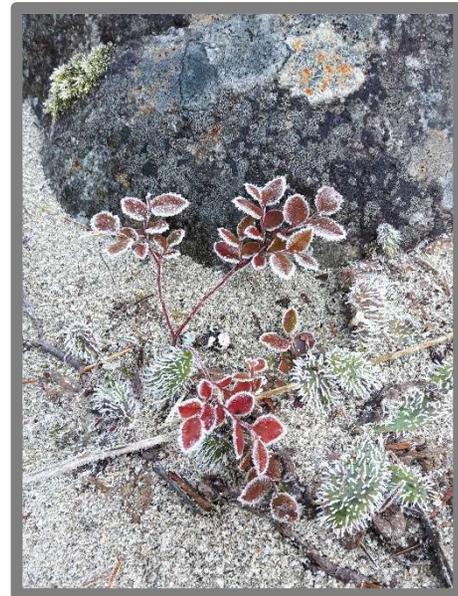


LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



FEBRUARY 2022

These meditations are available online
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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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LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY
Daily Meditations

FEBRUARY 2022

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JUST FOR TODAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

FEBRUARY 1, 2022

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>SUBSTANCE ADDICTIONS:</p> <p>Alcohol Caffeine Injected or smoked substances such as: Crack, Crystal Meth, Heroin Marijuana Prescription Medications Sugar Tobacco</p>	<p>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>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>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.

EYE IS LIGHT

When we give our will and life over to the care of God, we often refer to it as coming out of darkness into light. The darkness is the unmanageable life we have left behind and the light is the new life we are given by God who we believe will restore us to sanity.

I will lead those who are blind by a way they have not known, In paths they have not known I will guide them. I will turn darkness into light before them and uneven land into plains. (Isaiah 42:16a NASB)

A blind person does not have light in their eyes and therefore they cannot see. We have been blind to the ways of God and our blindness brought the darkness of sin into our minds and bodies. People do not see well when they are on a dark path. Now that our eyes are being opened to the light of who God is and His wondrous ways, we are beginning to see light and new ways of doing and behaving according to the principles that God has conveyed to us through the Scriptures.

Your eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness. So watch out that the light in you is not darkness. (Luke 11:34-35 NASB)

Having the illumination of God’s Word as recorded in the Bible will enlighten our way, and as we choose to obey His Word we will walk together with Him in the light of His presence. That does not mean our way will always be smooth, but it does mean we have light to see what lies ahead and understanding of what will happen should we choose to ignore God’s principles.

For God, who said, “Let there be light in the darkness,” has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6 NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for bringing me out of darkness and for giving me light to see and understand Your ways. My desire is to practice Your principles in all my affairs. Amen

When your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light.

Luke 11:34b NASB

FEBRUARY 2, 2022

A SOLUTION FOR OUR GUILT

We feel guilty for all sorts of reasons. When we were running wild in our addiction, we were not even aware of the harm we were causing. It was only when we woke up in recovery and began to look at our lives that we saw and understood how destructive our way of living was. This awareness often fills us with overwhelming guilt. When we disobey God's principles and harm ourselves and others we should feel guilt, but God has a solution for it.

God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through him. Christ didn't have any sin. But God made him become sin for us. So we can be made right with God because of what Christ has done for us. (John 3:17, 2 Corinthians 5:21 NIRV)

God has a solution for our guilt.

God wants us to be honest about the wreck we've made of our lives and in His great love and forgiveness is waiting for us to turn away from the continuing harm. God wants us to repent of our rebellion and live free from sin. God forgives. God washes clean. God brings about restoration. This is the only way to deal with our guilt. We are wise if we stop and consider what the Holy Spirit is saying about the consequences of continuing in our rebellious lifestyle.

We have been set free because of what Christ has done. Because he bled and died our sins have been forgiven. We have been set free because God's grace is so rich. (Ephesians 1:7 NIRV)

The evil one will try to tell us that we can't be forgiven for some of the things we have done. That's a lie! Sometimes we will think we should be behaving better than what we are – trying to live up to some rigid standard – and feel guilty when we miss the mark. God knows we are frail humans. God wants us to become new creations as He journeys with us. He will teach us how to live life to the full. Today we have a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge our guilt, accept forgiveness freely given through Jesus, and in Him, be blessed and built up to be a blessing to others.

Prayer: Gracious God, When I do wrong, help me to quickly repent and receive forgiveness. When the evil one seeks to discourage me by false accusation, help me to stand firm on Your word and challenge my thoughts with the truth that, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. 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.

WHY DO WE NEED TO ADMIT THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR WRONGS?

Step 5 of the 12-Step program of AA asks that we admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. It assumes that we have looked at our past behaviour and made a moral inventory of the exact nature of our wrongs. The detail of that list shows clearly how our lives were full of every kind of wickedness and lived daily for our self-gratification. Thankfully, when we gave our will and life over to the care of God, He forgave all our sins, and gave us a new life to live under His care and protection.

For he has rescued us out of the darkness and gloom of Satan's kingdom and brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who bought our freedom with his blood and forgave us all our sins. (Colossians 1:13-14 TLB)

Why then do we need to admit the exact nature of our wrongs to God, ourselves, and another human being? Confession of our sins gives us protection from the power of the evil one. Many of us are aware that Satan uses what we have done to fill us with guilt and shame and fear of being found out. When we admit the exact nature of our wrongs as directed by Step 5, we disarm Satan and ruin his strategy against us. Our pride may be deflated by admission of what we have done for many years, but the truth will set us free from the bondage of wrongdoing we may still be wrestling with.

In this way God took away Satan's power to accuse you of sin, and God openly displayed to the whole world Christ's triumph at the cross where your sins were all taken away. (Colossians 2:15 TLB)

It is wise to ask God to show us to whom we might confess the exact nature of our wrongs. Perhaps we know of a person who has demonstrated compassion and understanding of our condition and has been willing to pray for us and for others in similar situations. As we move forward in our recovery, we may also want to arrange accountability for our future actions to that person, or to another person whom we reckon to be trustworthy.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am forever grateful that all my sins are forgiven. I now ask You to help me be truthful as I do a Step-5, so that Satan ceases to have power over me. Amen

***Confession
of our sins
gives us
protection
from the
power of
the evil
one.***

FEBRUARY 4, 2022

ARMOUR OF GOD – STAND YOUR GROUND

NOTES

If we have admitted and repented of our sin before God, we are new creations. Jesus paid the penalty for our sin, and we are deemed “not guilty”. Why then do we allow Satan to accuse us and hold us in fear of admitting to some of the events in our past?

How blessed is he whose wrongdoing is forgiven, Whose sin is covered! How blessed is a person whose guilt the Lord does not take into account, And in whose spirit there is no deceit! (Psalm 32:1-2 NASB)

***Stand firm
therefore,
having belted
your waist with
truth, and
having put on
the breastplate
of
righteousness,***

Ephesians 6:14

truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, (Ezekiel 18:30b; Ephesians 6:14 NASB)

In a family, one sibling may hold another in fear by threatening to tell their parents about something an erring sibling has done wrong. This is how one exercises power over another, and it keeps the one who has erred in guilt and fear of being found out. When the event is confessed to the parents its power is broken and the erring sibling is set free from the power of the other sibling’s threats. Satan’s strategy is much more aggressive than that of a sibling, he keeps accusing us of harmful actions and reminds us of the shame associated with them. This causes us to be fearful and very reluctant to fully admit the exact nature of our wrongs.

Repent and turn away from all your offenses, so that wrongdoing does not become a stumbling block to you.

Stand firm therefore, having belted your waist with

Admitting the exact nature of our wrongs is essential to our well-being in recovery. Self-condemnation often gets in the way of being completely free from our past sins. We tend to think the offences we have committed are unique, but there truly is no new sin under the sun. God has forgiven us and that should encourage us to stand our ground when Satan comes to steal our joy. As we pray and meditate on the Scriptures, we will find that, when Jesus sets us free, we are free indeed.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. (Romans 8:2 NASB)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, In the face of accusation from the evil one, I ask You to give me the courage to stand firm and proclaim that through Jesus, my sins have all been forgiven and therefore I am free from all condemnation. Amen

CONTROL

Control is usually a relationship problem and is common in addiction. Control issues in a person's life may result from traumatic or abusive life experiences. The fear of painful emotions due to change may cause a person to cling tightly to familiar circumstances, regardless of the effect on themselves or another person. Often drug addiction is rooted trying to control fears, thinking that they can be calmed by a drug of choice and life made better for a time.

There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life—fear of death, fear of judgment—is one not yet fully formed in love. (1 John 4:18 MSG)

Controlling people want life to be the way they see it rather than the way it is.

Controlling people want life to be the way they see it rather than the way it is. A person involved with a controlling person may not measure up to the standard set by the controller. Because of this they are judged and criticized for who they are or what they do. The abused person may start to feel confused, frustrated, or resentful and think they are the problem, especially when the controller throws an angry fit over something they have said or done. Manipulation is what is actually happening and if any of us fit into this category we need to deal with the underlying fears that are driving our behaviour.

You will call out to me for help. And I will answer you. You will cry out. And I will say, 'Here I am.' "Get rid of the chains you use to hold others down. Stop pointing

your finger at others as if they had done something wrong. Stop saying harmful things about them. (Isaiah 58:9 NIRV)

When we are lacking in self-esteem for whatever reason, we often feel vulnerable and try to eliminate what we are feeling by managing our lives in a way that makes us feel in control. Sadly, this often includes attempting to manage others to fit into our plan. God's way is to give our will and lives over to His care and follow His principles as outlined in the Bible and allow others to do the same.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You know the way that I take. Please heal me and allow Your perfect love to make me secure in my trust in You for a contented heart and a purposeful life with You in recovery. Amen

KEEPING JOY ALIVE

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous discusses rebuilding relationships and declares the element of joy will strengthen our ability to do so. *"We aren't a glum lot. If newcomers could see no joy or fun in our existence, they wouldn't want it. We absolutely insist on enjoying life."*

The founders of AA linked misery to self-will and addictive habits and joy to an open loving relationship with God. They followed God's ways and recognized how it brought joy in their relationship with God and others. Joy is a quality we surely need as we move forward in our life with God in recovery.

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. (James 1:2-4 NLT)

What steals our joy? Pride is often the cause. We begin to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to. We start to find fault in our recovery program, in the people around us, and in our leaders and mentors. We blame others and our surroundings for our discontent.

You have felt secure in your evil ways. You have said, "No one sees what I'm doing." Your wisdom and knowledge lead you down the wrong path. You say to yourself, "I am like a god. No one is greater than I am." (Isaiah 47:10 NIRV)

If we desire to be joyful in our recovery, we will need to be mindful of our thoughts and actions. We need to find out what God's principles are for successful living and reshape our behaviour around them. We need to surrender pride every time it raises its ugly head, remembering that the Holy Spirit is always with us to give wisdom and guidance as we wholeheartedly submit to the ways of God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for my pride in believing that I could live a joyful life in recovery without You and without those who counsel and mentor me. I am forever grateful that You, the God of hope, will fill me with all joy and peace as I trust Your ways to take me forward in life and in my recovery. Amen

How happy are the people who know the sound of joy! They walk in the light of Your face, O Lord.

Psalm 89:15 NLV

AUTHOR AND PERFECTOR

When we come to faith in God and repent of our sins and receive forgiveness through the shed blood of Jesus, we are “born again” as Jesus says we must be. When we begin to live this truth, we should pay no attention to the lies Satan tells us or the taunts of people who might not understand who God is, and what He has done for us. We also need to recognize that we cannot live this new life on our own, we need to fix our eyes on Jesus who is the author and perfecter of our faith.

Let us keep looking to Jesus. He is the author of faith. He also makes it perfect. He paid no attention to the shame of the cross. He put up with attacks from sinners. So think about him. Then you won't get tired. You won't lose hope. (Hebrews 12:2a, 3 NIRV)

Let us keep looking to Jesus. He is the author of faith. He also makes it perfect.

Hebrews 12:2a
NIRV

When we begin our journey, we often forget that God is with us; that Jesus knows everything from beginning to end; that the Holy Spirit lives within us to teach us and guide us on our journey. The life we are now leading may be unfamiliar and we may feel like a fish out of water, but, as we continue to follow God's ways, and not lean on our own understanding, we will gain wisdom in His ways. We just need to settle down and trust God in everything He says we are to do and try not to figure out everything on our own. Let's allow God to direct our path and really see how things work out.

I am the Alpha and the Omega. I am the First and the Last. I am the Beginning and the End. Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will have the right to come to the tree of life. They will be allowed to go through the gates into the city. (Revelation 22:13-14 NIRV)

As we improve our conscious contact with God and pray for the knowledge of His will for our lives and the power to carry it out, we will gain knowledge and nothing will be impossible for us.

Prayer: Gracious God, Please give me understanding of Your ways and all You have done for me. I want to live my life according to Your principles so that I have the right to eat of the tree of life and be allowed to enter the eternal city where You dwell. Amen

TOGETHER WITH GOD

God is always with me. I need never face my problems alone. Together with God, any difficulty can be worked out and overcome.

For too long we've tried to overcome problems on our own. We were correct when we admitted that much of what was going on in us and around us was too complicated for us to sort out. Where we went wrong was to let fear and insecurity overwhelm us and then turn to anger and addiction to avoid the problems we were encountering. Our new life with God in recovery offers us hope that, together with God, any difficulty can be worked out and overcome. That's the key – with God. How do we put this principle into practice in all our affairs?

The Lord himself will go ahead of you. He will be with you. He will never leave you. He'll never desert you. So, don't be afraid. Don't lose hope. (Deuteronomy 31:8 NIRV)

God has unlimited power and He makes it available to us. Before the world was created God had each of us in mind with a good plan for our lives. Now that we are making ourselves available to His will, He is ready to show us that good plan. He will also help us overcome any and all obstacles as we seek to live out His plan in all our affairs. We may not know all the details, but God does. We may think our problems will never end, but God will not allow us to go through trials one second longer than necessary to fulfill His purposes. We can trust His good heart towards us.

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

We are responsible, with God's help, to faithfully work on problems until we see that the job is done. Some problems will be resolved quickly, and others will take some consistent work over a period of time. God will continue to give us strength and direction for each step. Our challenge is to trust Him and obey.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I don't like problems and I quickly get fearful when I face challenges. Help me to trust today that together with You any difficulty can be worked out and overcome. Amen

Together with God, any difficulty can be worked out and overcome.

LIMITED AUTONOMY

An autonomous person is someone who is capable of making an informed decision about something on their own without having the input of another. Tradition 4 of Alcoholics Anonymous states: *Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.* This is a principle to be put into practice at the group level but has lessons for our individual recovery as well. We are encouraged to express our individual uniqueness “*except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.*” (Twelve By Twelve page 146)

In this tradition AA is recognizing something that flows from God’s own heart – that humans would have the gift of free will – freedom to live fully as the person they were created to be but doing so according to the principles that their creator established. From the very beginning, choices were provided so we could honour God’s wisdom as superior to our limited human knowledge.

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.

There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death. This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him, for the Lord is your life. (Proverbs 14:12, Deuteronomy 30:19-20a NIV)

The founders of AA were willing to trust groups to rely on their collective conscience as a guide to action. It was a courageous choice and offered huge freedom to groups – even the freedom to get things wrong.

God made us in His image, unique from every other created being, with the ability to think and choose how to act based on truth and moral principles. God encourages us to make use of the abilities and creativity with which He has gifted us. At the same time, God pleads with us to recognize the reality that we are limited and stand in need of His wisdom every moment of every day. In moments where what we think is right goes against the wider wisdom, we would do well to heed the “except in matters affecting” principle.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to humbly surrender all that I think and do to Your guidance. I want my life to be shaped by Your wisdom, so my choices do not negatively impact others. Amen

RELAPSE PREVENTION – OBSESSION TO USE

We may not see what goes on inside us, but the Bible tells us there is a battle going on for control of our minds. When we first came into recovery, we likely found it hard not to obsess on the substance, person, or thing that we were addicted to. Evil powers had control of our thinking and actions, and they were determined to remain in control. The good news is that when we invite Jesus into our lives, the Holy Spirit comes to live in us and one of His tasks is to set us free from the power of sin.

Deep inside me I find joy in God’s law. But I see another law working in me. It fights against the law of my mind. It makes me a prisoner of the law of sin. That law controls me. (Romans 7:22-23 NIRV)

We do not visibly see the devil as he begins to oppose our new way of life, but we are certainly aware of his presence. In an unguarded moment he will fill our minds with obsessive thoughts about our drug of choice. At other times a wrong someone committed against us will swirl around in our minds and we are unable to get it out of our heads. The devil will do everything within his power to keep us in bondage to whatever He can. The unseen powers of darkness are no match against the power of the Holy Spirit, but their voices are louder, and initially more familiar to us, than the Spirit’s voice.

To have victory over obsessive thoughts we need to stand firm in the power of the Holy Spirit and speak aloud the written Word of God which disarms the enemy who is seeking to destroy us.

Put on all of God’s armor. Then you can remain strong against the devil’s evil plans. Our fight is not against human beings. It is against the rulers, the authorities and the powers of this dark world. It is against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly world. (Ephesians 6:11-12 NIRV)

Prayer: Gracious God, I desire to be free from every obsession that has held me captive to my past. Please help me stand firm on the truth of Your word and declare that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. Amen

To have victory over obsessive thoughts we need to stand firm in the power of the Holy Spirit and speak aloud the written Word of God which disarms the enemy who is seeking to destroy us.

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

Many of us when we give our will and life over to the care of God look for tangible signs that God is with us. We want to prosper and be in health and have a meaningful life, but this is not what God wants us to seek after. When some people witnessed Jesus feeding more than five thousand men, women, and children with five small loaves and two fish and saw there was a surplus of twelve baskets left over, they went looking for Jesus for He had departed from that place. When they found Him, they asked how he got to where He was.

Jesus answered, "You've come looking for me not because you saw God in my actions but because I fed you, filled your stomachs—and for free. Don't waste your energy striving for perishable food like that. Work for the food that sticks with you, food that nourishes your lasting life, food the Son of Man provides. He and what he does are guaranteed by God the Father to last." (John 6:26-27 MSG)

Work for the food that sticks with you, food that nourishes your lasting life, food the Son of Man provides.

John 6:27 MSG

After some dialogue the same people asked Jesus to give them a further sign so that they might see and believe what He was saying. Some of us are like these people, we have witnessed the miracle of many lives changed by the power of God and are still asking for more signs so that we might believe and follow the ways of God. The requirement for God to work in our lives is that we believe in the One He sent.

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; the one who comes to Me will not be hungry, and the one who believes in Me will never be thirsty. If anyone hears what I am saying and doesn't take it seriously, I don't reject him. I didn't come to reject the world; I came to save the world. But you need to know that whoever puts me off, refusing to take in what I'm saying, is willfully choosing rejection." (John 6:35 NASB; 12:47-48a MSG)

If we choose to believe on Jesus, the One God sent, we will never hunger or thirst for righteousness, for we shall be filled.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I choose to stop looking for signs and just feed on Your word to make me whole. Amen

HELP ME LORD

When we are in a place of despair, we often cry out to God for help but wonder if He is really listening. We feel unsettled and insecure. We wonder if God has turned away from us, but in hope, we cry out to Him for protection. The writer of the following Psalm called out to God for help when he was in similar circumstances.

Defend me, God. Argue my case against those people who don't know you. Protect me from those evil liars. God, you are my place of safety. Why have you turned me away? Why must I suffer this sadness that my enemies have brought me? Send your light and your truth to guide me, to lead me to your holy mountain, to your home. I want to go to God's altar, to the God who makes me so very happy. God, my God, I want to play my harp and sing praises to you! Why am I so sad? Why am I so upset? I tell myself, "Wait for God's help! You will again have a chance to praise him, your God, the one who will save you." (Psalm 43:1-5 ERV)

Let's tell God all about our troubles and then wait for Him to act in that which we are concerned about.

When we read this Psalm, we see how the writer is honest about the trauma he is experiencing. He recognizes that God is his place of safety but asks God why He has turned him away. He questions God about the reason he must suffer this sadness. Each of us has been in a similar situation at one time or another. Though Jesus told us we would have trouble in this life, we tend to think that suffering is for those who do not know God or are living in self-will rather than God's will. We believe that God judges the way we do. God, however, is much more merciful and gracious in His judgment than we are.

In the words that follow the writer's plea for the Lord to help him, we see his attitude change as he asks God to send His light and truth to guide him. He also tells himself to wait for God's help. When we find ourselves in trouble it would be good to follow the example given in this Psalm. Let's tell God all about our troubles and then wait for Him to sort out all our concerns.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, When my circumstances cause me to be fearful, help me to trust that You are near and ready to help. Amen

PUT IT ON THE LIST

Little by little as we walk with God and work the steps, we become aware of who we are and how we relate to others. As we prayerfully review our lives with God, He will reveal where we have caused harm, and where some form of amends remains outstanding to another. We have asked God to remove our defects of character and are now willing to make a list of those to whom we need to make amends.

I, the Lord, search all hearts and examine secret motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve. (Jeremiah 17:10 NLT)

The Lord is good to everyone who trusts in him, So it is best for us to wait in patience—to wait for him to save us
Lamentations 3:25-26 GNT

It is God who knows our hearts and what interaction each person is ready to give or receive. God is willing to share His wisdom and plans with us if we will consult Him, listen for His direction, and then act on what He says.

Show me the right path, O Lord; point out the road for me to follow. Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you. (Psalm 25:4-5 NLT)

As we admit our mistakes, God will give us the courage to live in honesty, accountability, and forgiveness. God forgives us for the harm we have caused and desires that we forgive those who have harmed us. He will help us make the necessary list and work out a plan for the amends.

Any person involved in this process is on a journey of facing and dealing with trauma, and that has challenges that need time and care. We don't want to be too early or too late in the action we take.

It is not only the right time to make our list of those we have harmed, but also the time to become willing to see what God sees, and agree with Him about how and when to make things right.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to be willing to face how I have harmed others and be available to make things right with them in the way and time that You know is best for all of us. Help me to learn from my past mistakes and be more considerate of others. I ask You for healing grace for all those with whom I need to make amends and also for myself. Encourage all of us to receive the love and forgiveness offered through Jesus Christ. Amen

EVERYDAY WISDOM – WORK FROM THE HEART

Many years ago a list was prepared of seven things that are death to living a good life. First on the list is lust – not surprising because we know the harm unfaithfulness brings to healthy relationships. Right in the middle of the list is laziness, or in the language used in those days, being slothful.

A lazy person is simply someone who is unwilling to work or use the needed energy to get a job done. They really don't care about the task at hand so there is minimum output of energy and activity given. The Bible uses a stark picture to help us understand laziness.

Some people are too lazy to take care of themselves. They will not even lift the food from their plate to their mouth. (Proverbs 19:24 ERV)

Each of us was created to do good work, and so giving honest effort to a task will bring us satisfaction. When we are too lazy to bother, our world becomes confusing, we feel less and less able to cope, and our ability to do so declines.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. (Genesis 2:15 NIV)

We are instructed to do the best we can with what we have. We don't have to be more than we are, but we are responsible to give a task all that we've got. God's promise to us is, when we serve others in the best way we can, we will find ourselves receiving back much more than we ever gave out. This is not just limited to doing jobs but has to do with making space for others in our lives, even when they are strugglers and have attitudes and practices that irritate us.

Don't just do the minimum that will get you by. Do your best. Work from the heart for your real Master, for God, confident that you'll get paid in full when you come into your inheritance. (Colossians 3:23 MSG)

Prayer: Loving God, You created me to bless and take care of Your creation. Forgive me for the many times it seemed too much for me to do whatever needed doing. Help me to mature and become a person who is useful in Your service and whose desire is to work from a heart of gratitude for all You've done for me. Amen

Lazy people want much but get little, but those who work hard will prosper.

Proverbs 13:4 NIRV

READY FOR GOD TO REMOVE DEFECTS OF CHARACTER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE WISDOM OF MAKING ONLY A FEW PROMISES

Whether it's a commitment we make to ourselves, to others, or to God, keeping at it until it is completed is tough for an addict. So, as God's word teaches us, it's important not to promise too many things.

Be careful when you make promises to God. Be careful about what you say to him. Don't let your feelings cause you to speak too soon. God is in heaven, and you are on the earth. So you need to say only a few things to him. If you make a promise to God, keep your promise. Don't be slow to do what you promised. God is not happy with fools. Give God what you promised to give him. It is better to promise nothing than to promise something and not be able to do it. (Ecclesiastes 5:2,4-5 ERV)

One day at a time we need to keep things simple, and steadily work on what's essential. When we make a promise, we need to treat it seriously and step by step do what is necessary to fulfill it. We may need to learn new ways of doing things and accept suggestions from others about what will work to help us reach our specified goals. We need to come to God again and again for wisdom and strength to do the next right thing. We might even need to ask for comfort and encouragement when it's tough to keep going. When we feel like the finish line is a long way off, we need to take time to notice the improvement we have already made.

Some of us will struggle to stay with the program of coming to know God and being willing to turn our will and our life over to His care each day, in every circumstance. For a long time we have lived on self-will and the lie that we could do "anything we wanted." Therefore, it takes time to root out what is false and stick with what is bringing positive change.

Keeping our word and seeing something through to the finish brings dignity, self-respect, and the blessing of God. Success in one area will give us the strength to reach out for the next.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to be a person who is known to keep my promises. Help me to keep things simple. Help me to walk with humility and patience. Help me to be willing to learn new things and persevere until I fulfill each commitment I make. Amen

**When we
make a
promise,
we need to
treat it
seriously
and step
by step do
what is
necessary
to fulfill it.**

I AM THE VINE

As we read the words of Jesus in the Bible, we will see that He often makes reference to earthly things in order to illustrate how precious our relationship is with Him. He also tells of things that are lost and found and demonstrates the value God places on each person He has created. In the following Scripture Jesus refers to Himself as the vine and to us as the branches. In this there is an intimacy that Jesus desires with us so that we can prosper and be in health.

I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you stay joined to me, and I to you, you will produce plenty of fruit. But separated from me you won't be able to do anything. (John 15:5 ERV)

If you stay joined to me, and I to you, you will produce plenty of fruit.

What is Jesus telling us? He is saying that in order to produce the fruits of righteousness we must be in living relationship with him. Grapes will not grow unless they are attached to a branch that is joined to the vine. We will not grow strong in our faith and in our recovery unless we have a relationship with Jesus. He is the giver of life and we will never have the life we desire unless we are in harmony with Him.

You have already been prepared to produce more fruit by the teaching I have given you. Stay joined to me and I will stay joined to you. No branch can produce fruit alone. It must stay connected to the vine. (John 15:3-4a ERV)

Our goal must be to take daily personal inventory of what we are spending time on and how we are growing in faith and the knowledge of Jesus. Through reading the Scriptures and obedience to the principles contained therein we can grow in our relationship with Jesus who gives light and life to all things.

Everything that was created received its life from him, and his life gave light to everyone. The light keeps shining in the dark, and darkness has never put it out. (John 1:4-5 CEV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Help me to plan my day so I spend time with You. I desire to grow in grace and be in harmony with You as You give life and light to all things concerning me. Amen

THE DISTRESS OF UNMANAGEABLE PROBLEMS

We all go through times in our lives when we feel the sky is falling and we are unable to do anything about it. This could be the result of irresponsible acts we have done, relationship problems we have caused, or the outcome of another's destructive actions which impacted us and created unexpected consequences that we are powerless to do anything about. Whatever the cause, our mind is in turmoil, and we wrestle with sleepless nights, seeking answers we are unable to find. The life of the writer of today's Psalm appears to be in a mess and his solution is to tell God about it and cry out to Him for help. What can we learn from his experience that will give us strength and hope in our own times of powerlessness and unmanageability?

Listen to my prayer, O Lord, and hear my cry for help! When I am in trouble, don't turn away from me! Listen to me, and answer me quickly when I call! My life is disappearing like smoke; my body is burning like fire. I am beaten down like dry grass; I have lost my desire for food. I groan aloud; I am nothing but skin and bones. I am like a wild bird in the desert, like an owl in abandoned ruins. I lie awake; I am like a lonely bird on a housetop. All day long my enemies insult me; those who mock me use my name in cursing. (Psalm 102:1-8 GNT)

When we came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity, we gave our will and life over to the care of this God of our understanding. As we choose to live in God's will, we discover that whatever the cause of our anxiety, the God we have trusted is available to help us face our issues head on and overcome the challenges they may bring. Our part is to structure all our worries and concerns into prayers and tell God about them. Knowing that God hears us and will help us brings us peace that surpasses all understanding.

In my distress I prayed to the Lord, and the Lord answered me and set me free. (Psalm 118:5 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, When I am fearful and feeling low because of stressful circumstances, help me to remember that You are the all-knowing God who guards my heart and mind as You care for me. Amen

Whatever the cause of our anxiety, the God we have trusted is available to help us face our issues head on.

HABITS

It's not surprising that living in active addiction for years is often described as having a habit. A habit is a particular practice that we do over and over again, and which is often hard to give up. It can be a practice that we've done so often that we may do it unconsciously. An addiction is a habit that is negative and one of the tools we have to help us overcome addiction is the ability to form new habits – only this time ones that are positive and life giving.

But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Hebrews 5:14 NIV

I will always obey your law, forever and ever. Each morning you listen to my prayer, as I bring my requests to you and wait for your reply. (Psalm 119:44 GNT, Psalm 5:3 CEV)

The Twelve Steps speak of habits we can build into our new life. They include, continually taking personal inventory, being involved in prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, repeatedly turning our will and our life over to the care of God, carrying the message to others, and practicing the principles learned in all our affairs.

On average it takes about two months of regular practice before a new behaviour becomes an automatic response, so we need to be aware of this, and be ready to reward progress rather than perfection. Experts tell us to focus on one new thing at a time. Perhaps that is the wisdom behind the Serenity Prayer principle *“living one day at a time and enjoying one moment at a time.”* Now there's a positive habit we all can grow!

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of

speech that cannot be condemned. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Titus 2:7-8a NIV)

Choosing to be joyful, praying continually, and practicing gratitude are important habits that will help us with every other good practice we develop. Developing integrity and setting a good example are habits God says will not only help us but will set an example for others to follow.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to live well with You today and develop life-giving habits that honour You and bless others. Help me to focus on what is most important today. Amen

FINDING RELIEF FROM LONELINESS

God made us for relationship with Him and with one another. Sharing life with friends is a natural yearning of the human heart. Often we have tried to cover our loneliness with substances, destructive habits, and unhealthy relationships. Living in recovery minus whatever we used to overcome our loneliness in the past, is a challenge. God wants to give us relief from our loneliness and welcome us into His family today.

Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. Relieve the troubles of my heart and free me from my anguish. He [God] heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. (Psalm 25:16-17, 147:3 NIV)

We are learning to put more accurate names to our emotions and loneliness has several different expressions. Grief and loss can trigger intense loneliness. Sometimes it's simply feeling ignored or left out. Being misunderstood and feeling uncared for is high on the list of loneliness indicators. Feeling drained or empty is also labelled as being lonely. We can feel lonely on our own or when surrounded by lots of people. It's all about feeling disconnected and adrift.

God, who lives in his holy palace, is a father to orphans, and he takes care of widows. God provides homes for those who are lonely. He frees people from prison and makes them happy. (Psalm 68:5-6a ERV)

As we identify what's going on in us we can begin to sort out an appropriate solution. Are we reaching out to spend time with God and others? Are we hiding behind walls of self-protection or are we being real with others so connections can be made? When we are feeling worthless and lonely, what positive truths are we choosing to affirm? When we seek Him, God promises to strengthen and comfort us with His unfailing love.

Be strong and be brave. Don't be afraid of those people because the Lord your God is with you. He will not fail you or leave you. Even if my mother and father leave me, the Lord will take me in. (Deuteronomy 31:6, Psalm 27:10 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your unfailing love for me. When I feel disconnected, help me to affirm that I am Your child, and You will never leave me nor forsake me. Help me to experience healthy relationships built on the foundation of Your Word. Amen

God wants to give us relief from our loneliness and welcome us into His family today.

GOD GIVES – LIFE AND BREATH

Often when we come into recovery and begin to learn the ways of God, we do not fully understand why God has given us life and breath. God who made us in His image has given us everything we need for life and godliness, and He wants us to know that giving and receiving from Him are part of the purpose and plan He has for our lives. God wants to teach us His principles, so our lives will be patterned after His will and our desire will be to walk in His ways.

He is the God who made the whole world and everything in it. He is the Lord of the land and the sky. He does not live in temples built by human hands. He is the one who gives people life, breath, and everything else they need. (Acts 17:24-25a ERV)

He is the one who gives people life, breath, and everything else they need.

Acts 17:25a ERV

Not one of us is here by accident for the Scriptures teach us that God knew each of us before we were even born and had a plan for our lives. Many of us, who for various reasons ended up in unmanageable lives, have never stopped to consider that we were born into this world as tiny babies. From God we freely received life and breath and perhaps never knew that God intended us to be instruments for good in this world. God is a giver and because He loved us so much, He gave us Jesus to pay the penalty for our sins.

Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him would not be lost but have eternal life. (John 3:16 ERV)

God made us to communicate with Him and He with us. As children some of us were never taught about God or His purpose for giving us life. Now, through prayer and meditation, we are improving our conscious contact with God and gaining knowledge of this God in whose image we are made, the God who gives us life and breath. We can ask God to reveal His will for our lives and to give us the power to carry it out.

This teaching is a treasure that you have been trusted with. Protect it with the help of the Holy Spirit, who lives inside us. (2 Timothy 1:14 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess my life is not according to Your good plan. My desire is to know You and the purpose for which You gave me life and breath. Amen

LIVING COMPLETE

To be complete means that nothing is lacking. Some people have health, wealth, possessions, honour and prestige in the community. To the on-looker they seem to lack nothing, yet many lack the ability to enjoy the things they have, and their lives are in turmoil. When we give our will and life over to the care of God, the Bible tells us that we will lack no good thing. Contentment, together with thankfulness to God for all He has given us, will help us mature and be complete.

For in Christ there is all of God in a human body; so you have everything when you have Christ, and you are filled with God through your union with Christ. He is the highest Ruler, with authority over every other power. (Colossians 2:9-10 TLB)

Being complete is not the result of getting the things we feel we lack, but in being content with everything we have been given through Jesus. When we believed in Jesus and repented of our sins, we were given eternal life and the promise that Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, will guard our hearts and minds. If earthly things begin to trouble us, we can come to Jesus, and He will give us rest. Having a thankful heart is a great start to being complete in this life. Just looking up at the sky at night can leave us in awe of God's creation and the place He has prepared for us in it.

Since you became alive again, so to speak, when Christ arose from the dead, now set your sights on the rich treasures and joys of heaven where he sits beside God in the place of honor and power. Let heaven fill your thoughts; don't spend your time worrying about things down here. (Colossians 3:1-2 TLB)

In the Scriptures we are told not to desire the things we can see, but to fix our eyes on the things we cannot see which will last forever. These are the things that will make us complete in being the person God created us to be.

And now just as you trusted Christ to save you, trust him, too, for each day's problems; live in vital union with him. (Colossians 2:6 TLB)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Help me to fix my eyes on You so that I can be mature and complete, not lacking anything. Amen

When we give our will and life over to the care of God, the Bible tells us that we will lack no good thing.

VALENTINES AND HEARTS

Will you be my Valentine? This day is meant to remind us of love and hearts joined together in friendship and commitment. Our life in recovery also has much to do with our heart, and love for one another, and friendship, and commitment. God desires to have a deep and satisfying personal relationship with us. God has shared His heart with us, invited us to share our hearts with Him, and generously expressed tenderness and kindness towards us. We've often been too busy with our own agenda to give much attention to God's offer of friendship. We've been too focused on wrongs done to us, hurts suffered by us, and painful memories that give us an excuse to continue in the destructive habits of our addiction.

God is offering us a beautiful heart – a healed and forgiven heart – a heart we desperately need to replace our broken and wounded heart.

Many cards and gifts with hearts on them are exchanged with friends and loved ones on Valentine's Day. As we celebrate Valentine's Day, it's a wonderful opportunity to think about, and respond to God's offer of love and friendship. God is offering us a beautiful heart – a healed and forgiven heart – a heart we desperately need to replace our broken and wounded heart.

"I'll pour pure water over you and scrub you clean. I'll give you a new heart, put a new spirit in you. I'll remove the stone heart from your body and replace it with a heart that's God-willed, not self-willed. I'll put my Spirit in you and make it possible for you to do what I tell you and live by my commands." (Ezekiel 36:25-27 MSG)

Without God, our heart truly is a heart of stone. It's filled with revenge, with hateful anger, with resentment, with bitterness and self-righteous judging. It's been scarred for too long by broken tapes of hatred and condemnation. There's no "fixing" that stuff. We really need to hand over that dead and dried up heart and exchange it for one that is living and soft and real.

Prayer: Loving Father, I give You my heart today. Remove this heart of stone that is filled with resentment and bitterness. Give me a new heart that is gentle and forgiving. Amen

FACING PROBLEMS WITH GOD

Remember nothing is going to happen today that you and God can't handle.

When we face difficulties and problems, we often ask ourselves some questions: Does God care? Does God care about me? Does God care about my situation today? It's easy to get consumed by the pressure of problems and fail to seek the help that God is offering to give us.

Sometimes we respond to problems by complaining and believing the lie that we have been rejected and abandoned by God and others, and now we are left to "figure things out on our own." Things have not worked out the way we think they should have, and we blame God and others for not helping us. In challenging moments the important thing is to remember that God is always with us and not to let the emotions of the moment cloud that truth.

God's desire is to help us, and if we seek Him, He will act on our behalf to make a way where there seems to be no way. His word says, ***"The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him."*** (2 Chronicles 16:9 NLT)

We are responsible, with God's help, to faithfully work on problems until they are resolved. God is with us, and if we ask Him, He will give us wisdom to know how to handle the problem. God may also invite a knowledgeable person alongside to help us. Some problems will be resolved quickly and others will take consistent work over a period of time. God will give us the strength to do what we need to do today and for each step we need to take in the future. Our challenge is to trust and obey Him as He leads us forward.

So don't get tired of doing what is good. Don't get discouraged and give up, for we will reap a harvest of blessing at the appropriate time ... For I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need. (Galatians 6:9, Philippians 4:13, NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for your promise to never leave me alone. Help me to trust You when I face problems, and permit You to show me the way forward. Help me to seek Your solutions and not try to force my own. Your ways are always better than mine. Amen

Together, with God, any difficulty can be worked out and overcome.

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 on one person by another and often the injured person will, through unforgiveness, cause further damage to themselves, plus inflict harm on those close to them.

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

Matthew 11:28 CEV

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 become tense, angry, and bitter towards others. Why would we refuse to forgive and live in continual 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

GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD BUT LOSE OWN SOUL

In this world what are we chasing after? Is it drugs, alcohol, money, sex, notoriety, loyalty, friendship, or maybe all the above? What if we had all those things readily available, would we be happy and contented? Some of us spent much of our lives seeking after these things only to find they did not give the satisfaction we desired but trapped us into pursuing more of the same at enormous cost to our well-being.

For what good does it do a person if he gains the whole world, but loses or forfeits himself? (Luke 10:25 NASB)

Traveling uncontrolled along the road of addiction we lost ourselves and the relationships of those who cared about us. We sacrificed ourselves for our addiction and ended up in an unmanageable lifestyle. There was no gain or honour in our obsession with the dependency we chose, especially as the price was losing ourselves. Jesus said that God will provide all our needs so, when we have given our will and life over to God's care, why not trust what Jesus said and live life as God intended?

What I'm trying to do here is get you to relax, not be so preoccupied with getting so you can respond to God's giving. People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep yourself in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met. (Luke 12:29-31 MSG)

As we come to God through prayer and meditation on the Scriptures, we will be encouraged to seek him in all our ways and follow his principles in all our affairs. There is nothing that God cannot do, and we need to relax and trust Him to do what we certainly cannot do for ourselves.

Riches and honor come from you alone, and you are the ruler of all mankind; your hand controls power and might, and it is at your discretion that men are made great and given strength. (1 Chronicles 29:12 TLB)

Prayer: Gracious Father, I have trespassed against You by what I have done, please help me to trust You to meet all my needs as I choose to follow You in all my ways. Amen

For what good does it do a person if he gains the whole world, but loses or forfeits himself?

Luke 10:25 NASB

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

When Jesus' friends and followers wanted to know how to pray – how to talk to God – Jesus taught them the familiar prayer we know as “The Lord’s Prayer.” It begins with the sentence, **“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.”** For God to be in heaven can seem distant to us but the truth is, God is close and always keeps His caring and watchful eye on us.

God looks down from heaven on the entire human race; he looks to see if anyone is truly wise, if anyone seeks God. (Psalm 53:2 NLT)

God is close and always keeps His caring and watchful eye on us.

The God of eternity who made time and space stands above it all and has the kind of perspective we need when events around us seem confusing and overpowering. We don't just look up to the sky because God may be out there somewhere, we look up because God is near and able to direct us and even pull us out of our circumstances if that is what is needed.

You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand! (Psalm 139:2-5 NLT)

Not only does God have the wisdom of a broader perspective but God is not limited by human abilities. God sees our whole being – body, soul, and spirit. He is able to speak into our lives with the direction we really need because He knows more than we know.

The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. (1 Samuel 16:6 NLT)

God, our loving Heavenly Father, invites us today to look up and remember that He is watching over us and ready to give us the perspective and direction we need.

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

COMING HUMBLY TO ASK FOR GOD'S HELP

What does it mean to humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings? If we truly have come to that place where we want God to remove our shortcomings, then we will have given some thought to what they actually are. We will be aware of the negative effect they have had on our lives and strongly desire to have them removed.

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

When we think of our character shortcomings, is there a sense of regret or do we attempt to justify what we do? To humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings reveals that we have become aware of how far we have strayed from the ways of God, and from the person He created us to be. We are humbled by the price Jesus paid to set us free from our sin and make us right with God. We know that only by the power of the Holy Spirit living in us will we be able to live the purposeful life we have been given. We are truly humbled by the fact that God has provided everything we need to live a life devoted to Him.

The new foundation we have laid in recovery will be reinforced when we daily admit that without God we can do nothing. Obedience to God's word is a tried and true way to victory over self-absorption. God does not want us to focus on our faults. He wants us to focus on getting to know His will as it is revealed in the Scriptures, and by putting that knowledge into practice in all that we do.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I recognize the shortcomings in my character and humbly ask You to remove them. I receive Your forgiveness for my sins and look to You for rest for my soul. I surrender all my fears and worries to You. I ask You to change my thinking and believing until I am totally secure in your love and goodness. I choose to embrace life on your terms. Amen

When we think of the shortcomings in our character, is there a sense of regret or do we attempt to justify our behaviour?