

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



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

PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

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

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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.

HAPPY CANADA DAY

Canada is a nation founded on principles that honour the God who created us. Several scriptures are carved into stones in the parliament buildings in Ottawa. They remind all Canadians that we are powerless over many things and without God our lives are unmanageable.

Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (Ephesians 6:13 NKJV) These words are written around the altar in the memorial chapel in the Peace Tower. We all face temptations and battles each day, and we need everything that God has given us so we can stand strong. On our own, we are powerless.

Carved on the wall in the same memorial chapel beside a list of wars in which Canadians have fought are the words: ***If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.*** (Psalm 139:8-10 NKJV) All Canadians are called to face the powers of evil and darkness that would seek to destroy our nation and the lives of those we love.

Written on the wall outside the Peace Tower are these words. ***Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; But happy is he who keeps the law. He [God] shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.*** (Proverbs 29:18, Psalm 72:8 NKJV). We all need to grow in our conscious awareness of God's plan for us and our country and, together with faithful people across this land, live and work so God is honoured in every province and territory.

As we sing our National Anthem today, let's join our voices and our hearts together in prayer as we sing, "God keep our land glorious and free." We often say in Recovery meetings "When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that, I am responsible." For Canada to remain glorious and free, every Canadian needs to step up, call out to God for help, and do our part. For that we are all responsible.

Prayer: Gracious God, Please keep our land glorious and free. Help me to do my part as I live as a person who honours You, blesses my family and makes the lives of my neighbours better. Help me to live this responsibility each day with grace and joy. Amen

***God keep
our land
glorious
and free.
O Canada
we stand
on guard
for thee.***

SELF-CONTROL

The new birth we receive when we give our will and life over to the care of God is the end of our old life dominated by sinful thoughts, formed in an unspiritual mind. Being born again means we begin a new life in Christ. As our spiritual mind is awakened to the ways of God, new spiritual qualities form in us, and self-control is one of those. As we pray and meditate on God's Word, the Holy Spirit gives us knowledge of the ways of God and we live fruitful lives as we trust and obey the Spirit's guidance

God's Spirit makes us loving, happy, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled. There is no law against behaving in any of these ways. (Galatians 5:22-23 CEV)

As we learn new ways of thinking and behaving, our desire will be to please God in all our affairs.

The Bible tells us to consider ourselves dead to sin. When we first set out on our spiritual journey in recovery, we often do not feel dead to sin. Our old ways and obsessive thoughts keep coming to mind, tempting us to satisfy their desires. This is where we need to exert the discipline of self-control and stand firm on God's Word, reminding ourselves that we are dead to our old self with its passions and desires, for they have been crucified with Christ.

And because we belong to Christ Jesus, we have killed our selfish feelings and desires. (Galatians 5:24 CEV)

It is our minds that need to be controlled and renewed by the truth that we are new creations who do not need to feed our character defects. The way we think impacts our behaviour which is why we need to improve our daily conscious contact with God, praying to know His will and have the power to carry it out. As we learn new ways of thinking and behaving, our desire will be to please God in all our affairs.

Don't be like the people of this world, but let God change the way you think. Then you will know how to do everything that is good and pleasing to him. (Romans 12:2 CEV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is to grow in the truth of who I am in Christ Jesus. Please help me be self-controlled in all my thinking and behaving for I want to follow Your principles in all my affairs. Amen

MISSING THE POINT ABOUT MISTAKES

Trying to be perfect is a mean task master yet many of us live in the fear of making mistakes and hide in shame and addictive behaviour when we stumble.

Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. (Proverbs 11:2 NLT)

Mistakes are a part of life. Thomas Edison failed 100 times before he finally got the light bulb right. Henry Ford went broke 5 times before he successfully manufactured and sold cars. Michael Jordan missed more than 9000 shots during his famous basketball career, including 26 times he was given the ball at the last second of the game and missed. Life is full of mistakes, but the winners are those who learn from them and try again.

The Lord takes good care of all those who fall. He lifts up all those who feel helpless. (Psalm 145:14 NIRV)

To learn from our mistakes means we look at what we have done wrong and think about how we might improve in future efforts. We need to do the best we can. We need to be humble when we do not know something and ask questions or seek professional help. We need to give our attention to what we are doing and avoid distractions. We need to learn from those who have been successful and ask for input from those who have walked the journey ahead of us. We need to take time to reflect on a task or on our day and see if anything went wrong, and if something did, promptly admit it.

Even if good people fall seven times, they will get back up. (Proverbs 24:16a CEV)

If we make a mistake the worst thing we can do is pretend it never happened. It does no good to bluster our way around it or try to hide it. The quicker we admit we got it wrong, the quicker we can build on the lesson learned. Let's get active and try, and then try again, until we get things right.

If you don't confess your sins, you will be a failure. But God will be merciful if you confess your sins and give them up. (Proverbs 28:13 CEV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to see my mistakes from Your perspective. When I stumble help me to learn a lesson, say sorry, get up, live in today, and move on with You. Amen

Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance

Proverbs 1:5 NIV

JUSTICE AND MERCY AND RECOVERY

REPRESS AND DENY

Depending on the situation we sometimes find ourselves caught up in the tension between our desire for justice or mercy. For those who wrong us we swing towards the desire for justice. When we see our own failures, we long for mercy.

To cope with living an addictive lifestyle we often repressed our moral thinking and denied the downward trend we were on. We made excuses for our behavior and convinced ourselves that we were not as bad as others made out. Our dependency enabled us to selectively forget our responsibilities and we lived in an unreal world where we refused to admit the changes in our personality.

He [God] loves whatever is just and good; the unfailing love of the Lord fills the earth. (Psalm 33:5 NLT)

You have heard my predictions and seen them fulfilled, but you refuse to admit it. Oh, that you had listened to my commands! Then you would have had peace flowing like a gentle river and righteousness rolling over you like waves in the sea. (Isaiah 48:6a, 18 NLT)

Unfailing love and truth have met together.

Justice and mercy are both aspects of God’s character. For justice to be justice the guilty must be punished. We are all sinners. We’ve all broken God’s laws. We all stand guilty. God cannot ignore our wrongdoing. We have harmed ourselves, others, and our relationship with God. We have trampled carelessly over precious things and that matters to God. Our sin must be punished with its appropriate penalty – death. On the cross, Jesus mercifully took that death on Himself and offered us life with Him forever in loving relationship.

In recovery, avoiding reality will hinder us from having the meaningful, purposeful life that we desire. Feelings of anxiety about our former lifestyle will surface and we need to be willing to put aside defense mechanisms and be honest about what is truly going on inside us. The road to addiction is often paved with dishonesty about events that negatively impacted our lives. The truth is, God made us and knows us and nothing is hidden from His sight.

Avoiding reality will hinder us from having the meaningful, purposeful life that we desire.

Righteousness and peace have kissed!

When people sin, they earn what sin pays—death. But God gives his people a free gift—eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23 ERV)

You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I’m far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. (Psalm 139:2-3 NLT)

Psalm 85:10 NLT

Without a clear picture of our own sinfulness and its awful consequences we will never find it in our hearts to be merciful to others. It is only in the deep gratitude for God’s forgiveness that we can hold our heads high and love others as we have been loved.

To survive in our home environment, we may have avoided things we were unable to cope with and were afraid our peers might find out about. This situation may have caused us to become violent towards others or retreat from them. Whichever way we reacted, we were repressing and denying our true self. Letting ourselves be known as the person God created us to be, and not hiding from our fears, enables us to live the fulfilling life God intended.

As those who live with God in recovery, we now look at our own life, take inventory to check if we are doing what is right, if we are showing mercy, and if we are walking humbly with God. Where we are wrong, we promptly admit it and allow God to show mercy towards us and grant us His forgiveness.

The Lord has shown you what is good. He has told you what he requires of you. You must act with justice. You must love to show mercy and you must be humble as you live in the sight of your God. (Micah 6:8 NIRV)

My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don’t lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body. (Proverbs 4:20-22 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, No one knows about justice and mercy like You do. Thank You for taking care of the just requirements for my sin by giving Jesus to pay in full all that I owe. The love and mercy You have for me is amazing. Please help me to show the same love and mercy I have received to other broken human beings. Amen

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You made me and You know me. Help me to follow Your principles in all my affairs so I can truly be the person You created me to be. Amen

WHAT IS A FRIEND?

We hang around with all sorts of people in a variety of situations. We “friend” people on social media but what is a true friend? How do we recognize a true friend and how can we be a friend to someone else?

The sweet smell of incense can make you feel good, but true friendship is better still. Just as iron sharpens iron, friends sharpen the minds of each other. (Proverbs 27:9, 17 CEV)

There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.

John 15:13-14
NLT

Friends bring colour to our black and white world. They bring something sweet to our day or our memories. Friends are those we enjoy being with, find ourselves being more truthful with, feel comfortable with most of the time, and want to have around us to share both our joys and sorrows. Friends often share common interests and draw things out of one another that would otherwise remain hidden. With friends we are often more willing to try new things and we often accomplish more together than on our own. True friends watch out for each other, share with each other, and even make sacrifices for each other.

You can trust a friend who corrects you, but kisses from an enemy are nothing but lies. Don’t desert an old friend of your family or visit your relatives when you are in trouble. A friend nearby is better than relatives far away. (Proverbs 27:6, 10 CEV)

True friends tell us the truth, not just what we want to hear or is convenient in the moment. They do not beat up on us with the truth but find the right way at the right time to confront us with things we need to hear. There is a wisdom and depth of caring from a friend that is to be valued even though we feel challenged by them in the moment. We need to keep true friends close and learn from them, strengthened by their loyalty and honesty.

God offers us His friendship today. The one who knows us best, loves us most, and has done more for us than anyone else, invites us to intimate relationship with Him today. To accept His invitation is our choice.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am grateful for friends and all they contribute to the joy and stability of my life. You are the friend who stays closer than a brother and I want to share my life with You. Help me to listen to You and obey all You have to teach me. Amen

SELF-SUPPORTING – PERSONALLY AND IN THE GROUP

One of the amazing transformations that we experience when we have spent some time in recovery from active addiction is that we learn how to become self-supporting. Instead of always expecting someone to rescue us with a hand-out, we learn how to not only pay our own way but also to contribute to the needs of others.

May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands. (Psalm 90:17 NIV)

Our recovery is our responsibility, not something that we expect someone else to do for us. As we recover, we learn how to work hard and little by little we see the fruit of our labour. Working hard and providing for ourselves and our families is both the will of God and the provision of God.

Yet we hear that some of you are living in laziness, refusing to work, and wasting your time in gossiping. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we appeal to such people—we command them—to quiet down, get to work, and earn their own living. (1 Thessalonians 3:11-12 TLB)

We practice being self-supporting in our group life as well as in our personal recovery. We learn how to care for each other and how to “love our neighbour as ourselves” by putting some money in the basket when it goes around in a meeting. We express the value of this principle in what is described in the Responsibility Statement: *When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.* (1965 AA Convention Literature)

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God. Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans. (2 Corinthians 3:5 NKJV; Proverbs 16:3 NIV)

It is God who gives us the skill to do a specific work. It is also God who gives us the will and the power to get to work and get the job done. We are created by God to be people who use the gifts God has given us. When we live responsibly, God will abundantly bless us.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for working in me and transforming me to do the work that You have created me to do. Help me to be faithful and trusting, as well as responsible and generous, in my work environment and wherever I meet with others. Amen

Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

AA Tradition 7

FEARLESSLY BRINGING EVERYTHING TO THE LIGHT

When we begin a searching and fearless moral inventory, we often list the obvious things we know are not in keeping with God's will. For the inventory to be a fearless and moral one we need to allow ourselves to look at those events in our life which we have chosen to keep hidden in the darkness of our soul. These are usually events that caused us to feel guilt and shame and which we want to keep hidden from others.

Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief. Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you.
(Psalm 143:1-2 NIV)

For the inventory to be a fearless moral inventory we need to allow ourselves to look at those events in our life which we have chosen to keep hidden in the darkness of our soul.

Because of our fear of Step 5, completing an all-inclusive moral inventory is intimidating for it means revealing those things we have kept hidden to another human being. As fear overwhelms us, we often choose to do a partial inventory rather than bring to light those things that cause us guilt and shame. We forget the importance of the first three steps which brought the power of God into our lives. If we believe God is who He says He is, that through Jesus all our sins have been forgiven, and that the Holy Spirit of God now lives within us, then we need not fear a human being.

The enemy pursues me, he crushes me to the ground; he makes me dwell in the darkness like those long dead. So my spirit grows faint within me; my heart within me is dismayed. (Psalm 143:3-4 NIV)

The enemy of our soul wants us to live in fear and keep the things that cause us pain hidden. We will sink under the weight of guilt if we choose to allow these events to remain in darkness. Jesus came into the world as a light so that

those who believe in Him will not stay in darkness.

I came into this world as a light. I came so that everyone who believes in me will not stay in darkness. (John 12:46 ERV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Please help me make a truthful moral inventory so I can be free from the power of the evil one. I believe that You are the light of the world and I want to walk in the light of Your presence ever with me. Amen

WHO IS THE GOD WHO CAN RESTORE US?

When we think of God, how do we imagine Him to be? Do we see Him as a judge ready to pass sentence on us when we do wrong, or do we see Him as the ever-loving God who has compassion on us and desires to care for us?

The person who wrote the following Psalm saw God as all powerful and praised Him for His majesty and glory. He also saw God with angels at His command ready to minister to those who put their trust in Him. Only through prayer and meditation on God's word in the Bible do we begin to see God as He truly is.

Praise the Lord, my soul! O Lord, my God, how great you are! You are clothed with majesty and glory; you cover yourself with light. You have spread out the heavens like a tent and built your home on the waters above. You use the clouds as your chariot and ride on the wings of the wind. You use the winds as your messengers and flashes of lightning as your servants. You have set the earth firmly on its foundations, and it will never be moved. (Psalm 104:1-5 GNT)

The way the writer describes how God gets around is like a scene from a space movie. The truth is God made the mind of humans who conceive fictional space travel, but the reality is that God moves in ways that are beyond the most incredible things humans can understand and even dream about. When we study the Bible, we will be amazed at how the earth and the heavens react to the presence of God when He chooses to make Himself known.

Often in life and even in recovery, we dwell on our past and allow the evil one to bring guilt and shame over what has already been forgiven. Why not throw off this bondage and focus on getting to know the amazing God to whom we have surrendered our will and our life. Remember, this all-powerful God is our Heavenly Father who takes great delight in us, His precious children.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for rescuing me from darkness and bringing me into the light of Your presence. As I meditate on the Scriptures please reveal Yourself to me, so that I may taste and see how good You really are. Amen

Only through prayer and meditation on God's word in the Bible do we begin to see God as He truly is.

ANGER MANAGEMENT 101

When we sober up and come into recovery, most of us quickly recognize that we have an anger problem. Losing our temper over something said or done and allowing anger to take control does great damage. While we may think that expressing anger is a sign of strength, it is actually allowing our weakness to show. For us to get well we need to learn new ways to handle stressful, irritating, and fearful circumstances.

Don't become angry quickly. Anger lives in the hearts of foolish people.
(Ecclesiastes 7:9 NIRV)

God's word tells us that selfishness is at the root of much of our anger.

It is equally damaging to keep anger bottled up inside. It hurts and keeps on hurting us and too often turns to resentment and bitterness that leads to emotional and physical illness. The longer we allow anger to live in us, the less effective we will be in the work that we were created to do that will bring us joy and satisfaction.

My dear friends, you should be quick to listen and slow to speak or to get angry. If you are angry, you cannot do any of the good things that God wants done. (James 1:19-20 CEV)

Most anger management programs train us to deal with anger that has risen within us. God wants us to go one level deeper and let Him help us deal with the improper desires that fuel the rise. God's word tells us that selfishness is at the root of much of our anger. God's best anger management tool is prayer – to tell God what is going on and ask God for what we need.

Do you know where your fights and arguments come from? They come from the selfish desires that make war inside you. You want things, but you don't get them. So you kill and are jealous of others. But you still cannot get what you want. So you argue and fight. You don't get what you want because you don't ask God. (James 4:1-2 ERV)

We are too familiar with getting what we want when we want it. With God's help we can be gracious and patient with others because we have learned to trust God for what we need.

Prayer: Loving God, forgive me for my selfishness and impatience which fuel my irritation and angry outbursts. Help me to bring my problems to You in prayer and receive the help and direction You are willing to give, so that peace may reign in my heart. Amen

PRAYER – FORGIVING AS WE HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN

Jesus said that the greatest commandment is, love God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind. And the second is like it: love our neighbor as we love ourselves. When we accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour, God forgave all our sins. Through prayer and reading the scriptures, we began a loving relationship with God and our hearts were filled with thanks for all that He had done for us.

Then he (Jesus) took a cup, gave thanks to God, and gave it to them. "Drink it, all of you," he said; "this is my blood, which seals God's covenant, my blood poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (Matthew 26:27-28 GNT)

We know about God's great love for us and our love for Him, but how do we feel about loving our neighbour, especially a person who has harmed us? Jesus told a story about an unforgiving servant to teach us how we are to forgive as we have been forgiven. The story tells of a servant who was unable to pay his huge debt owed to the king and the king generously forgave the debt. Then he went out and met a fellow servant who owed him a small debt in comparison. This forgiven servant was unwilling to forgive his fellow servant and had him put in prison. The king was not happy when he heard this and had the unforgiving servant put in prison where he was turned over to the torturers.

And Jesus concluded, "That is how my Father in heaven will treat every one of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart." (Matthew 18:35 GNT)

God's great love for us is the reason Jesus came into the world to pay our sin debt and restore our relationship with God. Jesus taught us to pray and ask God to forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors. If we are unwilling to forgive our debtors, how can we pray this prayer and expect God to forgive us?

And when you stand and pray, forgive anything you may have against anyone, so that your Father in heaven will forgive the wrongs you have done. (Mark 11:25 GNT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that I struggle to forgive those who have harmed me. In Your love, fill me with the grace to forgive others as I have been forgiven by You. Amen

Jesus taught us to pray and ask God to forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors.

LIFE – SWIFT AS A RACING RIVER

Moses, the man whom God appointed to bring His chosen people out of slavery in Egypt wrote the following Psalm. He looked back over the generations of Israelites and noted the comfort God had been to them through the trials and troubles that preceded their entry into the promised land. Moses spoke of God as being eternal and unchanging and our human lives as being swift as a racing river before we turn back to the dust from which we were created.

Lord, through all the generations you have been our home! Before the mountains were created, before the earth was formed, you are God without beginning or end. You speak, and man turns back to dust. A thousand years are but as yesterday to you! They are like a single hour! We glide along the tides of time as swiftly as a racing river and vanish as quickly as a dream. We are like grass that is green in the morning but mowed down and withered before the evening shadows fall. (Psalm 90:1-6 TLB)

How are we going to spend our appointed time on earth?

God made men and women in His image and gave us free will to follow the plans He had for us. He prepared the earth for us to live in and enjoy. We were in God’s plan before we were even conceived in our Mother’s womb and His plan included when and where we would be born. We may not know the generations before us, but God does. When we rebelled against God’s will, God made a way for us to be forgiven and reconciled with Him through Jesus. God is always present, always watching, and always inviting us to follow His ways.

From one man he made all the people of the world. Now they live all over the earth. He decided exactly when they should live. And he decided exactly where they should live. (Acts 17:26 NIRV)

God is without beginning or end. Eternity has no time limitation. A thousand years in our time-controlled world are not even one minute in God’s timeless world. We have a few earthly years to live before our bodies turn back to dust. How are we going to spend our appointed time on earth? Are we going to live in the will of our loving God or in self-will? Our eternal dwelling place rests on whose will we choose to obey.

Prayer: Eternal God, I choose to give my will and life into Your care. When my time on earth is done, my desire is to be at home with You forever in Your timeless dwelling place. Amen

GETTING HELP IN OUR POWERLESSNESS

When we realized our powerlessness over our dependency and came into recovery, our daily routine started to change. We had already admitted to a life-draining addiction and now we knew we needed to find a new orderly way of life. The events that formerly made up our day were left behind, and a new schedule began to develop. Days got planned around scheduled appointments and meetings to attend.

Quit dabbling in sin. Purify your inner life. Quit playing the field. Hit bottom, and cry your eyes out. The fun and games are over. Get serious, really serious. Get down on your knees before the Master; it’s the only way you’ll get on your feet. (James 4:9-10 MSG)

When a doctor diagnoses someone with a serious illness, their daily routine is changed to one of seeing more doctors and scheduled treatments. To get well they need to do those things that the specialists say will work. In our case we need to work with those who are knowledgeable in recovery and the process that works so that we can get clean and stay sober.

Now it’s time to change your ways! Turn to face God so he can wipe away your sins, pour out showers of blessing to refresh you, and send you the Messiah he prepared for you, namely, Jesus. (Acts 3:19-20 MSG)

If a person wants to get well, they need to schedule time to improve their conscious contact with God and for appointments with those who are experienced in the recovery process. No matter how difficult we may find our new life routine, when we call on God for help, He will answer us and help us find a safe path to a purposeful life.

You lead me and give me good advice, and later you will lead me to glory. (Psalm 73:24 ERV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I know that I need help to make it in recovery. When difficulties come my way and I feel weak, please help me to rely on Your strength to stay the course and get well. Amen

The events that formerly made up our day were left behind, and a new schedule began to develop.

KINDNESS and COMPASSION

God is kind and compassionate. Knowing and believing that God tenderly watches over us with compassion in whatever circumstances we are in will allow our hearts to be filled with peace as we navigate vulnerable days in recovery. Comfort and healing for our pain will flow from the knowledge that God really does care for us.

I myself taught Israel how to walk, leading him along by the hand. But he doesn't know or even care that it was I who took care of him. I led Israel along with my ropes of kindness and love. I lifted the yoke from his neck, and I myself stooped to feed him. (Hosea 11:3-4 NLT)

**Comfort
and
healing for
our pain
will flow
from the
knowledge
that God
really does
care for
us.**

God treasures us as His beloved children and desires that we respond to Him as we would to a loving, caring earthly Father. When we gave our will and life over to the care of God, we may not have been aware of God's kindness to us. An important part of our new life with God in recovery is getting to know this generous grace offered to us through Jesus Christ. When Jesus looks at suffering people, His heart is filled with love and compassion for them.

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. (Matthew 9:36 NIV)

To the extent that we experience God's love, our obsessive thoughts and destructive behaviour will diminish. We can tell God all about our feelings because He cares for us and knows exactly what we need. In the safety of God's protection, we will see our behaviour improving. Instead of

the heavy burden of forcing ourselves to hold poor behaviour in check, we will find ourselves relaxing and communicating with others in a friendly manner. Experiencing kindness helps us express kindness.

For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory. The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you." (Psalm 32:7-8 NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, I ask You to teach me Your ways so that my life may reflect You in me. My desire is to honour You in all I do and say. Thank You for your love and kindness towards me, I am forever thankful that You care for me. Amen

WISDOM – LEARNING FROM A HYRAX

What on earth is a hyrax and what does it have to do with my recovery? Unless we live in Africa or the Middle East we probably have never heard about these squat furry animals about the size of a rabbit. Hyraxes are one of four animal species mentioned in the book of Proverbs in the Bible. They are mentioned in this book of wisdom because they are wise, and we can learn from them.

Four things on earth are small. But they are very wise. The second are hyraxes, which aren't very powerful. But they make their home among the rocks. (Proverbs 30:24a, 26 NIRV)

Hyraxes do not have much means with which to defend themselves and so they settle down with up to 80 others in safe places high in the rocks, not easily accessible to predators.

When you see trouble coming, don't be stupid and walk right into it— be smart and hide. (Proverbs 22:3 CEV)

What is the lesson for us from the hyrax? We should not expose ourselves to danger and risk. We need to be on guard and identify those people and situations that are triggers to our using and steer a wide course around them. We need to: surround ourselves with lots of healthy people; attend meetings and actually fellowship with others; keep lots of phone numbers handy and use them.

Let us not give up meeting together. Some are in the habit of doing this. Instead, let us encourage one another with words of hope. Let us do this even more as you see Christ's return approaching. (Hebrews 10:25 NIRV)

Most of all, we need to run to the Lord who is our rock of refuge. Steps 10 and 11 help us maintain our sobriety by enhancing our relationship with God. We need to be wise by settling our hearts in God's presence and quickly admitting anything that goes wrong.

But the Lord is my place of safety, high on the mountain. God, my Rock, is my safe place! (Psalm 94:22 ERV)

Prayer: Thank you God for little creatures like hyraxes who have great wisdom. Help me to be wise and make any necessary changes, so I am always safe and secure in Your care. Amen

**Be cautious
and hide
when you
see
danger—
don't be
stupid and
walk
right into
trouble.**

Proverbs 27:12 CEV

RECKLESS BEHAVIOUR OR SOUND JUDGMENT

When God wants to paint a picture, He does so very effectively. An out-of-control life of self-will that ignores God is clearly described in detail in the Bible.

You can be certain that in the last days there will be some very hard times. People will love only themselves and money. They will be proud, stuck-up, rude, and disobedient to their parents. They will also be ungrateful, godless, heartless, and hateful. Their words will be cruel, and they will have no self-control or pity. These people will hate everything that is good. They will be sneaky, reckless, and puffed up with pride. Instead of loving God, they will love pleasure. Even though they will make a show of being religious, their religion won't be real. Don't have anything to do with such people. (2 Timothy 3:1-5 CEV)

**The wise
are cautious
and avoid
danger;
fools plunge
ahead with
reckless
confidence.**

Proverbs 14:16 NLT

We read these words and quickly get uncomfortable because we find ourselves on the list numerous times due to our own reckless behaviours. If ever we were reminded of why we need recovery and why we need to admit our lives are unmanageable, this list pretty much sums it up.

The problem for many of us in recovery is that we attach our reckless behaviour only to our substance abuse and fail to include things like being ungrateful and sneaky which are equally unacceptable. We need a radical change of heart and, we need to change our perspective

to become willing to see things as God sees them. We need humility to come to God with a willingness to have Him remove all our defects of character.

As dire as conditions in the self-willed life might look, God encourages us as He describes the changes He will make as we follow His ways. We can be people who understand sound judgment and speak clearly as we share with others our exciting stories of healing, freedom, and transformation.

The hearts of reckless people will understand sound judgment, and the tongues of those who stammer will be ready to speak clearly. (Isaiah 32:4 ISV)

Prayer: Loving God, my life on my own is a train wreck, I have proved that many times. Today, I choose to turn away from all expressions of reckless behaviour. I turn my will and my life over to Your care. Amen

RESOURCEFUL

Who is more resourceful than an addict in need? Desperation really fuels the ability to find quick and clever ways to overcome difficulties. The God to whom we turn over our will and life is the God who will use many things in our lives for good – including this resourcefulness we practiced for destructive means. Cleansed of the cheating and manipulation, God wants us to be an example to others of how to tap into His wonderful resources. With faith in God's goodness at work in us, we can now refocus our skills and talents.

But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men. (1 Timothy 5:8, Colossians 3:23 ESV)

From the experience we had before we were caught in addiction, as well as what we learned even during the dark days, we can help and offer many creative solutions in a variety of areas. We need to ask God to show us how we are to use the resources we have gained for the good of others. We don't have to be the resident expert on everything and we don't always have to have things done the way that worked for us, but we can offer what we have to bring a fresh perspective on what might be useful to others.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. (James 1:5, Luke 16:10 ESV)

God has kept us alive and brought us to today. God himself says that he has given us every spiritual blessing to do the things that He's given us to do, and His plan has always been that through our lives – yes our lives – others will see good things done and give God glory. So, let's get out there and resourcefully put our abilities into the service of God and others.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, it is amazing that You are able to use everything in my past – the good, the bad, and the ugly – in the service of Your agenda for today. Help me to live with faith that You have brought me, with my unique gifts, to this day to do good. Amen

**In the same
way, let
your light
shine before
others, so
that they
may see
your good
works and
give glory to
your Father
who is in
heaven.**

Matthew 5:16 ESV

GAINING INTEREST IN OTHERS

The contrast of destructive self-centeredness in active addiction with the healthy lifestyle of supporting one another in recovery is clearly expressed in Promise 7 of AA: *We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.* Learning and growing in our recovery, sharing our experience, strength, and hope are ways we fulfill this principle. Long before this was brought to the attention of recovering alcoholics, God told His believers this was the way to live.

Don't just think about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and in what they are doing. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
(Philippians 2:4 TLB, Colossians 3:16 ESV)

We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.

We help each other by giving time and attention to one another. One of the greatest gifts we can give is a listening ear and time for someone to get whatever they need to off their chest and out into the open. We need to slow down and pay attention to others around us, lending a helping hand as needed rather than merrily going along doing our own thing. Even though it is not always convenient, and it is often hard work, there is something very satisfying about caring for others in a way that strengthens and builds them up.

Promise 7 - AA When we carry the message, as Step 12 encourages us to do, we make ourselves vulnerable as we share our own struggles related to the journey of getting to know God and finding sobriety. By sharing our experience, we provide common ground for someone to find themselves at a starting point for moving ahead. This “gaining interest in others” is so important that when Jesus boiled down all the teaching of the Scriptures into two commandments, this was one of them. The success of our life and our recovery depend on living our lives this way.

Jesus replied, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:37-40 NLT)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You put your own interests aside and left heaven to come here to die for my sins. Help me to be more like You and become more interested in others and less self-focused. Amen

GOD'S WILL NO MATTER WHAT

When we say we have given our will and life over to the care of God, what does that mean to us? Does it mean that in all our affairs we choose to obey the principles God has set out for guiding our behaviour? Many of us suffer because it is often easier, in the moment, to follow self-will than to follow the God's will.

The Bible is full of accounts of people who prospered when they followed the ways of God even when it was not convenient. Daniel and his friends are examples. They were young captives taken from their own land to the land of their conquerors and there they were confronted with a number of challenges to the practice of their faith in God.

Daniel made up his mind to eat and drink only what God had approved for his people to eat. And he asked the king's chief official for permission not to eat the food and wine served in the royal palace. (Daniel 1:8 CEV)

When we read the story of Daniel in the Bible, we find that God moved in miraculous ways to prosper him and his three friends even while great persecution was plotted against them. What would we do if someone asked us to do something which was contrary to the will of God? Are our minds already made up that we will serve God regardless of what may be presented to us? To whom is our heart fully committed?

Your heart will be where your treasure is. You cannot serve two masters at the same time. You will hate one and love the other, or you will be loyal to one and not care about the other.
(Matthew 6:21, 25a ERV)

Recovery is the time to get to know and become convinced about the wisdom, power, and goodness of God to those who believe in Him. None of us can trust someone we do not know. God has revealed Himself to us through the Scriptures and the best course of action we can take is to believe God's word and obey it.

So remember that the Lord your God is the only God, and you can trust him! He keeps his agreement. He shows his love and kindness to all people who love him and obey his commands. (Deuteronomy 7:9a ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to trust You and be fully committed to obey Your principles in everything I say and do. Amen

What would we do if someone asked us to do something which was contrary to the will of God?

COMMUNITY – TOGETHER WE CAN

Sobriety and living in recovery is never a one-person activity. As the old saying goes, “It takes a community to raise a child,” and it takes a community to help a person stay clean and sober and find a new life. God’s plan has always been that we share our lives with one another. God acted first on this principle by sending Jesus to earth to show His great love for us and then He gave the Holy Spirit to empower and encourage us. As disciples of Christ who are embracing His love and walking in His ways, God invites us to do as He has done and love and care for others as He has loved and cared for us.

Share each other’s burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.

**Galatians 6:2
NLT**

And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity — all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved. (ACTS 2:44-47 NLT)

In the early days of people following Jesus they knew the importance of being together, of sharing with one another, of supporting each other, of praying and praising God together. As they did these things, others saw something in these people that stirred their desire to change their ways and seek this life they were witnessing in the community of faith.

Since we become like the company we keep, it is important to have friends we respect. This is also the reason that involvement in a support group is important for personal growth. When we are struggling in a certain area, it is helpful to know that we are not alone and that others are open to sharing our pain. It is also helpful to hear fellow strugglers share ways that have encouraged them to overcome the obstacles of complete honesty, perseverance, and accountability.

You, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith. And you must show mercy to those whose faith is wavering. Rescue others by snatching them from the flames of judgment. Show mercy to still others, but do so with great caution, hating the sins that contaminate their lives. (Jude 1:20a, 22-23 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for the life I have with You in recovery and for the community of people I have found there. Help me to be humble enough to receive help and to be available to help others as each of us grow together with You in our new life in recovery. Amen

WISDOM – STANDING WITH THOSE IN AUTHORITY

We are all looking for a peaceful life and God's word has a lot to say about how living well under authority with proper respect for leaders brings that to us.

People who always want more stir up conflict. But those who trust in the Lord will succeed. Those who trust in themselves are foolish. But those who live wisely are kept safe. I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for all people — for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. (Proverbs 28:25-26 NIRV; 1 Timothy 2:1-2 NIV)

In addition we often broke laws and went our own way in order to get what we needed. In our new life with God in recovery, if we don't like or don't agree with the decisions of some of our leaders, it's God's way that we pray for them rather than simply disregarding what they are saying or legislating. God wants us bring blessing into our own lives by praying for understanding and wisdom for those who are in authority over us.

When godly people win, everyone is very happy. But when sinners take charge, everyone hides. (Proverbs 28:12 NIRV)

Some issues in our society are complex and challenging and require the expertise of many to interpret. Part of our new life with God in recovery is to pray that God will keep evil people from coming to leadership and raise up those who will champion the cause of both the "haves and the have-nots." It is time for us to lift our eyes from our own self-centeredness and ask God to help us support what makes our society better.

A ruler who is mean to his people takes money from them by force. But one who hates money gained in the wrong way will rule a long time. (Proverbs 28:16 NIRV)

Do we want a peaceful life in recovery? It's time for us to step up and do whatever we can for the common good, including praying for and working with those who are in authority.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, It is challenging to live under authority because I am so used to wanting things my own way. Help me to learn how to work with those who are in authority so I and others can have a peaceful life. Amen

A country has many rulers when its people don't obey. But an understanding ruler knows how to keep order.

Proverbs 28:2 NIRV

THE DISTRESS OF UNMANAGEABLE PROBLEMS

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

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

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

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

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

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

WAKING UP TO LIFE IN GOD’S CARE

Some of us wonder where life will take us if we give our will and life over to the care of God. There is anxiety about our past and the effort required to change our ways seems intimidating. We are standing at a crossroad and are not sure which way we should take. If we go back to our old lifestyle, we know things will get worse because addiction and sin never get better, they always lead further into darkness. If we choose to give our lives over to the care of God, we fear having to live without our controlling dependency. What a predicament?

I can anticipate the response that is coming: “I know that all God’s commands are spiritual, but I’m not. Isn’t this also your experience?” Yes. I’m full of myself—after all, I’ve spent a long time in sin’s prison. What I don’t understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise. (Romans 7:14-15 MSG)

There is a way forward which seems obvious, even though it is new and unknown, obey God’s commands and leave the outcome with Him. We have admitted that we are powerless over our dependency, so it would be unwise to make decisions on our own about what is best for us. Recognizing what we have done to ourselves, to our loved ones, and to our friends surely is a wake-up call to trust someone other than ourselves. God has already proved Himself worthy of our trust. Through Jesus, He has liberated us from sin and is offering us forgiveness and new life.

He reached down from heaven. He took hold of me. He lifted me out of deep waters. He saved me from my powerful enemies. He set me free from those who were too strong for me. (Psalm 18:16-17 NIRV)

To effectively change our ways, we need to wholeheartedly give our will and life over to the care of God and trust that He will lead us in the paths of righteousness and justice, for He is faithful in all His ways.

Prayer: Loving God, I choose to give my will and life over to Your care. I am relying on Your Power to strengthen me as I obey Your principles in all my affairs. Amen

Where will life take us if we give our will and life over to the care of God?

A SEASON OF REFRESHING

This life we have been given, this new season that is before us, begins with each new day. Yesterday’s mistakes, blunders, worries and pains are behind us. We are unable to change what has been said and done. We need to admit that, and repent and turn away from the evil things we have done. We need to turn to God who promises us a season of refreshing.

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord (Acts 3:19 NIV)

Living as if God did not exist is the first thing we need to repent of. That is why the first steps of the program deal with this issue. We admit we are powerless.

**We are still
alive because
the Lord’s
faithful love
never ends.
Every
morning he
shows it in
new ways!**

**Lamentations 3:22-
23a ERV**

We come to believe God can restore us. We turn our life, including our rebellious self-will over to God, and receive salvation and a new way of living through Jesus Christ. We learn to recognize the voice of God’s Holy Spirit in us. He shows us behaviours and thoughts that are stirred by the insanity of our thinking, the brokenness of harm done to us, and character defects that need to be removed.

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (Psalm 51:4, 1 John 1:9 NLT)

If we reach out and embrace it, refreshing new life is available to us. Whether we are brand new in recovery or returning after many stumbles, God is with us, and when we call on Him, He will answer us and give us love and mercy each morning for a fresh new start. As our will is surrendered to His, God will give us everything we need to live life with a new sense of joy.

Sprinkled with the blood of Christ, our hearts have been made free from a guilty conscience, and our bodies have been washed with pure water. So come near to God with a sincere heart, full of confidence because of our faith in Christ. (Hebrews 10:22 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for each day You have planned for me. I repent of my rebellious ways and seek from this day forward to walk in the truth of Your word. Lord, please strengthen me to practice Your principles in all my affairs. Amen

BEING CONFIDENT IN WHO GOD SAYS WE ARE

God has given gifts to everyone; no one has been left out. The gifts He gives are not solely for our own benefit but are also for the good of others. We are created to serve God and bring joy and blessing to others. God promises to help us. Are you and I willing to step forward, confident in who God says we are? Are we willing to follow His ways and the plan He has for each of us?

Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. (Romans 12:4-6a NLT)

The first step in developing self-confidence is acknowledging that God is our creator and each one of us is individually made with special qualities. As members of the human family we are extraordinarily gifted because we are made in the image of an awesome God, uniquely equipped with the potential to fulfill the amazing plan God has for us.

Lord ... You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. (Psalm 139:13-14 NLT)

Often, in order to improve our confidence, we must demonstrate to ourselves that we can actually achieve what we set out to do. How do we do that? We take a risk and do something we have not done before. We leave the safety and security of our comfort zone in order to achieve something new.

Am I willing to affirm what God says about me and seek His strength to live confidently in the truth that with God in charge, I can successfully complete the work I’ve been given to do?

Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to faithfully walk with You, learning from both successes and mistakes as I use the gifts You’ve given me for the good of others. Please increase my faith in Your ability to make a success of my life as I follow Your will. Amen

**My heart
is
confident
in you, O
God; my
heart is
confident.
No wonder
I can sing
your
praises!**

Psalm 57:7 NLT

RESTORED TO SANITY

When we determined that we could no longer live in the insanity that was our daily routine, we knew we needed to be free from the bondage of our dependency. We longed to have control over the chaos and confusion we lived in and decided to seek help in recovery. From others in the program we learned that there was a power greater than ourselves who could restore us to sanity, and we wanted to get to know more about this power.

He heals the brokenhearted, binding up their wounds. He counts the stars and calls them all by name. How great he is! His power is absolute! His understanding is unlimited. (Psalm 147:3-5 TLB)

As we choose to obey God's word and follow His ways in all our affairs, our sanity will surely be restored.

God has absolute power over all that He has created. When we seek a power greater than ourselves, we are really seeking the person behind the power. The God who knows all the stars by name, and how they differ in splendor from one another, is that power. God knows each of us by name and everything about us. His understanding, and solutions for the problems that overwhelm us, is unlimited. As we turn towards God for help, He invites us to repent of our rebellious ways and turn our will and our life over to His care. His great Power can then work in our lives to restore us to sanity.

Do not let any part of your bodies become tools of wickedness, to be used for sinning; but give yourselves completely to God. Each one of you must turn from sin, return to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; then you also shall receive

this gift, the Holy Spirit. (Romans 6:13a; Acts 2:38 TLB)

God is a loving, caring Father who encourages us to learn about Him through reading the Scriptures. As we choose to obey God's word and follow His ways in all our affairs, our sanity will surely be restored.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to know You more and to follow Your ways. I need to get my life back on track and admit that I am powerless to do so. Today I choose to give my will and my life over to Your care, please restore me to sanity. Amen

BLESSINGS WORTH SINGING ABOUT

How do we respond to the blessings God gives when we come to accept what Jesus has done for us, and turn our will and life over to His care? All our sins are forgiven. We are washed clean. The Holy Spirit comes to live in us and restores us to sanity. We are adopted as God's sons and daughters. We are given an amazing eternal inheritance in a place Jesus is preparing for us. Wow!!! Those are certainly blessings worth singing about.

Sing a new song to the Lord! He has worked miracles, and with his own powerful arm, he has won the victory. The Lord has shown the nations that he has the power to save and to bring justice. God has been faithful in his love for Israel, and his saving power is seen everywhere on earth. Tell everyone on this earth to sing happy songs in praise of the Lord. (Psalm 98:1-4 CEV)

The Bible tells us that we, who once were powerless over our dependency, are now more than conquerors over the world, the flesh and the devil. By standing firm on God's word, we have the Power in us to overcome all temptation and accusation of the enemy. Should we slip and fall into sin, we are told to quickly repent and move forward. God is faithful to forgive, cleanse and restore us, so we do not listen to the enemy's accusations or wallow in our regrets.

God's mercy and justice is beyond our understanding. When we turn our back on a corrupt world and choose to follow the ways of God, we are assured that absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God that we have received through Jesus. Having this confidence, and knowing that we lack nothing to live a life submitted to God, let's carry this message to others, so that they too can sing happy songs of praise to our amazing God.

Everything that goes into a life of pleasing God has been miraculously given to us by getting to know, personally and intimately, the One who invited us to God. (2 Peter 1:3 MSG)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank You for coming to earth and helping me understand the goodness of my Heavenly Father. You inspire me to sing happy songs of praise. Amen

How do we respond to the blessings God gives when we come to accept what Jesus has done for us, and turn our will and life over to His care?

STRAIGHTEN UP AND FLY RIGHT

The saying "Straighten Up and Fly Right" has been around since Nat King Cole wrote and recorded a song with this title many years ago. At various times in our life, and certainly when we come into recovery, we need to get serious, get focused on healthy things and start behaving in new ways. People may tell us we need to get our lives in order but as long as we stubbornly refuse to do so, we're on a fast course to trouble and heartbreak.

Whoever stubbornly refuses to accept criticism will suddenly be destroyed beyond recovery. Proverbs 29:1 NLT

God kindly wrote down everything we need to know in order to live well, including how to correct our course when we are going wrong. That is why we need to read the Scriptures and apply what we read to our attitude, words, and behaviour.

Discipline your children, and they will give you peace of mind and will make your heart glad.

God has breathed life into all Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right. (2 Timothy 3:16 NIRV)

The inventory of Bible principles is what God will use when we stand before Him and He evaluates our lives. Now is the time to not just know what the right thing to do is, but to adjust our behaviour accordingly.

Words alone will not discipline a servant; the words may be understood, but they are not heeded. Jesus asked: ***"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' but you don't do what I say?"*** (Proverbs 29:19, Luke 6:46 ERV)

(Proverbs 29:17 NLT)

The Bible illustrates this point using children. Parents who truly care for their children, guide, direct and discipline them as needed. The child who grows up in the knowledge of what is right learns from being disciplined.

Some of us may not have been given this training or, in our arrogance and rebellion, ignored what we learned and went our own way. Now would be a good time to develop a humble heart, seek correction, and straighten up and fly right.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for my stubborn rebellious ways. Help me to welcome input from Your Word each day and to quickly put Your principles into practice. Amen

NO RECORD OF WRONGS

Keeping a record of wrongs often leads to the winding path of relapse and active addiction. When someone harmed us in the past, we may have been unable to deal with the situation at that time, so we buried the pain. The pain, however, was not dead and it festered with evil thoughts about the person who committed the offence. Other incidences may have added to this and we just kept pushing each one down. We became angry and intolerant and verbally exploded in situations which did not meet with our approval. To deal with the pain and distress we sought medication to make us feel better. At first the medication worked but eventually more and more was needed to help us live with the hurt and bitterness that was inside us.

Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil. For those who are evil will be destroyed, but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land. (Psalm 37:8-9 NIV)

Our record of wrongs influences the way we think and behave. For example, we think evil about a person who has harmed us and want them to suffer for what they have done. Increasingly we become agitated and anger builds within us. Vengeful thoughts fill our mind. Others find it hard to be around us because we have a super-sensitive attitude, and the fuse of anger is always smoldering. What can we do about this?

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:31-32 NIV)

If we have turned our lives over to the care of God, He has forgiven us for the sins we have committed, and He asks us to forgive those who have harmed us. This may be one of the hardest tasks we will face but God will give us the power to do what we cannot do on our own. Obeying God will free us from the wickedness of an unforgiving spirit. Refusal to do so means we are still entertaining it.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You that through Jesus all my sins are forgiven. Please help me to forgive my offenders and turn them over to You to deal with. As I choose to live by the power of Your Holy Spirit, help me to hear no evil, see no evil, and think no evil. Amen

Keeping a record of wrongs often leads to the winding path of relapse and active addiction.

OVERCOMING OVERWHELMING DISCOURAGEMENT

We seek recovery when our lives are unmanageable, and we are powerless to change. How we got to where we are may include a winding trail of events that seemed unfair and which caused us much pain. With good intentions we settled into a recovery program. However, some difficulties surfaced, and we became discouraged and intimidated by not finding quick solutions to our problems. Before we knew it, overwhelming feelings of wanting to run set in. One challenge to staying on course is, looking for solutions to our problems without seeing God's help in the middle of them.

Answer me now, Lord! I have lost all hope. Don't hide yourself from me, or I will be among those who go down to the world of the dead. Remind me each morning of your constant love, for I put my trust in you. My prayers go up to you; show me the way I should go. (Psalm 143:7-8 GNT)

God says if we call on Him in our day of trouble, He will rescue us.

Often, we have lost hope that life will ever treat us fairly. We have set goals for ourselves only to see them fail and fall apart. How can we overcome this trend? We need to pray to the God who created us and tell Him all that is in our hearts so that healing in our innermost being can take place. We need to forgive those who have treated us unfairly and own those things which we have done that negatively impacted our living environment. Forgiving and repenting will give us new hope and help us see the events of our life more clearly.

Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. (Hebrews 9:14 NLT)

God says if we call on Him in our day of trouble, He will rescue us. That is a promise that gives us hope for change as we practice God's principles in all our affairs.

But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. (Romans 8:25 GNT)

Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to trust the truth of Your word and never lose hope for a purposeful life with You by my side. Thank You for loving and caring for me. Amen

ATTACHING OUR HEARTS TO THE GOD WHO CARES

Substance abuse is often self-medication to compensate for the lack of expressions of love and safety in a relationship. When we are born, all of us require a safe emotional connection with a parent or caregiver. We need to know there is someone we can turn to for love and comfort. Scientists who study human development say this type of bonding nurtures every area of our development.

When we are ignored or abused by a parent or caregiver and feel empty inside, we tend to withdraw and find other ways to self-soothe. Addictions to substances and other unhealthy behaviours are often efforts made by a vulnerable person who is dealing with the trauma of feeling invisible and unloved.

So do not be afraid. I am with you. Do not be terrified. I am your God. I will make you strong and help you. I will hold you safe in my hands. I always do what is right. (Isaiah 41:10 NIRV)

Whatever our background, God wants us to know Him and live in His care each day. It's why Step 3 is such a powerful statement, because if we don't know that God cares, how can we turn our will and our life over to Him?

I am poor and needy, but, Lord God, you care about me, and you come to my rescue. Please hurry and help. (Psalm 40:17 CEV)

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

1 Peter 5:7 NLT

To live in recovery is to bring ourselves to the God who cares with full expectation that God will respond to our cries for help. It's a tough journey at first but if we will take it one step at a time, God will prove Himself loving and caring every single time. It's a journey of choices where we look to God for love when times are tough. The more we experience God's care, the deeper our trust and attachment to Him will be. Our whole personality will change as we intentionally live in God's love and care.

For the Lord your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs. (Zephaniah 3:17 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please fill my heart with Your love in those places where I've experienced detachment because of things gone wrong in my past. Make me whole again. Heal my mind and heart where abuse and neglect set me on a wrong course. Renew my mind so I can trust in Your loving care and believe that You are for me, You are with me, and that You will never leave or forsake me. Amen