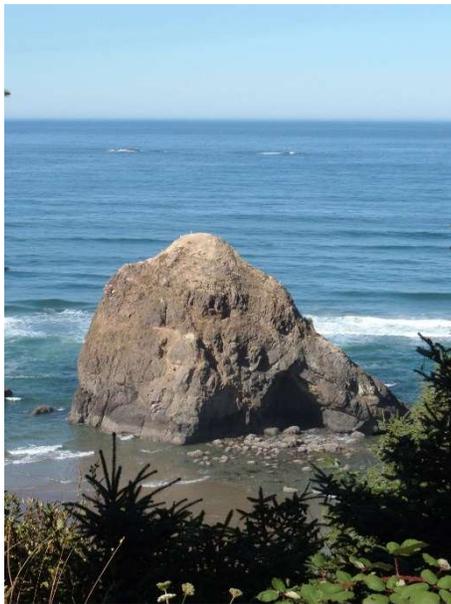


LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY



Daily Meditations



JULY 2019

These meditations are available online
for computer, tablets, and smart phones
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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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LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY
Daily Meditations

JULY 2019

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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MONDAY, JULY 1, 2019

HAPPY CANADA DAY

Canada's coat of arms is an official symbol of the country. Each component has meaning. Royal Authority is represented by the lions. The motto "desiderantes meliorem patriam" (They desire a better country) reminds us that most of us are immigrants who have experienced hospitality here in Canada. Symbols of both France and England link us to our country's heritage. A crest on the royal helmet symbolizes valour and courage. Figures on either side of the shield are known as supporters and are depicted with great strength. Underneath these symbols are the words, "A mari usque ad mare" (From sea to sea) taken from Psalm 72, a prayer for God's authority and rule to be present in all that holds this country together.

Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness. May he judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice. May he defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; may he crush the oppressor. In his days may the righteous flourish and prosperity abound till the moon is no more. May he rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. (Psalm 72:1-2,4, 7-8 NIV)

Thousands of years ago the above prayer went up from earth to heaven on behalf of a ruling king. The prayer asked God for justice for the people and that the people be blessed, the afflicted defended, and the children protected. The same prayer invited God to have dominion (influence and authority) over the country.

May this be our prayer as we celebrate Canada Day. Who better than we, who have experienced freedom from our addictive and destructive lifestyles, to offer up prayers to our loving God for hope and help for our friends and neighbours? Today, as we see the Coat of Arms and sing our national anthem, may we lift our hearts to God praying, "God keep our land glorious and free, and Lord, let it begin with me".

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for this land of Canada. May I seek to live in peace with my neighbours and look to You for direction in all my affairs. I ask that Your favour rest on this great land and may its government and its people from sea to sea be guided by Your wisdom so that this nation may flourish and prosper. Amen

As we see the Coat of Arms, and sing our national anthem, may we lift our hearts to God praying, "God keep our land glorious and free."

TUESDAY, JULY 2, 2019

LOVED ALWAYS

Many of us have questioned God about the purpose for our existence and the reason why certain things have happened to us. When God created humans, His intention was for them to have an abundant life. Even though humans rebelled against God and chose not to follow His ways, God did not abandon them. Through Jesus, God took action to restore His relationship with us.

Jesus said, **"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."** (John 3:16-17 NKJV)

God, who knows everything, still allows us to choose to operate within His loving knowledge and care, or to navigate each day on our own.

God, who knows everything, still allows us to choose to operate within His loving knowledge and care, or to navigate each day on our own. God was aware that our limited knowledge of the consequences of our choices would end in disaster without Him. However, love needs to be freely chosen and God has given us that choice. Addiction is a consequence of our failure to trust our lives to this all-wise, all-good, all-loving God. We bring pain and disaster into our lives when we attempt to live life on our own terms.

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. He leads the humble in doing right, teaching them his way. (James 1:22; Psalm 25:9 NLT)

God's way is simple. We choose to believe He is good and has our best interests at heart, regardless of what we may feel. In every circumstance we choose for God's principles as defined in the Bible. When our thinking and God's ways conflict, with God's help, we choose to live surrendered to His will and His ways.

Prayer: Loving God, thank You that Your love never fails, never gives up, and never runs out on me. Forgive me for the many times I've complained that no one loves or cares for me. Help me to lay down my stubborn self-will and choose to live in response to Your unfailing love. Amen

WEDNESDAY, JULY 3, 2019

GRACE – NECESSARY INGREDIENT FOR CHANGE

Over the long haul, how do we prevent relapse into addictive behaviour and maintain our choice to live in the love and grace of God? Strangely, we have to stop focusing on “not picking up” and focus instead on God’s goodness to us, God’s strength in us, God’s blessings around us, and God’s principles for our daily living. It’s time to stop recalling what happened 5 minutes or 5 years ago and instead focus on the good news that our past sins have been forgiven and that comfort and healing for every hurt are available today.

God pursued us with His love even while we were running away. He did so, not to accuse or condemn us, but to heal and restore us. To live in grace rather than in addiction is to rely on the truth that God’s power is sufficient to help us stand firm in Christ.

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)

Our behaviour usually reflects what we believe about God. God is love and God created us in love. Do we believe that? To live abundantly in recovery we must believe that in each moment of each day, and in every set of circumstances, our lives are supported and shaped by the love and amazing grace of God. The principle is simple, if we want to love others, we need to know that we ourselves are truly loved.

Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:7-8 NLT)

God invites us to a satisfying, meaningful, joyful and purposeful life. Are we willing to leave our addiction behind, come close to God, and accept His invitation to live in His wonderful grace?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for helping me see that You created me for the joy of having a loving relationship with You. Today, I choose You. I choose grace. Help me to fully live in Your amazing grace so I may get to know You and grow strong in Your care. Amen

***Are we
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THURSDAY, JULY 4, 2019

HOSPITALITY AND RECOVERY

Some of us in recovery lack the quality of being hospitable. We do not care to be around others. We give our attention to our own needs and have forgotten, or perhaps never learned, the social skill of thoughtfulness towards others. Our loving God created us to be in relationship with Him and with one another and we are out of sync with our humanness when we behave in other ways.

Starting from scratch, he made the entire human race and made the earth hospitable, with plenty of time and space for living so we could seek after God, and not just grope around in the dark but actually find him. He doesn't play hide-and-seek with us. He's not remote; he's near. (Acts 17:26-27 MSG)

Although we may not vocalize it, some of us tend to think this way, “Why should God and others care about me when I really don’t care about them?” However, we are made to be hospitable and care for one another. Jesus gave us a commandment to love one another. This is not a suggestion. God knows what is best for us and He made us to live in community with one another.

***God knows
what is
best for us
and He
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another.***

This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends. (John 15:12-13 MSG)

Going to a recovery meeting for the first time can be intimidating, but if we are warmly greeted by others we will be encouraged to stay. When attendees share their experience, strength, and hope with us, they are being hospitable, and desire that what they share will help to us.

Love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. (1 Peter 4:8-9 NIV)

Hospitality is the human way of caring for one another. It begins with one person helping another to find their way out of the maze of self-centeredness.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Sometimes I want to hide from others because of the guilt I feel about my past life. Help me to accept Your forgiveness and live in the dignity of being Your child. Help me to put Your Word and Your ways into practice. Help me to be hospitable as I share the experience, strength, and hope I experience in belonging to You. Amen

FRIDAY, JULY 5, 2019

MY LIFE IS UNMANAGEABLE

Why do we continue to do things our own way when it obviously isn't working? Someone has defined insanity as repeatedly doing the same action while expecting a different result. Someone else has coined a slogan that says, "If nothing changes, nothing changes." Doing life on our own without God has led us to empty, lonely, and shame-filled places.

In order for us to understand just how unmanageable our life is without God and how powerless we are to fix ourselves, the Bible uses a clear picture that contrasts a fountain of fresh flowing water with an old container – a cistern – that is dirty and cracked and doesn't even hold the rain water that has flowed into it.

God explains, **"My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water."** (Jeremiah 2:13 NIV)

We've responded to our felt needs with defective short-term solutions and ended up with a more frustrating level of need. While we are filling our lives with chaos and thrashing around in our own panic and distractions, we'll never know real life. God desires to provide power and guidance through His Holy Spirit, so we can have a peaceful and meaningful life that is fruitful and satisfying.

Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." (John 7:37-38 NIV)

Whether we are early in recovery or we've been clean and sober for a time, we need what God is offering us each day. We need to be filled up with God's life-giving truth and the refreshing power of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I don't want my life to remain stale or chaotic and ask that You work in me each day so I may live in the reality of what life brings. Please give me the courage and strength to follow Your direction in all my affairs. Amen

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SATURDAY, JULY 6, 2019

BEFORE YOU SAY I CAN'T, SAY I'LL TRY

When we are being taught something new, we often feel overwhelmed by the process we must follow. We may shy away from learning about something by telling ourselves or others, "I can't" or, "This or that is impossible for me." Our approach to learning to live a sober life after years in addiction often raises a similar response. We need to remind ourselves that with time and determined effort we can succeed, as many before us have. Of course, sobriety may seem impossible to us if we are relying solely on self-will, but when we put our hand into the hand of God and follow His ways, we will find success.

You can hear the victory celebration in the homes of those who live right. The Lord has shown his great power again! (Psalm 118:15 ERV)

**Today,
before
we say,
"I can't"
let's say,
"With
God's
help, I'll
try."**

God has made many promises to those who give their will and life over to His care. Success is achieved by following God's ways rather than our limited human ways. God tells us to bring our old thought patterns to Him for renewal. Inviting God to help us and choosing for His direction brings success and this boosts our self-confidence. Choosing to quote God's word over our faulty thinking is one way to bring about change that lasts.

The weapons we use are not human ones. Our weapons have power from God and can destroy the enemy's strong places. We destroy people's arguments, and we tear down every proud idea that raises itself against the knowledge of God. We also capture every thought and make it give up and obey Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:4-5 ERV)

At times we may be tempted to turn back to our old ways but if we call out to God, He will give us the strength to keep moving forward rather than giving in to defeat. Today, before we say, "I can't" let's say, "With God's help, I'll try."

Don't worry—I am with you. Don't be afraid—I am your God. I will make you strong and help you. I will support you with my right hand that brings victory. (Isaiah 41:10 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am weak, but You are strong. Help me choose to walk in Your will and Your ways in all my affairs and to fully rely on Your strength for victory over all my dependencies. Amen

SUNDAY, JULY 7, 2019

SUNDAY PSALM – LIVING IN UNITY

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore. (Psalm 133:1-3 NIV)

God says it is pleasant for people to live together in unity, that is, in harmony or agreement with one another. How many of us make an effort to live in unity with family, friends, people in meetings, and others? The Bible uses the picture of a physical body to represent this unity. When we surrender our will and our lives to the care of God, He brings us together with others to become one body, the body of Christ. This body is meant to work in harmony just like a physical body. Each part of a physical body is different, but every part is carefully placed by God to function for the good of the whole body.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (1 Corinthians 12:27 NIV)

If, for whatever reason, a part of the physical body should not perform the function it was created for, or performs in excess of its purpose, the whole body suffers. A physical body is healthy when each part is doing what it was created to do. In the body of Christ, God's children live in harmony, and the blessings of God flow when each person is doing what God planned in advance for that person to do.

Today let's consider our part in living in unity with other parts of the body of Christ. Let's avoid problems caused by not doing those things we ought to do, or by doing those things that we are not called to do. Let's try to understand God's purpose for us, even when He places us together with others with whom we seem to have nothing in common. Let's do everything we can today to live in unity as we function in a way that is kind and considerate towards others.

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to live in unity with others so that the many parts of the body of Christ may receive Your blessing. Amen

***How
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pleasant
it is when
God's
people
live
together
in unity!***

Psalm 133:1

MONDAY, JULY 8, 2019

ACCEPTING HARDSHIP AS THE PATHWAY TO PEACE

Everyone faces unwanted hardships and trouble. Some hardship comes because we act in ways that are unwise and end up in circumstances we did not anticipate. Other hardships come because we live in a broken world with people who are struggling and making mistakes just as we are. During those times it's important to face the questions: Does God know what is going on? Does God care? Is God making a way for me through these problems or do I just have to sort things out on my own?

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. The Lord hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles. (Psalm 46:1; 34:17 NLT)

As those who are seeking to live with God in recovery, we have an enormous advantage over many others. We can turn to God in our moments of frustration and uncertainty and find His help in our time of need. Instead of being frustrated and overwhelmed by a problem, we can focus our attention on our caring God who promises stability, peace, and a way forward.

You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you! Trust in the Lord always, for the Lord God is the eternal Rock. (Isaiah 26:3-4 NLT)

Panic blocks many helpful thoughts and solutions to problems. When we face hardship with peace, it's amazing how much clearer the guidance of God's Holy Spirit is heard. It's why, in every circumstance, it's good to turn our will and our life over to the care of God.

Obstacles and problems, even failures, can be opportunities for learning and growth as we experience God's faithfulness. It's not easy, but "accepting hardship as the pathway to peace" can be life changing as our faith and trust grow in the knowledge of God as our eternal Rock.

Prayer: God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference, living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time, accepting hardship as the pathway to peace trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will. Amen

TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2019

POWER IN RELATIONSHIPS

Whether it is a group of bullies on a school playground or an abusive partner behind closed doors, it's never right for one person to push their agenda or desires on another. Some of us who have come out of addiction have lived on either side of being domineering and demanding or submissive and trampled on. We've felt bullied and we've used manipulation to try to pressure others to give us what we want. We've used anger and complaining or lied and hidden our true needs and desires, in order to keep things peaceful with someone else.

God has a better plan for us as we live in relationship with others. God invites us to let go of the fear and co-dependency behind these behaviours and live in loving submission to each other.

In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. (Matthew 7:12, Philippians 2:3, Romans 12:10 NIV)

We need to bring our hearts and actions before God every day and seek His help in determining whether we are being self-centered or forceful in our relationships. We also need to move away from the lie that we are inferior to others. Mutual respect. Mutual service. This is God's heart for us in our relationships.

We need to see ourselves and others as God sees us, recognizing that we live each day for God's agenda rather than for our own or someone else's. As we approach God and build our faith in His goodness, we will know how to be generous with others. God will show us when to step back, how to agree to disagree and do so with honour and respect, and how to value and lift up others without throwing away our dignity.

Only God can teach us how to behave well in each of our relationships.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please take the blinders off my eyes and help me see how I relate to others. Help me to honour you, others, and myself in all I do and say. Amen

We live each day for God's agenda rather than for our own or someone else's.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 10, 2019

FACING TEMPTATION

As God draws us into a deeper relationship with Himself, the devil and his forces of darkness try to make us doubt Him. We need to be on guard. A wise phrase is "know your enemy".

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5:8 NKJV)

One of the most appealing things people desire is education, believing knowledge will give them control over their lives. While education is good, it has no power to comfort or sustain a distressed soul. Only the power of God can strengthen us to endure the hardships of life.

But God loves us deeply. He is full of mercy. So he gave us new life because of what Christ has done. He gave us life even when we were dead in sin. God's grace has saved you. (Ephesians 2:4-5 NIRV)

The devil sees a child of God as an enemy. He attempts to lure us away from God with accusations and suggestions that make us doubt. Only the word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit will give us victory over our enemy. While undergoing temptation Jesus quoted scripture. When we experience temptation we too should pray for strength and speak truth God's truth to our feelings and to our situation.

He [Jesus] himself suffered when he was tempted. Now he is able to help others who are being tempted. Great blessings belong to those who are tempted and remain faithful! After they have proved their faith, God will give them the reward of eternal life. (Hebrews 2:18 NIRV; James 1:12 ERV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I am glad you have experienced what I am going through and that You ever live to intercede for me. Help me to stand firm on Your word and persevere through to victory. Amen

THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2019

EVASIVENESS (HIDING)

At many points in our recovery journey the character defect of evasiveness may begin to surface. We try to keep troubling past events buried in some deep place in our soul. We are evasive when asked to share with others or make a moral inventory. However, the God who created us knows all about us and wants us to be free from the bondage of our past. He tells us that knowing the truth will set us free. Through Jesus, God has made provision for removal of all sin and shame from us.

In the past you offered the parts of your body to be slaves to your immoral and sinful thoughts. The result was that you lived only for sin. In the same way, you must now offer yourselves to be slaves to what is right. Then you will live only for God. (Romans 6:19b ERV)

Both physical and spiritual restoration are painful. The body and spirit have both been damaged by our addictive substances and habits and both require help. Just as medical help is sought for the body, so spiritual help is needed for the soul. Jesus gives us love and forgiveness for buried sin and shame. When we receive all that Jesus has for us, a positive and visible change in our attitude and behaviour will occur.

Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (Lamentations 3:22-23; 1 John 5:14-15 NKJV)

Life with God in recovery is a journey of facing our fears rather than avoiding them, of uncovering hurts rather than burying them. While taking action may feel painful in the beginning, it brings new life and new dignity to all who endure the journey to freedom.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for being evasive about my past life for fear of what others may think. Your word says that perfect love casts out all fear. Please help me experience your perfect love, so that I may be unafraid of the things that hold me captive to my past. Amen

***Through
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and
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FRIDAY, JULY 12, 2019

RESTORED TO SANITY

At some point in our lives we came to an understanding that we could not continue as we were. We longed to have control over chaos and confusion. We tried anger, intimidation, and violence, thinking they would shield us, or help get our needs met. We lied, cheated, and manipulated to try to get our own way. We tried "walking on eggshells", running away, silence, or co-dependently propping up those we feared. None of these things gave us sanity. Our lives were unmanageable, and we knew it. We were powerless to change things for the better.

Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live! You can make this choice by loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. This is the key to your life. (Deuteronomy 30:19-20 NLT)

***God has
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to show us
a way
through
our pain
and
confusion,
to a life
that is
filled with
peace.***

God has promised to show us a way through our pain and confusion, to a life that is filled with peace. God does not lie. Life will be good if we make the choice to do things God's way. Will it all be fixed in a day? No. Will there be challenges that stretch us to face our pain? Yes. Will we need support and encouragement to carry on and do the right thing when we feel like giving up? Yes. Will we be tempted to jump into a short term "solution" that involves familiar coping strategies like anger, lying, silence, or alternate addictions? Yes. Did they work before? No. Will they work now? No. Are we willing to give up handling things in our own way and embrace the new way God has shown us? If not, we need to ask ourselves, why not?

Without surrender to God's ways our lives will remain unmanageable and we will likely return to our old life of frustration and emptiness. However, when we accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord, we are given the power of the Holy Spirit to guide and direct us. He is the power that enables change in our lives.

Prayer: Thank you Jesus, for being willing to die for my sins and restore me to sanity. I accept Your help, forgiveness and healing. As I live according to Your will, I am thankful that the Holy Spirit will direct me in the way of a good, pleasing, and perfect life. Amen.

SATURDAY, JULY 13, 2019

THERE IS A GOD AND I'M NOT IT

Tony Bennet sang a song, "If I Ruled the World". The words of the song speak of what would be put into effect if the singer ruled the world. However, when one observes the expanse of the universe and has some knowledge of the precision required to keep the planets, sun, moon and stars in place, we should be thankful that this is not a task that has been left in the care of a limited human being.

The Lord is high above all nations, His glory above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God, who dwells on high, who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in the heavens and in the earth? (Psalm 113:4-6 NKJV)

Our lives are complex and require God's knowledgeable precision to operate well. When we choose to make our own decisions, we become our own god and our own care giver and supplier. With our limited knowledge of life, it doesn't take long before important things are dangerously "out of sync." Each of us knows deep down inside us that there must be a God, for we really cannot do life alone.

Love God, all you saints; God takes care of all who stay close to him, but he pays back in full those arrogant enough to go it alone. (Psalm 31:23 MSG)

Jesus came to earth so that through His death and resurrection we would be restored to God and live forever. Jesus told us He was going home to prepare a place for us in heaven. Life is so much more than the few years we have on this earth and only God can do all that is necessary to prepare us for this amazing forever life. When we take time to consider these things, we become more aware that there truly is a God and it definitely is not us.

God's home is with people. He will live with them. They will be his people. God himself will be with them and will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, sadness, crying, or pain. All the old ways are gone. (Revelation 21:3-4 ERV)

Prayer: God of Heaven and Earth, You have prepared a place for me to be with You forever. Help me take this sinful world as it is, trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will. Amen

SUNDAY, JULY 14, 2019

SUNDAY PSALM – MAKING AMENDS

O God have mercy on me, for people are hounding me. My foes attack me all day long. I am constantly hounded by those who slander me, and many are boldly attacking me. But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you. I praise God for what he has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me? (Psalm 56:1-4 NLT)

In our life in addiction, we offended many people – family, friends, and even strangers. We lived to meet the needs of our addiction and were concerned only with ourselves. We neglected others' needs. We lied, cheated, and even stole from those around us. We made enemies by our actions. We avoided people because of our behaviour.

When we are ready, we begin to think about making amends and make a list of all persons we have harmed. We may be fearful of making amends to some of those on our list because of the impact our addictive behaviour had on them. We fear that they will not be as willing as God to forgive us for what we have done.

In these challenging moments, like the writer of the Psalm, we trust in God: ***"I praise God for what He has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me?"***

When we put our hand into the hand of God, He will strengthen and support us as we become willing to make amends to those we have harmed. God is always with us. We need never face our problems alone.

See, God has come to save me. I will trust in him and not be afraid. The Lord God is my strength and my song; he has given me victory. (Isaiah 12:2 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your mercy and unfailing love for me. When I am afraid to complete any of the steps in the programs assigned tasks, I will trust in You to strengthen and help me. Amen

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***Each of us
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life alone.***

MONDAY, JULY 15, 2019

MONEY IS NEVER ENOUGH

There is a saying that “money makes the world go around.” What does this mean? We could interpret it to mean that without money everything comes to a standstill. If having money is important to make things happen what if the supply dries up? Does life come to a halt? Jesus told us not to worry about money and yet, when we do not have enough money, we worry.

So I tell you, don't worry about the things you need to live—what you will eat, drink, or wear. Life is more important than food, and the body is more important than what you put on it. Look at the birds. They don't plant, harvest, or save food in barns, but your heavenly Father feeds them. Don't you know you are worth much more than they are? (Matthew 6:25-26 ERV)

Only humans worry about money and their future well-being. The birds and the animals don't seem to worry about money? They don't have sleepless nights thinking about how they will provide for the future. How much does our worrying contribute to what we need?

Those who work hard all day come home and sleep in peace. It is not important if they have little or much to eat. But the rich worry about their wealth and are not able to sleep. (Ecclesiastes 5:15 ERV)

When we lived without the help of God, we managed either legally or illegally to fulfill the demands of our dependencies. Now that we have given our will and life over to the care of God, the great provider, will we continue to worry about what we need? God has promised to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. What we can do for ourselves, He will help us do. Money is not what makes things happen in this world, God is! Let's choose today to trust God and stop worrying about money.

People come into the world with nothing. And when they die, they leave with nothing. They might work hard to get things, but they cannot take anything with them when they die. (Ecclesiastes 5:15 ERV)

Prayer: Loving God, You alone are the great provider. Help me to trust You to meet all my needs. Amen

Jesus told us not to worry about money and yet, when we do not have enough money, we worry.

TUESDAY, JULY 16, 2019

HIDING IN THE SHADOWS

All of us are vulnerable to relapse when we are feeling lonely, frustrated or dissatisfied with life. When our minds are obsessed with shadows from our past, we need to seek help from God, our sponsor, or someone we can trust. We need to be honest about what we are experiencing. The devil's desire today is to steal, kill, and destroy us. He had power over us until we gave our will and life over to the care of God. Now, even though he is no longer our master, he lurks in the shadows seeking an opportunity to restore his power over us.

When sin had power over your life, you were not right with God. What good did you get from the things you are ashamed of now? Those things bring death. But now you are free from the power of sin. You have become a servant for God. Your life is set apart for God-like living. The end is life that lasts forever. (Romans 6:20-22 NLV)

Feeling empty and vulnerable and clinging to thoughts or practices that present us with an opportunity to relapse are signs that the devil is working hard to enslave us again. We must tell ourselves the truth, that giving in to our addiction will bring ruin to our lives once again. Our substance or dependency will not give us the life we are longing for. If it had, we wouldn't be in recovery today. Instead of thinking about relapse, we need to seek help from God and other trusted friends to help us persevere through this temptation.

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

God will give us the will and strength to persevere and have victory over our trials. God desires us to have fullness of life. The devil wants to kill and destroy us. Whom will we choose to trust and obey?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me through the times of trial in my life, and strengthen me to persevere. I want to follow You in all my ways and have fullness of life. Help me to daily affirm the truth, I am no longer a slave to fear, I am a child of God. Amen

WEDNESDAY, JULY 17, 2019

SPEAKING WITH TACT AND SENSITIVITY

In recovery meetings we've heard some people tell "war stories" that made us cringe and which may have triggered something negative in all of us who were listening. Thankfully, most of those who share their experience, strength, and hope do so in a tactful and thoughtful way. It's important to be considerate of others as we speak. We don't need to brag. We simply need to share what God has done for us and how He continues to accompany us on the journey.

You're blessed when you stay on course, walking steadily on the road revealed by God. You're blessed when you follow his directions, doing your best to find him. That's right—you don't go off on your own; you walk straight along the road he set. (Psalm 119:1-3 MSG)

It's important to be sensitive in any response we may make when someone is openly sharing about difficulties they are experiencing. The person may want to identify with another who knows and understands their situation. Even if we think they are co-dependently looking for rescue or still dealing with denial, we need to be tactful and compassionate when we respond to what they are sharing.

Be gracious in your speech. The goal is to bring out the best in others in a conversation, not put them down, not cut them out. (Colossians 4:6 MSG)

Sometimes when a person is doing wrong, we need to gently point them in the right direction. This should always be done with prayer and great sensitivity. Our purpose should always be to encourage.

Tell everyone God's message. Be ready at all times to do whatever is needed. Tell people what they need to do, tell them when they are doing wrong, and encourage them. Do this with great patience and careful teaching. (2 Timothy 4:2 ERV)

By our speech, do we create in others a desire to know God? That is truly speaking with tact and sensitivity.

Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for the mighty work You have done in me. Please give me great tact and sensitivity as I speak of Your grace poured out on me with others. Help me to encourage them in a way that will bring them closer to You. Amen

***By our
speech, do
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others a
desire to
know God?
That is truly
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with tact
and
sensitivity.***

THURSDAY, JULY 18, 2019

TURNING OVER MY WILL AND MY LIFE

The experience of life outside the will and care of God is helplessness and frustration when trials and temptations come our way. The good news is that when we respond to God's gracious offer of new life in relationship with Him, we become His beloved children and all God's resources are made available to us.

This new identity is God's gift to all who believe that Jesus' death on the cross paid the price for forgiveness of all our sins – past, present, and future. As we repent of our self-will and turn our life over to God's care, God's Holy Spirit comes to live within us and empowers us to make choices which follow God's principles for fullness of life. In a way that may surprise us and others, we will become individuals who truly want to please God and find satisfaction in doing so. How does God bring about this incredible transformation in us?

***Turning
our will
and our
life over
to the
care of
God
always
involves
action.***

It is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him. If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. (Hebrews 11:6, 1 John 1:9 NLT)

Turning our will and our life over to the care of God always involves action. If we say that we have entrusted our life to God but no change results in our behaviour, then we are only fooling ourselves. Accepting Jesus' payment for our sins on the cross brings us freedom from the bondage of sin and death plus eternal life with our Heavenly Father. We must pay close attention to the word of God as written in the Bible and allow God's Holy Spirit to direct us in all our affairs. Effective recovery is built on God's principles for living as they shape our thinking and behaving. Also, we must be aware that the powers of evil will battle against our will as they desire to keep us in bondage.

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:21-22 NKJV)

Prayer: Loving God, I don't understand how everything works together for my good but in faith I put my trust in You and rely on what Jesus did for me on the cross. My sins are forgiven. Through Jesus I stand clean and whole in Your presence. Help me to daily walk by faith and not by sight. Amen

FRIDAY, JULY 19, 2019

JUST FOR TODAY – LEAN NOT ON MY OWN UNDERSTANDING

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.

As we learn to live one day at a time, it's essential that we come to God with a willingness and intention to continuously surrender our will and our life into His care. What does that mean? What does a life surrendered to God look like? What steps can we take to implement it in our daily lives?

Trust in the Lord and do good, then you will live safely in the land and prosper. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you. (Psalm 37:3-5 NLT)

To trust God is to live confident that what He says can be relied on. If that's true, the first thing we want to do is find out what God says. That is what daily prayer and meditating on God's word is all about. We get to know the path God sets before us. We learn about what God says works and the harmful thoughts and behaviours that cause us to stumble.

The knowing part is usually the easiest. The difficulty for most of us is trusting God's way when it is different from what we have known or what we think will work. Trusting God rather than our own understanding is a challenge when we are facing people or circumstances that we can't control or realize we need help with. Will we go ahead and do something in fear or panic, or, will we trust God, give up our unknowns, our fears, and our worries, and wait for Him to show us a tried and true path?

Those who trust in themselves are fools, but those who walk in wisdom are kept safe. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 28:26; 3:5-6 NIV)

Prayer: Loving God, help me to walk in the path You have chosen for me, humbly submitting all my unknowns, my frustrations, my worries and fears, as well as my hopes and dreams into Your care. Thank You for leading me forward in the strength that You provide. Amen

***To trust
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SATURDAY, JULY 20, 2019

THINKING LIKE A PEACEMAKER

God invites us to joy and peace, to forgiveness and a loving relationship. Have we allowed ourselves to be loved and encouraged by the living God today? If we have failed to spend time with God we could be setting ourselves up for failure by not allowing Him to fill us up with peace and the strength that is necessary to properly face trials.

Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14 NLT)

***God
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Learning how to let go of our self-centered ways and coming into a lifestyle of making peace with God and others is hard work, particularly in early recovery. There are so many things to learn and unlearn. We have our default ways of acting and reacting and it's difficult for us to adjust to new ways of behaving. As with any new activity, it can be tiring at first as the "muscles of our soul" often feel painful from the strenuous workout. However, this pain signals growth rather than trouble to avoid.

No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way. (Hebrews 12:11 NLT)

God provides everything we need to relate to and be at peace with people who are less than perfect. Instead of engaging in harmful addictive behaviour, God wants to honour us, have us honour others. He wants to fill us with goodness, remove the poison of evil from us, and give us great joy in our relationship with Him. In the strength of God's love, we can then do the hard work of interacting peacefully with others who, like us, are flawed.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I choose to rely on your promise that today I can live in peace as I pursue a life that honours you and others. Help me to submit to your proven ways of interacting in relationships, so my behaviour gives glory to you and blesses others. Amen

SUNDAY, JULY 21, 2019

SUNDAY PSALM – HELP IN TIME OF NEED

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her. She will not fall. God will help her at break of day. (Psalm 46:1-5 NIV)

News reports are filled with every type of disaster we can imagine. We see the terrible impact of earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, and fires. Some people have lost their lives. Others have been displaced. The physical structure of communities has been forever changed. Sadness fills the hearts of residents. Amid the turmoil, we hear reports of those who are determined to rebuild their lives when the time is right. In each community the rebuilding process will require help from outside sources.

Our determination to rebuild our lives in recovery may come from a devastating happening or from the realization that we have fallen to a dark place that we never thought was possible. Overcome by the power of our addiction, we sank lower and lower and were unable to free ourselves from the slavery in which we were captive. Our lives became chaotic and unmanageable and we needed help from a power greater than ourselves to restore us to sanity.

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:16 NIV)

God is on the scene, ready with help in times of trouble. God has spiritual solutions for spiritual problems and practical help for practical issues. We need both. When He is sought, He will show us the way out of our despair and into a purposeful life with Him.

Prayer: Gracious God, I admit my life is unmanageable. In my weakness I come to You for strength to overcome. Today, I turn my will and my life over to Your care. Amen

God has spiritual solutions for spiritual problems and practical help for practical issues.

MONDAY, JULY 22, 2019

FAITHFUL AND DEPENDABLE

In addiction we were often unfaithful to our promises. Many in our family suffered heartache because we were unreliable and did not follow through on our commitments. In our own way we grieved our lack of integrity and buried our feelings of guilt and poor self-image in the recesses of our soul. God wants to heal us so that we may become honourable people who are trustworthy in all our ways.

People with integrity walk safely, but those who follow crooked paths will slip and fall. (Proverbs 10:9 NLT)

God is faithful, completely dependable, always true to His word. God never changes. What is recorded in the Bible as a promise, God will fulfill to us.

God is faithful, completely dependable, always true to His word. God never changes.

Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides. (Psalm 119:89-90 NKJV)

When we make promises to God, our spouse, our children, other loved ones, friends and acquaintances, we usually mean to keep them. However, unseen circumstances may arise, and the promises we made may conflict with our current situation. What do we do when this happens? Will we honour the promises we have made?

If we fail to keep our promises because of selfishness or inconvenience, then we are not acting with integrity. If we acknowledge our unfaithfulness and ask God to help us change, He will forgive us and empower us to live in a new way. God's character will be reflected in our behaviour and we will bless our community. We will become known as one who is faithful and whose word is dependable.

Lord, who is a God like you? You forgive sin. You forgive your people when they do what is wrong. You don't stay angry forever. Instead, you take delight in showing your faithful love to them. (Micah 7:18 NIRV)

Prayer: Loving God, I praise your name for your unfailing love and faithfulness; for your promises are backed by all the honor of your name. Amen (Psalm 138:2 NLT)

TUESDAY, JULY 23, 2019

IDENTIFYING AND FACING DYSFUNCTION

For a variety of reasons, many of us have an underlying structure of disorders that is damaging to us and to others. When a person is ill, the first step in getting well is to acknowledge that something is wrong, and then go to a doctor who can diagnose the cause and offer a treatment plan.

We sometimes tend to think we know all we need to know to answer these kinds of questions—but sometimes our humble hearts can help us more than our proud minds. We never really know enough until we recognize that God alone knows it all. (1 Corinthians 8:2-3 MSG)

As formerly self-directed addicts we need to acknowledge to God that we are hurting and are unable to diagnose and heal ourselves. We admit that we are not sure of the source of our problem, but we trust that God knows and cares. We thought the pain and dysfunction experienced in our addiction was the problem but now realize there are other underlying conditions. We need to listen to the diagnosis and treatment plan offered to us and agree to act on it. This will eliminate the need to mask the pain with our own destructive choice of medication.

He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle's! (Psalm 103:3-5 NLT)

Thank God for a clear diagnosis and treatment plan for our sinful self-centered ways of living separate from Him. Thank God for a wonderful Saviour in Jesus who forgives our sins and heals our diseases. Thank God for the principles of a healthy lifestyle which are clearly defined in the Bible. Thank God for the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, enabling us to put into practice, and experience the functional, purposeful life God created us to live.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I need Your help to recognize and overcome my lingering dysfunctional thinking and behaviour. Thank You that You are at work within me giving me the desire, and the power, to do what pleases You. Please help me to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with You, my God. Amen

WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 2019

IMMORAL THINKING

Many people who come into recovery seeking victory over drugs and alcohol find themselves relapsing into addictive lifestyles when they refuse to obey God's teaching on sexual purity. When it comes to murder, everyone recognizes that it is wrong and something to be avoided and punished. Jesus puts sexual sin in the same category as murder. Jesus speaks about sexual purity in a way that includes not just our actions but also our thoughts and feelings.

For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander. These are what defile you. (Matthew 15:19-20, NLT)

We are challenged to inventory the way we talk, the way we think, the jokes we tell, the offhanded comments we make. These fit in the category of impurity of mind and God clearly warns us against such activity. Looking at pornographic images on the television, in movies, on the internet and in magazines is activity outside of God's plan for us. It leads us to immoral thinking and lustful desires.

Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. (Ephesians 5:3-4 NLT)

God wants us to be whole and filled with peace and this only comes when we are following His ways in every area of life. Impossible standards? On our own, YES! But God is faithful to do in us what we cannot do for ourselves.

Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful. (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You have called me to be holy because You are holy. Give me the strength to live in sexual purity so that I may honour You with my body. Help me keep my eyes from viewing anything that would raise lustful passion within me and surrender all immoral thoughts to You for cleansing. Amen

We thought the pain and dysfunction experienced in our addiction was the problem but now realize there are other underlying conditions.

Jesus speaks about sexual purity in a way that includes not just our actions but also our thoughts and feelings.

THURSDAY, JULY 25, 2019

WHAT'S IN AN INVENTORY?

God created man and woman in His own image and together they lived in loving relationship with Him and with each other. This was the foundation that God established for a solid and satisfying life here on earth.

Jesus said: ***Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.*** (Mark 12:30-31 NIV)

The way we take an inventory of our life starts with identifying those attitudes and actions that either help or hinder us from loving God, others, and ourselves. This applies to reflection on our daily living as well as a formal inventory when working the steps.

Put on your new nature and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him. (1 Corinthians 2:9; Colossians 3:10 NLT)

To live in God's new way for us rather than in our own self-will we need to: 1) Be convinced that God knows everything good and evil in us but still loves us. 2) Let go of our faulty understanding of how life works and become willing to learn a new way from God. 3) Retrain our minds in the principles found in God's word and ask the Holy Spirit to instruct us in how to apply them in each situation that arises. 4) Ask God to show us how to love with a pure heart and to help us be obedient to Him in all our thoughts and actions.

As our relationship with God is restored, we will be renewed and strengthened to build healthy human relationships.

Prayer: Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24 NIV) *Amen*

The way we take an inventory of our life starts with identifying those attitudes and actions that either help or hinder us from loving God, others, and ourselves.

FRIDAY, JULY 26, 2019

WHEN TO BE THANKFUL

It's a wonderful practice each day to take time to be grateful for all that we have, and all that God is promising us. This principle is evident when we read the Bible.

They were also to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord. They were to do the same in the evening. (1 Chronicles 23:30 NIV)

Whether we feel great when we get out of bed, or wish we could turn over, snuggle down, and sleep a few more hours, one of the first spiritual practices of our day needs to be looking around us and recognizing with gratitude all that we have been given. At the end of the day many of us let our tiredness get the better of us and we fail to take just a few moments to reflect on the good things that God did for us throughout the day, and the ways He helped us in everything we faced. Even if we don't write these things in a journal, just taking time to bring them to mind builds joy and confidence within us.

Have I actually taken the opportunity to bring myself to a moment of reflection that lets gratitude rise in my heart?

Jesus modelled giving thanks when life was overwhelming and everyone around Him was struggling. When a huge crowd was with Him and the resources available for feeding everyone were totally insufficient, Jesus gave thanks. The result was an amazing miracle. What might God do if, when we are faced with overwhelming challenges, we take the time to bring what we have before Him, and give thanks?

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied. (Mark 6:41-42 NIV)

Most of us wouldn't question the fact that it's good to be grateful on a regular basis but the question for each of us today is, have I actually taken the opportunity to bring myself to a moment of reflection that lets gratitude rise in my heart and in my conscious awareness? This is how we find strength. This is how our faith in God's goodness multiplies in our hearts.

Prayer: Thank you God for being attentive to my needs in the situations I face throughout each day. Help me to practice gratitude so I can be filled with faith and live in conscious awareness of your generous heart towards me. *Amen*

SATURDAY, JULY 27, 2019

GROWING AND CHANGING

There are seasons in each of our lives which are fruitful and others which are not. Some plants and trees are evergreen and always have the appearance of life in them. Other trees and shrubs look rather drab and dead in the winter months. Then, as the season changes, they come to life as leaves begin to bud and grow, change colour, and produce fruit. When we feel drab and spiritually dead, we may be envious of those who always appear evergreen and have life in them. At these times we need to trust God and acknowledge that He has unique plans for each season of our lives.

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

God wants our lives to be filled with fruitfulness. He has created us with life giving abilities and talents. When our lives are in the care of God, His Holy Spirit works in us to produce abundant and good fruit at the right time.

Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that does not produce fruit. He also trims every branch that produces fruit to prepare it to produce even more. (John 15:1-2 ERV)

The purpose of our lives may have been lost under the brush and weeds of addiction, but God will remove or heal everything that takes away life and growth. It takes the seasoned eye of a gardener to know what's still alive and healthy and what needs to be pruned. It takes God's wisdom to identify the character defects and shortcomings that restrict our growth. Are we willing to allow God to prune us in order that we might have life and fruitfulness in His Kingdom?

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Glory be to him, now and forever! Amen. (2 Peter 3:18 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I give You permission to prune me so that I may grow in grace and the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour and be fruitful for Your Kingdom. Amen

SUNDAY, JULY 28, 2019

SUNDAY PSALM – PROMISES THAT ARE FULFILLED

The nations are in chaos, and their kingdoms crumble! God's voice thunders, and the earth melts! The Lord of Heaven's Armies is here among us; the God of Israel is our fortress. Come, see the glorious works of the Lord: See how he brings destruction upon the world. He causes wars to end throughout the earth. He breaks the bow and snaps the spear; he burns the shields with fire. (Psalm 46:6-9 NLT)

One would think the first sentence above came from today's newscast instead of the Bible. It seems most countries in the world are struggling with internal and external problems. The people elect new governments believing they will fulfill the promises the candidates made during the election. Elected leaders seek to annul agreements that previous governments believed in and worked to accomplish. Times change and the new government becomes the old government, and on and on and on it goes.

God's word never changes and, as we continue to follow His principles for life, we find we are never disappointed.

When we admitted that our lives had become unmanageable, we sought help. We came to believe that God is the power greater than ourselves who can restore us to sanity. We then became willing to turn our will and our lives over to His care. God made us promises and has faithfully fulfilled them. God's word never changes and, as we continue to follow His principles for life, we find that we are never disappointed. Jesus said, in this world we would have trials and sorrows and He was not wrong. He also told us to live in peace and not fear, because He has overcome the world.

I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world. (John 16:33 NLT)

When our behaviour reflects the fact that we have put our faith in God and trust Him to keep His promises, we will have a stable new life that will last forever.

Prayer: Loving God, You have proved Yourself faithful in all Your ways. Help me to rest in Your promises that are backed by the honour of Your name. Amen

MONDAY, JULY 29, 2019

WHERE TO LOOK WHEN I AM LOST

Jesus was often challenged by the self-righteous actions of some of the religious leaders who saw themselves as guardians of God's law. He did not approve of their religious pride or their blindness to the needs of ordinary citizens and sinners.

Many tax collectors and sinners came to listen to Jesus. Then the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to complain, "Look, this man welcomes sinners and even eats with them!" (Luke 15:1-2 ERV)

Jesus told people a story – a parable – to help them understand why He was sent into the world. Jesus said that if a man owned a hundred sheep and one of them wandered from the flock, the owner would leave the ninety-nine in the field and go and search for the one sheep that was lost. When the sheep was found the man would rejoice with his friends and neighbours.

Then Jesus made a connection between the sheep and us: ***In the same way, I tell you, heaven is a happy place when one sinner decides to change. There is more joy for that one sinner than for 99 good people who don't need to change.*** (Luke 15:7 ERV)

We are like the lost sheep who wandered away from our Heavenly Father. The religious leaders saw themselves as the 99 good people who did not need to change. Some of us are like them. We look on and judge what Jesus has done for us but fail to acknowledge that Jesus is our only way back to God. By acceptance of Jesus' death and resurrection we can be free from sin and adopted into God's family. Today, if we choose to turn our will and our life over to God's care, heaven will be a happy place.

Here is what Christ wants us to beg you to do. Come back to God! Christ didn't have any sin. But God made him become sin for us. So we can be made right with God because of what Christ has done for us. (2 Corinthians 5:20-21 NIRV)

Prayer: Loving God, I have wandered and know I am lost without You. I accept what Jesus did to restore me into Your family. Help me to stay close and follow You in all my ways. Amen

The religious leaders saw themselves as the 99 good people who did not need to change. Some of us are like them.

TUESDAY, JULY 30, 2019

SUMMER

It's summertime and the bright evenings encourage many of us to enjoy outdoor activities. Part of our enjoyment is having a barbeque outdoors with salads and other delicious picnic food. The God who created us to enjoy life reminds us of the joy we can have each day when we invite Him to be with us.

Open your mouth and taste, open your eyes and see how good God is. Blessed are you who run to him. (Psalm 34:8 MSG)

Warm days in the sunshine make us thirsty. We are reminded by medical doctors and others to drink lots of water. If we become dehydrated, we may become faint or confused. It's also important on busy summer days that we keep ourselves well-watered with the scriptures. The word of God invites us to seek God's healing and forgiveness to refresh us and bring us peace.

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." (John 7:37-38 NKJV)

Some of us, for various reasons, are unable to get outside and enjoy the summer weather. God wants us to know that He cares about our experience of life today and our limitations or vulnerabilities. He wants us to find our security and safety in His ongoing presence with us. God knows all about us and His desire is that we call on Him for help in our time of need.

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:16 NIV)

The summer, like the flowers or our troubles, will not last forever. If we invite God to be with us in all seasons of our life, He will never disappoint us.

Prayer: Gracious God, I am thankful that you care for me on summer days and in all seasons of my life. Help me to put my hope and trust in Your faithful promises no matter what my circumstances or my physical condition may be. Thank You for my life. Help me to bring joy to Your heart in all I do and say. Amen

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2019

SECURITY OR CHANCE

Often in recovery we are not sure where the future is going to take us, and it makes us fearful. In the past we used our addiction to help boost our confidence or blot out reality so we could survive. In sobriety, blurred images of ourselves come to life and we suffer the shame of the path we chose to follow. Thoughts of defeat tell us we will never be able to live securely in the new life God is offering us. The alternative, however, is going back to a life guided by our own self-will and living in insecurity and chance. We are at a crossroad, which path will we choose?

So if you find life difficult because you're doing what God said, take it in stride. Trust him. He knows what he's doing, and he'll keep on doing it. (1 Peter 4:19 MSG)

If we choose the path that God has planned for us, we are assured that God knows the way and He will guide us. If we choose the path of chance, we will struggle to find our way, and we will be alone as we walk in it. The unknown is not unknown to God and He will make our way safer than any other way that may seem more familiar and known to us.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
(Psalm 119:105 NKJV)

If we are looking to people, money, or any other thing for our security, we need to change our focus and look to the Lord of heaven and earth. God will be our security. God is faithful and has the power to do everything He has promised us.

God guards you from every evil, he guards your very life. He guards you when you leave and when you return, he guards you now, he guards you always. (Psalm 121:7-8 MSG)

Prayer: Loving God, I confess that my own way does not work, and I am fearful of what the future holds for me. Please strengthen me to believe and trust in Your word and follow You in all my ways. Amen

NOTES

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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.

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