

**LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY**

# **Daily Meditations**



**FEBRUARY 2021**



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

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## **JUST FOR TODAY**

*Just for today I will try to live in conscious contact with God praying only for knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out.*

*Just for today I will strengthen my mind. I will take a few minutes to read and meditate on God's word, seeking God's perspective for my life today. I will take note of one helpful thing God is saying to me and seek to behave accordingly.*

*Just for today I will be joyful, optimistic, and grateful. I will take time to notice the gifts in me, in others, and in my surroundings and let the rest go.*

*Just for today I will adjust myself to what is and not try to adjust everything else to my desires. I will trust that God is working all things for good in my life.*

*Just for today I will be agreeable. I will not criticize, not find fault, and not try to improve or control anybody except myself. I will pray blessing on one person with whom I struggle to relate.*

*Just for today I will have a quiet half hour all by myself to relax and enjoy all that God is giving me.*

*Just for today I will be unafraid, believing that as I trust in God with all my heart and lean not on my own understanding, He will lead me along a good path.*

*Just for today I will seek to serve others with kindness, doing what is right, and walking humbly with God.*

***For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. Ephesians 2:10 NLT***

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### **Daily Meditations**

**FEBRUARY 2021**

#### **CONTRIBUTING EDITORS**

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

### PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

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

## ***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.*

## **HOLDING ON TO HOPE**

When we are hoping to attend a scheduled event we often rely on another person to do something that will enable us to get to the event. An illustration would be trusting someone to purchase the tickets for us so that we can attend. Our hope is focused on getting to the event, so we would not trust just anyone to get the tickets but instead would choose someone we know we could rely on. What is our hope for today and who can we trust to help us fulfill that hope?

***Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.*** (Hebrews 10:23-24 NLT)

Through faith in the finished work of Jesus, we are assured of our place with Him in the Kingdom of God. In fact, Jesus is the only way we can get a "ticket" to the fulfillment of all God's promises to us. The love that God has for us gives us hope and a future and we will never be disappointed. Liberation from sin gives us the assurance that all God's promises to us are a definite "Yes" because His seal of ownership is on us and His Spirit is in our hearts.

***My dear friends, we are already God's children, though what we will be hasn't yet been seen. But we do know that when Christ returns, we will be like him, because we will see him as he truly is. This hope makes us keep ourselves holy, just as Christ is holy.*** (1 John 3:2-3 CEV)

Do we have hope to be like Jesus when He returns? To be like Him, we need to know what He is like. We need to improve our conscious contact with God through prayer and meditation on the Scriptures and learn about Jesus and why He came into the world not to judge it, but to save it.

***All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.*** (1 John 3:3 NIV)

***Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for the hope I have in You. Please help me get rid of all my impure desires and lusts and be transformed by the renewing of my mind, so that each day I can be more like Jesus. Amen***

***What is our hope for today, and whom can we trust to help us fulfill that hope?***

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2021

# NOTES

## JUST FOR TODAY – GOD WORKS FOR GOOD

*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.*

***We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*** (Romans 8:28 ESV)

Those who come from an unstable and insecure background often feel vulnerable when faced with something unfamiliar. They are used to controlling things around them to avoid any additional pain or disappointment.

***While it is good to do our part in working towards solutions, in the end it will always come back to seeking God's will and trusting His plan for our lives.***

When we have decided to trust God, we can relax. God “has our back” and God is “on our side.” We live in an unpredictable world and every day seems to bring new surprises, some of them good and others not so good. When we are surrendered to God’s will, He will work in any challenging circumstances to bring about a better solution than we could ever hope for or imagine.

***Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act.*** (Psalm 37:4-5 ESV)

The first thing we need to do is humbly admit that we really do not know what is best for us. We often react out of fear and worry and try to get things arranged in what is manageable to us. While it is good to do our part in working towards solutions, in the end it will always come back to seeking God’s

will and trusting His plan for our lives. Sometimes we may have to wait. Sometimes it seems, ‘the bad guys are winning.’ For a time, we may have to hang on tightly to God’s promise that He will act on our behalf. With a willing heart and a gracious manner, we do what we can in any situation and then settle down and relax knowing that as we seek God’s help, He is guiding us.

***Prayer: Loving God, I am grateful that I can release the pressures and burdens of each day into Your capable hands. Help me to stay focused on what You say and leave the rest. You are a good God, and you work for good in my life in all things. Help me to trust You! Amen***

## RELATIONSHIP ISSUES – ATTENTION SEEKING

Attention seeking takes various forms, but the underlying root is a need to be noticed and cared for. We often feel insecure, lack self-esteem, and wonder if our lives really matter to anyone. In the past, to lessen our feelings of insecurity, some of us began using addictive substances. This worked for a time but eventually we became developed a harmful dependency and it added to our inability to cope with life.

***The Lord is close to those who have suffered disappointment. He saves those who are discouraged.*** (Psalm 34:18 ERV)

Without a substance to hide behind, some of us feel vulnerable when we are in a group and turn to some form of attention seeking to hide our feelings. To impress others, we tell stories that are exaggerated or untrue. We talk loudly or too much. We gossip about another person to make it appear we know something of importance that others do not.

Seeking attention is seldom life giving. Our behaviour is the result of our focus being stuck on ourselves and we can easily miss out on a God-given encounter with someone who could become a loving friend or a knowledgeable mentor.

***We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you.*** (Psalm 33:20-22 NIV)

The good news is that by turning our will and life over to the care of God, we can be healed and restored to the unique person God created us to be. We can live securely in God's love rather than pursuing attention in a negative way. We can respect ourselves and others as well as share common interests and gifts in an enjoyable way. Which way are we choosing to live today?

***Let me hear of your unfailing love each morning, for I am trusting you. Show me where to walk, for I give myself to you.*** (Psalm 143:8 NLT)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your unfailing love for me. I bring all my emotional needs to You and ask for healing. I desire to let go of all my selfish ways. Please help me to notice and look out for others who may feel invisible, and love and care for them as You love and care for me. Amen***

***We can live securely in God's love rather than pursuing attention in a negative way.***

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2021

## CHARACTER STRENGTH – CONTENTMENT

Some of us in recovery circles know what it is like to live in plenty and others of us have experienced what it is like to live in poverty. Contentment in life does not come from having all that we need but from a deep satisfaction within. If we know that we are loved and cared for and someone has our back, that will give us a sense of peace and security in any situation we find ourselves.

***Fear of the Lord leads to life, bringing security and protection from harm.***  
(Proverbs 19:23 NLT)

***The  
contentment  
that God  
gives is  
priceless and  
cannot be  
bought with  
silver or  
gold.***

Without Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we will never experience contentment. Some of us have sought satisfaction in money, in our substance of choice, or in human relationships. We have made false gods of these things by focusing our minds and all our efforts on having them. They may have satisfied us for a time but eventually they failed to fulfill the deep longing within our heart. There is only one thing that will fill the emptiness in each one of us and that is, God in us.

***But those who still reject me are like the restless sea, which is never still but continually churns up mud and dirt. There is no peace for the wicked," says my God.***  
(Isaiah 57:20-21 NLT)

God has prepared a way for us to enjoy life and be content. Jesus paid the debt for our sins so we could be forgiven and freed from the penalty of sin by accepting this precious gift from God. All things are possible for those who believe in God. When we walk in His ways, we will know peace in the deepest place of our soul. The contentment that God gives is priceless and cannot be bought with silver or gold.

***Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it.*** (1 Timothy 6:6-7 NLT)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess I have wandered far from You. Today, I humbly ask You to come into my heart and help me follow You in all my ways. My desire is to experience Your peace that passes all understanding. Amen***

# NOTES

## FICKLE PEOPLE AND A FAITHFUL GOD

Why does God bother with rebellious humankind? As we read stories in the Bible, we notice that the people of God are fickle. For a time they follow the ways of God, then they rebel against Him and do what they think is right in their own eyes. Their own ways lead them into countless trials, and they have to call out to God for help against their enemies. In His mercy and compassion towards them, God rescues them from their enemies and helps them get back on course.

We are all very much like them. We come into recovery knowing that we need to turn our will and our life over to the care of God but then, at certain points, we think we know the best way and end up stumbling. We fall into difficult situations and again call out to God to rescue us. Amazingly, when we call for help, God responds to us with compassion and helps us.

***O Lord,  
what are  
human  
beings that  
you should  
notice  
them?***

***O Lord, what are human beings that you should notice them, mere mortals that you should think about them? For they are like a breath of air; their days are like a passing shadow. Open the heavens, Lord, and come down. Touch the mountains so they billow smoke. Hurl your lightning bolts and scatter your enemies! Shoot your arrows and confuse them! Reach down from heaven and rescue me; rescue me from deep waters, from the power of my enemies.*** (Psalm 144:3-7 NLT)

*Psalm 144:3 NLT*

God made us in His image so He could have a loving relationship with us. However, we are like the prodigal son that Jesus told a story about. The son wanted a different life than his father had provided for him and so he asked for his inheritance and went off and squandered it. Like the prodigal son, some of us are not content with the inheritance God has provided for us but we still want His blessing to live according to our own desires.

When the prodigal son came to His senses, he went home to his father who received him with open arms. The father had mercy and compassion on the returning son and restored him to the family. That is how God receives us when we come home to Him. He rescues us from self-centeredness and the brokenness of our addictive lifestyle, and with open arms welcomes us into His family.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for rescuing me from the deep dark waters I was in and for bringing me to my inheritance in Jesus. I am glad that Your image is stamped on me and that You love and care for me. Amen*

## SELF-HATRED

A lot of us express self-hatred as we look at our personal appearance and our life experiences. Perhaps we were brought up in an abusive home. Perhaps the bare necessities of life were not available to us and we lived in anxiety about our future. We compare our lot with that of others and grumble about how disadvantaged we are in so many ways. We blame God and others for our missed opportunities and the way we find ourselves today.

***I am sick of life! And from my deep despair, I complain to you, my God. Do you look at things the way we humans do? Is your life as short as ours? Is that why you are so quick to find fault with me? You know I am innocent, but who can defend me against you?*** (Job 10:1, 4-7 CEV)

Many of the people we read about in the Bible lived lonely fruitless lives until God called them out of their darkness and walked with them on the path He planned for their lives. Moses was a murderer and unsure of his ability to speak when God called him. Gideon was a coward and hiding from his nation's oppressors when God called him. However imperfect or ineffective we see ourselves God is calling and empowering us to fulfill the plan He has for our lives.

***Through faith in the name of Jesus, this man was healed—and you know how crippled he was before. Faith in Jesus' name has healed him before your very eyes.*** (Acts 3:16 NLT)

When we give our will and life over to the care of God, it is faith in Jesus and His finished work on earth that restores us in body, mind, and spirit. The sacrificial work of Jesus on the cross and His resurrection proclaim to Satan and his oppressors that they are powerless over the life that Jesus gives us. As we allow Jesus to heal us and make us complete, we will find that self-hatred no longer has any power over us and must go.

***So let's do it—full of belief, confident that we're presentable inside and out. Let's keep a firm grip on the promises that keep us going. He always keeps his word.*** (Hebrews 10:22-23 MSG)

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, You are mighty to save, please deliver me from the demonic oppression of self-hatred. I have come to believe that, through You, I am presentable both inside and out. Amen*

***However  
imperfect  
or  
ineffective  
we see  
ourselves  
God is  
calling us  
to fulfill  
the plan  
He has for  
our lives.***

## STEP THREE – WAKING UP TO LIFE IN GOD'S CARE

Some of us wonder where life will take us if we give our will and life over to the care of God. We have anxiety about our past, and the effort required to change our ways seems intimidating. We are standing at a crossroad and are not sure which way we should take. If we go back to our old lifestyle, we know things will get worse because addiction and sin never get better. They always lead further into darkness. If we choose to give our lives over to the care of God, we fear having to live without our controlling dependency. What a predicament?

**Where will life take us if we give our will and life over to the care of God?**

***I can anticipate the response that is coming: "I know that all God's commands are spiritual, but I'm not. Isn't this also your experience?" Yes. I'm full of myself—after all, I've spent a long time in sin's prison. What I don't understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise.*** (Romans 7:14-15 MSG)

There is a way forward which seems obvious even though it is new and unknown – obey God's commands and leave the outcome with Him. We have admitted that we are powerless over our dependency, so it would be unwise for us to make decisions about what is best for us. Recognizing what we have done to ourselves, to our loved ones, and to our friends surely is a wake-up call to trust someone other than ourselves. God has already proved Himself worthy of our trust. Through Jesus He has liberated us from sin and is offering us forgiveness and new life.

***He reached down from heaven. He took hold of me. He lifted me out of deep waters. He saved me from my powerful enemies. He set me free from those who were too strong for me.*** (Psalm 18:16-17 NIRV)

God has proved Himself to be faithful in all His ways. To effectively change our ways we need to wholeheartedly give our will and life over to the care of God and trust Him to lead us in the paths of righteousness.

*Prayer: Loving God, I choose to give my will and life over to Your care. I am fully relying on You to support my desire to change my ways. Please strengthen me in my resolve to obey Your principles in all my affairs. Amen*

## A BRIGHT NEW WAY OF LIFE

We lost our way. That is an obvious fact. We fell into addictive and destructive lifestyles. We hid in dark and isolated places. Sometimes that was in the dark corners of city streets, but even if it was under bright lights, we were still lost in the darkness of our minds and hearts. On our own we were lost and powerless to find a way to the light. Who can show us the way out of darkness into the light? Jesus says He is the light, and if we follow Him, we won't have to walk in darkness but will have the light that gives life.

***"I am the way, the truth, and the life!" Jesus answered. "Without me, no one can go to the Father. I am the light for the world! Follow me, and you won't be walking in the dark. You will have the light that gives life."*** (John 14:6, John 8:12b CEV)

Darkness is not a thing of itself. Darkness is the absence of light. In pioneer days people lit a candle, put a glass orb around it, and the light spread out across the room. When we invite God to come and live in us, He is the light in us that reflects brightness to everyone around us. As others see us glowing in the light of God's love as we live before them, they will be drawn to that light. Darkness in our hearts and in our circumstances must give way to the light of Christ as surely as darkness leaves a room when we flip a switch to turn on a light.

In recovery, we can learn to live in a new way by reading the Bible and learning how Jesus lived. We can then choose to follow His example. God's Holy Spirit will give us the power we need to live in this way. Jesus will give us light and life for our journey, and He will get us to our destination. Jesus not only knows the way, He is the way.

***The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.*** (Romans 8:11 NLT)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for seeing me when I was lost in darkness and for sending Jesus to be the light to show me the way to life with You. I surrender myself to You and choose to follow Your plan for my life. I ask for Your Holy Spirit to empower me to do Your will and show me how to be a light to those around me. Amen*

***Simon Peter answered, "Lord, there is no one else that we can go to! Your words give eternal life.***

*John 6:68 CEV*

## BREAKING SHAME'S POWER

Shame is a powerful emotion that repeatedly tells us we are worthless, unacceptable, unforgiveable, and have no place in a loving relationship. Pictures of embarrassing happenings tend to replay in our minds and intensify our shame. However, God stands ready to forgive what we have done and repair the harm caused to us and to others. The only way to rid ourselves of shame is to ask for and receive the forgiveness of God for our actions. When we accept Jesus' death as payment for ALL our sins, God will work to bring restoration and healing where any event has caused harm.

**The solution to shame is, receive what God is offering, see what God is seeing, and say what God is saying.**

*He [Jesus] has come to do away with sin by offering himself. People have to die once. After that, God will judge them. In the same way, Christ was offered up once. He took away the sins of many people.* (Hebrews 9:26-28 NIRV)

People who live in shame are bound up with fear. They build walls. They are terrified to get to know themselves. They wear a mask and live a role that does not reflect who they truly are. They constantly seek the approval of others. They are unable to live in a healthy mutual relationship because at the core of their being they believe they can never measure up.

God invites us to turn away from our sins and receive forgiveness. God wants us to be who we truly are – the person He created us to be. God wants us to come to Him just as we are, shame and all. As we wholeheartedly give our will and life over to God's care, our old shameful self is put to death and we are raised to new life free of stain or blemish. The solution to shame is to see what God is seeing, receive what God is offering, and say what God is saying.

*The Spirit that we received is not a spirit that makes us slaves again and causes us to fear. The Spirit that we have makes us God's chosen children. And with that Spirit we cry out, "Abba, Father." And the Spirit himself speaks to our spirits and makes us sure that we are God's children.* (Romans 8:15-16 ERV)

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, I admit that in the past I have done shameful things. Thank You that You died on the cross to take away my shame and the punishment for my sins. Because I accept Your death in my place, I believe I am free from all sin and have become a child of God. From this day forward, I choose to follow Your ways and rely on Your promises. Amen*

## SUNDAY PSALM – FREEDOM TO BE FREE

Before we came into recovery, we admitted that our lives were unmanageable, and we needed a power greater than ourselves to restore us to sanity. We may have been unsure about God and what to expect from Him, but we were open to receive all the help we could get. We no longer wanted to be a slave to our addictive practices and longed to be free to choose what was right and good.

*He gives justice to the oppressed and food to the hungry. The Lord frees the prisoners. The Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are weighed down. The Lord loves the godly. The Lord protects the foreigners among us. He cares for the orphans and widows, but he frustrates the plans of the wicked. The Lord will reign forever. He will be your God, O Jerusalem, throughout the generations. Praise the Lord!* (Psalm 146:7-10 NLT)

We may not have thought of our lifestyle as being oppressive and ourselves as prisoners, but that is exactly where we were in our addiction. The destructive powers that controlled our lives restricted how we moved about each day. We often felt compelled to lie, cheat, or steal, in our desperation to obtain our drug of choice. There was no time for anything else in our lives. We were entirely occupied with doing what was required to supply our dependency.

In recovery, God gently opened our blind eyes to reveal the mess we were in, and, through the redeeming work of Jesus, unshackled us from those things that limited our freedom. As we continue to turn our will and our life over to God's care we are blessed and have favor with God, and He gives us the desire and the power to do what pleases Him. Through God's love, we have also been freed from the power of sin and it no longer has authority over us. It is for our freedom that Jesus set us free, so let's praise Him and give Him thanks for all He has done for us.

*Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for freeing me from the bondage of my former lifestyle. Please help me to remain free and never again allow the dark forces of oppression to enslave me to sin. Amen*

**Through God's love for us, we have been freed from the power of sin and it no longer has authority over us.**

**WHAT DOES MATURITY LOOK LIKE FOR ME?**

As infants and toddlers, we were not aware of what was harmful and what was good for us. Our parents and others were the ones who taught us and created an environment of safety around us. As we matured, we continued to learn and observe the way things were done. In life, we normally have some good role models, and some not so good. Often our maturity can be stunted by the behaviour of a role model who is harmful to our well-being.

*The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.* (Luke 8:14 NIV)

***We can then grow and mature in our new life by practicing God's principles in all our affairs.***

How many of us have been caught in this cycle? We are all born into the world with nothing but some of us, like the seed that fell into thorns which choked the life out of it, started to worry and fret about the things that happened around us. As we began to mature we thought the pleasures of this world held the answer to our problems, only to find out that they caused us even more heartache. When we finally reach that place where our life is unmanageable, Jesus invites us to come to Him.

*Come to me and I will give you rest—all of you who work so hard beneath a heavy yoke. Wear my yoke—for it fits perfectly—and let me teach you; for I am gentle and humble, and you shall find rest for your souls;* (Matthew 11:28 TLB)

The Scriptures tell us that before we were born God knew us and nothing is hidden from His sight. When we come to believe in a Power greater than ourselves, we are becoming spiritually mature and it is the right time to put off the old self and be born again into the Kingdom of God. We can then grow and mature in our new life by practicing God's principles in all our affairs.

*Let all who are spiritually mature agree on these things. If you disagree on some point, I believe God will make it plain to you.* (Philippians 3:15 NLT)

*Prayer: Loving God, Help me to be spiritually awake and to practice Your principles in all my affairs. I want to press on to maturity in the new life You have given me. Amen*

**STOPPING GOSSIP IN ITS TRACKS**

Almost everyone says they hate gossip and yet many of us are easily drawn into conversations that are unkind. We listen to and participate in saying things about a person that would never be said if they were present. How can we be a person who stops gossip rather than one who contributes to its spread? We agree with God that the time to deal with gossip is now. We make a decision not to participate in a conversation about another person when the words that are being said would be painful for that person to hear if they were present.

*But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language.* (Colossians 3:8 NLT)

If the conversation around us moves towards gossip, we can change the subject and talk about something else – anything else that is positive. We can encourage a gossipier to speak with the person they are gossiping about. Sometimes if we simply suggest, "I don't feel comfortable talking about this person this way" may help the gossipier to consider what they are saying. We also end gossip by simply not passing on any of the negative words and rumors we have heard.

*Without wood, a fire goes out. Without gossip, arguments stop. Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended.* (Proverbs 26:20 ERV, Proverbs 22:10 NIV)

If a person persists in gossiping, then we are commanded by God to step away from them because it is not good for us to keep company with them. We do not help a gossipier develop good character by giving them our ear to practice speaking in this destructive way, and we don't do ourselves any favour by letting our own minds and hearts be poisoned by ugly words.

It is helpful to remember that those who gossip to us will definitely gossip about us. Let's choose to stop gossip in its tracks today!

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

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I agree with You that gossip must stop and that it begins with me. Help me to put positive practices into place so that the cycle of gossip will stop with me. Amen*

***How can we be a person who stops gossip rather than one who contributes to its spread?***

## WISDOM: THE BENEFIT OF DOING THINGS GOD'S WAY OVER THE LONG HAUL

How many times have we spoken before we thought and, as the saying goes, "put our foot in our mouth?" For too long we have held narrow views of life and our place in it. God created us for community and caring relationships. In the scriptures He has given us all the knowledge we need to live well every day.

***If you listen closely to my wisdom and good sense, you will have sound judgment, and you will always know the right thing to say.*** (Proverbs 5:1-2 CEV)

***The more often we make the choice to do things God's way, the more often we will see that it was exactly the right thing to do at that time.***

In Step 11 of the 12-Step program, we are encouraged each day to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for the knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out. As we encounter God's wisdom in the Bible and put His ways into practice, we will have the satisfaction and joy of experiencing how practical God's word really is. In some circumstances, it is a challenge to put God's ways into practice. God's way teaches us to be generous to others which is opposite to the self-centered messages we have heard and told ourselves in addiction. However, when we choose for God's way, we discover His way is better.

***The Lord watches your ways. He studies all your paths. Sinners are trapped by their own evil acts. They are held tight by the ropes of their sins. They will die because they refused to be corrected. Their sins will capture them because they were very foolish.*** (Proverbs 5:21-23 NIRV)

To walk with God requires us to discipline ourselves at certain times and in certain ways. The more often we make the choice to do things God's way, the more often we will see that it was exactly the right thing to do at that time.

Those around us will benefit from our right actions, and our sense of what is good will become clearer. This becomes part of the message we carry to others as we practice God's principles in all our affairs.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to not only meditate and pray for the knowledge of Your will but to have the courage to put it into practice in all my affairs. My desire is to trust Your wisdom and Your way even when it seems inconvenient or quite different from what I have known in the past. I choose once again to turn my will and my life over to Your care and ask for Your direction in all my ways. Amen***

## MARKING MILESTONES

Recognizing and marking milestones (clean time in recovery) is a way to celebrate our sobriety and give hope to those who attend recovery meetings with us. Milestone celebrations help us remember what our lives were like when we first turned away from our destructive lifestyle and sought God. They also help us celebrate finding our new life with God that we couldn't find elsewhere.

***The Lord is my strength and shield. I trusted him with all my heart. He helped me, so I am happy. I sing songs of praise to him.*** (Psalm 28:7 ERV)

We celebrate belly-button birthdays because we are thankful for another year of shared life with family and friends. We celebrate sobriety milestones to give thanks for God's lavish love and grace poured out on us when we turned our will and life over to His care. God enabled us to see life with meaning and purpose. How else could we remain sober for even one day, let alone months or years?

***He remembered us when we were defeated. His faithful love will last forever. He saved us from our enemies. His faithful love will last forever.*** (Psalm 136:23-24 ERV)

Every day of sobriety is worth celebrating, which is why we celebrate many different time periods, from one day to multiple years, with chips, key fobs, medallions, and cakes.

***This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be happy today!*** (Psalm 118:24 ERV)

Registering our clean date and preparing to mark the milestones as they come along is one helpful tool in keeping us sober. Remembering our journey of one day at a time with God and celebrating how one day became one week, one month, one year, is a helpful deterrent when we struggle to stay clean.

***Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible."*** (Matthew 19:26 NLT)

***Prayer: Loving God, I thank You for this day of sobriety and each day linked to it. You've been with me through thick and thin and You will never leave me nor forsake me. I truly face each day with confidence because of Your unfailing love and care for me. Amen***

***Recognizing and marking milestones (clean time in recovery) is a way to celebrate sobriety and give hope to others.***

## THE PROCESS OF GAINING WISDOM

When we reflect on our destructive and addictive lifestyle we begin to recognize the extent of the dumb choices we made. For too long we have lived like fools. It is now time to learn how to live well. Wisdom is God's gift to us, but it is also the result of our effort to search for it and put it into practice.

***Listen to wisdom and do your best to understand. Ask for good judgment. Cry out for understanding. Look for wisdom like silver. Search for it like hidden treasure. If you do this, you will understand what it means to respect the Lord, and you will come to know God. The Lord is the source of wisdom; knowledge and understanding come from his mouth.*** (Proverbs 2:2-6 ERV)

***Wisdom is God's gift to us, but it is also the result of our effort to search for it and put it into practice.***

What are we to do to gain wisdom? ***“Listen. Ask. Cry out. Search.”*** This suggests an attitude of humility in being teachable. We need to have open eyes and ears to learn facts and have open minds and hearts to receive and apply what we learn to our everyday situations. We need God's Spirit to show us how it all fits together. He is the power greater than ourselves who can restore us to sanity.

We believed for a long time that ***we*** had all the solutions and we told others, and God, how things needed to work. To become wise and live well requires that each day, in every situation, we pause and seek God's input on things we are doing. God promises to guide us if we will persist in our search for His wisdom in all that we do.

Those who have walked with God for a time can also be sought to provide us with their experience, strength, and hope. Sponsors, pastors, mentors, and those with effective time in recovery are people we should seek to learn from.

***Wisdom will help you follow the example of good people and stay on the right path. Honest people will live in the land, and those who do right will remain there.*** (Proverbs 2:20-21 ERV)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I praise You that all the wisdom I need is available to me today. Help me to make every effort to learn Your ways and to put them into practice. Thank You for mentors and friends who have walked this way before me. Help me to humble myself and listen to what You and others have to say so I can grow in wisdom and be more like You. Amen***

## WILLINGNESS IS THE KEY

To become willing to follow God's ways every day is a challenge for us who are used to running our own lives. If we are to have a successful life in recovery the practice of a willing heart and mind to follow God's principles is necessary.

We need to be willing to admit we cannot do life on our own. We need to become willing to believe that a power greater than ourselves exists and has our best interests at heart. We need to become willing to admit our shortcomings and to have God remove them. We need to be willing to review each day in an ongoing inventory with God and make any necessary changes.

For change to take place and serenity with God in recovery to become our lived reality we must wholeheartedly turn our will and life over to God's direction and care. God is the one who gets to decide what is best for us, what is best in our relationships, what is best for our well-being today, and for the long haul. What God says needs changing gets worked on until it changes. What God says needs removing gets removed. When God says to bear with something patiently, we hang in and tolerantly bear with it.

***God has chosen you and made you his holy people. He loves you. So, your new life should be like this: Show mercy to others. Be kind, humble, gentle, and patient. Don't be angry with each other but forgive each other. If you feel someone has wronged you, forgive them. Forgive others because the Lord forgave you. Together with these things, the most important part of your new life is to love each other. Love is what holds everything together in perfect unity.*** (Colossians 3:12-14 ERV)

We must be willing to allow God, through His word in the Bible, to guide us and give us discernment as we negotiate new pathways in our minds and hearts. We must be willing to ask, "God, what do I need to change so Your kingdom will come, and Your will be done in my life here on earth as it is in heaven?"

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to be willing to obey You and Your principles in all my affairs, in all my relationships, and in particular help me grow in my relationship with You. Amen***

***If we are to have a successful life in recovery the practice of a willing heart and mind to follow God's principles is necessary.***

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2021

## EMOTIONAL HEALING IS ASSURED

Healing is a process of restoring to health something that has been injured in some way. The wound can either be physical or emotional, but in both cases healing takes time. A small cut to a finger may take a few days to heal while a deep gash can take weeks. Emotional damage is often unseen and the longer it remains untreated the more damage is done. Emotional damage is inflicted by one person on another and often the injured person will, through unforgiveness, cause further damage to themselves and inflict harm on others.

***If you are tired from carrying heavy burdens, come to me and I will give you rest.***

*Matthew 11:28 CEV*

***At that point Peter got up the nerve to ask, "Master, how many times do I forgive a brother or sister who hurts me? Seven?" Jesus replied, "Seven! Hardly. Try seventy times seven." (Matthew 18:21-22 MSG)***

If we have been injured, we need to do what is necessary to get well. A small cut can cause further damage if it becomes infected with bacteria. If we have been emotionally injured, we need to seek help and not just allow the event to fester in our minds and cause us further harm. Without God in our lives, our attitude towards those who have harmed us is to judge, condemn, and be angry, rather than to show mercy and promote healing. Often drugs and alcohol are the medicine of choice to stop the emotional pain we are feeling. However, they are not the prescription for healing.

***Don't judge others, and God won't judge you. Don't be hard on others, and God won't be hard on you. Forgive others, and God will forgive you. (Luke 6:37 CEV)***

We lock ourselves in a prison cell in our minds when we refuse to offer forgiveness to someone who has harmed us. Our wound is aggravated, and we are tense, angry, and bitter towards others. Why would we refuse to forgive and live with continued darkness and pain when healing through Jesus is available?

***If you are tired from carrying heavy burdens, come to me and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28 CEV)***

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am weary of carrying the heavy load of unforgiveness, please give me the will and desire to forgive so I can be healed and restored to life. Amen***

## CHARACTER DEFECT: ARROGANCE

One of the coping mechanisms many of us use when dealing with low-self-esteem and the humiliation of our past failures is the mask of arrogance. We work so hard to cover up our shame that we no longer are in touch with what is real and needs to be dealt with. We all are a mixture of strengths and weaknesses and in His love, God wants us to come to a realistic assessment of ourselves.

***Don't think that you are better than you really are. You must see yourself just as you are. Decide what you are by the faith God has given each of us. (Romans 12:3b ERV)***

Arrogance is the steel-hard resistance that supports denial, blames others, and excuses ourselves, as we continue to believe that our problems are created by the actions of someone else.

***Live together in peace with each other. Don't be proud but be willing to be friends with people who are not important to others. Don't think of yourself as smarter than everyone else. (Romans 12:16 ERV)***

Healthy recovery requires us to take responsibility for our actions and reactions. In humility we need to see ourselves as we really are. We also need to practice the gift of mercy as we see others' flaws and recognize that we are all on a level playing field where we need to encourage one another by sharing the experience, strength, and hope, that God has graciously given to us.

Arrogance says "I don't need anyone else. I can do this on my own." In recovery we get to lay down our ego and all the grandiose thinking that we have developed, admit our powerlessness over our addiction, and embrace the truth that with God's help and the support of others, we truly can recover our lives.

***People who think they are wise when they are not are worse than fools. God is against the proud, but he is kind to the humble. (Proverbs 26:12, James 4:6b ERV)***

***Prayer: Loving God, I want to live in truth. I lay down my masks, particularly arrogance and grandiose thinking and humbly put my trust in You to help me recognize my character defects. Teach me to love others as You love me. I want to be the person You created me to be. Amen***

***We all are a mixture of strengths and weaknesses and in His love, God wants us to come to a realistic assessment of ourselves.***

## ACCEPTANCE THAT BRINGS SERENITY

Life has its ups and downs and does not always treat us fairly. Some problem situations seem to work out and others do not. In difficult times, when we are powerless to change a situation, what we really need is the serenity that comes from recognizing what cannot be changed. How do we deal with that? We reach out to God and steady ourselves in the truth that God is with us, God cares for us, and God will make a way where there seems to be no way forward.

***Give your burdens to the LORD, and he will take care of you. The Lord gives his people strength. The Lord blesses them with peace.*** (Psalm 55:22, 29:11 NLT)

***Acceptance sees reality for what it is, focuses on what can be done, and leaves the rest in God's hands.***

The acceptance that fills us with peace is found when we stop living in denial. It comes when we no longer hide from pain by trying to live under buried anger or behind the sadness of "that's just how it is." Acceptance sees reality for what it is, focuses on what can be done, and leaves the rest in God's hands.

Acceptance keeps this day and this moment in focus and leaves tomorrow's uncertainties with God. Acceptance causes us to pray and speak with God about what is going on, particularly speaking to Him of those things we do not understand and wish we could change. Acceptance seeks God's direction and strength to cope, trusting that God has a plan. If we don't know the next right thing to do, we can ask a trusted companion in recovery, and then act on the advice of any appropriate action. In this way we position ourselves for blessing and support.

***For even if the mountains walk away and the hills fall to pieces, My love won't walk away from you, my covenant commitment of peace won't fall apart." The God who has compassion on you says so.*** (Isaiah 54:10 MSG)

God has more strength to give than what our current situation requires. God will compassionately comfort us while the going is tough. Circumstances may come and go, but we can be sure that God will always show us the way forward if we acknowledge Him in all our ways and allow Him to direct our path.

***Prayer: Loving God, when I face challenging circumstances, help me to reach out to You for comfort and strength. Help me to do the next right thing and trust You to make all things right as I surrender to Your will. Amen***

## SUNDAY PSALM – NO RECORD OF WRONGS

From the chaos of our dysfunctional lives many of us called out to God with words like, "God if you are really there, please help me." We were unsure if there really was a power greater than ourselves to hear our cry for help. However, in unexpected ways God answered our call. Perhaps through a person He put in our way, or with the quiet voice of His Spirit in our hearts, He reminded us of places where we had heard help was available. God then opened doors for us to enter a recovery program.

The writer of the following words also cried out to God because he could no longer live with the sin in his life.

***Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord; Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you.*** (Psalm 130:1-4 NIV)

When we receive God's forgiveness for our sins, God removes every record of our wrongs. He no longer remembers our sins. God does not have a bad memory. He simply chooses not to remember what He has forgiven. What about being accountable for our sins? When Jesus died for our sins, His sacrifice "paid in full" the debt we owed for our rebellion against God. None of us could stand before a Holy God in our unclean condition but the blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin. When we accept Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we become new and clean, just as if we had never sinned. God holds no charges against us. He also lifts the burden of shame and guilt from us.

***We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need.*** (Colossians 1:11 NLT)

As we come to understand the amazing gift of God's grace to us through Jesus, we will be strengthened to live the life God has called us to.

***Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for Your saving grace. I praise You for all You have done for me and humbly ask for even more of You in my life. Amen***

***When we receive God's forgiveness for our sins, God removes every record of our wrongs.***

## STEP FOUR – SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY

When making an inventory of our lives before God, some basic questions to ask are: "God what does my life look like to you? How have I strayed from Your directives? What needs to go? What needs to be sought after with everything I have in me so I can really live?"

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

**When making an inventory of our lives before God, the basic question to ask is, "God what does my life look like to you?"**

Our addictive behaviour is almost certainly rooted in the problems we experienced with relationships in the past. Wrong beliefs and actions flowed from the pain and brokenness we experienced. When doing an inventory that is searching, fearless, and moral, we must examine our way of thinking and ask ourselves, "What actually caused me to think and behave in that way?" We must look not only at what we did, but why we did it.

*No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.* (Philippians 3:13-14 NLT)

Like a skillful surgeon God will help us identify and then remove those things that have hindered us from living a good and pleasing life. We will come to know what a purposeful life looks like when we inventory our past and current behaviour in the light of what God's word says.

*Prayer: Loving God, The act of uncovering what I have tried to hide and run from in the past is extremely challenging. However, in the safety of Your love and care, I am determined to make a searching, fearless, and moral inventory of myself. Please help me! Amen*

## GOD HAS YOUR BACK

Living well with God in recovery requires many things, not the least of which is courage. It's so easy to feel blocked by fear or beaten down by discouragement because there's wreckage from the past to be cleared, hurts that need healing, and vision and skills to obtain in order to build a solid future. How could we even begin to think we could manage all that without the wisdom, support, and constant presence of God.

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.* (Joshua 1:9 NIV)

God is aware that our natural response to challenges and problems is not strength and bravery. It is His will though, that we find the courage and perseverance we need by seeking it from Him. Just remembering that God is with us will give us comfort. We are not alone. The Bible tells us that God has infinite power, and we can call on Him to solve whatever needs solving.

Our part is to follow God's instructions and leave the results with Him. We need to trust Him to give us what we need when the timing is right. Sometimes we want to have what we need ahead of time and God does not promise that to us. He does promise to be with us in the moment, in the situation, in the challenge, and get us through.

We often seek to reassure someone who is facing a challenge with the words, "I've got your back." God promises to be the one who is there for us even when no one else can be. He's "got our back" and He has the love and power to effectively deal with whatever we are facing. We can truly rely on Him!

*But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* (1 Corinthians 15:57 NIV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for not just promising to be with me in my time of need but for showing me over and over again that You are true to Your word. I don't know what my future holds, or even the rest of this day, but You do, and so I ask You to fill me with Your peace and the courage to face whatever may lie ahead. Amen*

**God promises to be the one who is there for us even when no one else can be.**

## A LOVE TO CELEBRATE ON VALENTINE'S DAY

One of the things many of us missed while growing up was tenderness in our homes. This lack of love and compassion may have driven us towards the path of addiction and a destructive lifestyle. We got used to feeling that others had no interest in us and no time for us. We gave up on going to anyone with our needs or our troubles because we believed that no one cared. What a joy when we came into recovery and discovered that someone really loved and cared about us. That someone is God who offers us the unfailing love and tenderness we have always wanted. This Valentine's Day let us choose to experience and celebrate the lavish love God has for us.

***See what amazing love the Father has given us! Because of it, we are called children of God. And that's what we really are!*** (1 John 3:1 NIRV)

***Every day  
God turns  
toward us  
with a  
smile on  
His face  
and a  
welcome in  
His heart.***

We can call out to God whatever our needs are. We can speak to God as often as we like. God never gets tired of listening to us. God is interested in all the things that concern us. God has been patiently waiting for us to notice that He is reaching out to us with love and tenderness and inviting us to come close to His heart. Is there a better friend we could have?

We are safe with God. He is always looking out for us to ensure our safety. He sees and rejoices in all the new things we learn. He does not frown at the silly mistakes we make. God celebrates our successes and encourages us to try again when we have failed. Every day God turns toward us with a smile on His face and a welcome in His heart.

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

We are precious to God. Today God asks us, "Will You be mine? Will You receive my love, respond to my love, and love me in return?"

*Prayer: Loving God, on this Valentine's Day help me to recognize and respond to the many expressions of love and kindness You convey to me. Help me to pause and give thanks for your faithful, unfailing love and promises. You truly are the best friend and companion a person could ever have. Amen*

## BARRIERS THAT KEEP US FROM BEING GRATEFUL

One of the keys to a successful, stable recovery is practicing gratitude. The time we feel least like being grateful is the time we most need to discipline ourselves to notice what is good around us and give thanks for it.

***Let those who are wise pay attention to these things. Let them think about the loving deeds of the Lord.*** (Psalm 107:43 NIRV)

When things are not going the way we want them to, we become irritable and complain about the problems and obstacles that confront us. If we train our minds to believe for the strength God will give us to get through, things will be more settled, and contentment will reign in our hearts.

At times we choose not to be thankful because we believe God does not deserve any credit. We think our own hard work has accomplished what we have done. The truth is, even the ability to do things well comes from God. We need to humble ourselves and give thanks to God for all He chooses to do through us.

***There are different ways to serve. But they all come from the same Lord. There are different ways the Spirit works. But the same God is working in all these ways and in all people.*** (1 Corinthians 12:5-6 NIRV)

Often, we fall into the trap of entitlement, telling ourselves that we deserve this or that for whatever reason. We need to lay down self-centeredness and pride and learn how to be content with what God has given us at this time. In all things, give thanks.

***My God will meet all your needs. He will meet them in keeping with his wonderful riches. These riches come to you because you belong to Christ Jesus.*** (Philippians 4:19 NIRV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, You fill my life with good gifts. Help me to be thankful for the success I have in my work and studies. You give me everything I need to live well each day and for that I am eternally grateful. Thank You for always being with me. Amen*

***The time we  
feel least like  
being grateful  
is the time we  
most need to  
discipline  
ourselves to  
notice what is  
good around  
us and give  
thanks for it.***

## DEVELOPING CHARACTER – BEING AGREEABLE

If asked for their opinion about us, how many people would say we have the quality of being agreeable? This would include being humble, patient, and kind even when faced with the irritating character defects of others. Being agreeable naturally flows from a heart that is at peace with the world.

***Finally, all of you should agree and have concern and love for each other. You should also be kind and humble.*** (1 Peter 3:8 CEV)

To be agreeable, we need to be willing to evaluate what is going on in any challenging situation and determine how best to handle it. When we are disagreeable, we usually refuse to consider finding a solution. We form our own opinion. We are not willing to discuss things with anyone. In other words, our minds are made up and we are not willing to cooperate in any way with anyone.

***Being agreeable naturally flows from a heart that is at peace with the world.***

***Stop being bitter and angry and mad at others. Don't yell at one another or curse each other or ever be rude.*** (Ephesians 4:31 CEV)

In addition we did not care what we said or did or how it affected others. Now in recovery, it's time to grow up and consider others and be willing to both listen to, and express an opinion with respect, no matter how emotionally challenging we may find the topic. It is possible to agree with others without compromising our integrity.

***The Law came, so that the full power of sin could be seen. Yet where sin was powerful, God's kindness was even more powerful.*** (Romans 5:20 CEV)

Living in community is sometimes challenging. We need to find out what the Bible says about how to treat one another and then put it into effect. Jesus suffered the indignity of dying on a cross so that we might be made right with God. Are we willing to adjust our ways to make things right with another? If we choose to be agreeable and do kind deeds, maybe others will follow our example, and together we will bring about a more agreeable atmosphere for everyone.

***Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for bringing me out of darkness into the light of Your truth. I ask You to remove any shortcomings that remain in me. Teach me to be an agreeable person so that others might be drawn to You. Amen***

## SEEING IT THROUGH TO COMPLETION

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

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

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

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

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

***2 Corinthians 13:11 b***

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

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

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

## NO REGRETS

The second promise found in the Big Book of AA tells us that if we diligently work the steps, *“We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.”* This echoes what we read in the Bible about our journey in this new life with God in recovery.

*I’m not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me.*

*Friends, don’t get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I’ve got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I’m off and running, and I’m not turning back.* (Philippians 3:12-14 MSG)

***Because of  
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One of the greatest gifts we can give ourselves is accepting the fact that whatever has taken place in our past is done and cannot be changed. We can learn from it and allow God to use it to bring about good, but we cannot change it. With God’s help though, we can safely let go of the regret and shame we may continue to feel.

*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)

Because of God’s unfailing love for us, we can look at our past with eyes wide open. We can process what went on in some events and, where necessary, accept responsibility, and then just let the rest go. We can work on becoming ready to make amends for the harm we have done and seek healing and forgiveness for all who were involved. We can keep our hearts and minds open to God’s ongoing healing as He restores us to sanity. We can live with the knowledge of progress rather than perfection. Above all, we can live in gratitude to God for one more day to enjoy His blessings and to carry this message to others who suffer.

*Prayer: Loving God, thank you for opening up my future and closing my past. Thank you for giving me today. With your help I will embrace everything this day brings, trusting that you will guide me along a good path and use everything in my life, both the good and the bad, to glorify You today and in the future. Amen*

## LIVING WITH JOY TODAY

We live in a beautiful world created by God. Because God desired a people for Himself, He made humans in His own image. By doing this, God could communicate with us and we could have a relationship with Him. Whether we take time to notice it or not, God is pouring out blessings for us every day. God’s plan for us is that we live close to Him, in the joy of His presence with us.

*God’s kingdom is not about eating or drinking. It is about doing what is right and having peace and joy. All this comes through the Holy Spirit.* (Romans 14:17 NIRV)

Too often we do not recognize the goodness of God to us, especially His love for us that brought Jesus into the world to be our Saviour. We blame God when things do not go right but fail to thank Him when good things happen. We can increase joy in our lives by receiving God’s forgiveness for our sin, and then walking in gratitude for His help and protection in troubling times in our imperfect world.

*If you do not serve the Lord your God with joy and enthusiasm for the abundant benefits you have received ... you will be left hungry, thirsty, naked, and lacking in everything.* (Deuteronomy 28:47-48 NLT)

True joy will be our experience when we live in the purpose God planned for us when He made us. Today may be a great day to learn more about that.

*Wisdom will lead you to a life of joy and peace. Even though I have troubles and hard times, your commands give me joy.* (Proverbs 3:17, Psalm 119:143 ERV)

Even at this point in our recovery, when some of the consequences of our unwise choices of the past are causing us concern, God wants to bless us. As we learn to obey His principles and choose to follow God’s ways, we will experience joy and peace beyond all we could ask for or imagine.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You that I can live joyfully in Your presence and enjoy the peace of a good life, even in circumstances that are less than perfect. Help me to always seek Your wisdom and do what is right, so that I may experience the joy of receiving all the blessings You pour out on me. Amen*

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