

**LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY**

# **Daily Meditations**



**JANUARY 2020**



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

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### **JUST FOR TODAY**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

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



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

## PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

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

## LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

# Daily Meditations

### JANUARY 2020

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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Scriptures taken from:

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## ***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 FIRST DAY OF THIS NEW YEAR

Happy New Year! This is the first of 366 days we have in this leap-year to enjoy life and do good. Will we allow today to be one more day of the “same old same old” or will today be a day we choose to enjoy the love of God and live in response to that love?

***You have now become a new person and are always learning more about Christ. You are being made more like Christ. He is the One Who made you.*** (Colossians 3:10 NLV)

We can enter into this new year with joy and hope because it is God who says that when we invite Him into our lives, we become new. The old goes and the new comes. God does it. Prior to God living in us we are dead people walking around not knowing how to do life. When God makes us alive, He not only shows us how to live but gives us the desire and the power to do things His way.

***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)

Can we really hope to live like that today and over the course of the following 365 days? Our hope should be based, not in our own self-effort to get it right, but rather in the God who chooses us and works powerfully in us to make us His holy people.

This is what we are affirming when we speak in Step Two about coming to believe that a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. This is the humility of Step Seven when we humbly ask God to remove all our shortcomings. This is the joy of Step Twelve as we realize that we have had a spiritual awakening and are not only sharing the good news but are practicing it in all our affairs.

***Prayer: Loving God, thank You for not only inviting me to new life but for coming to be that life in me today and each day of this new year. You are the hope that lives inside me and the love that is always there to take me forward. I pray that You will help me to live in this new year, one day at a time, as the person You created me to be. Help me to become more like You every day. Amen***

***When God makes us alive, He not only shows us how to live but gives us the desire and the power to do things His way.***

## BUILDING UP OUR SELF-ESTEEM

Low self-esteem is a negative sense of one's worth or ability to cope or do well in life. There's plenty of literature that links substance abuse with low self-esteem. The pity is that substance abuse doesn't solve this problem but only adds to it in a very major way. What does God, who made us and who planned a meaningful and satisfying life for us, have to say about our self-worth?

***God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. You are precious to me. You are honored, and I love you. "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."***

***For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.*** (Genesis 1:27, Isaiah 43:4b, Jeremiah 29:11, Philippians 4:13 NLT)

***God's perspective of us is the ONLY correct one.***

The devil loves to tell us lies when we don't feel good about ourselves, our circumstances, or our future. He tells us we're defective and we need something to make us fit in, be accepted, or help us feel better. God's view is different and His perspective of us is the ONLY correct one. We all have strengths and weaknesses. We don't need to fear our weaknesses or try to hide them just because they are different from someone else's. God's promise is that when we feel weak, His power will strengthen us.

God says: ***My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.*** (2 Corinthians 12:9 NLT)

In difficult times it's good to change our mind-set and lift our spirit by rejecting negative thinking, helping others, forgiving ourselves and focusing on what we can do rather than on what we can't do. It's even more important to keep things simple by remembering that our value isn't based on our successes or failures or on the opinions of others or even our own feelings. We are who God says we are. We have a wonderful future because God says we do, and God will help us. We can get through whatever difficulty we may face because God promises to make a way where there seems to be no way.

***Prayer: Loving God, help me to live today in the joy of being the person You created me to be, trusting that You are with me and providing everything I need to live with dignity and honour. Amen***

## SNOW

Have you ever been in a room when snow started to fall outside and the atmosphere in the room changed as children got excited about playing in the snow? Older folks who looked out may not have had the same enthusiasm about the falling snow. Some may have anticipated the traffic problems and the difficulties negotiating slippery sidewalks.

***It isn't proper to honor a foolish person. That's like having snow in summer or rain at harvest time. A messenger trusted by the one who sends him is like a drink cooled by snow at harvest time. He renews the spirit of his master.*** (Proverbs 26:1; 25:13 NIRV)

In most communities there are two sides to every street. When it snows the municipality requires each homeowner to clear the sidewalk on their side of the street so that people can safely walk by. In our relationships there are two people. The Bible tells us as much as it depends on us, we are to live peaceably with all people. To live this way, we need to keep ourselves free from offending our friends and neighbours. It means we are to keep our side of the relationship pure, regardless of what is happening on the other side.

***Gracious God, help me to keep my side in my relationships clean.***

***You want me to be completely loyal, so put true wisdom deep inside of me. Remove my sin and make me pure. Wash me until I am whiter than snow!*** (Psalm 51:6-7 ERV)

Although we're not responsible to clear the snow from the other side of the street, it's a kind act to help a neighbour by doing so. The same is true in our relationships. We are not responsible for the other side of the relationship but sometimes we can "go the extra mile," perhaps by clearing up a misunderstanding, letting bygones be bygones, or taking time to listen to their concerns even though they are not expressed in the way we like.

***I, the Lord, am the one speaking to you. Come, let's discuss this. Even if your sins are as dark as red dye, that stain can be removed, and you will be as pure as wool that is as white as snow.*** (Isaiah 1:18 ERV)

***Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to keep my side in my relationships clean. Give me wisdom in my care of the other person so that our relationship may be pure and white as snow. Amen***

## FINDING PURPOSE

*“My life is of great beauty and infinite value. God has a plan for my life that is meaningful, purposeful, and joyful.”*

God created us in love for a life of meaning and purpose that is far beyond what we have known so far. Some of us wandered into addiction because life felt empty and we were looking for something to fill us up. Sadly, we made the wrong choice. Not only were we not filled up, but after a time in addiction, we were empty and in worse shape than when we began. God’s plan for our lives hasn’t changed even though it’s taken us a while to get to this place where we are actively seeking to know and do God’s will in all our affairs.

**God  
created us  
in love for  
a life of  
meaning  
and  
purpose  
that is far  
beyond  
what we  
know so  
far.**

***But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.*** (Exodus 9:16 NIV)

Our lives were meant to reveal how wonderful God is and the amazing things He has done. He created us to be a part of our family and of a loving, caring community. In whatever ways we’ve missed this good purpose for our lives, God is ready and willing to show us the path to finding it now. He doesn’t give up on us or His plans for us. He’s able to use even our blunders in His amazing plan that will spread goodness in our lives and in the lives of people we encounter from here on in. Sound unbelievable? Sure does, but God’s word is reliable and that’s what He says. It’s what we can confidently rely on in our new life with Him in recovery.

A man named Job went through hard times where nothing was working and nothing made sense and in the middle of that he said to God, ***“I know you can do everything. You make plans, and nothing can change or stop them.”*** (Job 42:2 ERV) He was right, and in a short time God’s plan for blessing Job was evident to everyone. The same is true for us. All we need to do is ask God and He will show us, one step at a time, how to walk in His good purpose for our life.

*Prayer: Loving God, You have promised to give me the desire for Your will to be done in my life and the power to carry it out. I’m asking for both of those today. Use my life to demonstrate Your goodness wherever I go. Amen*

## GROWING UP

When we accept Jesus’ death as payment for the sins we have committed, we are freed from the punishment of sin and are given a fresh start. Thankfully God did not stop there. By raising Jesus from the dead, God demonstrated He is the Higher Power on whom we can rely to help us successfully live in this fresh new way.

***Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has great mercy, and because of his mercy he gave us a new life. This new life brings us a living hope through Jesus Christ’s resurrection from death.*** (1 Peter 1:3 ERV)

When we begin this journey with God in recovery, we are like someone who has been injured and needs to learn how to walk again. We may feel uneasy and unsteady. In the past we allowed feelings to control the direction our lives took. Now we are growing in our faith that God’s ways are good and are seeking His guidance before we act.

We have begun to see how our behaviour impacts others as well as ourselves. We are becoming more mature in how we respond to others. If we continue to walk steadily along this path and listen for God’s guidance, we will grow in perseverance and learn to cope with whatever lies ahead.

***You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don’t try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.*** (James 1:3b-4 MSG)

God has the power to shape our lives according to His good purpose. Let’s get rid of our old way of doing things. Let’s grow and mature in the new life we have been given.

***We take our lead from Christ, who is the source of everything we do. He keeps us in step with each other. His very breath and blood flow through us, nourishing us so that we will grow up healthy in God, robust in love.*** (Ephesians 4:16 MSG)

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank You for giving me new life. You have the power to shape my life according to Your good purpose. Help me to let go of my old way of doing things and grow healthy and mature in the new life You have given me. Amen*

***We are  
growing in  
our faith  
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are  
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guidance  
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act.***

## PRACTICAL WISDOM FOR EVERYDAY LIVING

In the middle of the Bible, just after Psalms, we find the book of Proverbs which contains all sorts of practical wisdom about everyday living. Since there are 31 chapters in Proverbs, some people choose to read a chapter of Proverbs on the corresponding day of the month. (i.e., on January 4 they read Proverbs 4.)

We want our minds to be developed so we know what is right and wrong and know how to solve difficult problems. This is what we are promised when we regularly read and apply the practical ideas we find in Proverbs.

**To be wise is to get to know God's word and do what He says. We are foolish if we do otherwise.**

*These are the proverbs of Solomon, the son of David and king of Israel. They will help you learn to be wise, to accept correction, and to understand wise sayings. They will teach you to develop your mind in the right way. You will learn to do what is right and to be honest and fair. These proverbs will make even those without education smart. They will teach young people what they need to know and how to use what they have learned. Even the wise could become wiser by listening to these proverbs. They will gain understanding and learn to solve difficult problems.* (Proverbs 1:1-5 ERV)

Our growth in any area of life is not gained by self-effort alone. It is based on the principle that on our own we are powerless. We need a higher power who can restore us to sanity. It's as we turn our will and our life over to God that we find a new and successful way to live each day. To be wise is to get to know God's word and do what He says. We are foolish if we do otherwise.

***If you really want to gain knowledge, you must begin by having respect for the Lord. But foolish people hate wisdom and instruction.*** (Proverbs 1:7 NIRV)

For too long, we have lived in our destructive and addictive lifestyle. As the saying goes, "If nothing changes, nothing changes." Today we have a chance to learn the best changes to make and to experience God's power in putting them into practice.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I acknowledge that I don't know enough to live life on my own. I need Your wisdom. I need Your power. Help me to live with humility and learn a new way of life by reading Your word and putting Your ways into practice. Amen*

## UNITY

After living so long in the self-centered world of addiction, it's not easy to come into recovery and build relationships with other human beings, particularly those who have lived in self-centered ways just like us. Relapse is much more often the result of stress in relationships than it is giving in to the obsession to use.

***Put up with one another. Forgive one another if you are holding something against someone. Forgive, just as the Lord forgave you. And over all these good things put on love. Love holds them all together perfectly as if they were one.*** (Colossians 3:13-14 NIRV)

We need help to live in unity with others. It's why the founders of AA made this principle in the Twelve Traditions the very first one, "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity." This principle echoes what God has been teaching humans since the beginning of time. We need to live well with each other in order to live well individually.

***There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body. It is the same with Christ. So let us do all we can to live in peace. And let us work hard to build up one another.*** (I Corinthians 12:12, Romans 14:19b NIRV)

No one said it would be easy. The Bible verse above tells us we are going to need to work hard. We need endurance and encouragement from God if we are going to be able to put up with one another and socialize in a way that helps us live together well.

***May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.*** (Romans 15:5-7 NIV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, It is so hard to be with others when we all have character defects. Please give me the grace to accept others as I pray You will give them the grace to accept me. Help us to walk in unity with one another and do it one step at a time, one day at a time. Amen*

***Relapse is much more often the result of stress in relationships than it is the obsession to use.***

## SEARCHING, FEARLESS, AND MORAL

We are not very far into our recovery program when we come face to face with Step Four which asks us to make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. We're asked to look at our thoughts, motives, and behaviours, sort out what was right, what was wrong, and what our part was in it all. It doesn't sound fearless to us. We hear many different messages in our society about what is morally right and wrong and it often leaves us confused. How are we to approach not only this step but our life in the light of moral principles?

**God has been careful to tell us what is good and what is harmful.**

Who gets to decide what is right and wrong? The obvious answer would be that the one who knows everything should make that call. God is the one who has set the world in place and has given us life and breath. God knows the end from the beginning and God has been careful to tell us what is good and what is harmful. Thankfully it's all written down for us in the Bible. We only view things in a short space of time and often our emotions in any set of circumstances clouds our judgment. Without a reliable source to help us, we would be in trouble again and again.

**All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.** (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NLT)

Truthfully, for most of us the real problem is not being fully aware of what is morally right or wrong and just wanting to do things that are right in our own eyes. God is ready and willing to help us want to do what is right. God truly is an amazing God into whose care we can put our will and our life.

**For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.** (Philippians 2:13 NLT)

*Prayer: Loving God, Please help me to take an honest look at my life and see where I fall short of doing what is right and good. Help me to see where my own stubborn self-will caused problems. Fill me with grace so I can begin to live in a new way, starting today. Amen*

## SUNDAY PSALM – HOW DID I EVER GET TO THIS PLACE?

**My Lord, you heard my groaning. You can hear my sighs. My heart is pounding. My strength is gone, and I am going blind. Because of my sickness, my friends and neighbors will not visit me; my family will not come near me. My enemies say bad things about me. They are spreading lies and rumors. They talk about me all the time. But I am like a deaf man and cannot hear. I am like someone who cannot speak. I am like those who cannot hear what people are saying about them. I cannot answer to prove my enemies wrong. Lord, you must defend me. Lord my God, you must speak for me. That's why I prayed, "Don't let my enemies smile at my pain. Full of pride, they will laugh if I stumble and fall." I know I am guilty of doing wrong. I cannot forget my pain.** (Psalm 38:9-17 ERV)

Many of us have come from an environment that is described above by the writer of this Psalm. When we began to make unwise decisions, we never dreamed they would take us to where they did. We never gave a thought to why our behaviour would turn our family, friends and neighbours away from us. We never thought we would get to a place where we could not bear to hear what people were saying about us.

We know that we are not alone. Many people in the world of addiction are like us. Most made foolish choices and were naïve to the way their dependency led them and how far it took them down. That's why the writer of the Psalm turned to God for help. When we get to that place where we hate what we are doing and call on God, He will be there to help us. The significant question for each of us to ask ourselves is, "Do I hate what I have been doing or just hate the suffering I have to endure?"

Like the Psalmist, we must come to God and admit that we are guilty of wrongdoing. We cannot deal with our pain on our own. Our Heavenly Father waits for us to turn our hearts towards Him. When we do, He adopts us as His children, and we have all the power of the Kingdom of Heaven to help us.

*Heavenly Father, I confess that my life is a mess of my own making. I have done wrong things and made poor choices. I want to leave all that behind. I want to be born again into Your kingdom and follow Your ways. Please help me! Amen*

**When we get to that place where we hate what we are doing and call on God, He will be there to help us.**

## PLANNING AHEAD

Planning gives us peace in our hearts knowing that we have reviewed the specifics of how to get to where we are going and what we need to get there. For instance, when we plan a hike, we decide the place we want to visit and determine whether the terrain is suitable to our physical fitness. We want to ensure we are wearing the right footwear and clothes for the journey and have informed someone where we are going. It is also wise when we are travelling to a place for the first time to consult with a person that has been that way before and has some knowledge of what lies ahead.

**Planning gives us peace in our hearts knowing that we have reviewed the specifics of how to get to where we are going, and what we need to get there.**

***Plans fail without good advice. But they succeed when there are many advisers.*** (Proverbs 15:22 NIRV)

When we are travelling the road to recovery, we also need to make plans for those things that will get us to our destination. We need to work hard to be spiritually fit to navigate the road ahead. We need to seek advise on how to avoid the pitfalls of temptation. It is helpful to have a sponsor who knows the road ahead and can advise us on what is likely to happen.

***Let us act as we should, like people living in the daytime. Have nothing to do with wild parties, and don't get drunk. Don't take part in sexual sins or evil conduct. Don't fight with each other or be jealous of anyone. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ as if he were your clothing. Don't think about how to satisfy sinful desires.*** (Romans 13:13-14 NIRV)

It is wise to plan ahead and determine what we will do when we are challenged in our journey. Sinful desires and overwhelming obsessions may war against our mind and

our body, but if we seek Jesus to help us, He will act on our behalf.

***But because Jesus lives forever, his priesthood lasts forever. Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save those who come to God through him. He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf.*** (Hebrews 7:24-25 NLT)

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, I know my flesh is weak, therefore, I ask You to help me plan for victory when I am tempted to give up. Amen*

## PRAY

Some people who have no relationship with God will still pray when they are in trouble or when they really need help in a time of great distress. Does God hear their prayer? Yes, He does. Will He answer their prayer? Yes, He will. How God answers that prayer is up to God for He knows each person's heart and knows what is best for each of us. God is much more generous than any human being and He alone knows the end from the beginning. However, when we have given our will and life over to the care of God, we are assured that His eyes always watch over us and His ears are open to all our prayers.

***The Lord watches over everyone who obeys him, and he listens to their prayers. But he opposes everyone who does evil. Ask me, and I will tell you things that you don't know and can't find out.*** (1 Peter 3:12; Jeremiah 33:3 CEV)

We who have accepted Jesus as our Saviour are God's beloved children. Like any good parent, God is aware of His children's needs. The closer we get to our Heavenly Father the more He will speak with us. God's desire is that we grow in wisdom by reading and obeying His word. He gives us His Holy Spirit to help us understand the principles of His Word. He also empowers us to love and care for others as He loves and cares for us.

***But I tell you to love your enemies and pray for anyone who mistreats you. Then you will be acting like your Father in heaven. He makes the sun rise on both good and bad people. And he sends rain for the ones who do right and for the ones who do wrong.*** (Matthew 5:44-45 CEV)

God cares about His creation and each of us are benefitting from His goodness in the world today. Can anyone imagine living in a place without God in it?

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for being aware of all my needs and making help and guidance available to me every moment of every day. Forgive me for the times I've not bothered to consult with You or failed to surrender my will and my life when it was different from what I wanted in a particular circumstance. Help me to walk in Your good will today and obey You in all my affairs. Amen*

***When we have given our will and life over to the care of God, we are assured that His eyes always watch over us and His ears are open to all our prayers.***

BEING WITH GOD IN THE PLACE WHERE HE IS

***Blessed are those who live in your house. They are always praising you. Blessed are those whose strength comes from you. They have firmly decided to travel to your temple. As they pass through the dry Valley of Baka, they make it a place where water flows. The rain in the fall covers it with pools. Those people get stronger as they go along, until each of them appears in Zion, where God lives.*** (Psalm 84:4-7 NIRV)

***If we are praising God in the place where we are and reading His word, God is with us in that place.***

For many reasons some of us are unable to go to church buildings where people gather to sing praises to God and to be taught from His word in the Bible. The truth is, if we are praising God in the place where we are and reading His word, God is with us in that place. The Bible tells us that God looks out over the whole earth, and that includes where we are today. God gives strength to those who are wholeheartedly committed to Him.

***For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.*** (2 Chronicles 16:9a NKJV)

Have we firmly decided to travel with God in our life in recovery? If so, God will be with us wherever we go. When we follow His ways in all our affairs, even in places that are dry to the word of God, we can be people who make it a place where the word of God flows like a refreshing stream. As we witness about Jesus and His love for us, blessings will flow, and our residence will be filled with more and more people who are praising God for releasing them from the power of sin. When we move on, the place will continue to be blessed with the fruit of the Spirit which is, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

The longer we continue our journey with God, the more our lives will become fruitful. Our faith in God will grow stronger until the time when we will go to dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Today, I ask You to strengthen me to walk the walk with You and not just talk the talk. Amen***

FINDING HOPE IN A DARK PLACE

Recovery begins when we come to our senses and affirm that we are powerless over alcohol or some other substance or habit and that our lives have become unmanageable. It is a profound moment, not of hopelessness but of letting go and turning our focus somewhere new for solutions to our life's problems.

***Foolish people say in their hearts, "There is no God." They do all kinds of horrible and evil things. No one does anything good. The Lord looks down from heaven on all people. He wants to see if there are any who understand. He wants to see if there are any who trust in God. All of them have turned away. They have all become evil. No one does anything good, no one at all.*** (Psalm 14:1-3 NIRV)

We did horrible things to ourselves and others as we sank further and further into the pit of our destructive lifestyle. We lost sight of a way to change ourselves and lost contact with our emotions, until we didn't even care. We often think that our powerlessness and the unmanageability of our lives is the dark and disconnected place we arrived at through our addiction. Actually, it is not. That is a result not a cause. The real root cause is the fact that we either didn't know or didn't dare to reach out and trust that there was a God who made us, who loves us, and who is longing to care for us in a way that makes life possible and meaningful. We thought and lived as if there was no God. We now have lots of proof that it truly is the foolish people who say in their hearts "There is no God".

***God could and would if He were sought.***

***(Big Book - How It Works)***

Thank God that even though we gave up on Him, He didn't give up on us but kept on calling out to us and inviting us to a life that was always meant to be – a life dependent on His goodness and love for us so we could do good things. May we seek God today. As we are so often reminded, "God could and would if He were sought."

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for the chaos and suffering I've caused by living as though You did not exist. I affirm today that You are God. You created me in love, and You will show me a way to live well. I'm not sure how it all works but the wreck of my life, and the witness of others who say that You made a difference in their lives, and the truth of Your words I read in the Bible, have convinced me that I really do need You. Help me to know You more. Today, I turn my will and my life over to Your care. Amen***

## ANTICIPATION

Our anticipation of events is positive when we expect something good is about to happen, such as going out to a show, taking a holiday trip, or doing something else we really like to do. At other times our anticipation of what is about to happen brings fear and anxiety. It may be a situation where we have done wrong and are expecting punishment or just the ongoing chaos of living in a dysfunctional lifestyle. Our emotions go up and down according to the outcome we are anticipating. In recovery, how can we live at peace in the middle of the ups and downs of life?

***Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, But a good word makes it glad.*** (Proverbs 12:25 NKJV)

When we are in trouble God invites us to call on Him. We read stories in the Bible of people who were anticipating trouble from their enemies and how God answered their petitions and prayers. We learn from these stories that God cares for His people. If we have given our will and life over to the care of God, can we anticipate that He will help us in our time of need? Yes, we can!

***Our outlook on life has a major impact on how we succeed in living life to the full.***

***Your way is perfect, Lord, and your word is correct. You are a shield for those who run to you for help.*** (2 Samuel 22:31 CEV)

Our outlook on life has a major impact on how we succeed in living life to the full. If we view God as our Heavenly Father who knows what is best for us, then we will anticipate goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our life. If we hold to this viewpoint, we will truly soar like an eagle and get a larger view of life with God in recovery.

***Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*** (John 14:27 NKJV)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your word gives me hope that I can trust You to work all things together for my good. Help me to anticipate this in every situation. Amen***

## WISDOM FOR THE JOURNEY; KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE ROAD

Too many of us still drive distracted by our phones and other technology. Statistics for 2018 show that distracted driving accounted for approximately 25% of all motor vehicle crash fatalities. Distractions take our minds off what we should be focusing on and the pathway before us that can change very quickly. In our life with God in recovery, we need to stay focused on what's important and put away anything that distracts us.

***Keep your eyes on the path and look straight ahead. Make sure you are going the right way, and nothing will make you fall. Don't go to the right or to the left, and you will stay away from evil. The path of those who live right is like the early morning light. It gets brighter and brighter until the full light of day. But the path of the wicked is like a dark night. They trip and fall over what they cannot see.*** (Proverbs 4: 25-27, 18-19 ERV)

So much of life in recovery is new to us. We don't know the road ahead and must trust God to get us to the right destination. The scripture verses above remind us that if we will simply do what is right, our path will become brighter and brighter. The slogan, "Just do the next right thing" reminds us to focus on what is most important. Encouraging ourselves to do what is right will help us take one step forward at a time, even though we may not see all that lies ahead.

***Your word is like a lamp that guides my steps, a light that shows the path I should take.*** (Psalm 119:105 ERV)

Reading and meditating on God's word each day and putting what we read into practice is the light that gives us dependable direction in recovery. Getting distracted by our fears, our frustrations, or our obsessions, is as deadly to our life with God in recovery as texting while driving a motor vehicle is.

What distraction do I need to let go of in order to stay focused on what matters?

***Heavenly Father, Thank you for Your daily guidance. Help me to let go of things that distract me from what's important. Please help me to always do the next right thing. Amen***

***In our life with God in recovery, we need to stay focused on what's important and put away anything that distracts us.***

## CHARACTER DEFECT: ARROGANCE

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

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

Arrogance is the steel-hard resistance supporting denial that blames and excuses ourselves as we continue to think that our problems are created by the actions of others.

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

***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 are. We also need the grace of God to see others' flaws and gifts and recognize that all of us are on a level playing field where we need each other and have good gifts to share with each other.

Arrogance says "I don't need anyone else. I can do this on my own." In recovery we get to lay down our ego, reject all the grandiose thinking we've been relying on that hasn't gotten us very far, 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*

## COPING STRATEGIES

When we turned our will and life over to the care of God, we started a life journey to live sober. We are not alone on this journey. God is always with us. However, we need to prepare ourselves for the battle that is to come. We are naive if we think the one who Jesus said wants to steal, kill and destroy us will just retreat and forget about us. The truth is Satan will do everything within his power to bring us back into bondage.

***God sent Christ to be our sacrifice. Christ offered his life's blood, so that by faith in him we could come to God. We are people of flesh and blood. That is why Jesus became one of us. He died to destroy the devil, who had power over death.*** (Romans 3:25a; Hebrews 2:14 CEV)

No army would go into battle without a strategy against the enemy, so we need to prepare our strategy. By His death, Jesus redeemed us from our sin. By His resurrection Jesus won the victory over death. This is the truth we are to stand on when the enemy seeks to drag us back into bondage to our dependencies. Satan's strategy is always to twist the word of God and have us doubt its truth. We will have victory if we are willing to arm ourselves, as Jesus did, with the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

***Put on the helmet of salvation. And take the sword of the Holy Spirit. The sword is God's word.*** (Ephesians 6:17 NIRV)

Satan makes our addiction appealing and we need to prepare for that. The battle for our souls is in our minds and the helmet of salvation protects our minds. When temptation comes, we need to call out to the Lord for help and then decisively stand firm on His word.

***Lord, there isn't anyone like you. You help the weak against the strong. Lord our God, help us. We trust in you.*** (2 Chronicles 14:11b NIRV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, When temptation comes, help me to stand firm on the truth of Your word and do the next right thing. Amen*

***When temptation comes, we need to call out to the Lord for help and then decisively stand firm on His word.***

## CONTENTMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## HITTING BOTTOM

Hitting bottom is the place we reach in our addiction where we finally admit that we have a problem and that we can't solve it on our own. We come to realize that we are powerless and that our lives have become unmanageable.

For too long we thought everyone else had a problem or even that we had problems, but they weren't as bad as those of others. However, there comes that point where we can no longer hide from the facts. We realize that we are at a low place and we can't see any way out. We know we can't go on with the way things are. Fortunately, at that point, God is waiting for us to come to Him and He is willing to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

***I waited patiently for the Lord to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along.*** (Psalm 40:1-2 NLT)

God not only works on our behalf but also strengthens us and teaches us valuable lessons from the things we have experienced. It's in our lowest moments that we have an opportunity to see how kind and good God really is and that He will give us everything we need to get well one day at a time as we choose to trust Him rather than ourselves.

God promises to give us a new foundation, a solid place to stand, if we will give Him the opportunity rebuild our lives. Today we have another chance to stand on this solid foundation rather than falling through the floor again and hitting a new bottom.

***Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.*** (Psalm 62:1-2 NIV)

***Heavenly Father, Thank you that when I hit bottom You were there ready to embrace me and help me build a new life. Help me to remember that it is because of Your unfailing love for me that I can stand strong on a firm foundation. You are my rock and my security. I choose to follow Your ways in all my affairs. Please help me. Amen***

***God not only works on our behalf but also strengthens us and teaches us valuable lessons from the things we have experienced.***

## EMBARRASSMENT

As we prepare to do the steps in a recovery program, who among us enjoys doing a Step Four inventory or writing out the last 90 days of our addiction? Part of the reluctance so many of us experience when we make an appointment with someone to confess the exact nature of our wrongs is the shame and embarrassment we feel over past events. It's not easy to admit our faults, and there is a huge stigma attached to the circumstances of our life in addiction that took many of us to prison, psych wards, or life under a bridge etc. None of us like admitting to the mistakes we made but the sooner we do, the quicker we can learn from them and start to grow.

**We ask for help in order to get rid of anything that keeps us from living in this dignity of who God says we are.**

**Good people might fall again and again, but they always get up. It is the wicked who are defeated by their troubles.** (Proverbs 24:16 ERV)

The embarrassment of needing to ask for help is the next hurdle to overcome. It's hard to admit that life is out of control and at the same time recognize ourselves as persons of dignity and value beyond our addiction. The truth is that we are created by a loving God to do good and make a positive difference. We need to own that and affirm that until it sets the foundation of who we are and why we are living and breathing. We ask for help in order to get rid of anything that keeps us from living in this dignity of being who God says we are.

**You are the one who put me together inside my mother's body, and I praise you because of the wonderful way you created me. Everything you do is marvelous! Of this, I have no doubt.** (Psalm 139:13-14 CEV)

Sometimes the baggage others carry results in them trying to embarrass and humiliate us in order to feel better about themselves. We need to refuse the lies while blessing the person who is spewing them and praying for them to be healed and restored.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am who You say I am, and I'm created in your image. No one is more beautiful and worthy of honour than You, so I turn from the guilt and shame of my rebellious ways and accept what You have done for me through Jesus. Help me to let the shame and embarrassment go. Help me to live in response to Your great love for me. Amen*

## 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've lived like fools. It's 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)

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

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

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

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

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank 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've walked this way before me. Help me to humble myself and listen to what You and others have to say so I can grow in wisdom and be more like You. Amen*

**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.**

SUNDAY PSALM – LOOK UP AND LEARN

KEEPING GOD WHERE I AM

*Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord from the heavens. Praise him in the heavens above. Praise him, all his angels. Praise him, all his angels in heaven. Praise him, sun and moon. Praise him, all you shining stars. Praise him, you highest heavens. Praise him, you waters above the skies. Let all of them praise the name of the Lord, because at his command they were created. He established them for ever and ever. He gave them laws they will always have to obey.* (Psalm 148: 1-6 NIRV)

The person who wrote this Psalm was so amazed by all that he saw in the heavens above that he called out for everything to praise the Lord. Why should the heavens praise the Lord? The Psalmist says because they were created at God’s command and are established forever. Another incredible thing is that God gave them laws to follow which they will always obey. The sun circles the earth and the moon reflects the light of the sun. The stars light up the heavens.

**Can’t we assume that if we obey God’s laws our lives will be much better than if we try to arrange things on our own?**

The Bible indicates that there are three heavens and God resides in the highest one from where He rules over the heavens and the earth. Humans reside on earth surrounded by the atmospheric heaven. When humans send rockets and probes into space they move around in the stellar heaven. The elements in the heavens obey God’s laws and therefore we humans, animals, and fish can survive in the earth’s atmosphere.

*I know a man in Christ who was taken up to the third heaven. This happened 14 years ago. I don’t know if the man was in his body or out of his body, but God knows.* (2 Corinthians 12:2 ERV)

God in His wisdom gave us a book containing His laws for life, it is called the Bible. He also put within humankind a moral code to live by. Can’t we assume that if we obey God’s laws our lives will be much better than if we try to arrange things on our own? Who knows best, the creator or the created?

*Prayer: Loving God, You really are an amazing creator. Help me to be obedient to Your laws and live life to the full as You intended. Amen*

We read in the 12-Steps program material about turning our will and our life over to the care of God. We also hear individuals talk about what a difference it made to their life when they did that. The question is, what does it look like to do that?

*I keep my eyes always on the Lord. He is at my right hand. So I will always be secure. So my heart is glad. Joy is on my tongue. My body also will be secure. You will not leave me in the place of the dead. You will not let your faithful one rot away. You always show me the path of life. You will fill me with joy when I am with you. You will make me happy forever at your right hand.* (Psalm 16:8-11 NIRV)

The above words from the Bible give us some information on what will happen when we turn our minds and hearts towards God. They tell us what we can expect from God. Our part is not complicated and quite clear and the benefits are dramatic.

We are to keep our eyes on the Lord, seeking to be conscious of Him in every situation, and inviting Him to show us our next move. We acknowledge that He is always near us, as close as our right hand. In all our endeavors we are to not act in self-will but invite God to interact with us in everything we say or do.

Turning our will and our life over to God’s care is making a choice to trust that God is good, that He will never leave us to deal with painful circumstances on our own, that He won’t allow the barrage of our thoughts and feelings or our relationships to overwhelm us, but will show us the path to a life of serenity. It means that we won’t always understand what God is doing when the pain isn’t immediately removed, or the circumstances are taking time to change. Regardless of what we can see we will persevere and do what is right and trust that God is working. We will trust that He is taking us to a safe haven that is better than anywhere we’ve been before. The truth is anywhere we are *WITH HIM* is better than any place we could be *WITHOUT HIM*.

**You always show me the path of life. You will fill me with joy when I am with you.**  
*Psalm 16:11 NIRV*

*Prayer: Loving God, I don’t see too much of the path ahead and there are still lots of things to be sorted out. I want to walk together with You today. I want to put my will and my life into Your care. I want You to show me this path of life where I can be filled with joy and live secure in Your presence. Please help me. Amen*

## PROMISES OF GOD

The Bible is full of God's promises to help us in our time of need. Various people have counted how many promises from God we can find in the Bible and it's somewhere around 8,000. That's about 22 different promises for each day of the year. The wonderful thing is that all God's promises are true for each day of the year, so we have 8,000 promises available to us today.

***If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.*** (James 1:5 NIV)

***While we need to make every effort to get information and honour the advice of others, we first need to ask God for His wisdom.***

One thing it seems most of us lack in our decision-making process is wisdom. In the above scripture God promises that if we ask Him, He will generously give us the wisdom we lack. God is our loving Heavenly Father and will never find fault with us for asking nor accuse us for how foolish we have been.

As with many promises, there is a condition attached. We need to be willing to stop for a moment and ask God for wisdom in all we purpose to do. We are not smart enough to figure things out on our own. Asking another human being for their wisdom is a good thing but it is limited because that person is also human. Only God knows everything. Only God knows what is best.

***Don't trust in your own wisdom, but fear and respect the Lord and stay away from evil. Knowledge begins with fear and respect for the Lord, but stubborn fools hate wisdom and refuse to learn.*** (Proverbs 3:7, 1:7 ERV)

While we need to make every effort to get information and honour the advice of others, we first need to ask God for His wisdom. Then the challenge is, will we choose for God's wise way or do things our own familiar, self-centered way. If we choose for God's way and put it into action, then we are honouring God and affirming that He really does know best.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I need all the wisdom I can get. You know all things and are willing to show me the best path for my life. Help me to humble myself and be willing to seek Your wisdom and put it into action in everything I do. Thank you for always speaking the truth to me in love. Amen*

## SELF-CENTEREDNESS

A character defect that most of us have is self-centeredness. Sometimes we are not aware of it, but it is evident in how we behave and in what we say. A lot of our communication with others is about ourselves and what we think or do. We often brag about how we outwitted someone to get what we wanted. We boast about our activities. It seems we just want others to know how clever we really are. Some of us are so concerned about promoting ourselves that we seldom stop to think of how we are relating to others.

***In whatever you do, don't let selfishness or pride be your guide. Be humble, and honor others more than yourselves. Don't be interested only in your own life, but care about the lives of others too.*** (Philippians 2:3-4 ERV)

Impatience with a person or an event is another way we show our self-centeredness. We often get upset when the check-out person at the store is too slow; the doctor has too many patients; someone forces their way ahead of us in a line-up; our counsellor doesn't seem to understand, or we think they are not listening. Complaining when our expectations are not met is evidence of our self-centered attitude. How often do we stop and think about the well-being of the other person in the situations we complain about?

***An unfriendly person pursues selfish ends and against all sound judgment starts quarrels.*** (Proverbs 18:1 NIV)

In our new life with God in recovery we are learning new ways of thinking and behaving. When we take daily inventory, perhaps we need to inventory around how we helped someone in need, prayed for a person who was showing signs of stress, or noticed a person in a lineup that needed to be attended to before us. God calls us to love our neighbour as ourselves. Our neighbours shouldn't suffer because all our love is centered on ourselves.

***I am afraid that when I come, we won't be pleased with each other. I fear that some of you may be arguing or jealous or angry or selfish or gossiping or insulting each other.*** (2 Corinthians 12:20 CEV)

*Prayer: Gracious God, I find it hard to take my eyes off my own agenda and look out for the interest of others. Please help me to do so. Amen*

***God calls us to love our neighbour as ourselves.***

## GIVING GOD A CHANCE

How do we come to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity? There are a lot of issues in that one statement. Perhaps we've sat in recovery meetings and heard others share about their journey of coming to believe and we related to some part of their story but wonder how our life might fully relate to it all. In a world where people believe many things – including some who believe there is no god – how do I know there is a power greater than myself? How do I know that God has any interest in restoring me to sanity or even more important, has the ability to do so?

Our questions are valid and welcome. We're not the first to ask them and we won't be the last. Jesus Christ made bold claims about being God and about coming to earth to take the punishment for our sin and brokenness by dying on the cross. People who hung around with him felt hope stirring in them that Jesus was the one they had waited for centuries to see but some had doubts. On a dark day when one of those people wondered if he had gotten it right, he sent some of his friends to Jesus to ask for confirmation of what he believed.

**We  
come to  
believe  
as we  
give God  
a chance  
to work  
in our  
lives and  
then  
watch  
how He  
does.**

*"Are you the one we should be looking for? Or must we wait for someone else?" Jesus answered, "Go and tell John what you have heard and seen. The blind are now able to see, and the lame can walk. People with leprosy are being healed, and the deaf can hear. The dead are raised to life, and the poor are hearing the good news. God will bless everyone who doesn't reject me because of what I do."* (Matthew 11:3-6 CEV)

We come to believe as we give God a chance to help us see and understand things we have been struggling with; to find strength to take steps we never could before; to experience healing in our hearts and memories where pain used to overwhelm us; to find this life we never knew existed. We come to believe as we give God a chance to work in our lives and then watch how He does.

*I praise you, Lord, for being my guide. Even in the darkest night, your teachings fill my mind. I will always look to you, as you stand beside me and protect me from fear.* (Psalm 16:7-8 CEV)

*Prayer: Loving God, give me ears to hear and a mind to understand Your word, and through obedience, see the reality of it in my life today. Help me to believe who You say You are, and that You have the power to restore me to sanity. Thank You for giving me hope. Amen*

## SUNDAY PSALM – BUILDING UP OR TEARING DOWN

Sometimes where we live and the people with whom we communicate add trouble to our lives and the lives of others by what they say or do. How can we obey God and still live in truth and at peace with those around us?

***When I am in trouble, I pray, "Come and save me, Lord, from deceitful liars!" What punishment is fitting for you deceitful liars? Your reward should be sharp and flaming arrows! But I must live as a foreigner among the people of Meshech and in the tents of Kedar. I have spent too much time living among people who hate peace. I am in favor of peace, but when I speak of it, all they want is war.*** (Psalm 120:1-7 CEV)

We live in a technical world where Facebook, text messages and Instagram message etc. are communicated at split second speed. Often the truth is not verified before the message is sent and the written words cause grief for the person who has been written about. The person who wrote the above Psalm is troubled by those he calls "deceitful liars". We should also be on our guard around people who easily get angry over all sorts of events and make scathing remarks about persons their anger is directed at.

Those of us who have given our will and lives over to the care of God need to pay attention to what God says about how we treat our neighbours. We are told to treat our neighbours as we ourselves would like to be treated. Before we convey something about another person we need to stop and ask ourselves if we would like someone to speak about us this way. We need to ask if what we say or do will build a person up or tear them down.

The writer of the Psalm says, ***"I have spent too much time living among people who hate peace."*** Are we people who seek peace in all circumstances or are we people who like to "fuel the fire". Jesus is the Prince of Peace and if our desire is to be more like Him, we need to first allow Him to give His peace to us.

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, Make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. Amen*

***We need  
to ask if  
what we  
say or do  
will build a  
person up  
or tear  
them  
down.***

## WISDOM FOR THE JOURNEY: TAKE ACTION NOW

*I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that I am responsible.* (Alcoholics Anonymous)

This “Responsibility Statement.” written for the AA international convention in Toronto in 1965 put words together that had long been of significance to AA. Many of the principles in AA are rooted in truths from the Bible practiced by the founders. This willingness to respond to someone in need is one of those.

***It’s not our job to “fix anyone” but it is our God given responsibility to look with eyes of compassion and lend a hand to those around us.***

***Do everything you possibly can for those who need help. If your neighbor needs something you have, don’t say, “Come back tomorrow.” Give it to him immediately.*** (Proverbs 3:27-28 ERV)

Proverbs is a book of wise sayings and in it we are reminded to act for the good of others, to do it now, and not wait for a more convenient moment or another day. When Jesus spoke of those who showed by their actions that they were right with God, He revealed that the help they had given others was as if it had been done to Him.

***“Then those that are right with God will say, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You? When did we see You thirsty and give You a drink? When did we see You a stranger and give You a room? When did we see You had no clothes and we gave You clothes? And when did we see You sick or in prison and we came to You?’ Then the King will say, ‘For sure, I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of My brothers, you have done it to Me.’*** (Matthew 25:37-40 NLV)

It’s not our job to “fix anyone” but it is our God given responsibility to look with eyes of compassion and lend a hand to those around us. As we’ve been forgiven and purified by God, and supported in our journey by others, now it is our turn – whether we are one day into recovery or many decades – to lend a hand to another. The amazing thing is, as we make life a bit easier for someone who is suffering, even though it may inconvenience us in the moment, we will find joy and contentment filling our own hearts.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me change my self-centered focus. Give me eyes to see and a heart of compassion to take action today to respond to someone in need. Amen*

## LOVE IS PATIENT

The Bible tells us that love is patient. How many of us would profess to be patient? Do we listen attentively to what another is saying? Do we give up on a program or a project because it requires too much time or it is not going as we anticipated? When things do not go our way, are we willing to pause and seek God on how we should proceed? Many of us are aware of the numerous times we have made life altering blunders because of our impatience.

***It’s smart to be patient, but it’s stupid to lose your temper. Always be humble and gentle. Patiently put up with each other and love each other.*** (Proverbs 14:29; Ephesians 4:2 CEV)

What causes us to be impatient and lose our temper? Perhaps it stems from our disrespect of people in general. Perhaps we have been conditioned by the environment we grew up in and never learned to wait for things. Perhaps our disappointment with events we expected to happen, but never did, affected our trust in others and gave us a sarcastic attitude. How do these things and many others impact our recovery? Do we stay the way we are, or do we seek God to teach us how to love others and be patient with them?

***I am the Lord God. I am merciful and very patient with my people. I show great love, and I can be trusted.*** (Exodus 34 6b CEV)

When we became God’s children through accepting Jesus as our Saviour, we were born again into a family household that is quite different from any other household. Our Heavenly Father’s love for us surpasses that of any earthly parent. God loves us with unfailing love and is faithful to do what He says. Whatever we are lacking, He is ready to supply. If we need to be filled with His love in order to be patient, He will supply that need.

***My friends, we beg you to warn anyone who isn’t living right. Encourage anyone who feels left out, help all who are weak, and be patient with everyone.*** (1 Thessalonians 5:14 CEV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please fill me with Your unfailing love so that I can love and be patient with others. Amen*

***The Bible tells us that love is patient. How many of us would profess to be patient?***

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2020

## KNOWING FREEDOM AND A NEW HAPPINESS

In the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous there is a section on making amends and sorting things out with our families. In this section we find a paragraph naming twelve promises we will celebrate *“before we are half-way through.”* The first of these promises is, *“We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.”* Are these empty words for just a select few or the experience of just some old-timers of AA? Is there a chance it can be a reality for me?

***Christ has set us free to enjoy our freedom. So remain strong in the faith. Don't let the chains of slavery hold you again.*** (Galatians 5:1 NIRV)

***We will experience the freedom that gives us hope when we believe God's promise to free us from our bondage.***

Living in sobriety is hard work after living in a self-centered addictive lifestyle. Working the steps, particularly making amends to those we have harmed and being careful to do so in a way that would not injure them or others, takes courage and care which we are just beginning to develop. We will experience the freedom that gives us hope when we believe God's promise to free us from our bondage.

Memories from our past do not need to hold us down. Fear of what others might say or do no longer needs to squeeze us into a mold that is something other than our true self. God now lives in us so we can share the good news of how He's changed us and how He is ready to do that for anyone who comes to Him. God will give us words to share that will comfort those who are sad and those who are caught in their own resentment and fear, even if the fear and bitterness was the result of their own bad behaviour.

***The Spirit of the Lord God is on me. The Lord has chosen me to tell good news to the poor and to comfort those who are sad. He sent me to tell the captives and prisoners that they have been set free.*** (Isaiah 61:1 ERV)

God is working in all of us today. Our responsibility is to trust God, do our part, and then relax and enjoy the freedom and happiness we have been given.

*Heavenly Father, Thank you for my sobriety and for freedom to live in a new way of peace and blessing towards others. Help me to stay strong, trusting You to work in my life and in the lives of those I have harmed. In Your love and care may we all find freedom and happiness. Amen*

FRIDAY, JANUARY 17, 2020

## THE GOLDEN RULE

In the middle of Jesus teaching about how to treat our enemies he inserts one of the most famous principles of human interaction called The Golden Rule.

***Do for others what you want them to do for you.*** (Luke 6:31 ERV)

This principle was written centuries before and was contained in the Jewish scriptures which Jesus and others heard from week to week in their worship services. Jesus is re quoting it because it is important for us to know and practice.

As we share and support friends and loved ones, we often do for them what we would like them to do for us. Jesus says in that context there is no real challenge because it is easy to love and care for those who love and care for us.

***“If you love only those who love you, should you get any special praise for doing that? No, even sinners love those who love them! If you do good only to those who do good to you, should you get any special praise for doing that? No, even sinners do that!”*** (Luke 6:32-33 ERV)

What makes this saying of Jesus challenging is that we are to behave this way with people who don't love us or treat us well.

***Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Ask God to bless the people who ask for bad things to happen to you. Pray for the people who are mean to you.*** (Luke 6:27b-28 ERV)

***Do for others what you want them to do for you.***

(Luke 6:31 ERV)

We've all been hurt and disappointed in our past. We've also hurt and disappointed others. Jesus wants all of us to move forward, find healing, and live well. He knows that holding grudges and failing to make amends is a recipe for bitterness and disaster of the heart. What's God's way for us to have successful recovery today? When someone irritates us or we reflect on a person we are avoiding, God's says: ***“Love...do good...ask God to bless...and pray.”***

So, who is the person on my “challenging person list” to whom I can apply The Golden Rule today?

*Prayer: God help me. It's so hard to bless and do good to people who have harmed me. Please work in my heart and give me the courage and strength to bless others and live the Golden Rule from a heart of thanksgiving for all You have done for me. Amen*