

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



JULY 2021



These meditations are available online
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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'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 the mandate of 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."

WHAT HOPE DO WE HAVE?

Life is a journey and from its beginning to its end we are all influenced by the environment we live in. When we were old enough to choose our own way, our choices were likely impacted by what went on in our journey to that point in our life. What hope do we have, when what was sown into the early years of our life, is what we may be reaping today?

Lord, you know the hopes of the helpless. Surely you will hear their cries and comfort them. You will bring justice to the orphans and the oppressed, so mere people can no longer terrify them. (Psalm 10:17-18 NLT)

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

Hebrews 11:1 NIV

When we first gave our will and life over to the care of God we knew little, if anything, about God's ways. Our known ways and actions were like chains that bound and enslaved us to a life that was totally unmanageable. The only hope we have of eliminating our bondage is to unchain our mind from our actions and with God's help release ourselves from our former slave master. We need to keep saying no to the old path that dominates our thinking and continue treading the new path back to life. Each time we make that choice the new path will become more firm under our feet and our old ways will more and more be left behind.

Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you. (Psalm 25:5 NLT)

The scriptures tell us to have faith in God even when we are unable to see the way forward. The measure of our faith is the hope we have in the power, faithfulness, and love of God to strengthen us as we tread the pathway of the will of God for our lives. God will make a way for us to persevere through and live the life plan He has prepared in advance for us.

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, My old ways need to be axed. Your word gives me hope to move forward in my life. Please strengthen me to tread the new path You have marked out for me. Amen

"GOING FISHING" IN RECOVERY

The long days of summer are with us. During these few months many folks enjoy fishing in the early morning or late into the evening. Whether it is standing in hip boots in a river or sitting in a small boat or canoe on a lake there is something restful and lifegiving about recreational fishing. The sights and sounds of nature are all around and the thrill of reeling in a fish contributes to an inner sense of well-being. Some people fish for a living and spend long hours or days on the ocean bringing in a catch that will provide food to feed themselves and their families.

As we move along in recovery, part of our healing process is recognizing the call of God in our lives, (a spiritual awakening) and the desire to share the love of God with others.

One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" And they left their nets at once and followed him. (Matthew 4:18-20 CEV)

Jesus chose some fishermen to accompany Him while he was here on earth. He invited them to leave their fishing nets and to follow Him so they could become "fishers of men."

As we move along in recovery, part of our healing process is recognizing the call of God in our lives, (a spiritual awakening) and the desire to share the love of God with others. The forgiveness we have received through Jesus has changed us. The story of how God has transformed our lives will attract others to Him and give them hope for their own sobriety. Carrying the message to others is how we become "fishers of men."

The first fishermen disciples chose to leave everything behind to follow Jesus. Their joy of living with Jesus was the story they shared. This is the same invitation God gives to us today – surrender to God, experience the joy, share the message.

Prayer: Loving God, help me to hear Your voice, follow You and learn how to attract others to the new life You are offering all of us. Help me be a "fisher of men". Amen

I AM LOVED BY GOD ALWAYS

We all long to experience love from our family, friends, and people we respect. We believe that when others love us, we will finally feel satisfied. Sometimes we think we must do a certain thing or become a certain kind of person in order to earn this love from others.

God's love for us is quite different. It is not influenced by us doing certain things for Him because God's love is based in God's character, which is love. There is something constant and safe in God's love. It is a love that will not fail us.

This is real love. It is not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. We are still alive because the Lord's faithful love never ends. Every morning he shows it in new ways! You are so very true and loyal! I say to myself, "The Lord is my God, and I trust him." (1 John 4:10 NLT; Lamentations 3:22-24 ERV)

***When
God lives
in us, His
love
comes
alive in
our
hearts.***

We never have to worry if we are good enough for God. While God may not approve of our actions and behaviour, His love is not an emotion that will change with circumstances. He has already loved us at our worst. His love is constant. When God looks at us, He sees us through eyes of love. If we allow Him to work in our lives, we will become what God already sees we are.

The real question for us to ask ourselves is not whether God loves us but whether or not we have opened our hearts to God and invited Him in. If we choose to give our will and life over to the care of God, we can experience God's love and thrive in it each day. Where we once felt dead inside because of sin, God's Holy Spirit will bring life. When God lives in us, His love comes alive in our hearts, and we are assured that absolutely nothing can separate us from God's love.

... nothing now, nothing in the future, no powers, nothing above us or nothing below us—nothing in the whole created world—will ever be able to separate us from the love God has shown us in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:39 ERV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, forgive my sin and come into my heart. Heal my wounds. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit and Your love which You have promised will never fail me. Amen

CHARACTER STRENGTH: DISCRETION

We are not always the best judge of which confidences shared with us need to be held or which need to be disclosed. Most things shared in confidence need to be kept close to our hearts and shared only with our Heavenly Father as we pray for the good of the person who shared with us. Some things are required by law to be disclosed to the appropriate authorities, particularly if a person's life is in danger. When a friend shares their character defects with us, although they may not have stated specifically they are sharing in confidence, we should use our discretion and keep that information to ourselves, leaving it up to our friend to disclose their shortcomings with whom they choose.

Discretion is a life-giving fountain to those who possess it, but discipline is wasted on fools. From a wise mind comes wise speech; the words of the wise are persuasive. (Proverbs 16:22-23 ERV)

We have not always behaved wisely with what we shared about others. Often, we threw discretion to the wind in order to feed our own pride as "someone in the know." Sometimes when asked about another person, we set aside sound judgment and disclosed things which would have enabled others to use the information against them.

Who may worship in your sanctuary, Lord? Who may enter your presence on your holy hill? Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts. Those who refuse to gossip or harm their neighbors or speak evil of their friends. (Psalms 15:1-3 NLT)

We need to ask ourselves what our motivation is when we share things that we ought not to. We need to think about the consequences of our actions and the harm we may cause. To be kind to our neighbour, we need to be discreet in the way we speak about them and others.

Lord, guard my mouth. Keep watch over the door of my lips. (Psalm 141:3 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I ask You to help me have discretion in sharing what I know about others. Forgive me for the harm I may have caused someone by my thoughtlessness. Help me to be more like Jesus whose words strengthen and give life. Amen

***To be kind
to our
neighbour,
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about
others.***

SUNDAY PSALM – LOVED THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES

When problems arise it's easy to forget that God cares about us. We often feel alone and vulnerable in the situation we are in. Daily life continues regardless of the heartache we are feeling and somehow, we must cope. We feel like orphans with no one to care for us. We forget about God's promise to help us and assume He also has abandoned us. However, God does not forget His beloved. We just need to call on Him and He will answer us and steady us.

The Lord says, "I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them. (Psalm 91:14-15 NLT)

In difficult times, rather than running from God, we need to draw closer to Him and let His unfailing love ease the pain we are feeling.

In difficult times, rather than running from God we need to draw closer to Him and let His unfailing love ease the pain we are feeling. We live in a broken world where sin and sorrow have impacted everyone. Perhaps we've wondered where God was when bad things happened to us. Perhaps we did not seek God for help because we were unaware that He was right there.

Jesus took all sin, suffering, and sorrow on Himself when He died in our place on the cross. God offers us forgiveness, healing, and comfort as we put our trust in His unfailing love for us. Regardless of life's circumstances, God promises that He will never leave us and will hold us steady until we can effectively move forward again.

The eternal God is your refuge, and his everlasting arms are under you. Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down, and we

thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. (Deuteronomy 33:27, Isaiah 53:4-5 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I don't understand suffering, but I know that you do and that you offer me forgiveness, healing, and comfort because You love me. Hold me close today. Take my hand and steady me in your unfailing love. Amen

LISTEN TO ME AND BE SECURE

In times of trouble, and when facing an unknown and uncertain future, it's easy to feel unsafe and fearful. God promises us that, as we listen to Him, we will be safe and secure.

But if you listen to me, you will be safe and secure without fear of disaster. (Proverbs 1:33 CEV)

It would be very easy to miss the word "but" in the sentence that contains the promise because it is the first word. This word indicates that there are prior things we need to avoid in order to experience the life of security and blessing that God is promising us. If we read the preceding verses in Proverbs 1 we will be reminded of the trouble that comes when we are enticed into harmful practices such as; when we mock those who live a simple life program; when we stay so busy and distracted that we don't hear God's warnings or bother to obey His principles when it is inconvenient to do so; when we slide along not being alert to potential trouble and thinking, "I've got this in the bag."

How happy are those who hear the word of God and obey it!

Luke 11:28 GNT

The word "listen" has two parts: to hear what is being said and to obey what we hear. This is the recipe for the successful living that God is promising us and makes available to us. He knows what is best for us. We need to seek Him and find out what that looks like. God will guide us around things that would otherwise cause us to stumble because He knows better than we do how weak we are and how powerful the triggers in certain situations are. As we give our full attention to God and obey what he says, we will experience the life of security God promises us. We will then be free from the fear of disaster that is so harmful to our well-being.

Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track. Submit yourselves to God. Resist the Devil, and he will run away from you. (Proverbs 3:6 MSG; James 4:7 GNT)

Prayer: Loving God, it's so easy to be flooded with fearful thoughts and act in panic. Help me to follow Your way in every situation I encounter, so I can experience the safety and security that You have promised. When I am fearful, help me to check where I failed to listen or failed to follow Your ways, and help me to take the necessary action required to correct my disobedience. Please help me stay on track and listen well. Amen

LEARNING FROM SOUND ADVICE

Wise people are willing to listen to sound advice and learn. When we begin our journey with God in recovery, we need to welcome help from people whose desire is for us to succeed in being restored to sanity. We can learn from their experience, strength, and hope because they have gained wisdom through conscious contact with God, by listening to others, and by following the principles recorded in the Bible for a successful life.

Wisdom is found on the lips of those who understand what is right. But those who have no sense are punished. (Proverbs 10:13 NIRV)

**Wisdom is
found on
the lips of
those who
understand
what is
right.**

**Proverbs 10:13a
NIRV**

Those who have walked the spiritual journey to recovery tell us of prayers that God answered when they felt like giving up. They persisted in doing the next right thing and God made a way for them to be overcomers, even when they doubted there was a way forward. If we choose to disregard the truth that in tough times God will give us the power we need to hold on, then in our foolishness, we will end up back in the same place we came from.

Knowledge begins with fear and respect for the Lord, but stubborn fools hate wisdom and refuse to learn. But now you know the true God. Really, though, it is God who knows you. So why do you turn back to the same kind of weak and useless rules you followed before? Do you want to be slaves to those things again? (Proverbs 1:7; Galatians 4:9 ERV)

God wants to take us through to victory, but if we are unwilling to pay attention to His sound advice, we will forever be on the same old roundabout. God's word, as recorded in the Bible, assures us that He will honour all the promises He has made. Why not trust and obey what God says? Why not be a person who gains wisdom?

Prayer: *Loving God, Help me to listen and learn from others who have walked this journey of recovery before me. Please give me the will and desire to trust and obey Your word so that I may gain wisdom and walk in Your ways. 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 perfect 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

STEP ONE – I CAN’T DO IT ALONE

We come into recovery because we recognize we are powerless over addictive substances, people, or things that we have become dependent on to sustain life as we know it. We acknowledge that where we are at is not life-giving, and if we continue on this path it will have the effect of further downward spiral. Regardless of what we have gained or lost, what we have achieved, or where we have fallen short, we have reached the point where we no longer can cope with life on our own.

We admit defeat and turn to God for mercy and grace. God assures us that if we get to know and trust Him, He will rescue us and help us do what we cannot do for ourselves. In fact, Jesus said He came to save people exactly like us, in circumstances just like ours.

We have reached the point where we no longer can cope with life on our own.

The Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.” (Luke 19:10; Matthew 9:13 NLT)

We are not suffering solely because we have misused certain substances or developed destructive habits or co-dependent relationships. We are not suffering because we were created as a second-class human being or because we grew up in a less than perfect environment. We are suffering because we believed the lie that we could meet our own needs and solve our own problems in our own way. We are suffering because we believed that masking the unbearable pain inside us with a substance, a habit, or a relationship would give us lasting pleasure and make life worth living. We are suffering because we did not believe our need to have an ongoing relationship with God above all else.

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)

God offers us a new way of life that begins by admitting, we cannot do life on our own.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit defeat. I am powerless to live life on my own. Without your guidance, my life truly is unmanageable. I give up trying to meet my own needs. I give up trying to cover my pain and confusion with substances, destructive habits, and unhealthy relationships. Gracious God, I turn to You and ask You to show me the way forward that will bring peace to my heart. Please strengthen me to follow You in all my affairs. Amen

AN AMAZING MUSTARD SEED

A mustard seed is very small, but in only three months it can grow and produce a mature harvest. Amazing growth in a short space of time. We may feel quite small and vulnerable, wondering if we can sustain recovery. We can take hope from what Jesus is saying about the mustard seed.

If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, it is enough. You can say to this mountain, “Move from here to there.” And it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you. (Matthew 17:20-21 NIRV)

If we take the little bit of faith we have, enter the process of "coming to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity," and turn our will and our lives over to God's care, then in even the short space of 90 days amazing changes can be ours. Our faith is not in our own ability but in God's unfailing love and power to uphold us in our life in recovery.

I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. (Philippians 1:6 NLT)

Mustard on hamburgers, hot dogs, or ham sandwiches makes them taste even better. Mustard leaves add wonderful flavour to salad greens and is good for our digestive system. Mustard oil has healing benefits as a health-boosting agent. Who knew a little seed could make such a difference?

God created us with amazing potential which is still waiting to be discovered. Our addiction had the power to block all that God created us to be. Now in recovery, we can receive what God is giving us each day to help build us up. We can grow strong and courageous in His unfailing love and become the unique person that God created us to be.

No one has ever seen, no one has ever heard, no one has ever imagined what God has prepared for those who love him. (1 Corinthians 2:9 ERV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I want to have faith, even faith as small as a mustard seed, to trust You to make something amazing of my life with You in recovery. Amen

Our faith is not in our own ability but in God's unfailing love and power to uphold us in our life in recovery.

CONFRONTING DENIAL

A healthy foundation for life with God in recovery includes seeking truth in all our affairs. Our goal is to know what is good and recognize what is harmful. We can then correctly identify what has the power to negatively impact us. God's word is a trustworthy source of truth in directing us to new ways of life. We need to confront any denial of God's truth and invite Him to show us where our thinking and perceiving have become confused. God's wisdom and power will help us make any changes that are necessary.

We need to confront any denial of God's truth and invite Him to show us where our thinking and perceiving have become confused.

Search me, 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. Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. (Psalm 139:23-24 NIV; Matthew 11:28 NLT)

In recovery we are taught to accept responsibility for our actions. We come to know that our actions bring consequences. In the past, some of us tried to deceive ourselves into thinking we could escape the consequences of the things we had done. Now, with some time and learning in recovery, we know the truth that God made accountability a necessary part of human existence.

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. (Galatians 6:7-8 NIV)

The good news is that God will help us be accountable and make amends to those we have harmed. God wants us to live with self-worth before Him and others. We may fear humiliation and the pain of acknowledging the truth about what we have done. However, finally

admitting the truth will bring us peace, even though it means facing our past. Truth leads to freedom. Deceit and denial lead to bondage and death.

Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to fearlessly commit to truth in all my affairs. I want to live in the freedom that comes from living life your way. Amen.

POWER IN RELATIONSHIPS

Whether it is a group of bullies on a school playground or an abusive partner behind closed doors, it is never right for one person to force their agenda or desires on another. Some of us who have come out of addiction have lived on both the side of being domineering and demanding and that of being submissive and trampled on. We have been bullied by others and we've manipulated others to give us what we want. We've lied and hidden our true needs and desires so that things could remain peaceful in a relationship, and we've also used anger and abusive words to gain control over others to get what we wanted.

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 learn to submit to each other in love.

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 each 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 is God's heart for us in our relationships.

We need to see ourselves and others as God sees us and choose to 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 we should step back, how to agree to disagree with honour and respect, and how to value and lift up others without throwing away our dignity.

Only God can teach us how to be safe, be loving, and be kind in the challenges of each relationship.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please take the blinders off my eyes and help me see how I relate to others. Help me to honour You and others and to practice Your principles in everything I do and say. Amen

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

GROWING MATURE IN OUR LIFE WITH GOD

When we come into recovery, we are usually immature in our knowledge of God and his ways and have little recall of what it is like to live a meaningful life. Mature people in recovery groups are familiar with the places we have come from and so they welcome us. They are patiently waiting to share with us in order that we might grow in the knowledge of God and His way to a purposeful life.

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up.
(Romans 15:1-2 NIV)

Improving our conscious contact with God, and gaining knowledge of the Scriptures, and practicing the principles we learn, will help us grow and mature in our life with God in recovery.

In the past we had little consideration for others and our daily agenda focussed only on fulfilling our own needs in whatever way that took. We acted in immature ways and our focus was simply on pleasing ourselves. Centering on self-focused pleasure reveals that we have devoted our lives to the gods of whatever makes us feel good. Perhaps we did not know, or refused to abide by, the ways of the God of the Bible.

If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. (Matthew 15:10, 12 NIV)

Improving our conscious contact with God, gaining knowledge of the Scriptures, and practicing the principles we learn, will help us grow and mature in our life with God in recovery. When Jesus died on the cross, He fully demonstrated the Scripture above. He loved his Father by fulfilling His Father's will for Him, and He loved us by doing so. Is our desire to remain in the love of Jesus as we choose to love each other?

If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? (1 John 4:20 NLT)

Heavenly Father, Please help me to be mature in my knowledge of the Scriptures and to seek Your will for my life and the power to carry it out. My desire is to spread the good news of the love of Jesus to others. Amen

BEING WITH GOD IN THE PLACE WHERE HE IS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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. The truth is, that through Jesus, God has made provision for removal of all sin and shame from us.

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 offers 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 be painful in the beginning, it brings new life and new dignity to all who endure on this journey to freedom.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for being evasive about my past life for fear of what others might 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

I AM A WALKING MIRACLE

"I am a walking miracle" is a slogan we often hear said in recovery meetings. It's repeated because we are amazed at the change God has made in our lives. Each of us knows that it is nothing short of a miracle to be who we are today, compared to who we once were.

Many of us will testify that when we came into recovery we were powerless over our problems and dependencies. Daily life was totally unmanageable. The thing that brought us to recovery was that we began to believe we could find a power greater than ourselves who could restore us to sanity.

God has sent his special servant Jesus. He sent him to you first. He sent him to bless you by causing each of you to turn away from your evil ways. (Acts 3:26 ERV)

When we were stumbling around in the darkness, we were unaware of the provision God had made for us. We did not know, or chose not to believe, that God desired to have a relationship with us. When we wholeheartedly gave our will and life over to God's care, we came to experience that we had someone to watch over us, someone who really knew us and cared for us. We also became aware that we were filled with God's Holy Spirit and marked as God's own, guaranteeing of our inheritance as a child of God.

Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22 NKJV)

What a privilege to be in the care of Almighty God. When a child of God considers where they have come from and who they are right now, no wonder they proclaim, "I am a walking miracle".

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 1:5b-6 NKJV)

Prayer: Gracious Father, I don't know why You love me, but You do. Thank You for raising me up to new heights with You. Amen

It is nothing short of a miracle to be who we are today, compared to who we once were.

GOD'S VIEW OF LAZINESS

In the Bible Jesus told a story of three servants who were given various amounts of money to use or invest on behalf of their master. Two of the servants doubled the amount they were given and the third did nothing. We don't know if he was jealous that the others were given more or if he held resentment against the master because of his high expectations, or a bit of both. The bottom line is, he didn't do anything with what he had been given. When the master came back, his condemnation of the servant was not that he hadn't earned as much as the others but that he was lazy and had not done anything with what he had been given. (Matthew 25)

What are we going to do with the gift of today that God has given us?

We may look around at others who had a better life when they were growing up, a better education, or better prospects than we ever had. In comparing our circumstances with theirs, we may feel sorry for ourselves and angry at the world that seems to have deprived us of a good life. God has given each of us opportunities and gifts we can use to serve one another and thereby experience a fulfilled life. What have we chosen to do with what we have been given?

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly but understand what the Lord wants you to do. (1 Peter 4:10 NIRV, Ephesians 5:16-17 NLT)

Some people compare themselves with others and because they easily manage to do more than what they see others do, they choose not to do all they could. God knows what each of us is capable of. To do less than we can is being lazy. When we use the gifts and opportunities we have been given we will benefit from the personal satisfaction of doing all we can. Each person is accountable to God for what we have been given.

Much will be required of everyone who has been given much. Even more will be asked of the person who is supposed to take care of much. (Luke 12:48 NIRV)

Every day is a gift and an opportunity. What are we going to do with the gift of today that God has given us?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of my life and the opportunities I have been given. Help me to do all I can to faithfully serve You and others each day. Amen

HITTING BOTTOM

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

For too long we thought others had a problem and their problem was much worse than the one some people thought we had. However, there comes a point in our lives where none of us can hide from the facts. We realize there is nothing good in our lives and we cannot see a way forward out of the chaos. We also know we cannot go on with things the way they are. Fortunately, at this point, God is waiting for us to come to Him, and He is willing to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

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

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

God promises to give us a new foundation, a solid place to stand if we will give Him the opportunity to rebuild our lives. We can choose to stand on this foundation today and rebuild our lives or we can fall through the floor once again and hit a new rock bottom from which we may not recover.

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

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

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

DEALING WITH HEALTH ISSUES

Many of us struggle with health issues both in our bodies and in our minds. The Bible tells us that whatever we allow our minds to dwell on has a major impact on our physical well-being. God's desire is that we prosper as we obey the principles in His word. God wants us to be in good health and have a cheerful heart which He says brings healing to our body and soul. God also informs us that a crushed heart will struggle with sickness and depression.

Beloved friend, I pray that you are prospering in every way and that you continually enjoy good health, just as your soul is prospering. A joyful, cheerful heart brings healing to both body and soul. But the one whose heart is crushed struggles with sickness and depression. (3 John 1:2: Proverbs 17:22 TPT)

God wants us to be in good health and have a cheerful heart which He says brings healing to our body and soul.

When we were in addiction, we thought that drugs, alcohol, unhealthy relationships, or all of them together would help us have a good life. However, we were wrong in our assessment because dependencies never bring relief or healing to troubled souls. They increase the need for more of the same numbing medication. If we continue medicating ourselves and doing what is right in our own eyes, Satan will work to enslave us to whatever we substitute for God's goodness.

Even though I've seen their ways, I will heal them. I will guide them forward and repay them with comfort, giving mourners the language of praise. (Isaiah 57:18 TPT)

When we commit to following the ways of the Lord, He promises healing and freedom from whatever has caused us harm. Our part is to improve our conscious contact with God through prayer and meditation on the Scriptures applying these principles in all our affairs. God invites us to share in his wonderful goodness and He will give us the will and the power to do what pleases Him.

Everything in the Scriptures is God's Word. All of it is useful for teaching and helping people and for correcting them and showing them how to live. (2 Timothy 3:16 CEV)

Prayer: Gracious God, I am truly blessed that You want me to share in Your goodness. Please give me the will and desire to learn and then do what pleases You. Amen

WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT

When troubles show up in our lives, we are right to call out quickly to God and trust that He will hear us and will help us. The problem is, we often wait until the challenges are way too much for us to handle and then we come to God in a panic. We expect God's help in an instant. When that doesn't happen, we complain that God doesn't care about us.

I pray to you, Lord. So when the time is right, answer me and help me with your wonderful love. Don't let me sink in the mud, but save me from my enemies and from the deep water. Don't let me be swept away by a flood or drowned in the ocean or swallowed by death. Answer me, Lord! You are kind and good. Pay attention to me! You are truly merciful. Don't turn away from me. I am your servant, and I am in trouble. Please hurry and help! Come and save me from my enemies. (Psalm 69:13-18 CEV)

We are encouraged by our reading from the Bible today to remember that God is kind and good, and His love has no limit. God pays attention to us when we are in trouble and He promises to rescue us. The great faith that we need to develop is to trust that "**when the time is right**" God's help will be there for us.

While God truly is kind and quickly responds to many of our requests, only God knows all that needs to be in place before the perfect solution is applied. We often assume that God's help will come in the particular way we think we need it, and at the moment we want to have it. It doesn't always work like that. God may help us in different ways and at different times than we might desire, but His help is effective in every situation and right on time.

The Lord is good to those who put their hope in him. He is good to those who look to him. It is good when people wait quietly for the Lord to save them. (Lamentation 3:25-26 NIRV)

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for loving me and hearing and answering my prayers. Help me to have faith and continue to put my hope in You while I wait for some answers to come. To know You is to know that You are never slow as some people might think, but are patient to fulfill Your plan for me by bringing the perfect solution at just the right time. Amen

The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake.

2 Peter 3:9a NLT

TAKING, AS JESUS DID, THIS SINFUL WORLD AS IT IS

The process of recovery is a time to find peace while also accepting life as it is. Life isn't always fair. It isn't always predictable or controllable. When we become willing to face the hurts we have experienced and consider our reaction to them, then we come closer to changing our thought patterns and response to troubling situations. Jesus came into this sinful world, not to judge it for what it is, but to put it right.

God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again. (John 3:17 MSG)

We can't change the fact that our world is imperfect, but we can choose our attitude.

We can't change the fact that our world is imperfect, but we can choose our attitude. There are many injustices in life. Good people suffer sickness and all sorts of problems. Wicked people prosper from unrighteous acts and appear to have all their earthly needs met. Jesus took this sinful world as it was and suffered and died to give new life to its inhabitants. God graciously says that whoever believes in Jesus will not perish but have everlasting life, and that includes those who are currently His enemies.

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. (Matthew 5:44-45 NIV)

All of us have made bad choices and walked paths that have caused us pain. Life with God in recovery teaches us to think and act in new ways. Are we willing to accept this world as it is and do what God has called us to do to make it a better place for us and for our community? Today, let's focus on ways to change the things we can and simply be at peace with the rest.

When anyone is in Christ, it is a whole new world. The old things are gone; suddenly, everything is new! (2 Corinthians 5:17 ERV)

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to take this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it. Give me the courage and wisdom to accept the things I cannot change and, with Your help, change the things I can. Amen

SETTLING MY HEART BY SHOWING MERCY

Mercy is the act of being compassionate or kind toward someone who does not deserve it. God showed mercy towards us by sending Jesus into the world, not to condemn us for our sin, but to save us from it. How then should we respond towards others?

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Matthew 5:7, Ephesians 4:32 NIV)

When a person stands before a judge for a crime they have committed, what are they hoping for? Normally their lawyer will have prepared them for the likely penalty for the crime, but their hope is that the judge will have mercy and give a lesser sentence.

God, the righteous judge, did not give us a lesser sentence than the one we deserved for our sin. Instead, He sent Jesus into the world to be our substitute. Jesus paid the penalty for our sin in full and cleared our record. God's love and mercy towards us is freely given. We then should be like God and freely offer others forgiveness, love and mercy. Forgiveness and mercy come from a heart that has been changed by the extravagant love of God for us.

But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all. (Isaiah 53:5-6 NLT)

We are not acting with compassion and mercy if we choose to call others to account for every unkind thing they say or do, or if we want them to suffer for the things they have done to us in the past.

Showing mercy and forgiveness is proof that we are walking in the light of God. This will bring peace to our souls and settle our hearts.

Heavenly Father, I confess that I have been reluctant to forgive those who have harmed me. Fill me with Your love and compassion so that I can be like you and show mercy from a generous heart. Amen

Showing mercy and forgiving is God's way for us to walk in His light. This will bring peace to our souls and settle our hearts.

STEP TWO – RESTORED TO SANITY

When we determined that we could no longer live in the insanity that was our daily life, 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 those 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. God invites us to repent of our rebellious ways and turn our will and life over to His care. As we turn towards God for help, His great Power can 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, 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 repent of my rebellious ways and choose to give my will and life over to Your care. Please restore me to sanity so I can live my life in peace and harmony with You and those around me. Amen

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 with confidence in what He says we can rely on. If that is true, the first thing we need to do is to find out what God says. That is what daily prayer and meditating on God's word are all about. We get to know the path God sets before us. We learn what God says works. We also learn about 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. Doing what God says rather than relying on our own understanding is a challenge when we face 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 familiar ways, and look to God to show us His 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 and humbly submit all my frustrations, my worries, and my fears, as well as my hopes and dreams into Your care. Thank You for leading me forward in the wisdom and strength You provide. Amen

To trust God is to live with confidence in what He says we can rely on.

WISDOM AND WEALTH

To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. (Ecclesiastes 2:26 NIV)

We all want to enjoy life. Some of us ended up in addiction because we focused on seeking pleasure. If it made us feel good, we wanted more of whatever it was, and were willing to do whatever it took to get more. In recovery we constantly hear messages in the media about how we need this or that to make us happy. Especially in cities where the cost of living is high, we wonder if we will ever be able to make enough money to have the lifestyle which we believe will make us happy.

Safe in His love, we will find the satisfaction and contentment we long for whether we are rich or poor.

From God's perspective, and that's the basis of all healthy recovery, the blessings that money and material things represent are only good for us when we first live in the care and pleasure of our loving Heavenly Father. Safe in His love, we will find the satisfaction and contentment we long for whether we are rich or poor or have the latest gadget.

Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33 NIV)

Giving up addiction to drugs and alcohol only to pick up an addiction to money and possessions is not the way to an abundant life. If we thought we were living meaningless lives under the control of our dependencies, how much more will we experience emptiness if we run after money and possessions? Building our foundation on the love of God through Jesus Christ, is the only way to a good, pleasing, and perfect life.

When material blessings come, we should give thanks to God, receive them with joy and share them with others. When we do this we are acknowledging that we are blessed to be a blessing as God intended.

Prayer: Loving God, help me to find joy and satisfaction in my life whether I am blessed with a little or a lot. Protect me from the trap of thinking I need certain things or a given amount of money to be truly happy. I trust You to provide for my needs. With what You provide, help me be content and bless others from Your provision. Amen

WHEN TO BE THANKFUL

It is a wonderful practice to take time daily to be thankful for all that we have, and all that God has promised us. This principle is evident as 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 do not write these things in a journal, just taking time to bring them to mind builds joy and confidence within us that God is near.

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 would not question the fact that it is 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 grows 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

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

SUNDAY PSALM – MORE DESIRABLE THAN GOLD

BECOMING COMPLETE ONE STEP AT A TIME

Some of us in recovery have transitioned from knowing little or nothing about the amazing God who pursued us with His love to completely giving our will and life over to His care. We know that living a self-directed life brought us to a place of darkness where life was totally unmanageable. Now we are beginning to know this loving God and His way to light and life.

When we came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity, what were we expecting to happen? Did we think that overnight our minds and hearts would be transformed, and our selfish desires and ways of thinking would disappear? The truth is this will happen. We just need to receive and believe what God says: we are born again to a new life and, one step at a time, we will establish our way of thinking and behaving in keeping with God’s ways.

The instructions of the Lord are perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The commandments of the Lord are right, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are clear, giving insight for living. Reverence for the Lord is pure, lasting forever. The laws of the Lord are true; each one is fair. They are more desirable than gold, even the finest gold. They are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the comb. They are a warning to your servant, a great reward for those who obey them. (Psalm 19:7-11 NLT)

For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing his glory. (Colossians 1:27-28 NLT)

Giving our will and life over to the care of God means we let go of the ways of this world and take hold of God with both hands. When God says, “This is the way, walk in it”, we obey him. We need to remember that we are powerless to do life on our own and have proved repeatedly that our ways do not work. God’s instructions have proven true over time. Whether we fully understand them or not, we just need to follow them.

Serve only the Lord your God and fear him alone. Obey his commands, listen to his voice, and cling to him.

Serve only the Lord your God and fear him alone. Obey his commands, listen to his voice, and cling to him. (Deuteronomy 13:4 NLT)

Deuteronomy 13:4 NLT

When we have given our will and life over to God, all His promises are ours to claim. One of those promises is, He makes us as his own and fills us with the Holy Spirit who then lives in us as a guarantee of what is to come. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth who guides and counsels us and gives us wisdom and practical knowledge about God’s ways.

It is God who enables us, along with you, to stand firm for Christ. He has commissioned us, and he has identified us as his own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything he has promised us. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22 NLT)

Now we are beginning to know this loving God and His way to light and life.

When we choose to make conscious contact with God and ask for guidance, He directs our path, and we experience joy in our hearts and peace in our souls. The Holy Spirit guides us, and our conscience once again grows to become a trustworthy judge. We begin to make better choices and find freedom to become more transparent in the world around us.

They demonstrate that God’s law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right. (Romans 2:15 NLT)

God’s ways are perfect. When we follow God’s principles in all our affairs, we can safely leave all the consequences with Him. Great reward is promised to those who wholeheartedly trust and obey the Lord. Joy and contentment will fill our souls, and life will be sweeter than honey dripping from the honeycomb.

Prayer: Gracious God, I am convinced that Your ways give insight for living that will lead me to a meaningful, purposeful life. Help me to treasure Your ways as I would the finest gold and put them into effect in everything I do and say. Amen

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for the Holy Spirit who settles and guides me into all truth and for Your promises that are guaranteed because He lives in me. Amen

HALFWAY IS BETTER THAN HALF MEASURES

Although we know that "*half measures avail us nothing*," it's also wonderful to have the promise that, "*If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through.*" (Big Book, pg 83-84)

We are not required to live a perfect life – thankfully, Jesus did that for us – but we are required to make a sincere effort. As we do, we will experience the promised outcome. While it is true that the promises given are fulfilled among us, sometimes quickly and sometimes slowly, it is the experience, strength, and hope of those who share that reassures us and gives us hope when the going gets tough.

This is the reason we do not give up. Our human body is wearing out. But our spirits are getting stronger every day. The little troubles we suffer now for a short time are making us ready for the great things God is going to give us forever. We do not look at the things that can be seen. We look at the things that cannot be seen. The things that can be seen will come to an end. But the things that cannot be seen will last forever. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18 NLT)

We will be amazed before we are halfway through.

Noteworthy changes gradually take place deep within in our soul where we are unable to see them. Our daily commitment is to consciously give ourselves over to the care of God and follow the principles that have worked for many who have walked this path before us. It is only as time passes that we notice that we are changing in ways that amaze us. We find peace and stability we never knew before. Solutions to problems present themselves. We become more and more conscious of God being with us, supporting us each step of the way.

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. (Deuteronomy 31:6 NIV)

Thankfully we don't have to wait until we have completed Step 12 to experience transformation. When we have committed to doing the next right thing, we will notice that change is already taking place.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am so grateful that You are with me today, working change in the deep places of my soul as I follow Your ways with all my heart. Please help me to live in hope and constantly do the next right thing in each situation I encounter. Amen

FINDING ENTHUSIASM AGAIN

Recovery is hard work. Sometimes we feel joy in the journey and other times we don't seem to feel anything at all. We spend a lot of time analyzing our feelings as we remember the many difficulties and challenges we had in the past. Our self-esteem begins to suffer and we feel uncomfortable, maybe even distressed. If we are honest, sometimes we just get tired of dealing with it all. How can we find the strength and the joy and enthusiasm we need for growth in this journey?

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people. Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth. (Colossians 3:23 GNT, 2 Timothy 2:15 NLT)

Particularly when our emotions are a challenge it is helpful to be able to lean back on God's promise to be with us and get us through what we are facing. If we ask God for help and do what we can with as much enthusiasm as we can, we can expect God to strengthen and support us through one more day. We may not see the finish line, but we can have the satisfaction of living well one more day.

The Lord your God will fight alongside you and help you win the battle." (Deuteronomy 20:4 CEV)

Part of finding enthusiasm again comes from recognizing the progress made on a long and sometimes difficult journey. We need to set goals for one hour or one day or one activity and give thanks as we accomplish them. Some of our discouragement may come from only having long-term goals which take time to reach. That is why the "progress not perfection" principle is so powerful. Some other small but effective tools include practicing gratitude, taking time to find beauty in nature, listening to praise music, or trying something new, and then intentionally speaking with sincerity and genuineness about what we liked about it. If we do these things, joy and enthusiasm will catch up to us again.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to find peace and joy as I go through this tough part of my journey. Help me to lean on You and remember that You are always with me. Thank You for supporting me through one more successful day in recovery. Amen

Work hard and do not be lazy. Serve the Lord with a heart full of devotion.

Romans 12:11
GNT