

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



FEBRUARY 2024



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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.



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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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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.

SUBSTANCE ADDICTIONS: Alcohol Caffeine Injected or smoked substances such as: Crack, Crystal Meth, Heroin Marijuana Prescription Medications Sugar Tobacco	BEHAVIOUR ADDICTIONS: 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)
SOFT ADDICTIONS: 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	RELATIONSHIP ADDICTIONS: Abusive Relationships: Includes: Intimidation, Isolation, Domination, Blaming, Humiliation, Withholding, Forcing acts against one's will Approval dependency Attention Seeking Codependence/Rescuing Power/Control

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.

THE BEAUTY OF A QUIET AND GENTLE SPIRIT

God invites us to a life of gentleness where we honour truth, respect the dignity of everyone, including ourselves, and delight in the joy and wonder of each new day.

Surround me with your tender mercies so I may live, for your instructions are my delight. (Psalm 119:77 NLT)

To be gentle with ourselves and others does not mean seeking "easy ways" to avoid dealing with significant issues while allowing ourselves to continue in whatever feels comfortable but is harmful. Gentleness means we approach life with quiet honesty, admitting the truth when we are struggling to cope and need help.

We make space for gentleness in our lives by setting safe boundaries in relationships. We experience gentleness of spirit when we take the time to slow down and notice the good things around us: a baby in a stroller; the aroma of food; or the beautiful colours in the sky as the sun goes down.

Lord, don't hold back your tender mercies from me. Let your unfailing love and faithfulness always protect me. (Psalm 40:11 NLT)

As we sit quietly and have conversations with God, gentleness will develop in us, and then flow from us to others. Reading the Bible often brings peace and gentleness to our soul. When we are encouraged by what we are learning from the Scriptures, a gentle spirit seems to wrap itself around our hearts and our souls feel comforted.

Let my teaching fall on you like rain; let my speech settle like dew. Let my words fall like rain on tender grass, like gentle showers on young plants. (Deuteronomy 32:2 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to live in the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit which is precious in Your sight. Amen

***God invites us
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SORTING OUT SOFT ADDICTIONS

NOTES

Soft addictions are habits or behaviors we use to control distressing moods or thought patterns. They satisfy a shallow want but ignore or block a deeper need. They numb us to feelings we don't like or are unfamiliar with. They substitute a superficial high for genuine feelings of accomplishment. God does not want us to lean on these temporary supports. He wants us to acknowledge the truth about our real needs. When we are willing to deal with reality and seek God, He promises to strengthen us and hold us steady.

***Are we
engaging in
an activity to
improve our
life and our
relationships
or are we
simply trying
to numb our
feelings and
let the world
go by?***

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10 NIV)

Soft addictions are formed through the misuse of ordinary things such as cell phones or excess sleeping, eating, shopping, work, or exercise. We must be radically honest about the underlying root of our behaviours – all of them – not just those that are easily labeled “addictions and dependencies”. Asking ourselves some simple questions can help us recognize if something we are doing has become a soft addiction.

Are we engaging in an activity to improve our life and our relationships or are we simply trying to numb our feelings and let the rest of the world go by? As we participate in the activity, are we conscious of God's presence in and around us or, are we seeking satisfaction in the action rather than living in the truth? Do we believe we are serving God's purposes in what we are doing or are we using the activity to distract us from feelings of discontent,

loneliness, or anger? These are some of the issues we need to consider as we determine whether the activity is healthy or a soft addiction to divert us from reality.

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:2 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to recognize any way I am misusing things that are in theory good, but are a substitute for me to avoid dealing with my negative feelings. I ask you to heal those places in me that cause pain. My desire is to follow You in all my ways. Amen

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 pick up 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)

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

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 how Jesus He came into the world not to judge it, but to save it. Jesus said we can trust all that He has spoken.

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.” (John 5:24 NKJV)

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for the hope and assurance I have through believing that Jesus came into the world to pay the sin debt I owed. Please help me get rid of all my impure desires and lusts and be transformed by the renewing of my mind, so that daily I may become more like Jesus in all my thoughts and actions. Amen

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 of us who come from an unstable background often feel vulnerable when faced with something new. We are used to controlling things around us so that we avoid any additional pain or disappointment that may result from being part of an unfamiliar event.

While it may be good to do our part in working towards solutions, we will find even greater wisdom if we first seek God's input and trust His good plan for our lives.

However, when we decide to trust God, we can relax. God “has our back” and God is “on our side.” We live in a world where each day seems to bring surprises, some of which are good, and others not so good. When we are surrendered to God’s will, He will work in any challenging circumstance 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 recognize and humbly admit is, 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 a way that is manageable for us. While it may be good to do our part in working towards solutions, we will find even greater wisdom if we first seek God’s input and trust His good plan for our lives. Sometimes we may have to wait for something to happen. 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 God 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 just leave the rest. You are a good God and You work all things for good in my life. Help me to trust You! Amen

LEAP YEAR

It’s leap year so this is a day added to the calendar every four years to keep our clocks in line with the earth’s rotation around the sun.

The reason for this extra day is that every year the earth circuits around the sun in 365 and $\frac{1}{4}$ days. For a few years that wouldn’t have much impact on the four seasons of each year, but that $\frac{1}{4}$ of a day over decades or centuries would make our known seasons quite different if this adjustment was not made.

God wants us to do whatever it takes today and every day to keep our lives in sync with Him because He knows where life is lived at its best. We too can get just a little bit off in how we are journeying with God but every now and then God knows we need to make an adjustment, so we stay in the “sweet spot” of God’s will and care.

Stay on the path that the Lord your God has commanded you to follow. Then you will live long and prosperous lives in the land you are about to enter and occupy. (Deuteronomy 5:33 NLT)

We need to avoid taking one step off the path God has laid out for us. What we also need to watch is how we may slowly drift away from God’s plan for us. That drift happens when we begin to think we know better than God or the people around us. It is at those times that we are called to be humble and make an adjustment, even if it is inconvenient, and keep walking with God and trustworthy friends.

One section of the Serenity Prayer reminds us: “trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next.”

So, let’s take inventory and see if we have been drifting and make an adjustment to line our lives up once again with God’s trustworthy direction.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for loving me and staying with me every step of my journey. Help me to trust Your love, to stay close to You, and to make whatever adjustments are necessary so I don’t drift apart from You. Amen

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

***Psalm 119:1-5
ESV***

FICKLE PEOPLE AND A FAITHFUL GOD

Why does God bother with rebellious humankind? As we read stories in the Bible of those who claim to be people of God, we notice that they 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.

All of us are very much like them. We come into recovery knowing that we need to turn our will and life over to the care of God, but then pride exerts itself and we think we know the best way forward and end up stumbling. We fall back into harmful habits 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)

Psalms 144:3 NLT

God made us in His image so we could have a loving relationship with Him. 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 darkness I was in and for giving me my inheritance through Jesus. I am glad that Your image is stamped on me so that I can have a relationship with You. Help me to obey Your principles in all I say and do. Amen

DEVELOPING CHARACTER – LOYALTY

What is loyalty? Someone who is loyal is dependable and will do what they have committed to. When we think about loyalty, do we see it as something to be desired or does it bring a negative emotional response?

In our addiction, loyalty to family or friends and keeping our commitments to them was not something we prioritized. Our loyalty was first to our dependency and to meet its demands. Nothing else mattered to us. However, our dependency was not loyal to us because it did not fulfill its promise of a lasting feeling of well-being. Even though we faithfully fulfilled our dependency's demands, it was never satisfied and only wanted more. It made us sick in body, mind, and spirit.

Your father is the devil, and you do exactly what he wants. He has always been a murderer and a liar. There is nothing truthful about him. He speaks on his own, and everything he says is a lie. Not only is he a liar himself, but he is also the father of all lies. (John 8:44 CEV)

When we give our will and life over to the care of God, we make a commitment to God and He makes a commitment to us. God is loyal to fulfill all the promises He makes to us. Do our actions show loyalty in following the ways of God? Are we willing to give the same kind of loyalty in our commitment to God as we were to the demands of our dependency?

Today we have a fresh opportunity to not just “talk the talk” but to “walk the walk”. If we remain in God’s love and care and follow His principles in all our affairs, we will develop the character quality of being loyal to God and to others. We will then have the fullness of life we are seeking.

Your love reaches higher than the heavens, and your loyalty extends beyond the clouds. (Psalm 108:4 CEV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for loving and caring for me. Your loyalty will never fail me for You work everything together for my good. Help me to be unyielding in my loyalty to You and Your ways in everything I say and do. Amen

***Today, we
have a fresh
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others.***

WILLINGNESS IS THE KEY

Those of us who just like doing familiar things that appeal to us will find it a challenge to be willing to live in the ways of God. A willingness to follow the ways of God is a vital key to having a successful life in recovery.

We must be willing to admit we cannot live a purposeful life on our own. We must believe that there is a power greater than ourselves who exists and has our best interests at heart. We must be willing to admit our shortcomings and have God remove them. We must commit to examining each day in an ongoing inventory and make any necessary changes to whatever does not conform with God's ways.

A willingness of heart and mind to follow the ways of God is the vital key to having a successful life in recovery.

For change to take place and the serenity of life with God in recovery to become our lived reality, we need to wholeheartedly turn our will and our lives over to the direction and care of God. 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 our future. Whatever God says needs changing gets worked on until it changes. Whatever God says needs removing gets removed. When God says to bear with something patiently, we hang in and tolerantly bear with whatever is going on.

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 let God guide us, through His word in the Bible, to a clear understanding of truth and its application in our daily lives. We must be willing to ask ourselves, "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, Please help me to be willing to submit to Your ways in all my affairs, in all my relationships, and particularly help me to grow in my relationship with You. My desire is to do those things that please You. Amen

WISDOM – TIME

There is a right time for everything, and everything on earth will happen at the right time. (Ecclesiastes 3:1 ERV)

When God created the earth and everything in it, He did so in a sequence that made provision for the life and pleasure of humans that He created. At just the right time everything was in place for human survival including a garden for humans to live in. When we were made in the secret place of our mother's womb God also had a plan for each of us. He planned where we would be born and the place where we would live in the hope that we would search for Him and find Him.

God began by making one man, and from him he made all the different people who live everywhere in the world. He decided exactly when and where they would live. God wanted people to look for him, and perhaps in searching all around for him, they would find him. But he is not far from any of us. (Acts 17:26-27 ERV)

Because we live in a sinful world we might have a hard time believing that God is good and that He truly desires that we live a pleasing and purposeful life. Perhaps we drifted into addiction because we believed the circumstances and place of our birth were not favorable to us.

God is aware of who we are and of our circumstances. Perhaps He has brought us to this place at this time to seek Him and ask Him for wisdom to follow the path He has prepared for us. There is a right time for everything on earth. Maybe this is the right time for us to give our will and life over to the care of God who is not too far from us.

In the Scriptures God says, ***"When the time came, I listened to you, and when you needed help, I came to save you." That time has come. This is the day for you to be saved.*** (2 Corinthians 6:2 CEV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your wisdom is infinite and You say that this is the day for me to be saved. Today, I choose to give my will and life over to Your care. I truly believe that You will guide me to the pleasing and purposeful life You have planned for me. Amen

Maybe this is the right time for us to give our will and life over to the care of God.

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 those around us. 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 to see what God is seeing, receive what God is offering, 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 know who they really are. They wear a mask and live a role that does not reflect their true self. They constantly seek the approval of others. They are unable to live in a healthy 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 a 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 were punished for my sins when You died on the cross, and my shame is therefore removed. I accept Your death and resurrection as guarantee of the new life I have received. I believe there is now no condemnation against me and I have become a child of God. From this day forward, I choose to follow Your ways and rely on Your promises. 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 are 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 had 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 us 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 death and resurrection of Jesus proclaim to Satan and his oppressors that they are powerless over Jesus and the life He gives to us. As we submit to Jesus' healing power to 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 Your finished work on earth, 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.

WHAT DOES MATURITY LOOK LIKE FOR ME?

As infants and toddlers we were not aware of what was harmful for us or what was good for us. Our parents and others were the ones who taught us and hopefully created an environment of safety around us. As we matured, we continued to learn and observe the way things were done. It's normal for most people to 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, and some of us, like the seed that fell among thorns which choked the life out of it, started to worry and fret about the happenings around us. As we began to mature we thought the pleasures of this world held the answer to our problems, but we were soon to find out that these diversions caused us even more heartache. When we finally reached that place where our life became unmanageable, Jesus invited 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 was hidden from His sight. When we come to believe in a Power greater than ourselves we are being spiritually awakened and this is the perfect time to put off the old self and receive the new life God is offering us. We 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 become 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

DON'T BE A PHONY

There is no more tiring way of life than living as a phony. Giving false impressions and lying to cover up attitudes or behaviours drains us of energy and joy. Anyone who shoves "their particular truth" in our faces can be more irritating than helpful. How can we make sure that we are not the ones who are being fake? Where is the balance in being kind or being honest?

With most people in community our first responsibility is to be truthful, kind, and respectful. We are to love God with all our heart and love our neighbour as ourselves. There will be those close trusted friends with whom we share our burdens and our frustrations, but with most people, positive, uplifting, and respectful talk should be our norm. There are always things to be grateful for no matter how challenged we feel.

God gave us this command: If we love God, we must also love each other as brothers and sisters. (1 John 4:21 ERV)

There is a time to be vulnerable and share our hurts and frustrations. We need friends with whom we can share our sorrows and burdens. We need to welcome honest feedback even when it makes us uncomfortable. We all have blind spots. We need honest support from sponsors and trusted friends. We don't need someone who is just going to smile and be nice to us while we wallow in self-pity or slide into harmful patterns of living.

You can trust what your friend says, even when it hurts. But your enemies want to hurt you, even when they act nice. (Proverbs 27:6 ERV)

The more we live as respectful and authentic persons who befriend others the more we will experience God's blessing of caring and supportive friends.

So speak encouraging words to one another. Build up hope so you'll all be together in this, no one left out, no one left behind. I know you're already doing this; just keep on doing it. (1 Thessalonians 5:11 MSG)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to live as a genuine, positive person. Help me to always speak the truth in love and to listen to wise feedback from caring people who take the time to encourage me. Amen

How can we make sure we are not the ones who are being fake?

WISDOM – THE BENEFIT OF DOING THINGS GOD’S WAY OVER THE LONG HAUL

How many times have we spoken before thinking 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 we have all the knowledge we will need to live life 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 the Scriptures really are. In some circumstances it is a challenge for us to put God’s ways into practice. God 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 that we always discipline ourselves. 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 truly is good will become clearer to us. This is part of the message we will choose to 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 is 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

ACCEPTANCE THAT BRINGS SERENITY

Life has its ups and downs and doesn’t always treat us fairly. Some problem situations work out and others don’t. In difficult times, when we are powerless to change the situation, what we really need is the serenity that comes from acceptance. How do we find 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)

The acceptance that fills us with peace is found when we stop living in denial. It comes when we no longer live with buried anger and hide the pain of the situation or just resign ourselves to the sadness of “that’s just how it is.” Acceptance sees reality for what it is, focuses on what can be done, does that, 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 tell God what is really going on, particularly speaking to Him about things we don’t 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 ask a trusted companion in recovery and then take the 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 if we acknowledge God in all our ways and allow Him to direct our path, we can be sure that God will show us the way through any situation we encounter.

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

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

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 have 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 the humility of being teachable. We need to have open eyes and ears to learn facts and open minds and hearts to receive instruction and then apply what we have learned 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 will restore us to sanity.

For a long time we believed that we had all the solutions and told others and God how we thought things should work. However, to become wise and live well requires that each day, in every situation, we seek God's input on everything we are doing. God promises to guide us if we will persist in our search for His wisdom in all that we plan to 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 efficient in Your Kingdom. Amen

GETTING IT RIGHT IN THE END

In life there often seems to be two groups of people, those who speak well and look good and those who always seem to get things wrong. For many of us who descended into addiction we thought that we fitted into the second group. Jesus offers hope for us today in a story he told some people who thought they were better than everyone else.

Jesus said: *"A man had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.' " 'I will not,' the son answered. But later he changed his mind and went. "Then the father went to the other son. He said the same thing. The son answered, 'I will, sir.' But he did not go. "Which of the two sons did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered.* (Matthew 21:28-31 NIRV)

One of the ongoing challenges of recovery is living with humility and integrity each day. Recovery is a journey, and we won't always get things right the first time. Taking new steps and doing the hard work of recovery is just that – hard. Whenever we stumble, Jesus' story shows us how to get back on track.

When we come into recovery as approval seekers, we might too easily give our word to do whatever is required, but then fail to do the promised work. Others of us demonstrate self-will by reacting negatively when we are challenged to do something, and boldly refuse to do it. Whatever our initial response, what really matters is what we do next.

Those who simply try to look good without following through will not find the good life they seek. The son who didn't look so good in the beginning is the one Jesus puts forward as the positive example. We may not get it right in the beginning but if we persevere and admit our defects of character, become willing to have God remove them, and then humbly walk in a new way, we will live in the joy and dignity of God's approval.

Jesus's story reminds us once again, "don't just talk the talk but walk the walk."

Prayer: Heavenly Father, When I don't do the right thing, please give me the courage to admit it and help me take the necessary steps to submit to Your will for my life. Help me to live with honesty and humility. Help me to not just talk the talk but to walk the walk. Amen

If we persevere and admit our defects of character, become willing to have God remove them, and then humbly walk in a new way, we will live in the joy and dignity of God's approval.

JUST FOR TODAY – I WILL TRY TO LIVE IN CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD

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.

Our lives matter to God. The details of our day are important to him. He wants to give us direction. He wants to support us and protect us. God enjoys spending time with us, and He is pleased when we spend time with him. God enjoys it when we “chat it up” with him. Until we realize how much God loves us and cares about the details of our lives, we won’t want to pray to him. Until we sincerely believe that he has completely forgiven us, we will be ashamed to face him.

**Pray
diligently.
Stay alert,
with your
eyes wide
open in
gratitude.
Don’t
forget to
pray for
us.**

(Colossians
4:2-3 MSG)

Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always. This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. (1 Chronicles 16:11, 1 John 5:14 NIV)

What might it look like to have a chat with God today?

- ☞ Find a place where you can be undisturbed and free from distractions.
- ☞ Tell God your thoughts and feelings.
- ☞ Share your day with God as you would with a friend. What was your experience of this day?
- ☞ Review your day with God. What went right? What went wrong? Ask for forgiveness and make amends as necessary.
- ☞ Ask for any healing needed.
- ☞ Listen carefully. God has a message for you.
- ☞ Ask God for knowledge of his will for you and the power to carry it out.

I call on you, my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer. (Psalm 17:6 NIV)

No one understands and cares for us more than God. Only God has the wisdom to give us reliable direction that will fit together with our past, with the present, and the future He has for us.

Prayer: Loving God, I am so grateful that you care for me and are interested in the details of my life. Thank you for giving me the strength and courage to walk in Your will as You reveal it to me. 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 are all a mixture of strengths and weaknesses but because of His love for us, God wants us to come to a realistic assessment of who we truly are.

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 us, 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 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 are all a
mixture of
strengths
and
weaknesses
but because
of His love
for us, God
wants us to
come to a
realistic
assessment
of who we
truly are.***

EASY DOES IT

"Easy Does It" is one of the most well-known slogans in recovery circles. It's the name that some 12-step groups choose for their gathering. This slogan can be found numerous times in the Big Book of AA and elsewhere in recovery literature. Its main thought is to help us slow down and relax and take a measured approach to recovery, to problem solving, or to whatever situation seems too large and complicated for us.

Jesus also taught that "easy does it" when he told us: ***Don't worry about tomorrow. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Tomorrow will have its own worries.*** (Matthew 6:34 ERV) Jesus used the example of a little child to remind us that we need to keep things simple and take it easy.

When we trust that God is good and that our will and our lives are safely settled in His care, we won't have to fix everybody and everything.

You must change your thinking and become like little children. If you don't do this, you will never enter God's kingdom. The greatest person in God's kingdom is the one who makes himself humble like this child. (Matthew 18:2-4 ERV)

Letting tension get the best of us and becoming stressed out never puts us in a good problem-solving frame of mind. When we trust that God is good and that our will and our lives are safely settled in His care, we won't have to fix everybody and everything.

When things are fearful for a little child, they simply run to their loving parent for protection and support. As their parent holds them close they quiet down because they know their parent will do what is necessary to sort out the situation that is a problem to them. When things

are difficult for us, we need to bring our problems to God and remember that "easy does it." As our hearts are quieted in His love, we will hear God's guidance and know the next step to take.

God says: ***Only in returning to me and resting in me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength.*** (Isaiah 30:15 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to slow down and remember that "easy does it." You are bigger than my biggest problem and You have good plans for my life. Help me to quiet my heart and trust You. 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, 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 around the room. When we invite God to come and live in us, He is the light in us that glows and reflects light to those around us. As others observe us live in the light of God's love they will be drawn to that light. Darkness in our hearts and in our circumstances will 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 life to the full by reading the Bible and learning how Jesus lived. We need to make a conscious choice to follow the principles we are learning. God's Holy Spirit will give us the power we need to live in the ways of God. 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 faithfully live in the light of Your presence. Amen

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

John 6:68 CEV

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 my life. Please help me! Amen

STOPPING GOSSIP IN ITS TRACKS

Almost everyone says they hate gossip and yet many of us are easily drawn into conversations about others that are unkind. 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 decide that we won't participate in a conversation about a 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 we are participating in moves towards gossip, we can change the subject and talk about something else – anything else that will not harm another. With the purpose of resolving whatever problem the gossip has, we can encourage them to speak with the person they are gossiping about. Sometimes if we simply suggest, "I don't feel comfortable talking about this person in this way" it may help the gossip to consider what they are saying. We may 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. (Proverbs 26:20 ERV)

If a person persists in gossiping, then we are commanded by God to step away from that person because it is not good for us to keep company with them.

Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended. (Proverbs 22:10 NIV)

It is helpful to remember that those who gossip with you will certainly gossip about you. Let's stop gossip 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, When I encounter gossip, I ask that You give me the courage to purposefully stop the cycle. Please help me to build positive practices into my life that will support others rather than tear them down. Amen

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

VALENTINES AND HEARTS

Will you be my Valentine? This day is meant to remind us of love and of hearts joined together in intimate friendship and commitment. Our life in recovery also has something to do with a new heart, union with another, and intimate friendship with commitment. God's desire for us is to have a deep and satisfying personal relationship with Him. God has shared His heart with us and invited us to share our hearts with Him. In the Scriptures we read that God generously expresses His tender love and kindness towards us. However, too often we have

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

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.

Cards and gifts with hearts on them are often exchanged with friends and loved ones on Valentine's Day. God is offering us a beautiful heart – a healed and forgiven heart – a heart we desperately need to replace our broken, wounded heart. Let's take the opportunity today to think about and respond to God's offer of love and friendship as we celebrate this Valentine's Day.

"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 in our lives, our heart truly is as hard as stone. It is filled with revenge, with hateful anger, with resentment, with bitterness, and with self-righteous judgment. It's been scarred by unforgiven records of hatred and judgment against those who have harmed us. There's no "fixing" that stuff. We need to hand over that dead and dried up old heart and receive a new one that is loving and soft and tender.

Prayer: Gracious Lord, Today I come to You and ask You to remove my stony heart which is filled with resentment and bitterness towards those who have harmed me. Create in me a clean heart that is gentle and forgiving and filled to overflowing with Your love. Help me to love others as You love me. Amen

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 empowered to live the life God has called us to.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for Your saving grace and for giving me a new life. I humbly ask You for the endurance and patience I need to live my life according to Your principles. Amen

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

DEVELOPING CHARACTER – BEING AGREEABLE

If asked, how many people we encounter daily 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 naturally agreeable 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 a challenging situation and determine how best to handle it. When we are disagreeable we usually don't want to bother about seeking 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 our addiction we didn't 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 find the topic at hand. We can be agreeable 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 with others is often challenging. We need to find out what the Bible says about how to treat one another and then put that into effect. Jesus suffered the indignity of dying on a cross for us so that we might be made right with God. Are we willing to adjust our ways so that we can make things right with one another? If we choose to be agreeable and do kind deeds maybe others will follow our example, and together we can bring about a more agreeable atmosphere for all.

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

A LOVE TO CELEBRATE

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 into 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.

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)

We can call out to God to supply whatever need we may have. We can speak to God as often as we choose. 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 and ensuring our safety. He rejoices with us in all the new things we learn. He does not frown at the silly mistakes we make. God celebrates our successes and when we fail, He will encourage us to try again. Every day God has a smile on His face and a welcome in His heart for each of His children.

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, Help me to recognize and respond to the many expressions of love and kindness You convey to me. I give thanks for Your faithfulness in keeping Your promises. You truly are an amazing God and the best friend and companion a person could ever have. Amen

***Every day
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children.***

NO REGRETS

The second promise found in the Big Book of AA tells us that if we continually 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 happened in the past 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 regret and any related 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 review what occurred in some troubling events and accept responsibility for any part we played, and then just let the rest go. We can work at becoming ready to make amends for the harm we have caused and also seek healing and forgiveness for all who were involved. We can keep our hearts and minds open to God's ongoing process of restoration 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 of hope to others who suffer.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for opening up my future and closing my past. Thank You for today. With Your help I will embrace whatever this day may bring, trusting that you will guide me along a good path and work all things, past, present, and future, together for my good and to glorify Your name. Help me to accept my past in the light of the future You have planned for me. Amen

LIVING WITH JOY TODAY

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

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 fail to recognize the goodness of God in our lives, especially His love for us that brought Jesus into the world to be our Saviour. We often blame God when things do not go right but fail to thank Him when good things happen. The joy in our lives will increase as we receive God's forgiveness for our sin. With great joy we will then choose to express our gratitude for God's help and protection in troubling times in this 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 has planned for us. Today may be the perfect 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)

At some point in our recovery, when some of the consequences of our unwise choices of the past are causing us and perhaps others concern, God wants to bless us with contentment. As we learn to obey God's principles and choose to follow His ways, we will experience joy and peace beyond all we could ask for or even 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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