

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



January 2017

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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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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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VOLUME 02, NUMBER 01

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 2017

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Happy New Year! This phrase will likely be heard many times throughout the day. For most of us it started at the first stroke of midnight when the old year was passing and the new year dawning. What an exciting time, when the old is gone and the new has come. God is offering us a new life in the dawning of this new year. If we choose to give our will and our life over to the care of God, He promises us life to the full and healing for our whole body, mind and soul. The following words from the Bible are good principles to follow if we are seeking a new way of life in this new year.

Don't do as the wicked do, and don't follow the path of evildoers. Don't even think about it; don't go that way. Turn away and keep moving. For evil people can't sleep until they've done their evil deed for the day. They can't rest until they've caused someone to stumble. They eat the food of wickedness and drink the wine of violence! The way of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, which shines ever brighter until the full light of day. But the way of the wicked is like total darkness. They have no idea what they are stumbling over. My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body.
(Proverbs 4:14-22 NLT)

Today, on the first day of this new year, God is pursuing each of us with His love. We have just celebrated Christmas which shows us how much God loves and cares for each of us. We don't know what the New Year will bring but God does. Each year is filled with both joys and sorrows. God knows the temptations we will face and the difficult moments that we will encounter. He will guide us safely forward. Our part? Pay attention to what God says and practice these principles in all our affairs.

Prayer - Heavenly Father, Thank you for this new year with its new opportunities for a life that is happy joyous and free. Help us to live well one day at a time in your love and care. AMEN

MONDAY, JANUARY 2, 2017

HAPPY NEW YEAR--REALLY???

Some of us may have awakened this morning to the fact that our lives are unmanageable and that we are powerless over our addictive behaviour. We may have been seeking happiness in a dysfunctional lifestyle and have caused ourselves and others a lot of pain by the way we have behaved. We could be facing the consequences of overspending, overeating, or unfortunate words or actions said and done at gatherings during the holiday season. As we begin this day and this new year it doesn't look all that happy and hopeful.

God, Give me strength and wisdom to leave destructive and addictive behaviour behind and learn a new way of walking with You in recovery.

From before we were born, the God who created us knew us and this moment in time. His desire is to remove the pain of sin from us so we may have new life with Him and peace with others. This condition of peaceful living is available to every person right here, right now, in the early days of this new year. What do we need to do to experience it? We need to believe that God loved us so much that He sent Jesus to earth to suffer death on a cross so that the price of sin, including the sin of our destructive and addictive behaviour, would be paid for in full and our relationship with Him would be restored.

For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:21 NLT)

Inviting Jesus into our hearts is the first step in making us right with God. Receiving the love, forgiveness, and acceptance of God, is the foundation we need to build on as we go forward into this new year and a new life.

The Lord says, "I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them. I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation." (Psalm 91:14-16 NLT)

Prayer - Dear God, I admit that without You my life is unmanageable. Please help me find the path of peace and new life that You are offering me. Come into my heart and forgive me. Give me strength and wisdom to leave destructive and addictive behaviour behind and learn a new way of walking with You in recovery. AMEN

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2017

NEW YEAR, NEW HOPE, NEW BEGINNING

We are just a few days into the new year. We look to this coming year with renewed hope. We long for something that is better than the year that has gone before. News reviews were filled with stories of disaster and suffering. We have our personal history of events from last year and for most of us it was a mixture of both success and struggle. What can we actually hope for as we advance into this new year?

God was in this New Year before we got to it. God has made Himself and His unfailing love available to us. Despite what has gone wrong in our past, God invites us today to prepare our hearts and lives to receive new life -- new life in Christ. We've just celebrated the birth of Jesus whose one purpose was to come to earth to save sinners like us and to heal broken hearts like ours.

He (Jesus) died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them. ... Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him.
(2 Corinthians 5:15, 17-18 NLT)

In the same way that we needed forgiveness from God and a new way of life in loving relationship with Him, so do others who are struggling today – some with obvious problems of addiction and others who simply try to hide their pain. God wants us to reach out to anyone who still suffers, particularly our fellow addicts, with the good news of Jesus' promise to save and heal everyone who asks Him. Others find hope as we share our story of the strength and healing we have found in surrendering our will and our lives over to the care of God.

This can truly be a year of hope and new beginnings for us and for others as we reach out to support one another in our new life with God in recovery.

Prayer – Dear Lord Jesus, help us to share the “Good News” of Your unfailing love with others. In this year, our desire is to see many lives transformed by Your powerful saving grace.
AMEN

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2017

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

We want to behave better this year than in previous years. We want to live healthier, exercise more. We want to clean up and de-clutter. We want to budget and save money for our future. Some of us want to read more and learn new things. We want a better life and so we make New Year resolutions – promises to ourselves about how we will change. Unfortunately for many of us, although it is only a few days into the new year, many of our resolutions have already been broken. We may have had good intentions, but we did not have the power to carry them through.

*It is only the
life of God in us
that gives us
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In many churches on a Sunday in early January people are baptized. They are prayed over and then have water poured on them or have their bodies immersed in water. Jesus said this washing with water was a sign of new life. Is this just like a new year's resolution or is there something more to it?

Have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. (Romans 6:3, 5-8 NLT)

Jesus' message was that He came to earth to die for the sins of broken people who could not fix themselves. He was brought to life from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. Baptism represents our desire to have God cleanse us from sin and raise us to new life. The power to help us live this life comes from the Holy Spirit who lives with us, and is in us. It is only the life of God in us that gives us hope to live better and keep the promises we make to ourselves and others.

Prayer – Heavenly Father, I acknowledge that it is pointless to try to change my life situations by making New Year Resolutions. I am grateful that I can fully rely on the provision You have made to help me live life to the full. AMEN

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 2017

THE BEST CHOICE OF THE YEAR

The season of Christmas celebrations and New Year holidays has gone for another year. The time has come to move into the responsibilities and adventure of this new year. God's invitation to us is to turn away from harmful and destructive thoughts and behaviour and turn to Him and His unfailing love. He wants us to come to believe that He is a power greater than ourselves who can restore us as we put our will and our life into His care.

"The time has come," Jesus said. "The kingdom of God is near. Turn away from your sins and believe the good news!" One day Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee. There he saw Simon and his brother Andrew. They were throwing a net into the lake. They were fishermen. "Come. Follow me," Jesus said. "I will make you fishers of people." At once they left their nets and followed him. (Mark 1:15-17 NIRV)

Jesus saw men who were busy doing their jobs. They were ordinary men working hard and living everyday lives. They had fish to catch and clean and get to market so they could provide for the needs of their family. Into this ordinary pattern of their life steps Jesus with a startling command, *"Follow me and I will make you fishers of people."* Although they were responsible men, they immediately left their nets and their boats and followed Jesus.

Jesus sees us in our everyday lives. He has good plans for us. He wants us to experience the deep and meaningful life He has prepared for us. This requires some interruption to our everyday activities. For all of us, it's taking time daily to read God's word and pray. For some of us it's also taking a season of weeks or months in a treatment or recovery setting where we daily hear, reflect on, and begin to practice healthy life principles. Only by listening for God's direction, and following what He tells us to do, will we ever experience the richness and satisfaction of living God's good, pleasing and perfect plan for our lives.

Prayer – Lord Jesus, As I make the choice to turn my will and my life over to Your care, help me to take time to listen closely to You and do what You say. AMEN

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FRIDAY, JANUARY 6, 2017

A VOICE TO FOLLOW

Political leaders have come and gone. Sometimes we like those who have been elected to power and other times we wonder what happened on the campaign trail. Many political leaders who started out being "for the people" are exposed in later years as having abused the power and privilege of their office. We see and hear news of scandal on the television and in the newspapers almost daily. Whose voice are we to follow? How can we find a leader who can take us forward as individuals and as a society?

For us, once we've admitted that our lives are unmanageable and that we are powerless, the next step is to embark on the journey of "coming to believe that a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity." In a world of many religions and spiritualities where can we reliably turn?

***Jesus Christ is a
dependable
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and life. This is a
great time to
get to know His
teachings and
follow His ways.***

When the Sabbath day came, Jesus went into the synagogue. There he began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching. He taught them like one who had authority. He did not talk like the teachers of the law. Just then a man in their synagogue cried out. He was controlled by an evil spirit. He said, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are. You are the Holy One of God!" "Be quiet!" said Jesus firmly. "Come out of him!" The evil spirit shook the man wildly. Then it came out of him with a scream. All the people were amazed. So they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching! And with so much authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits, and they obey him." News about Jesus spread quickly all over Galilee. (Mark 1:21-28 NIRV)

The authority, power and wisdom of Jesus' teachings were unique for His time. Throughout history Jesus has remained the most influential person who ever lived. For centuries, great leaders, teachers, and theologians have talked about and analyzed Jesus' teachings. His words have impacted history. Values and moral structures in societies were founded on His teachings.

Do we want a dependable voice directing us on a safe path in recovery and life? The Bible tells us clearly that Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. This is a great time to get to know His teachings and follow His ways.

Prayer – Lord Jesus, I am forever grateful for Your meaningful words of truth. Help me to follow You in all my ways for You are truly a dependable leader. AMEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7, 2017

SPIRIT SATURDAY – JOY

Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NLT)

Always be joyful. Is that possible? Can anyone be genuine and be joyful all the time? Many of us have faked a smile on our face at various times to appear happy when our insides were reflecting something quite different. It seems that to appear joyful all the time requires a great cover-up and a real lack of integrity. Why then would God instruct us to always be joyful? How can we hope to achieve this? The following words of Jesus may help us understand.

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. ... apart from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! Remain in my love. When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! (John 15:4-7, 9-11 NLT)

We were not created to manage life on our own. We were created to live daily embraced by God's love and filled with His life. A branch cannot produce grapes unless it remains in the vine. The vine gives the branch everything it needs to produce fruit. We cannot stay strong and joyful unless we know and consistently practice the things Jesus tells us to do. When we are hurt, we are to come to Him for healing and love rather than remaining in hurt and bitterness. When we fail, we are to be filled with His forgiveness rather than separating ourselves in the isolation of guilt and shame. As we live in this new way, remaining in God, following His Word, and relying on His unconditional love, we will be filled with overflowing joy.

Prayer – Lord, I never want to be separated from You. Help me to obey Your commandments and remain in Your unconditional love today so I can be filled with great joy. AMEN

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM - REPENTANCE

Some of us, when we get over the celebration of Christmas and New Year, may start to wonder what it was all about. Here we are back in our daily routine with all the glitter of the holidays gone and nothing much happening in our ordinary life. Regrets about our dysfunctional lifestyle may start to surface. During the holiday season, we may have added more pain to what we already have buried in the deepest recesses of our being. As we reflect on our addictive lifestyle and our rebellious ways, we may begin to wonder if the life we are currently living is what we want for our future. Like the person who wrote the following Psalm we may be crying out to God for His help.

O Lord, God of my salvation, I cry out to you by day. I come to you at night. Now hear my prayer; listen to my cry. For my life is full of troubles, and death draws near. I am as good as dead, like a strong man with no strength left. They have left me among the dead, and I lie like a corpse in a grave. I am forgotten, cut off from your care. (Psalm 88:1-5 NLT)

It's never too late to start over with God.

We may be like the person who wrote these words, believing that we are cut off from God's care. We may feel powerless to change and have no strength to carry on. However, in His love and compassion, God is calling out to us and inviting us to turn to Him. It's never too late to start over with God. As long as we live and breathe we have the opportunity to respond to His unconditional love, turn away from our destructive behaviour, receive forgiveness, and invite Him to rebuild our lives. When we choose to do so, God has promised to help us.

That is why the Lord says, "Turn to me now, while there is time. Give me your hearts. Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning. Don't tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead." Return to the Lord your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. (Joel 2:12-13 NLT)

Prayer – Heavenly Father, Thank you for Your unfailing love for me. I choose to turn my will and my life over to Your care and ask You to be my strength to carry on. AMEN

MONDAY, JANUARY 9, 2017

LIVING IN A WAY THAT PLEASES GOD

God invites us to live each day consciously obeying His spiritual principles as recorded in the Bible. When we become complacent, and forget about God and His ways, we are setting ourselves up for a fall. Is it a challenge to live a quiet and responsible life after years of chaos and blaming others? Of course it is! Will we need to reign in our default thoughts and feelings and choose to surrender to what is good and right and new? Yes! Yes! Yes! Over and over and over again!

Jesus was once asked by a teacher of the law which of the commandments was the most important, He replied, "***The most important commandment is this: you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.*** The second is equally important: *'Love your neighbor as yourself.'* No other commandment is greater than these." (Mark 12:29-31 NLT)

When looking at our daily habits and practices, are we reflecting these most important commandments? Do we talk with our loving God about what is going on in our lives today or do we still let the chaos of resentment and bitterness keep us on the edge of our relationship with Him and with others? Are we truly looking after our own well-being and guarding our hearts, or are we looking around and being irritated by the actions and words of others? Who are we allowing to influence our circumstances and the way we live right now? Are we loving God and our neighbour as ourselves?

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8 NIV)

When we faithfully live in a way that pleases God, He blesses us with favour and honour.

Prayer – Loving God, Thank You for guiding me in the path of peace and blessing. Help me always to do those things that please you. AMEN

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2017

HALF MEASURES AVOIDED US NOTHING

There is no such thing as satisfaction in a self-directed life. Life does not always allow us to pick and choose what we will have, and what we will not have. Satisfaction comes from a God-directed life where His will is faithfully obeyed. The consequences of disobedience to God's commands are clearly outlined in the Bible. We are instructed to stay away from all types of behaviour that are harmful because disobedience weakens us spiritually and makes us vulnerable to attacks that put us in bondage to Satan.

Life with God in recovery requires an individual to be thorough in both their willingness to change and the action they take.

The founders of AA who wrote "The Big Book" understood this when they wrote: "*Half measures avoided us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His (God's) protection and care with complete abandon We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.*" (Big Book p.58)

The Bible describes this same principle this way: ***You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet. These—and other such commandments—are summed up in this one commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law. The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living. Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see.*** (Romans 13:9-10, 12 NLT)

Life with God in recovery requires an individual to be thorough in both their willingness to change and the action they take. At all times, with all our family and friends, in all our affairs we must strive to obey God and consistently practice recovery principles. This includes dealing with the issues of the heart as well as visible behaviour. Half measures lead to relapse and more suffering. Let us be fearless and thorough today.

Prayer – Heavenly Father, My desire is to make healthy choices that will result in a satisfying life. Help me to live wholeheartedly in a way that pleases you. AMEN

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2017

MAKING A FRESH START

This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24 NKJV)

How many times in the dysfunctional dark days of our addiction and life-without-God did we wake up and wish that we had not? Life without God was tiresome. Problems loomed large in front of us. Circumstances were out of control. We felt abandoned and unable to cope with another day of the same old stuff. We wondered what it would take to stop the cycle. At that time, God in His grace was drawing near to us and somehow, in the midst of our insanity, we decided to turn our will and our lives over to God as we understood Him. As we make this fresh start we soon become aware that we can find joy in each new day God gives us.

I remember my affliction and my, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:19-23 NIV)

We are still in the early days of this New Year and not one of us know how the year will end. We are treading an unknown path as we go forward. In a wartime speech, King George VI included the following encouraging words in his Christmas broadcast: *"I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown", and he replied, "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God, that shall be to you better than a light and safer than a known way."*

In these early weeks of the new year, with many unknown days before us, let's determine to put our hand into the hand of God and wholeheartedly follow Him in all our ways.

Prayer – Heavenly Father, You have given me this new day, help me to rejoice and walk hand in hand with You until its close. I am forever grateful that You will never leave me nor forsake me. AMEN

THURSDAY, JANUARY 12, 2017

NEW LIFE EACH DAY

How different each day in recovery becomes when we walk and talk with God. It's wonderful to start the day with the promise of God's unfailing love and goodness. We can be strengthened and encouraged as we remember that this day is a precious gift with fresh opportunities generously given to us by God. We can be ourselves without the mask of addiction and explore our loving relationship with God. We learn healthy ways of living by reading God's word and talking with Him in prayer. As we experience peace and security in our relationship with God, we can then share love and goodness with others. In some recovery meetings, members join together to make the following statement referred to as the 'Life Affirmations':

***God, who knows
the beginning
from the end,
will help us face
whatever
presents itself in
this new day.***

My life is of great beauty and infinite value. God has a plan for my life that is meaningful, purposeful, and joyful. There is a work for me to do today that will bless others and give me deep satisfaction. God is always with me I need never face my problems alone. Together with God any difficulty can be worked out and overcome.

This new life we've been given through the grace of God, this new season that is before us, begins with this new day. Yesterday's mistakes, blunders, worries and pain are behind us. We cannot change what has been done. Worries about potential problems which may or may not happen tomorrow are not within our grasp. God, who knows the beginning from the end, will help us face whatever presents itself in this new day. Together with God any difficulty can be worked out and overcome.

Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Jesus said: I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (Matthew 6:33-34, John 16:33 NIV)

Prayer – Lord, You have given me this day in which to live and honour You. Help me to be aware of my words and actions throughout the day and to seek guidance from You in all I do and say. AMEN

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 2017

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

The heart is hopelessly dark and deceitful, a puzzle that no one can figure out. But I, God, search the heart and examine the mind. I get to the heart of the human. I get to the root of things. I treat them as they really are, not as they pretend to be. (Jeremiah 17:9-10 MSG)

When reading the Bible, we become aware that the actions of self-willed, rebellious people is the history of humankind. What is the root cause of people making a mess of things? Our hearts are full of pride and self-will. We choose to do things that are right in our own eyes and live as though God did not exist. God's solution for our rebellious ways is forgiveness and restoration through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. (Romans 3:23-25a NLT)

Treatment programs, sponsors, counselors, and other activities can help us identify harmful thoughts and behaviour. However, the problem, the underlying source of all our problems, is our rebellious self-will. This is the root issue that needs to be recognized and brought before our Heavenly Father for forgiveness and healing.

A new beginning takes place when we humbly admit that on our own we are powerless, that our lives are unmanageable, and that we need a life-giving relationship with the God who loves and cares for us. Any other solution will lead us back into the insanity from which we are seeking release.

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. (Galatians 5:1 NKJV)

Prayer – Heavenly Father, forgive me for living life in the past as if you did not exist. I ask You today to come close and guide me in all my affairs. My desire is to be ever conscious of Your eternal presence.
AMEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14, 2017

SPIRIT SATURDAY – JOY – MY HAPPY PLACE

Where's your "happy place"? When one types "happy place" into an image search on Google the pictures that come up are, young hands holding older wrinkled hands; a wedding celebration; friends jumping for joy in the outdoors; a young child looking peacefully on a baby; someone resting in a hammock; a rainbow in the sky; a beautiful beach with waves of blue sea; a lovely cup of coffee.

What if we didn't have to "go to a place" or "experience a happening" to find joy but could live in and be in a place of joy wherever we go? Today's good news is that God tells us how.

It is God's desire that we live joyfully today. Let's follow His instructions and be filled with joy.

The following are some of the ways the Bible says we have joy wherever we are.

Psalm 32:1 Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight!

Psalm 32:2 Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty!

Psalm 34:5 Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces.

Psalm 34:8 Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!

Psalm 41:1 Oh, the joys of those who are kind to the poor! The Lord rescues them when they are in trouble.

Psalm 63:7 Because you are my helper, I sing for joy in the shadow of your wings.

Psalm 70:4 But may all who search for you be filled with joy and gladness in you. May those who love your salvation repeatedly shout, "God is great!"

It is God's desire that we live joyfully today. Let's follow His instructions and be filled with joy.

Prayer – Heavenly Father, Please help me to ever live in Joy for You have made known to me the path that leads to life, and in Your very presence is fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore. AMEN

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – NO WAY OF ESCAPE

There are times in life when “nothing goes right from morning to night” as Elvis Presley used to sing. All of us have days like that, and sometimes the days turn into months, and in some cases into years. What are we to do when we think God is punishing us or has forgotten us? We are not the only ones to think that way.

You have thrown me into the lowest pit, into the darkest depths. Your anger weighs me down; with wave after wave you have engulfed me. You have driven my friends away by making me repulsive to them. I am in a trap with no way of escape. My eyes are blinded by my tears. Each day I beg for your help, O Lord; I lift my hands to you for mercy. Can the darkness speak of your wonderful deeds? Can anyone in the land of forgetfulness talk about your righteousness? O Lord, I cry out to you. I will keep on pleading day by day. (Psalm 88:6-9;12-13 NLT)

In our life with God in recovery we go through trials and difficulty. We want explanations and to understand why things are happening to us. Like the person who wrote the words above in the Bible we blame God because life is not how we expected it to be.

In the book of Genesis in the Bible we read the story of Joseph. Joseph seemed to do all the right things but ended up in jail. God had a plan for Joseph’s life and eventually, Joseph got to recognize the plan. However, Joseph suffered much before he was in the right place, at the right time, to do those things God had planned in advance for him to do.

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)

Life isn’t perfect but God has a good plan to work with us and support us in every circumstance so all things can work out for good in the long term.

Prayer – Lord, forgive me when I complain about the things You allow to happen in my life. Help me to recognize that You have a plan and are working all things together for my good and Your glory.
AMEN

MONDAY, JANUARY 16, 2017

WHAT DETERMINES MY VALUE

Low self-esteem. No self-worth. This is the experience of many who suffer in addictive lifestyles. We obsess on negative thoughts about ourselves and our ability to do well in life. We make a simple mistake and we feel like we are a complete failure. When others disagree with what we are saying, we are unable to cope. We feel like no matter how hard we try we can’t measure up. What are we left with? A general feeling of hopelessness that God never intended us to have.

***Our self-worth
should be
based on
what God
says and not
on what we
have
determined,
or on what
others say.***

So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.” Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! (Genesis 1:27-28, 31 NLT)

Whenever we question our worth we need to challenge our thinking with what God says in the Bible. Where we have received negative messages which caused us to feel worthless, we need to tell ourselves the truth that God does not make junk. When God looked at the humans He created, including us, He said they were very good. Our self-worth should be based on what God says and not on what we have determined, or on what others say.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. (Psalm 139:13-14 NIV)

God’s knowledge of us is evident in the things He has prepared in advance for us to do. God’s promise to bring that purpose to fulfillment is assured when we turn our will and our lives over to His care and live one day at a time in recovery.

For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11 NLT)

Prayer – Heavenly Father, I am awed by Your knowledge of me, and the purpose You have for my life. May I ever be reminded that I am a child of God. AMEN

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2017

WHO SAYS I'M DEFECTIVE?

God knows each one of us. We are the masterpiece of His creative hands. This knowledge should fill us with great joy and a real sense of personal worth. Why then do we struggle so often with fear, self-rejection, and shame? When we try to live as someone other than who we were created to be we experience separation from God. From the first human beings who chose to believe Satan and disobey God by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil we have experienced the negative consequences of trying to be someone we are not.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." (Genesis 3:8-10 NIV)

God, our Creator, wants us to experience the loving relationship with Him that we were intended to have. Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for our sin and rebellion. He then overcame death and made a way for us to be reconciled to God and have eternal life. When we accept the provision Jesus made for us, we become cherished children of a loving God. Our restored self-worth is not based on what we may feel, or what others say about us, but rather on what God says.

To all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (John 1:12-13, 10:10 NIV)

We need to listen to God rather than pay attention to the deceiver who is purposefully trying to steal, kill and destroy the new life we have been given.

Prayer – Lord Jesus, Thank You for paying the price to restore me to new life with You. Remind me often of who You say I am. Help me to recognize and receive the grace that is abundantly poured out on me because I am Your child. AMEN

Our restored self-worth is not based on what we may feel, or what others say about us, but rather on what God says.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2017

REBUILDING SELF-ESTEEM

Many events in life seem to destroy our value and puncture holes in our self-esteem. A significant part of living with God in recovery is restoring our understanding of our true value, established by God who created us.

No matter what we've done in our past or for how long we did it, when we accept the finished work of Jesus and become new creations, God says, "You are forgiven. I, the Creator of the universe pay attention to you when you pray. Nothing can separate you from My love. You are created to do good work. My plan and purpose for your life is to give you a future with hope."

A significant part of living with God in recovery is restoring our understanding of our true value, established by God who created us.

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. (Romans 8:1-2, 38 NLT)

We need to tell our hearts and minds the truth until incorrect thought patterns are transformed and we are resting secure in God's unfailing love and care.

See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows. (1 John 3:1a, Luke 12:7 NLT)

As beloved children of God we need to exchange our self-will for God's will. When we focus on what God says works and put those things into practice, we will begin to experience a life that is satisfying and meaningful.

Don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up, and be alert to what is going on around Christ—that's where the action is. See things from his perspective. Your old life is dead. Your new life, which is your real life—even though invisible to spectators—is with Christ in God. He is your life. When Christ (your real life, remember) shows up again on this earth, you'll show up, too—the real you, the glorious you. (Colossians 3:2-4a MSG)

Prayer – Heavenly Father, Help me to daily focus on Your word and put it into practice. AMEN

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19, 2017

ADDED VALUE FROM GOD

God's attention and artistic skill in our lives did not end the day we were born. In the same way a weaver takes many threads and weaves them into intricate patterns for a wall hanging or a rug, so God continues to work the details of each day of our lives together for our good.

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. (Romans 8:28 NLT)

Which details of our life are left to chance and error? None. God is making something beautiful of our life.

God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end. (Ecclesiastes 3:11 NLT)

God's plan for us is suited to our unique personality, talents and abilities. Our part is to believe what God says and turn our will and our lives over to His care. When we do, He will use us for His planned purpose.

In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. (2 Timothy 2:20-21 NIV)

We often long for complete fulfillment and deep satisfaction. We can experience those feelings with great joy only when we live wholeheartedly surrendered to God's will. When our purpose each day is to know and do whatever God says, then life becomes more meaningful. Obeying God's word as recorded in the Bible, is the first step towards fullness of life. Satisfying joy and a sense of well-being come as we put into practice those things we have learned.

Prayer – Heavenly Father, My desire is to wholeheartedly follow You in all my ways. I am grateful that You add value to my life as You continue to work all things together for my good. May You be glorified in all that I do and say. AMEN

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20, 2017

DEMONSTRATION OF OUR WORTH

A one-hundred-dollar bill, whether it is in prime condition or is crumpled and dirty, is still worth what the creator of the bill has determined. God has clearly demonstrated the worth of each person through the death of His beloved son Jesus. He is our loving Heavenly Father and we are His precious beloved children. Do we see ourselves and others in this light? When we question our own worth or that of another person, we need to remember who God our Creator says we are.

See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! (1 John 3:1 NLT)

When we experience God's love, acceptance, strength and peace, we can begin to see ourselves and others differently. God gives us gifts and talents so we can be a blessing to those who live in community with us. We no longer need to be driven by a selfish agenda but instead can focus on loving and caring for others. Our actions will give witness to how God's love made a difference in our lives and that, in turn, will encourage others to come to know Him.

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. (Philippians 2:1-4 NLT)

Prayer – Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your unfailing love for me. Help me to be a blessing in my community and to demonstrate the lavish love You have poured out on me in my service to others. AMEN

In the same way a weaver takes many threads and weaves them into intricate patterns for a wall hanging or a rug, so God continues to work the details of each day of our lives together for our good.

When we experience God's love, acceptance, strength, and peace, we can begin to see ourselves and others differently.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21, 2017

SERENITY SATURDAY - GOD'S GUIDANCE BRINGS JOY

When we let confusion reign in our minds we live as though in turbulent waters, allowing ourselves to be tossed about like the waves of the sea. Letting God steer our course brings us to calm waters, fills our hearts with joy, and delights those who live around us. Thinking and acting on our own self-centered thoughts often results in confusion and grief. Too often when we choose to follow our familiar selfish ways and ignore the guidance of the Holy Spirit we end up in despair. On the other hand, when we walk surrendered to, and empowered by, the Holy Spirit we experience more and more confidence and hope.

Our hope comes from God. May He fill you with joy and peace because of your trust in Him. May your hope grow stronger by the power of the Holy Spirit.
(Romans 15:13 NLV)

What steals our joy in recovery and causes us to stumble? The main root cause is PRIDE. We begin to think of ourselves more highly than we ought. We start to find fault in our recovery program, the people around us, and our leaders and mentors. We blame our environment and others for our discontent. We start to feel confident in our own ability to manage our own recovery. We begin to believe that we could return to our old lifestyle and handle it more successfully than we did in the past. Our prideful thinking makes us feel we can succeed on our own without the help and guidance of our awesome God and that, sadly, is a deadly error in judgment.

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)

God is a God of order; He is not a God of confusion. Surrendering our minds to Him brings peace to our whole being.

Prayer – Dear Lord, Forgive me when I think I can take care of myself. Help me to surrender to my helplessness without You. Today, I again turn my will and my life over to your care. AMEN

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – HELPLESSNESS

Some of us find it hard to accept the fact that without God in our lives we are powerless and our lives are unmanageable. We struggle with who we are. We struggle with others. Anyone who tries to help us is suspect of wanting something from us. We see God as a tyrant who wants to take away our freedom to do as we want. Yet all the while we are unhappy with our life and know that we are helpless to do anything about it.

O Lord, why do you reject me? Why do you turn your face from me? I have been sick and close to death since my youth. I stand helpless and desperate before your terrors. Your fierce anger has overwhelmed me. Your terrors have paralyzed me. They swirl around me like floodwaters all day long. They have engulfed me completely. You have taken away my companions and loved ones. Darkness is my closest friend. (Psalm 88:14-18 NLT)

***God is only
a prayer
away.
Whatever
our troubles
may be, His
word says if
we seek
Him, we will
find Him.***

The writer of these words appears to be blaming God for all his troubles and his helplessness. Have we been in that place? Are we still there? When we hit bottom in our addictive lifestyle our friends and loved ones are often no longer part of our lives. We are alone and terrified of what the future may hold, even paralyzed and unable to move forward. In that dark place, if we will look to God to help us, He has given us His word that He will. He will bring us out of our despair and will be our strength to start our journey forward into new life.

"Lord, help!" they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He led them from the darkness and deepest gloom; he snapped their chains. Let them praise the Lord for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them. (Psalm 107:13-15 NLT)

God is only a prayer away. Whatever our troubles may be, His word says if we seek Him, we will find Him.

Prayer – Heavenly Father, I admit that my troubles are overwhelming and I am helpless to do anything about them. I acknowledge that You can make a way where there seems to be no way. Please help me! AMEN

MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 2017

ADDICTION OR GRACE (1)

God created the heavens and the earth and set them to run on His established laws. Gravity is one of those laws. When someone pushes a bag of trash into the garbage chute they can't see the law of gravity but they can hear the bag hit the bottom so they know that it is operating. In the same way, the existence of love and grace become evident in us when we turn our will and our lives over to God's care.

May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. (2 Peter 1:2-3 NLT)

God created humans in His own image. God's plan for each person is to know Him and to have a fulfilling relationship with Him. We were also created to love and honour one another and to be at peace with the world around us. If we live with inner chaos and act out of our character defects, it is the outcome of our failure to know and respond to God's unconditional love for us. In our society, people try to educate and fix humans so they will respect one another and the environment, without any input from the God who created both. It just doesn't work.

For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross. This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. (Colossians 1:19-21 NLT)

We can choose today for life with God in recovery and experience the satisfying grace of God who loves and cares for us, or we can choose to continue to live self-destructively in our addictive lifestyle as if He did not exist. It's a no-brainer, don't you think?

Prayer – Heavenly Father, Thank you for Jesus, whose death on the cross brought peace to everything in heaven and on earth. I receive His life and love so I can begin to love and respect others and the environment in which I live. AMEN

***The existence
of love and
grace
become
evident in us
when we
turn our will
and our lives
over to God's
care.***

TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2017

ADDICTION OR GRACE (2)

The principle is simple: If we desire to live in a more loving way towards others we need to know that we ourselves are loved. Love is the very essence of God. Living in a loving, caring relationship with God and others is God's plan for everyone.

Dear friends, we should love each other, because love comes from God. Everyone who loves has become God's child. And so everyone who loves knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love to us: He sent his only Son into the world to give us life through him. (1 John 4:7-9 ERV)

***If we desire to
live in a more
loving way
towards others
we need to
know that we
ourselves are
loved.***

Our behaviour often reflects what we believe about God. When we don't get what we want, we believe God doesn't care for us. When we don't feel loved, we believe we're just not good enough to be loved by God or anyone else. Operating on beliefs like these drives us to seek love in harmful relationships, practices and ultimately substances. Whatever we substitute for God's best is a counterfeit and sooner or later we will come to know it doesn't satisfy.

Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. (Isaiah 55:2 NLT)

How do we prevent relapse into addictive behaviour and destructive lifestyles and finally live in love and grace? We choose to believe God has given us unique gifts and talents to serve Him and others well. We reject negative thoughts and focus instead on finding ways to recognize the gifts God is generously giving us each day and then share them with others. In this way we grow strong in God's unending love for us.

Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22 NIV)

Prayer – Heavenly Father, I confess my weakness in keeping my eyes fixed on You. I ask You to work in me, giving me the desire and the power to do what pleases You. AMEN

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2017

ADDICTION OR GRACE (3)

God desires to honour us and fill us with His Spirit. He offers us a relationship of love that is deeply satisfying and will bring joy and peace into our lives. However, through our own self-will, we may choose different influences which will sooner or later lead us down the path to relapse. As far down as we may fall into our self-directed abyss, God, in His grace and love will continue to pursue us. God invites us to come close to Him and promises that when we do, He will come close to us.

Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? ... But he gives us even more grace to stand against such evil desires ... So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. ... Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor. (James 4:4-11 NLT)

A life focused on simply getting what we think we need will result in a lonely, destructive, chaotic lifestyle. Drawing close to God is the first step on the road to recovery. Will we allow ourselves to be loved by God, forgiven and washed clean from our sins, lifted out of the pit of a destructive lifestyle, and honoured by the living God? Instead of engaging in harmful addictive behaviour, will we turn to God and let Him help us stand firm in our resolve to follow Him?

Some sat in darkness, in utter darkness, prisoners suffering in iron chains, because they rebelled against God's commands and despised the plans of the Most High....Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He brought them out of darkness, the utter darkness, and broke away their chains. (Psalm 107:10-11, 13-14 NIV)

Why do we deliberately put ourselves through unnecessary suffering? God is inviting us to a meaningful, joyful, and purposeful life. Are we willing to accept the invitation?

Prayer – Lord, I acknowledge that my spirit is willing but my flesh is weak, please empower me to make healthy choices. Come into my life, Lord Jesus, wash me clean from my sin and fill me with new life. AMEN

God is inviting us to a meaningful, joyful, and purposeful life. Are we willing to accept the invitation?

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 2017

ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER

A recent search for the word "encourage" in the Bible brought 92 direct references. This is obviously a quality of character that matters to God.

Those of us who are strong and able in the faith need to step in and lend a hand to those who falter, and not just do what is most convenient for us. Strength is for service, not status. Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, "How can I help?" (Romans 15:1-2 MSG)

So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.
(1 Thess. 5:11 NLT)

The dictionary definition of "encourage" includes these ideas: to give support, confidence or hope; help or stimulate to develop. SYNONYMS: hearten, buoy up, inspire, motivate, spur on, fire up, revitalize, urge, promote. Nurture, champion, cultivate, strengthen.

When we love and care for a person our desire is for life at its best for them. We need to take time to talk with our loved ones or friends who are struggling and try to understand what is going on in their lives. Sometimes just discussing a problem may help the person find a solution and possibly resolve the issue. However, not every problem can be resolved that easily. By following up with a phone call, a note, another meeting or whatever it takes to help the person get through the troublesome time, we can show we care.

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had. (Romans 15:5 NIV)

Demonstrating to others that we care about them is encouragement to them whether the problem is resolved or not. If God had not come alongside us when we were struggling and encouraged us to try again, where would we be today?

Let's look around us today and see the opportunities that God is giving us to encourage others with the same comfort and encouragement we ourselves have received.

Prayer – Heavenly Father, help me to take my eyes off myself and focus on the divine encounters You are giving me to encourage others. AMEN

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2017

RANDOM ACTS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Recently on the news the story was told of two women who went into a Tim Horton's coffee shop, bought many doughnuts and cups of coffee and began to give them out to the next people who came in as a "random act of kindness." Other stories are told of people who pay for the next person's gas at the gas pump or pick up the dinner tab for another table at a restaurant. These are persons who are giving just to be generous. In some instances, it is in response to something lovely that has been done for them.

In the same newscast, we hear stories of people who are complaining and condemning others for what they did or didn't do. Sometimes it seems that no one can get it right. What would happen if each of us were to change our perspective, seek out the good, encourage others and start a cycle of "random acts of encouragement?" What if we were to take the ordinary circumstances of our day and let them be opportunities to encourage others with our words of appreciation?

Jesus said: ***"So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important. Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.*** (John 13:34-35, Galatians 6:3, 10 NLT)

Encouragement can be offered in a variety of ways: a word, a note, a prayer, a phone call, a visit, providing meeting information, or even accompanying the person to a meeting or appointment they may have. We can be a part of a support network for others in the same way that we have been supported in our recovery. We will experience encouragement ourselves as we offer it to others.

Prayer – Dear God, thank you for loving and encouraging me. Help me to appreciate others and to look around for the helpless and the lonely and encourage them to find new life in You. AMEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, 2017

FINDING JOY IN OUR NEW LIFE -

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (James 1:2-4 NKJV)

Life in recovery can be challenging at times. We have joy in the fact that we are no longer in the pit of our addiction but, we are now treading waters that are unfamiliar to us. People around us are encouraging us to stay the course but we are unsure, and even fearful, of our new environment. We may have been "experts" in coping with our dysfunctional lifestyle but are now "newbies" in coping with life in recovery. Thankfully, God has promised to be with us in our transition process.

God rejoices with us when we walk steadily forward and is willing to support us when we stumble and fall.

Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust. You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:1; 11 NKJV)

The transition from living for self-fulfillment to living life for the glory of God is a testing of our will. Is there truly joy in walking in the ways of God? Sometimes we can say a definite "yes" as we experience joy in having made good decisions. Other times we find ourselves in a battle with our own will. God called us out of darkness and invited us to walk in the light of His presence. Like any child learning to walk we may stumble as we move forward but, like any good Father, God will hold on to our hand. God rejoices with us when we walk steadily forward and is willing to support us when we stumble and fall. God is always calling us to fullness of joy in Him.

How happy are the people who know the sound of joy! They walk in the light of Your face, O Lord. They are full of joy in Your name all day long. And by being right with You, they are honored. (Psalm 89:15-16 NLT)

Prayer – Heavenly Father, thank you for bringing joy into my life. Help me to resist the evil one who wants to steal, kill, and destroy the life you have given me. Help me to recognize joy even during challenging times and hold tightly to your hand through it all. AMEN

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – SECURITY

As humans, we tend to base our security on the depth of our personal relationships with those around us. If we grew up with attentive loving parents, we learn to trust others and have a good sense of healthy boundaries. If we grew up in dysfunctional families, we tend to be wary of others because we experienced or witnessed violation of personal boundaries in our homes. Some of us as children also had to deal with unmet needs. Now, as responsible adults, we need to assess and recognize whom we can trust.

Keep me safe, O God, I've run for dear life to you. I say to God, "Be my Lord!" Without you, nothing makes sense. And these God-chosen lives all around—what splendid friends they make! Don't just go shopping for a god. Gods are not for sale. I swear I'll never treat god-names like brand-names. My choice is you, God, first and only. And now I find I'm your choice! You set me up with a house and yard. And then you made me your heir! (Psalm 16:1-6 MSG)

When we come from the pit of our addiction and admit we are powerless over our lifestyle, we look for a secure place where we can be restored to sanity. Some of us choose for a place where there are God inspired people all around. These people become our friends. Their desire is for us to turn our will and our lives over to the God they know can be trusted. To his delight, the person writing today's Psalm found out that when he chose God, he was actually God's choice. Now in relationship with God, he is amazed that he is a child of God and an heir of all His promises.

Today, let's consider if we have found our security in the God who loves and cares for us, or are still shopping for an alternate god. Without the living God, nothing really makes sense.

Prayer – Lord, I confess that at times I still seek my security in people and things. Help me to choose you alone, first and only. AMEN

Keep me safe, O God, I've run for dear life to you. I say to God, "Be my Lord!" Without you, nothing makes sense.

(Psalm 16:1 MSG)

MONDAY, JANUARY 30, 2017

THE JOY OF BEING HONOURED

It is nice to be appreciated for something that we have done or achieved. Our desire as children, was that our parents, or others charged with our care, would value and honour us for who we are.

Both riches and honor come from You, and You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. (1 Chronicles 29:12 NKJV)

Just as a skilled artist can restore a valuable old painting to its original luster, so God can restore our true beauty and worth.

When our care givers neglected our basic needs, or caused harm to us in some way, we lost respect for them. As the years passed, we withdrew emotionally or physically from them and started to seek our worth in someone or something else. We got lost in a desperate search for affirmation and approval. When we ended up in bondage to our addiction, we seldom did anything that others would consider as honourable.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6 NIV)

We may find it difficult to see value in ourselves because we know we are flawed persons. However, our flaws are no surprise to God and, just as a skilled artist can restore a valuable old painting to its original luster, so God can restore our true beauty and worth. If we give our will and our life over to the care of God, He will honour us by giving us new life. When we are "born again" as Jesus said we must be, we can live our lives in the honour that God places on us as His beloved children.

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord ... If you keep yourself pure, you will be a special utensil for honorable use. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work. (Act 3:19 NIV, 2 Timothy 2:21 NLT)

Prayer – Heavenly Father, thank you for the great love you pour into us. We are honoured to be called the children of God. Take us, flaws and all, and restore us to our true beauty and worth. We want the new life you offer us – sins erased, clean and ready for every good work. AMEN

TUESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2017

NOTES

HONOURING OTHERS ABOVE OURSELVES

God created us to live as honourable people – honouring God, honouring others, and experiencing the joy of living as a person of dignity and honour. This is the life we are meant to recover as we leave behind addictive and destructive lifestyles.

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10 NIV)

If we are unsure that God exists or believe that God does not exist, then we will determine our own behaviour and be accountable only to keep the laws of the country in which we live. If we break a law, and get caught, as many of us have, then we pay the penalty set by that law for our behaviour. Governments add to, or remove laws, in the belief that the laws will cause the community to honour one another and protect property. However, today's society seems to be on a collision course with the law and appears to be more interested in their individual rights rather than in the common good of society. Life, without God in it, does not lead to honouring one another above ourselves.

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one. (Psalm 14:1, 3 NIV)

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When someone asked Jesus which of God's laws was most important, Jesus replied: ***Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.' This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: 'Love others as well as you love yourself.'*** (Matthew 22:37-39 MSG)

God knows the best way for us to live. He's given us life principles in the Bible that show us how to act in honourable ways towards others. When we invite God to come and live in us, He gives us the strength we need to put those habits of honouring and respecting into practice in our daily lives.

Prayer – Dear God, My desire is to live in a way that honours You and others. I ask You now to give me the will and desire to follow Your principles in all I do and say. AMEN



Come and learn and grow with us:

Christian 12-Step Recovery Meeting

Wednesdays, 7:00 pm

325 6th Street

New Westminster, BC

Christian 12-Step Recovery Meeting

Thursdays, 7:30 pm

543 Powell Street

Vancouver, BC

*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