

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY



# Daily Meditations



**JULY 2022**

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to victims of  
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as they reclaim the gift of their life.*

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## LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

# Daily Meditations

**JULY 2022**

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JULY 1, 2022

## 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 acceptance and hospitality in Canada. Symbols of both France and England link us to a part of our country's heritage. A crest on the royal helmet symbolizes valour and courage. Figures on either side of the shield are known as supporters and are depicted with great strength. Underneath these symbols are the words, "A mari usque ad mare" (From sea to sea) taken from Psalm 72, a prayer for God's authority and rule to be present in all that holds this country together.

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

Thousands of years ago the above prayer went up from earth to heaven on behalf of a ruling king. This 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 and hands to our gracious God praying, "God keep our land glorious and free, and 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."***

JULY 2, 2022

## BEING DECISIVE

Making decisions and taking responsibility for our choices requires courage. In our addiction it was easy to bully people for things we needed to feed our habit but, a healthy weighing up of facts, and coming to a reasoned decision that is good for everyone, tends to bring out our vulnerabilities. There are just so many things we don't know about ourselves and life. We hate both physical and emotional pain and still want to do whatever we can to avoid it. How do we come to that place of focus and clear sight that prompts us to know which is the best route to take?

In simple terms, we seek wise counsel from God and then make the best choice available to us. God promises to watch over us and guide us and if we start to head in the wrong direction, He will whisper a word of correction to our hearts.

***It is not God's plan that we swing between the extremes of being pushy or being passive.***

*The Lord shows his people how to live, but the wicked have lost their way. If you wander from the right path, either to the right or to the left, you will hear a voice behind you saying, "You should go this way. Here is the right way.* (Psalm 1:6, Isaiah 30:21 ERV)

It is not God's plan that we swing between the extremes of being pushy or being passive. Too often we are willing to say, "Whatever happens, will happen" and even add in "for a reason." The truth is, often things happen because of the choices we make that we could have made differently.

*Lord, help me learn your ways. Show me how you want me to live. Guide me and teach me your truths. You are my God, my Savior. You are the one I have been waiting for.* (Psalm 25:4-5 ERV)

We take a daily inventory of how things were done today so we can learn and perhaps do better on another day. This is the reason we pray for conscious contact with God and for the knowledge of His will for us, and the power to carry it out. Both practices help us to fulfill each day's tasks and to be decisive in a healthy way.

*I praise the Lord because he taught me well. Even at night he put his instructions deep inside my mind. I always remember that the Lord is with me. He is here, close by my side, so nothing can defeat me.* (Psalm 16:7-8 ERV)

*Prayer: Loving God, help me to know You, and Your ways, and to walk in them. Amen*

JULY 3, 2022

## STEP ONE – GETTING HELP IN OUR POWERLESSNESS

When we realized our powerlessness over our dependency and came into recovery our daily routine started to change. We already admitted to a life-draining addiction and now we needed to find a new way of life. The events that formerly made up our day were gone, and a new daily schedule was being developed. Our days are now 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 physicians and treatments are scheduled which all focus on healing. To get well the person will 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 the safest 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 that will help me get well. Amen***

***The events that formerly made up our day are gone, and a new daily schedule is being developed.***

JULY 4, 2022

## PRAYING IN THE TIME OF STRUGGLE

One of the great comforts and challenges, all at the same time, is the reality that we are powerless to manage our lives on our own. Nothing makes us feel more vulnerable than not being able to be in control. The truth is that whether we know it or not, life is too much for us and only the care and control of our gracious God keeps our world and our lives on track.

In this struggle to maintain our faith and trust in God and not scramble due to the panic of being out of control, we are invited to pray for one another.

Whether we've been in recovery for a long time or just getting started, we all know that there are many struggles and challenges to be faced if we are to keep going. The Bible encourages us to pray for one another in the struggle.

***Prayer is the number one strategy to employ in order to find the solutions and strength we need.***

***I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.*** (Romans 15:30 NIV)

The struggle may come from our own personal challenges with temptation and obsessions. The challenge may be to retain hope for a loved one who has relapsed once again after seeming to do well for a time. Whatever the challenge, we know that prayer is the number one strategy to employ to find the solutions and strength we need. The deepest level of our lives is the spiritual and the solution for every other area of thought, emotion, and behaviour is rooted in the spiritual work that is taking place in the core of our being.

***For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*** (Ephesians 6:12 NIV)

The evil one is stronger than us but is no match for the power of God. That's why we need a higher power who can restore us and to whom we can pray and regularly give our will and our lives into His care.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I'm glad I don't have to pretend that it's not a struggle to continue to do what is right. Help me to stand in Your love and to support my friends in prayer as together we offer our powerlessness to You and invite You to continue Your work of restoration in our lives. Amen***

JULY 5, 2022

## COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

The end of Tradition 12 in the Big Book of AA sums up an important principle in our recovery: We need to regularly count our blessings.

*We are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all. (Big Book of AA)*

The Bible also gives us many wonderful words on which to focus our thoughts as we practice humility and are thankful.

***The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.*** (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV)

God speaks blessings of protection, peace, and tenderness over us today. Will we believe His words and fill our minds with these delightful thoughts?

God offers us the blessing of forgiveness. Jesus died on the cross and took the punishment for every sin we have ever committed and for those we are not yet aware of. We are blessed today with a clear conscience as we confess our wrongs to God and let Him take away our sin.

***Blessed is the person whose lawless acts are forgiven. Their sins have been taken away. Blessed is the person whose sin the Lord never counts against them.*** (Psalm 3:1-2a NIRV)

With the founders of AA, let's make it a habit to count our blessings each day. As we do, we'll become more aware of all that God has given us and our hearts will be filled with joy because of His love and care for us.

*Prayer: Loving God, I am grateful for the gifts You bring to my life each day. Give me the courage to receive all you are offering me and the humility to remember that all I have today comes from You. I acknowledge that on my own, my life is an unmanageable mess. Amen*

***We are  
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sin.***

JULY 6, 2022

## GOD RESPONDS TO MY PRAYERS

People in recovery are those who want to learn from the experience, strength, and hope of others. When it comes to praying, one hero we might look to is a prophet in the Bible named Daniel. Daniel had a practice of praying three times a day. Even when he knew continuing to pray could cost him his life he went to his house and as was his custom opened his windows, not caring who saw him, and prayed. It did cost him an overnight trip to the lions' den, but God kept him safe, and He was later raised to a place of prominence in the government.

***Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.*** (Daniel 6:10 NIV)

***God heard  
Daniel and  
communicated  
back to him in  
a way he could  
understand.***

Daniel prayed for numerous things and often confessed His own sins and the sins of his nation. He prayed beyond his own needs. He asked God to give him wisdom and understanding. He needed guidance and God gave it.

***While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the Lord my God for his holy hill—while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, ... came to me ...He instructed me and said to me, “Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. As soon as you began to pray, a word went out, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed.*** (Daniel 9:20-23 a NIV)

While you and I may not see an angel or hear words as directly as Daniel did, his example of constant prayer is what Step 11 encourages us to do – seek through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God. Confessing his sins regularly shows us the power of Step 10 – promptly admitting our wrongs. What is very comforting in the above Scripture quotation is the clear affirmation that God heard Daniel and communicated back to him in a way he could understand. God gives answers – sometimes in a way and time that is different from what we would prefer – but always in a way that perfects God's plan for our future.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am grateful that You are paying attention to me and the prayers I offer up to You. Help me to be honest as I unburden my heart to You, knowing that You hear my prayers and will respond to me in the right way and at the right time. Amen*

JULY 7, 2022

## OVERCOMING A VICTIM MENTALITY

People who suffer from a victim mentality often confuse love with pity or rescue. They think good things only happen to others. They feel overly sensitive and anxious. Can God make a way for them to have a satisfying and meaningful life? Yes! Yes! Yes!

Jesus suffered and died on the cross to deal with sin and injustice and to enable us to be free and have life with God forever. Jesus willingly gave His life for us, so we no longer need to live as a victim. Jesus paid in full the price of sins committed by us, and injustices done to us.

***Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*** (Isaiah 53:4-6 NIV)

It is very challenging for those of us who have spent years living with a victim mentality to move into the experience of being an overcomer. Why? We have become familiar with a lifestyle of wanting someone else to do things for us. The thought of taking responsibility and using our own initiative raises anxiety within us. Underneath our conscious fear of rejection is often an unconscious layer of anger, not just against our abuser, but also against those who “should have” protected us and did not.

God wants to release us from the bondage of a victim mentality and help us grieve painful losses. Rather than continuing to blame others, He invites us to receive healing for the wounds, and forgiveness for the resentments we’ve held. As we bring our troubled situations to God for His help and healing, He will take hold of our hand and say, ***“Do not fear; I will help you”***. (Isaiah 41:13 NIV)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to turn from protecting myself at all costs and learn how to live life with realistic expectations and safe boundaries. Teach me Your ways and help me live without fear. Thank You for caring for me. Amen***

***Jesus willingly gave His life for us, so we no longer need to live as a victim.***

JULY 8, 2022

## COURAGE TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP

How do we find the courage to try something new or go after what we really want? Fear can feel overwhelming and too often we let it interfere with the next step we need to take to build a solid foundation in recovery.

Courage isn’t the absence of fear. Courage means that we take advantage of the little strength we find within ourselves and stubbornly stick with God who will provide all the strength we need. Having the courage to change does not mean we will never experience fear. It simply means we trust God to support us as we take the next step.

In the Bible when Jesus walks on the water, the disciples are terrified when they see him. ***“Lord, is it you?” Peter asked. “If it is, tell me to come to you on the water.” “Come,” Jesus said. So Peter got out of the boat. He walked on the water toward Jesus. But when Peter saw the wind, he was afraid. He began to sink. He cried out, “Lord! Save me!” Right away Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “Your faith is so small!” he said. “Why did you doubt me?”*** (Matthew 14:28-31 NIRV).

***All we need is just the courage to take the next step.***

Peter was a “hotheaded man” but he also was someone who accomplished so much that we are still talking about him and learning from him 2000 years later. Just like us, Peter made a number of bad choices when he was afraid. However, Peter also learned from the things Jesus taught him in those moments. In the story quoted above Peter was bold enough to climb out of a boat in a storm and walk toward Jesus. Peter gathered up enough courage to take one step. He ventured out into a new experience. When he looked at the circumstances around him, he suddenly got scared and started to sink. At that moment Peter made a good choice. He called out to Jesus and found the help he needed. Jesus then simply said to Peter as He would say to us, “Why did you doubt me?”

As we move forward in recovery, all we need is the courage to take the next step. This doesn’t mean that we won’t be afraid or won’t need help. It means that we will summon the faith and courage to take one more step. As we do, God will support us with the necessary strength to continue our journey.

***Prayer: Loving God, help me to find the courage to take the next right step. Remind me that you are always with me and I can call to You for help in every situation. Amen***

JULY 9, 2022

## PRACTICAL WISDOM – DEALING WITH CLUTTER

We are often reluctant to admit problems and deal with painful events as they occur. We push them down into the deep recesses of our souls and put our best face on. This is like shoving clutter into a closet and tightly closing the door before guests arrive. This works for a while but at some point we have to open the closet door and when we do everything inside falls out around our feet. At some point, the events we have suppressed will also burst out and cause us to vent anger and bitterness on those around us who may have had nothing at all to do with the original events.

***The human spirit can endure a sick body, but who can bear a crushed spirit?*** (Proverbs 18:14 NLT)

We clean up the clutter in our homes by taking things from where they have been stashed away and stacked up and dealing with them in an orderly manner. Some things get thrown out. Others get mended, washed, or ironed and become usable again. We need to do the same with the hidden events of our lives.

***It is not right to acquit the guilty or deny justice to the innocent. The name of the Lord is a strong fortress; the godly run to him and are safe.*** (Proverbs 18:5, 10 NLT)

We will never feel acceptable to God or to others while we allow who we truly are to be determined by our past. Unforgiveness towards others, or even towards ourselves, needs to be carefully exposed and then disposed of. The pain and brokenness we feel in our hearts will need to be lovingly cared for and mended. Our hidden talents will need some encouragement, so they become usable again. God is a master restorer and as we improve our conscious contact with Him He will provide all that we need to make us complete in Him.

*Prayer: Gracious God, Please help me face and let go of those hurtful events I have buried deep in my soul. My desire is to have a fulfilling life with You and others. Please give me the desire and wisdom to follow Your principles in all my affairs. Amen*

***We will never feel acceptable to God or to others while we allow who we truly are to be determined by our past.***

JULY 10, 2022

## STEP TWO - GIVING GOD A CHANCE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JULY 11, 2022

## HELP IN TIME OF NEED

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

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

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

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

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

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

***God has  
spiritual  
solutions  
for  
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issues.***

JULY 12, 2022

## MAKING RESTITUTION

To make restitution is to restore something that was stolen or lost. When we have harmed someone, we take responsibility for the harm done and do all in our power to make it right. That might mean repaying money for things stolen, clearing up an attack on a person's reputation, or owning up to the truth for some action we previously blamed on them. The list of wrongs needing to be righted is endless and is unique to each of our life experiences.

True restitution to others is challenging to make if we haven't first seen our own behaviour in the light of God's love. We broke God's laws. We harmed a person or persons God created and rejected God's beautiful world to live in the darkness of evil. We owed a debt to God we could never repay. God recognized the need for restitution to be made if relationships were to be healed and go forward in a positive way. What was God's response? Through Jesus, He chose to pay the debt on our behalf and make restitution for all our wrongs.

***Christ had  
no sin, but  
God made  
him  
become  
sin so that  
in Christ  
we could  
be right  
with God.***

***Christ carried our sins in his body on the cross. He did this so that we would stop living for sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you were healed. God paid a very high price to make you his. So honor God with your body. Live like free people, but don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. Live as those who are serving God.*** (1 Peter 2:24; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Peter 2:16 ERV)

***2 Corinthians  
5:21 ERV***

Ellis Crum wrote a song about this. "*He paid a debt He did not owe. I owed a debt I could not pay. I needed someone to wash my sins away. And now I sing a brand-new song, Amazing Grace. Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could never pay.*"

As we recognize all that God has done for us in forgiving our sins and restoring us to a loving relationship with Him, we will find ourselves operating more and more in gratitude and generosity towards others. Although it's never easy to make restitution, we will be so much more motivated to take the necessary steps when we reflect on God's work of restitution in our own lives.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Jesus who died on the cross for my sins so that I could be reconciled to You. I ask for wisdom and courage to humbly approach family members and friends and make restitution to them with a heart and mind that will honour You. Amen***

JULY 13, 2022

## MATURE AND COMPLETE

When someone or something is the best that it can be, we say it is mature or complete. Do we often consider ourselves as mature and complete? In the Bible God gives us principles to follow so we can grow and become the mature person He created us to be. If we obey God alone and do not allow ourselves to be influenced by others, we will be blessed in all that we do. To be mature is to accept that in this world we will have trouble, just as Jesus said. To persevere through the troubles that come our way, we need to understand the ways of God and be willing to do what He says.

***We will no longer be babies in the faith. We won't be like ships tossed around by the waves. We won't be blown here and there by every new teaching. We won't be blown around by cleverness and tricks. Certain people use them to hide their evil plans.*** (Ephesians 4:14 NIRV)

In our unmanageable lifestyle some of us allowed others to get us involved in their evil plans and we suffered the consequences. What now enables us to be mature in these situations is to have the will and desire to practice God's principles in all our affairs. Our attitude should be that of improving our conscious contact with God through prayer and meditation, so that He may direct us in the way we are to go. We will grow in our faith as we choose God's ways for our ways, rather than conforming to the ungodly ways that are acceptable to our friends or in our culture.

***Don't live the way this world lives. Let your way of thinking be completely changed. Then you will be able to test what God wants for you. And you will agree that what he wants is right. His plan is good and pleasing and perfect.*** (Romans 12:2 NIRV)

As we mature in our faith, we need to be ready to admit to any defects of character that may arise and cause us to stumble. We need to regularly take personal inventory and when we are wrong, promptly admit it.

***So be careful. When you think you are standing firm, you might fall.*** (1 Corinthians 10:12 NIRV)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to set boundaries for myself that are in keeping with Your Scriptures. Please work in me so I can be mature and complete, lacking nothing. Amen***

***God gives us principles to follow so we can grow and become the mature person He created us to be.***

JULY 14, 2022

## LOVE IS NOT IRRITABLE

It is so much easier to name ways that others irritate us than to accept that there are ways we irritate others. It may even be harder for us to admit that the real source of our irritability comes from deep inside us. God is clear that we cannot live as loving people and be irritable or easily angered.

***Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged.*** (1 Corinthians 13:5 NLT)

Many factors can cause or contribute to irritability, including stress, disappointment, hormonal changes, lack of sleep, and low blood sugar. When things are not going our way and we feel others are blocking us from accomplishing what needs doing, we easily complain and become irritable. Depression may be an off shoot of irritability. We don't like how we are feeling, and the behaviour or personality of another person may begin to irritate us. It is not that the person is doing anything wrong, it's simply our inner pain working out in us.

God cautions us to deal with whatever the underlying root of our irritation is, so we can avoid creating more painful issues to deal with.

***Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. A patient person is very smart. A quick-tempered person makes stupid mistakes. An angry person stirs up fights. And a person with a bad temper commits many sins.*** (Romans 6:12 NLT; Proverbs 14:29 ERV; Proverbs 29:22 NIRV)

If we ask Him, God will show us the truth about what is going on, give us comfort and healing for the pain we are experiencing, and show us a way forward. He will also provide everything we need to complete the tasks He assigns us. Will we choose to live in the care and guidance of God or remain as irritable people?

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Often I feel irritated and stretched by what is going on around me and inside me. Help me to look to You for help when my short fuse is about to blow and allow Your comfort and peace to work in me, so that together we may resolve the underlying problems related to my irritability. Amen***

JULY 15, 2022

## CHANGE YOUR HEART

Jesus tells us that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. If our hearts are thankful to God for all He has done for us, then we will generously praise God, and through prayer and meditation on His Word, seek to know Him more. On the other hand, if our hearts remain unchanged and we think that being clean and sober will gain us favour with God and others, then we are continuing to operate in self-interest.

***Give me the desire to follow your rules, not the desire to get rich. Don't let me look at worthless things. Help me live your way.*** (Psalm 119:36-37 ERV)

Jesus' disciples encountered a man called Simon who had previously earned his living as a sorcerer. Simon said he believed in the name of the Lord Jesus and was baptized. When Simon saw that new believers received the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands by the disciples, he offered money to buy this power. The disciples then realized that Simon's heart was not right with God and told him to repent of his wickedness for thinking that the gift of God could be purchased with money.

***Simon saw that the Spirit was given to people when the apostles laid their hands on them. So he offered the apostles money. He said, "Give me this power so that when I lay my hands on someone, they will receive the Holy Spirit." Peter said to Simon, "You and your money should both be destroyed because you thought you could buy God's gift with money".*** (Acts 8: 18-20 ERV)

When we put off our old self with its corrupt ways and put on our new self, allowing God to reproduce His character in us, then God is attentive to our prayers. Today, let's be sure that we have surrendered our will and our lives to the Lord so that His favour and blessing may continually be upon us.

***Be that new person who was made to be like God, truly good and pleasing to him.*** (Ephesians 4:24 ERV)

***Prayer: Loving God, I want to leave my old ways behind and embrace Your ways that lead to life and Godliness. I choose to put my trust in You and acknowledge that this new life is a gift from You and not something I have to earn. I want to be like Jesus in my heart. Amen***

***Change your heart! Turn away from these evil thoughts and pray to the Lord. Maybe he will forgive you.***

***Acts 8:22 ERV***

JULY 16, 2022

## SHARING THE BLESSING BY PRAYING FOR OTHERS

God tells us to pray for one another, so what does that look like? Are we supposed to tell God what we want Him to do? How do we even know what others really need? We don't know, but God does. We don't know what the best plans are for a person, but God has already prepared a way forward for those we love and are praying for. Our task in prayer is to ask God for His love and wisdom and pray for open doors for Him to work in the lives of our family, friends, and even our enemies.

***That is why we always pray for you. We ask our God to help you live the good way he wanted when he chose you. The goodness you have makes you want to do good. And the faith you have makes you work. We pray that with his power God will help you do these things more and more.*** (2 Thessalonians 1:11 ERV)

***We ask our God to help you live the good way he wanted when he chose you.***

God has a purpose for every day of our lives that is particularly suited to our personality and situation in life. God wants us to know His goodness and be blessed by it so much that we see it spill over into the lives of others. The more goodness we exhibit the more good we will do. This is why we pray.

We all want to be wise and have spiritual understanding and live in a way that honours God and produces good. We also want to endure patiently when troubles come. These are things that grow in us as we pray.

The Bible has many prayers of blessing we can use to pray for others. We can insert the person's name in the prayer or just hold them in our thoughts as we pray these words over them. God is faithful to His word, so when we use His own words to bless others, we can be sure that they will experience something of great benefit.

***Prayer: We pray that God will make you completely sure of what he wants by giving you all the wisdom and spiritual understanding you need; that this will help you live in a way that brings honor to the Lord and pleases him in every way; that your life will produce good works of every kind and that you will grow in your knowledge of God; that God will strengthen you with his own great power, so that you will be patient and not give up when troubles come. Then you will be happy and give thanks to the Father. He has made you able to have what he has promised to give all his holy people, who live in the light.***

***(Colossians 1:9-12 ERV)***

JULY 17, 2022

### THREE – TURNING OVER MY WILL AND MY LIFE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JULY 18, 2022

### MAINTAINING HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

When we turned our will and life over to God many of us had hope for a quick turnaround in our lives. We failed to remember how many years it took us to get to this place in our lives. Some of us gave up all hope of recovery when we found ourselves struggling with life minus our dependency. For this reason, we must be aware that hope grows gradually as we wholeheartedly practice surrender of our will to the care of God, and repeatedly commit to obeying His principles in all our affairs.

***Everything written in the past was written to teach us. The Scriptures give us strength to go on. They encourage us and give us hope.*** (Romans 15:4 NIRV)

Our minds were previously programmed by our self-focused thinking and now need to be reprogrammed so they are in line with what the Bible teaches. To reprogram our minds, we acknowledge and repent of our misguided thinking, ask God to help us believe in our hearts and fill our minds with the knowledge of His Word, and then give us the power to carry it out.

***The Scriptures  
give us  
strength to go  
on. They  
encourage us  
and give us  
hope.***

***We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience.*** (Colossians 1:9b-11 NIV)

God has promised to help us and give us direction in the way we are to go. Laying down our will in favour of God's will for our lives is the way to a meaningful, purposeful life. Maintaining our hope of change and being patient with ourselves is what will work in the long run. With God in our lives there really is hope for the future.

***Don't live the way this world lives. Let your way of thinking be completely changed. Then you will be able to test what God wants for you.*** (Romans 12:2a NIRV)

*Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for giving me hope and a future. I choose to surrender my will to You and ask You to help me change my way of thinking. Amen*

JULY 19, 2022

## DON'T JUST TALK THE TALK BUT WALK THE WALK

When we were trapped in our own personal hell and in bondage to the substance that medicated us, we called out to God. He heard us and set us free. We were grateful to receive forgiveness for our sin and the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to live the life we always wanted. We were excited to set out on our new journey.

***We never stop thanking God for the way you received his word. You heard it from us. But you didn't accept it as a human word. You accepted it for what it really is. It is God's word. It is really at work in you who believe.*** (1 Thessalonians 2:13 NIRV)

The joy of meeting Jesus, our new friend who desires the very best for us, was like having our cake and eating it too. However, as the days and weeks went by, we began to miss the old familiar lifestyle. We started to grumble like the children of Israel whom God had released from slavery in Egypt. On their journey to freedom, they missed some things that were available in Egypt and began to see slavery with their wants met, as better than freedom. If we are to walk the walk of life with God in recovery, we need to be willing to persevere through the rough country of learning to do things God's way rather than doing things our way. God is with us and will see us through every problem we encounter, but we need to determine to stay the course even when the going gets tough.

***Whoever hears these teachings of mine and obeys them is like a wise man who built his house on rock. It rained hard, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house. But it did not fall because it was built on rock.*** (Matthew 7:24-25 ERV)

Talking about building a house is easy, taking the action to build one requires patience, know-how, and strength. In recovery, we can't just talk the talk, we need to have patience and the know-how to walk the walk. God will strengthen us to make the journey, but we need to be willing to surrender to His ways.

***Heavenly Father, I don't just want to talk the talk of recovery, I want to walk the walk. With Your help and guidance, I can sustain the life I want to live without looking back. Please help me! Amen***

***We can't just talk the talk; we need to have patience and the know-how to walk the walk.***

JULY 20, 2022

## PUTTING GENEROSITY INTO ACTION

If someone were to choose 3 words to describe us, would "generous" be one of them? We are encouraged from God's word today to develop this character strength.

***I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ.*** (Philemon 1:6 NLT)

Many of us think we are more generous than we actually are. We give when it is convenient. We give when we are hoping to get something in return. Sometimes, we give without considering the consequences and then struggle because we haven't used well what we've been entrusted with. It's quite a different story to be generous when it is inconvenient, when we don't particularly like the person in need, or when there is no possibility of any return benefit.

***But generous people plan to do what is generous, and they stand firm in their generosity.*** (Isaiah 32:8 NLT)

We can pray for the wisdom to put generosity into action because our prayer is rooted in our thankfulness to God for the good things we have received from Him. When we operate out of this motivation, we are more likely to make correct and generous choices. We need to plan to share responsibly what has been entrusted to us. We need to stick with the plan even if it might suddenly seem inconvenient. God wants us to pray about our giving so we will be wise as well as generous.

***Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything. The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed.*** (Proverbs 11:24-25 NLT)

***Prayer: Loving God, help me to plan all of my actions, including my giving, with You. I want to be wise as well as generous in sharing what You have so generously given to me. Amen***

***If someone were to choose 3 words to describe us, would "generous" be one of them?***

JULY 21, 2022

## IDENTIFYING AND FACING DYSFUNCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JULY 22, 2022

## SOWER AND SEED

How many of us check out the soil in which we want to grow plants or vegetables? If we want healthy plants, we need to loosen up any packed down soil so that it will sustain air flow and retain water. In the Bible we read a story about a Sower who scattered seeds that fell on different types of soil, each impacting the growth of the seeds in some way.

*A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.* (Matthew 13:3-8 NIV)

***The soil in this story is compared to the condition of our hearts when we hear the Good News of why Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sin.***

The soil in this story is compared to the condition of our hearts when we hear the Good News of why Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sin. Some hear what Jesus did but because their hearts are hard it makes no impression on them. Others are touched in their emotions, but their hearts remain unchanged. Some believe that what Jesus did for them was a great sacrifice. They become excited to follow His ways. However, as time goes on, they allow day to day happenings and responsibilities to choke their time and attention and they forget about Jesus. Eventually they relapse to their former ways. Those who grow and produce fruit in their lives hear and believe the Good News. They take time daily to be watered and fed by the Word of God. By following God in all areas of their lives, their hearts are completely softened, and good fruit grows.

*But the fruit that the Spirit produces in a person's life is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.* (Galatians 5:22-23 ERV)

*Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You that Jesus came to pay the penalty for my sins, and I am adopted as a child of God. Please soften my heart with the water of Your word so that I may bear much fruit for Your Kingdom. Amen*

JULY 23, 2022

## GETTING OFF TRACK BY REFUSING TO LISTEN

To be responsible recovering addicts, we need to have regular contact with God and seek His wisdom and His will for our lives. We need to ask God to give us understanding of the Scriptures and pray for His help in applying His principles in all our affairs. It's so easy to get lost in our old way of doing things and allow irresponsibility to kick start. Our sponsor or a trusted friend may have spoken to us about getting off track, but we refused to listen. Before we knew it we were behaving in ways that were not in keeping with our new life with God in recovery and found ourselves heading in the direction of relapse.

***As a dog eats its own vomit, so fools recycle silliness. See that man who thinks he's so smart? You can expect far more from a fool than from him.*** (Proverbs 26:11-12 MSG)

Some of us deceive ourselves by justifying our behaviour and the bad choices we are making. We may have hurt someone with angry words or behaved unacceptably. We may have stayed silent to avoid dealing with a situation where gossip was being spread. We may then foolishly have spread the gossip we heard. We are accountable to God and to those in authority for the unwise choices we make. If we were to judge ourselves, could we say we were loving our neighbour as ourselves?

***When you run out of wood, the fire goes out; when the gossip ends, the quarrel dies down. A quarrelsome person in a dispute is like kerosene thrown on a fire.*** (Proverbs 26:21-22 MSG)

If we humbly ask God to help us change those things we can, God will enable us to do so, and to live in the wisdom of His word. Choosing to actively live in loving relationship with God and with our neighbours will empower us to live a joyful life which no one can take from us. As God blesses us abundantly, we will in turn be a blessing to others.

***Prayer: Loving God, I need Your wisdom and understanding to change my uncaring ways and actions. My desire is to love You with all my heart and to love my neighbour as myself, please help me to do so. Amen***

***Our sponsor or a trusted friend may have spoken to us about getting off track but we refused to listen...and found ourselves heading in the direction of relapse.***

JULY 24, 2022

## STEP FOUR – SEARCHING, FEARLESS, AND MORAL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JULY 25, 2022

## LIKE NIGHT AND DAY

***Sin whispers to the wicked, deep within their hearts. They have no fear of God at all. In their blind conceit, they cannot see how wicked they really are. Everything they say is crooked and deceitful. They refuse to act wisely or do good. They lie awake at night, hatching sinful plots. Their actions are never good. They make no attempt to turn from evil.*** (Psalm 36:1-4 NLT)

We read these words in the Bible and it perfectly describes those times in our lives when we were running on self-will in our destructive lifestyle. We were co-operating with the evil one every day and often weren't even aware of it. We didn't care about what people thought of us and what we were doing. We told ourselves that we weren't afraid of anyone – certainly not God. Crooked and deceitful barely goes deep enough to describe the choices we made and the things we did.

Are we not grateful that God, in His great love for us, never gave up on us but kept inviting us to come to Him and leave all that behind? In hindsight we can hardly imagine why we chose to live in such dark and ugly places for so long. The contrast of God's love poured into our lives each day now amazes us as we come into closer conscious contact with Him. Through prayer and meditation, we are now seeking to walk out God's principles for healthy living.

***Your unfailing love, O Lord, is as vast as the heavens; your faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the ocean depths. You care for people and animals alike, O Lord. How precious is your unfailing love, O God! All humanity finds shelter in the shadow of your wings. You feed them from the abundance of your own house, letting them drink from your river of delights. For you are the fountain of life, the light by which we see.*** (Psalm 36:5-9 NLT)

It's not enough to know about God's love. Let's seize the opportunity today to embrace a loving relationship with God, rest in His shadow, and let Him fill us to overflowing with His goodness.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your unfailing love for me. You are the fountain of life and in Your light I am refreshed and strengthened as I choose to give my will and life over to Your care. Help me to wholeheartedly follow You in all my ways. Amen*

***For you  
are the  
fountain  
of life, the  
light by  
which we  
see.***

***(Psalm 36:9  
NLT)***

JULY 26, 2022

## 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.***

***Promise 7 - AA***

We help each other by giving time and attention to one another. One of the greatest gifts we can give is a listening ear plus 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.

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 may 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 to earth to die for my sins. Help me to be more like You and become more interested in others and less self-focused. Amen*

JULY 27, 2022

## REST AND RECREATION

It's summertime – time for rest and recreation and hopefully some quality time with friends and/or family. We have daily rhythms of work and sleep, and weekly calendars that include workdays and weekends. Some of us have at least one annual time of vacation where we take a week or more to really get away from the usual routines and enjoy nature and rest. A time to rest, and a time away from our daily routine, is a need God created in us.

***You may work six days a week to do your job. But the seventh day is a day of rest in honor of the Lord your God. So on that day no one should work.*** (Exodus 20:9-10 ERV)

Whether we are at work or play God wants us to be people who know peace and rest of soul. Knowing God and trusting Him is how we find that peace. Life, even doing well in recovery, is more than we can handle on our own. That's why we make a habit of handing the stress and pressure of daily living over to God, inviting Him to do for us that which we cannot do for ourselves.

***It is surely true that I find my rest in God. He is the God who saves me. It is surely true that he is my rock. He is the God who saves me. He is like a fort to me. I will always be secure.*** (Psalm 62:1-2 NIRV)

When we put our trust in God, confess our sins, and turn away from them, we are forgiven. At times the enemy seeks to rob us of our peace of mind and rest of heart. He'll get us feeling guilty about this or that thing from our past. In those moments, God wants us to find peace by reminding ourselves that God's forgiveness is greater than any wrong we've done. Whatever this day brings for us – work or play – may our hearts be quieted by God's love and care.

***This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.*** (1 John 3:19-20 NIV)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of rest. I choose to honour You in my work and rest. I bring my anxious thoughts and troubled emotions to You, trusting that You will quiet my heart and fill my whole being with Your peace. Amen***

***A time to rest, and a time away from our daily routine, is a need God created in us.***

JULY 28, 2022

## RESCUING RELATIONSHIPS

Some of us slid into destructive and addictive lifestyles out of a desire to have friends and companions to belong to. We longed to have people around us to enrich our lives and to be able to do the same for them. Some of us attempted to support and rescue others from the effects of their dysfunctional lifestyle. In the beginning we were gracious and happy to be a friend and offer our support but, as time moved along and the chaos continued, we became progressively critical and unhappy with our situation.

***If someone who is wise tries to settle a problem with a fool, the fool will argue and say stupid things, and they will never agree.*** (Proverbs 29:9 ERV)

Too many of us remain in unhealthy relationships because we are afraid of the impact our withdrawal may have on the person we are trying to support. We put up with their constant unhappiness, physical or mental abuse, substance abuse, financial chaos, medical issues etc. etc. We refuse to acknowledge that we are powerless in the situation. Perhaps our own identity is in the role of staying connected to their world, and we fear change. Compulsive rescuers, in a roundabout way, may be seeking to support their own shortcomings.

***Whoever hides their sins will not be successful, but whoever confesses their sins and stops doing wrong will receive mercy. People who respect others will be blessed, but stubborn people will have plenty of troubles.*** (Proverbs 28:13-14 ERV)

Through Jesus, God has already made provision to rescue each of us from a life burdened down by sin. By surrendering to God and obeying the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we gain wisdom in all our affairs. If we humbly ask God to remove all our shortcomings, our relationship with others will grow and be healthy.

***Let's take a good look at the way we're living and reorder our lives under God.*** (Lamentations 3:40 MSG)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, You alone are the giver of new life. Help me to accept the things I cannot change and change the things I can. I ask You for discernment and wisdom in all my relationships so I may know the difference. Amen***

***By surrendering to God, we gain wisdom in all our affairs through obeying the guidance of the Holy Spirit.***

JULY 29, 2022

## DEALING WITH INSULTS AND LIES

Jesus always spoke the truth. He encouraged people to follow Him because He is the way, the truth, and the life. He said some things that are very difficult to do and may not seem to fit into the category of comfort and encouragement.

***Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.*** (1 Peter 3:9 NIV)

Does Jesus really mean this? We see examples of situations like road rage and know that quick-flash anger lives in most of us and can be triggered very quickly. Isn't it enough that we don't act violently in response to what others say and do or spread vicious rumors about them to others? Not only does the Bible teach us to not react and return evil for evil but it challenges us even further when we are taught to find a way to bless the one who is speaking badly about us.

***Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.*** (Matthew 5:11 NIV)

As Jesus hung on the cross, He blessed and forgave those who put Him there, even while they were busy mocking Him and making fun of Him. Jesus knew it was better to focus His actions on fulfilling what God wanted Him to do rather than be distracted by the cruel words or behaviour of others.

God will help us when we choose to stop the cycle of insults with kindness. This does not mean that we smile while our fists are clenched. It does mean that we give up the desire for revenge. We let God speak truth to our hearts and give us peace within, so the insults and evil lies of others wash off us like oil on a non-stick pan surface. When we've done this, we can then ask others to tell us what their problem is. Sometimes we will be able to mutually resolve the problem. At other times it may be the right thing to simply walk away in peace and pray a blessing on the wounded angry person. Either way, God will bless our sincere efforts to end insults and lies.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I can't imagine not insulting someone back when they insult me but I'm willing to do things Your way. With Your help I will do my best to bless someone who, either in the past or even today, speaks evil to me or about me. Remove all lies from my mind and heal my wounded heart and help me to see myself and others as You see us. Amen.*

***We are  
taught to  
find a way  
to bless  
the one  
who is  
speaking  
badly  
about us.***

JULY 30, 2022

## LIGHTS IN THE SKY

The Bible tells us that on the third day of creation God spoke and vegetation was created on the earth. On the fourth day God created the sun, moon and stars in the heavens. These lights were created to separate the day from the night, and to serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years. Why would God create vegetation on the earth before He created the necessary elements to support it?

***Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds".***

***And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day. And God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years"... And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.*** (Genesis 1:11,13,14,19 NIV)

***We have  
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opportunity  
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us in our  
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with Him.***

When we observe the sun in the daytime and the moon and stars at night, what goes through our minds? Are we amazed by the God who created this sustainable earth whose vegetation is controlled by days, seasons and years?

In our addiction, we seldom thought of God. Now we have the opportunity each day to learn and be in wonder at the order in which God is working to sustain us in our new life with Him in recovery.

***Your thoughts are far beyond my understanding, much more than I could ever imagine.*** (Psalm 139:17 ERV)

Before we were born Jesus paid the price for our sins by dying on the cross and by His resurrection we are assured of eternal life with our Heavenly Father. God made provision for us to be free from the bondage of the sins we would commit before we even existed. None of us has an excuse for remaining in our brokenness and sin because God, at just the right time, made a way for us to be forgiven and restored to new life. God is beyond our understanding, but then He *is* God.

*Prayer: Loving God, Help me to surrender to the order of Your ways in all my affairs. I praise You that I do not have to lean on my own understand but just believe and trust You. Amen*

JULY 31, 2022

## CREATING OUR SELF-IMAGE

Understanding the relationship between self-image and addiction is like a chicken and egg situation – trying to interpret which came first. Some of us tried to cover up for our low self-image by using alcohol or drugs. For others addiction contributed to our low self-image as we tried to deal with the guilt and shame of our unmanageable life. The Bible says God knows all about us and planned our time of birth and where we would live. Do we factor this into our self-image?

***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)

For all of us, our self-image should be based on why we exist at all. Do we believe that we are made in the image of God? Do we believe that God knew us before we were born and had a plan for us? The Bible tells us the story of Joseph who was rejected by his brothers because he was his father's favourite. To get rid of him, his brothers sold him as a slave, and Joseph ended up in Egypt.

***Then he sent someone to Egypt ahead of them—Joseph, who was sold as a slave. They bruised his feet with fetters and placed his neck in an iron collar. Until the time came to fulfill his dreams, the Lord tested Joseph's character.*** (Psalm 105:17-19 NLT)

Joseph's self-image must have changed as he went from being the favourite son in a family to being a slave. Did God know Joseph had become a slave? The scripture above says God tested Joseph's character. After many years Joseph's life turned around and he became second in command in the land of Egypt. How might this have impacted Joseph's self-image?

***You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good.*** (Genesis 50:20a NLT)

As Joseph's story unfolds, we should be encouraged. Our self-image will change with life's circumstances, but as we allow God to direct our ways, we will become aware that our self-image reflects God's plan for our lives.

***Prayer: Gracious God, I am blessed by the fact that You use my past, my present, and my future according to Your purpose as You work all things together for good in my life. Amen***

## NOTES

***Our self-  
image  
should be  
based on  
why we  
exist at  
all.***

## SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

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

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

## PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

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

## How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery

*God created us to have a wonderful life. In love, God planned for us and carefully put us together. God has always been calling out to us to enter into a relationship of love with Him. He doesn't force us but He invites us. Many of us have learned what a painful and confusing wreck our lives become when we try to live independently from God. Today is a good day to begin to live the full and rich life God intended for us. Nothing in our past can keep us from this life, if we want it and choose for it.*

*The 12-Steps remind us that our lives are unmanageable without the loving care of God and that we can get to know and come to believe that He is a power greater than ourselves. As we turn our will and our lives over to God's care, we find a solid foundation upon which to build a new life.*

*When we confess our sin and brokenness to God, repent and turn towards God, He gives us new life. When we invite God to come into our lives we find that He is ready and waiting for us. A simple prayer like the following, offered sincerely, establishes this new relationship with God that will last forever.*

***God, my life is unmanageable without you. You created me to live in relationship with you. There really is no good way to live on my own. Forgive me for not including you. I turn from my independent ways and surrender my will and my life to you. Thank you Jesus for dying on the cross for my sins and making a way for me to have new life and be filled up with Your Holy Spirit. Come into my heart and wash me clean. Teach me to do your will. Transform my way of thinking. Strengthen me to obey You in all I do. Amen***

*If you prayed that prayer sincerely from your heart, God forgives you and receives you. God makes you His son or daughter. God wants to show you how to live well and give you strength to do that every day. We would love to provide you with some information to support you as you move forward in your journey with God. Please contact us. You'll find our contact information on the front cover of this booklet.*

## **JUST FOR TODAY**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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