loving God, When I am feeling lonely or sad, remind me to be thankful that I am never forgotten by You. Help me to celebrate Jesus' birth and to know the power of His love to comfort, strengthen, and encourage me. Amen

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2021

ENCOUNTERING GOD

Encounters with our awesome God or His angels often bring fear. On the night Jesus was born the angels, who were sent by God to announce His birth, had to reassure the shepherds, "Do not be afraid!" Once the shepherds realized that the angels wanted to communicate with them, they were willing to hear what they had to say and then to seek the Christ child of whom they spoke. God, our Heavenly Father, 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 never 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.

***God's
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that we
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which
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all fear.***

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 recognize Him? Will we respond to His love? Will we share the interests of His heart and allow Him to share 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 my relationship with You might be restored. I am forever grateful that You care so much for me. Amen

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2021

CHRISTMAS DAY – A PROMISE KEPT

"With God, nothing will be impossible." This is what the angel told Mary when he announced God's intention to have her give birth to His Son, Jesus. Mary discovered that these words were truly possible on the night of Jesus' birth over 2000 years ago. Even before she held Baby Jesus in her arms, her response to God's choice for her life was an ecstatic song, flooded with praises to God and full of confidence in God's promise to accomplish His purposes through her, a humble Jewish girl.

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. He shows mercy from generation to generation to all who fear him. His mighty arm has done tremendous things! He has scattered the proud and haughty ones. He has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands. He has helped his servant Israel and remembered to be merciful. For he made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children forever. (Luke 1:46-55 NLT)

When Jesus was on earth He paid special attention to the poor, the despised, the hurt, and the sinful. He rejected no one. He ignored no one. God will never change. No one is beyond the scope of God's love or His ability to save. When our lives seem most unmanageable and we feel that no one cares, we need to remind ourselves that God both understands and cares.

The birth of Jesus is God's message to humanity that He loves and cares for each and every person. Whatever it takes to provide healing and restoration in our lives, God will supply. Along with Mary, we can safely turn our will and our life over to His care and take note of the amazing things God promises to do for us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, With you nothing is impossible. Thank you for delivering me from the darkness of sin and bringing me to the light of hope through Jesus. I ask you to fulfill Your purpose for my life and help me to honour Your Holy name by carrying Your message to others who suffer from the rages of sin. Amen

When our lives seem most unmanageable and we feel that no one cares, we need to remind ourselves that God both understands and cares.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2021

WHO WILL RECEIVE HIM?

Christmas celebrations usually include the Wise Men who came from the East to visit Jesus. These men (Magi) had seen a new star in the east and their interpretation was that a noteworthy King of the Jewish nation had been born, so they set out to worship this newborn King. (Matthew 2:1-12). The Bible tells us of other wise men and prophets, such as Micah and Daniel, who foretold of Jesus' birth hundreds of years before He was even born.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.

John 1:12 NASB

Isn't it amazing that worship and gifts came from outsiders who sought Jesus? Are we, who often feel like outsiders, willing to receive Jesus and become worshippers of the living God? God did amazing things at Jesus' birth, and through the Magi, provided funding for the family's journey to Egypt. He will do amazing things in our lives when we believe on the One He has sent.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name. (John 1:12 NASB)

Prayer: Gracious Father, I want to know and receive Jesus, the One You have sent. Thank You for providing everything I need to live a Godly life. Amen

But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah... From you One will come forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. And to Him was given dominion, honor, and a kingdom, so that all the peoples, nations, and populations of all languages might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed. (Micah 5:2a, Daniel 7:14 NASB)

When the Magi arrived in Jerusalem, they inquired of the reigning King Herod about the newly born King. King Herod, who felt threatened, called the religious leaders together and they determined that the prophets had foretold that the Jewish Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. Herod, who intended to kill the child, sent the travellers on to Bethlehem and asked to be informed of the place where they find the child.

...the star, which they had seen in the east, went on ahead of them until it came to a stop over the place where the Child was to be found. And after they came into the house, they saw the Child with His mother Mary; and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (Matthew 2:9b, 11 NASB)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2021

THE LONG WAIT

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

God made a promise that He would send someone to bring salvation to 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, worshipping 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 don't know how long we need to wait for the fulfillment of events God has planned for our lives. It likely won't be sixty years. What we need to understand today is that God's plans are perfect, and God's timing 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 will experience the best life possible each day, and make ourselves available for all that God has planned for our future.

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 for my future and, as I wait for fulfillment, be willing to do the next right thing. Amen

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

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2021

STEP TWELVE - LIVING THE GOOD LIFE

We are strengthened to stay free of addiction because God is guiding and supporting us each step of the way. Each experience of God's faithfulness deepens our trust and stability as we learn and grow. We share with others and practice God's principles in all our affairs because this is the proven way to experience life at its best.

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23 NIV)

We will have a deeply rooted sense of well-being when we understand that it is "progress not perfection" that we seek. Living in the awareness that God is with us, and having the desire to implement His ways, will strengthen our faith and desire to honour God in all that we do and say. Consistently living this way and truthfully telling our story may encourage others who are trapped in the pit of their addiction. Perhaps as they identify with us and the place we were at when we came into recovery, they may be inspired to turn their own lives around.

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, ... practice these principles in all our affairs

Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important. I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. (Galatians 6:2-3, John 13:34; 15:13 NLT)

As we practice the principles we have learned in all our affairs, we will find ourselves drawing closer to God, and the peace and serenity of His love and grace will envelop our entire being. We will think and feel differently and find positive new ways to behave because we are being guided by the Holy Spirit. This is the good life the Bible and the 12 Steps speak of, and which help us not just talk the talk, but walk the walk.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for bringing me out of darkness into your wonderful light. Help me, to walk in the light of your presence. Help me to shine for you as I gently and humbly share with others how You have changed my life. Amen

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2021

STANDING FIRM

As we come to the end of another year and watch the news shows that review the events of this past year, we realize how quickly some things change and yet how slowly other things seem to leave. What do we do with all that's gone on in recent times and how do we safely make the move into the new year?

This is a time to remember that God is in control and will fulfill His purposes. Much more is going on in the world than what we see and hear in the daily news. When we call on God in our personal challenges we are assured that He will help us and bring about those things He has promised. Even when people think they have failed to live up to the potential God has for them, God remains unwavering in His plans and will work out His purpose 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. We need to wholeheartedly trust God's Word, and His vision, and firmly hold fast to His promises.

When the storm has swept by, the wicked are gone, but the righteous stand firm forever. (Proverbs 10:25 NIV)

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.

Prayer: Lord 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

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

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2021

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 my 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, broke into the darkness and chaos of life on this planet, and brought peace and hope for those who put their trust in Him.

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)

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

Jesus longs to 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 even show us new ways to resolve lingering issues, ways we 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. Your mercy, O Lord, endures forever; Do not forsake the works of Your hands. (Psalm 138:7-8 NKJV)

We believe that there is a solution to every problem because God is with us. We give our will and our life into God's care and do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord. We then wait prayerfully in His 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 power to perfectly fulfill His good purposes in everything that concerns us.

Seems like a good plan to carry forward as we close out this year and move into the next.

Prayer: Gracious God, I choose to stand with You and trust You to show me the way forward in every situation that concerns me. Thank You for Your care and guidance. Amen

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2021

TRANSITIONING FROM ONE YEAR TO THE NEXT

In just a few hours the new calendar year will be upon us. On what basis do we hope to have a better year in the coming one than we had in this year which is almost gone? Often, we feel overwhelmed at the start 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 our sobriety in the future.

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 18:30b-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 going forward – 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 5:17b NLT, Philippians 1:6b NIV)

The year ahead is a fresh opportunity to improve our conscious contact with our all-powerful God who will continue to restore and maintain our 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 God makes to us on this New Year's Eve.

Prayer: Loving God, As I enter this new year, I choose to commit my past to you. I lay down my fears and resentments. I receive Your comfort, Your forgiveness, and Your healing. I have hope and confidence in the assurance that You will complete the good work You have begun in me. I will remember that Your love will never fail me for Your mercy is new every single morning in the year ahead. Thank You for Your faithfulness. Amen

NOTES

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SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

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

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

PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

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

How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery

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

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

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

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

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

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