

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



July 2017

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at:

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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.*

Come and learn and grow with us:

Christian 12-Step Recovery Meeting
Wednesdays, 7:00 pm
325 6th Street
New Westminster, BC

Christian 12-Step Recovery Meeting
Thursdays, 7:30 pm
543 Powell Street
Vancouver, BC

We want to hear from you.

Visit us at www.partnersinhope.ca or write to us at:

Partners in Hope Recovery Society
1906 – 615 Belmont Street, New Westminster, BC V3M 6A1
Email: pihrecovery@gmail.com

*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



2017

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JULY 2017

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

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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.

NOTES

SATURDAY, JULY 1, 2017

HAPPY CANADA DAY

Canada's coat of arms is a picture filled with symbols that are meaningful. You'll find lions that represent the kingly authority. The motto "desiderantes meliorem patriam" (They desire a better country) reminds us that most of us are immigrants and we have experienced hospitality here in Canada. Symbols link us to our heritage in both France and England. 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 all of 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 represented 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 king ruling over the land. The prayer asks for kingly justice for the people. The cry goes out to God for the people to be blessed, the afflicted defended, and the children protected. The prayer asks for God to have dominion (influence and authority) over all the country.

May this be our prayer on this 150th celebration of Canada Day. Who better than we, who have been freed 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 let it begin with me.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for this land of Canada. May we continue to live in peace with one another as we look to You for direction in all the affairs of Canada, its government and its people. AMEN

*As we see
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SUNDAY, JULY 2, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – LOVE AT ITS BEST

What a refreshing feeling it is to be free from the guilt of our addiction and dependencies. Before we came into recovery we could hardly look up because we were afraid to meet the gaze of someone who cared for us. At other times, we were arrogant and in defiance against anyone who brought attention to our dysfunction. To us it may be a mystery how we were ever brought to the place of asking God for help.

*In His
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It's possible that even as we sunk deeper into our chaotic lifestyle, someone was praying for us and asking God to draw us to Himself. Now in recovery, we can give thanks to God for His enduring love for us. In His amazing grace, God brought us out of the darkness of hopelessness into the light of His glorious presence.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let Israel say: "His love endures forever." Let the house of Aaron say: "His love endures forever." Let those who fear the Lord say: "His love endures forever." When hard pressed, I cried to the Lord; he brought me into a spacious place. The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? (Psalm 118:1-6 NIV)

We can let go of those events and words that caused us to walk through doors of pain and despair. When God tenderly brought us up from the pit we had dug for ourselves, doors that we had closed were opened to us. Now we are free to go through the doors of healing and restoration. The Lord is always with us so we do not need to be afraid of what is ahead.

This is the message from the one who is holy and true, the one who has the key of David. What he opens, no one can close; and what he closes, no one can open: "I know all the things you do, and I have opened a door for you that no one can close. You have little strength, yet you obeyed my word and did not deny me." (Revelation 3:7-8 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your enduring love for me. Truly Your love, is love at its best. AMEN

MONDAY, JULY 31, 2017

IT'S WORTH THE EFFORT

Every year the city of Vancouver, BC hosts "The Sun Run" and thousands of folks participate. Many train for weeks in advance of the run. They stretch and jog and challenge themselves to run longer and faster. While they run, they sweat, they are short of breath, they push past discomfort to reach their goal, and yet many will tell you "It's worth the effort".

God commands us to stay pure and obey what is right. It may be challenging for us to hear God's rules for life but it is even more challenging to obey them. Like the runner, we may feel the discomfort of pushing past our desires of the moment in favour of doing what God says is right. However, when we do, and achieve our goal, we can also say "It's worth the effort".

How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word. I have tried hard to find you—don't let me wander from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. (Psalm 119:9-11 NLT)

To avoid relapse into any type of sin and destructive behaviour, we need to regularly fill our minds and hearts with God's word. As an athlete trains and builds up muscles and strength for the race ahead, so we stay on course in our new life by regularly spending time with God in prayer and meditation, seeking only knowledge of God's will and the power to carry it out.

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

Those who complete the annual Sun Run in Vancouver experience satisfaction for having conquered a challenge. We too will find great joy and satisfaction as we live free from our obsessions and compulsions. Attaining the goal of living pure before God really is worth the effort.

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to cast off everything that hinders me from running the race marked out for me. When temptation comes my way, strengthen me to do what is right according to Your word. AMEN

*Attaining
the goal of
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before God
really is
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effort.*

SUNDAY, JULY 30, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – BELIEVE GOD AND BE BLESSED

As we get to know God in this process of coming to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity, we're often not quite sure that God will hear and answer our prayers. We are hopeful that He might answer, but we do not have the assurance that God knows and cares and has the power to meet our needs.

The founders of AA included Step 2 because they knew God delights in us when we have faith to believe that He exists, that His word is truth, and show it by putting those beliefs into action in all our affairs.

The Bible assures us that ***“The eyes of the LORD search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.”*** (2 Chronicles 16:9 NKJV) The Bible also tells us to ask and we will receive, seek and we will find and knock and the door will be opened to us.

Lord, save us! Lord, grant us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you. The Lord is God, and he has made his light shine on us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will praise you; you are my God, and I will exalt you. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. (Psalm 118:25-29 NIV)

What does it mean to have a perfect heart before God? It means we choose to believe that God exists, that His word is truth, and we live our lives based on those facts. The Bible tells us that a man named Abraham believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith. Abraham had favour with God and God blessed him and granted him success. The founders of AA included Step 2 because they knew God delights in us when we have faith to believe that He exists, that His word is truth, and show it by putting those beliefs into action in all our affairs.

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry. (Hebrews 11:6; Psalm 34:15 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You are my God and I choose to believe in You. I will praise You and exalt Your word in all my affairs. AMEN

MONDAY, JULY 3, 2017

MOTIVATED BY GOD’S WILL IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS

See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. (Hebrews 3:12-13 NIV)

The desire to demonstrate our love for God and our neighbour should be the motivation that helps us accomplish the tasks that are on our daily agenda. At the end of each day we take inventory to determine how well we carried them out. When we do an honest assessment, we can be pleased with those things we managed to do well. In those areas where we know we fell short we can ask God to help us improve.

Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ. (Colossians 3:23-24 NLT)

What standard do we use for evaluating how we are honouring God in all our affairs? Jesus said we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbour as ourselves. Did each of us wake up this morning loving God with our whole being and desiring to be a part of what God wants to do through us today? Did we ask God for guidance in all those things we planned to do? When unplanned events occurred, did we function in a way that was pleasing to God and may have encouraged our neighbour? Were we conscious of God being with us as we carried out the events of the day?

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know. (Jeremiah 33:3 NIV)

God’s word assures us that when we call upon Him for help with our daily agenda, He will answer us and give us wisdom.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am grateful that You will give me the desire and the will to do what pleases You. Help me to love You with all my heart and to seek You in all my ways. AMEN.

The desire to demonstrate our love for God and our neighbour should be the motivation that helps us accomplish the tasks that are on our daily agenda.

TUESDAY, JULY 4, 2017

LIVING GOD'S WILL IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS – IS IT POSSIBLE?

Even though we may desire to walk with God and follow His ways, we will still need God's help to accomplish that goal. King David, who was named, "a man after God's own heart" called out to God for help repeatedly.

Be good to your servant, that I may live and obey your word. Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions. I am only a foreigner in the land. Don't hide your commands from me! I am always overwhelmed with a desire

It truly is possible for us to live a purposeful life of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit when we seek God's direction in all our affairs.

for your regulations. You rebuke the arrogant; those who wander from your commands are cursed. Don't let them scorn and insult me, for I have obeyed your laws. Even princes sit and speak against me, but I will meditate on your decrees. Your laws please me; they give me wise advice. (Psalm 119:17-24 NLT)

God gives us His Holy Spirit to live in us and guide us so we know what's right and true. As we turn our will and our lives over to His care, God also works in us to give us the desire to know and follow His ways.

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

We live in a world where people are arrogant and don't seek God. They rebel against God's principles and choose to do what is right in their own eyes. If we are to remain strong and steady in the plan that God has for our lives, we will need to seek Him in all our affairs and rely on His strength to support us as we choose to do what is right.

We need to read and meditate on God's word daily. We

need to surrender to the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit.

It truly is possible for us to live a purposeful life of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit when we seek God's direction in all our affairs.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Turn my eyes away from worthless things and lead me in the way I should go. Let me rest in Your unfailing love for me as I grow in the knowledge of Your word. AMEN

SATURDAY, JULY 29, 2017

THE BEAUTY OF A QUIET AND GENTLE SPIRIT

While it is important to show gentleness towards those we are in contact with, it's also essential that we learn how to treat ourselves gently. That doesn't mean that we look for a "softer gentler way" that avoids issues and allows us to continue in whatever is convenient and comfortable, but is ultimately harmful. It does mean that we seek out gentleness everywhere we find ourselves.

God invites us to a lifestyle of gentleness where we respect truth, respect the dignity of everyone including ourselves, and delight in the joy and wonder of each new day. ***Surround me with your tender mercies so I may live, for your instructions are my delight.*** (Psalm 119:77 NLT)

Gentleness helps us admit that we are struggling and it's okay to seek help. ***He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies.*** (Psalm 103:4 NLT)

Gentleness is protected by the setting of safe boundaries in relationships. ***Lord, don't hold back your tender mercies from me. Let your unfailing love and faithfulness always protect me.*** (Psalm 40:11 NLT)

Gentleness is often experienced in our spirit when we take the time to slow down and notice life around us – a flower on a summer day; a baby in a stroller; the aroma of food; the beautiful colours in the sky as the sun goes down. ***God has made everything beautiful for its own time. The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship.*** (Ecclesiastes 3:11, Psalm 19:1 NLT)

Gentleness in us flows and grows as we sit quietly and have a conversation with God. Just reading the Bible often brings peace and gentleness to our souls and when we speak to God in response to what He is conveying to us in His Word, a gentleness of spirit seems to wrap itself around our hearts. ***Let my teaching fall on you like rain; let my speech settle like dew. Let my words fall like rain on tender grass, like gentle showers on young plants.*** (Deuteronomy 32:2 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to live in the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit that comes from within and which is precious in Your sight. AMEN

God invites us to a lifestyle of gentleness where we respect truth, respect the dignity of everyone including ourselves, and delight in the joy and wonder of each new day.

FRIDAY, JULY 28, 2017

FREEDOM THROUGH TELLING THE TRUTH

"We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." How hard would it be to trust such a power if we thought he was a liar? How could we even think about turning our will and our life over to his care? Fortunately, one of our Heavenly Father's basic characteristics is truth. In fact, it is impossible for God to lie. We can completely depend on every word God says and every promise He gives us.

It is impossible for God to lie. Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. God tells the truth, even if everyone else is a liar. (Hebrews 6:18, John 14:6 NLT, Romans 3:4 CEV)

God wants to reveal the deception and lies we've been told by society and those we've lived under, because lies always harm and drag us down.

God always speaks truth, even difficult truths, but does it with such kindness and love that it draws our heart closer to Him rather than driving us away from Him. There's a story in the Bible in John 4 that tells about Jesus' encounter with a woman who was hiding the truth. Jesus engaged her in conversation and revealed the complete truth about her life's circumstances, which weren't all that great. Amazingly, in just a few minutes that woman, who had lived in shame in her community for years because of her circumstances, ran back to town and invited everyone to come and hear Jesus because He had revealed everything that had happened to her: **Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?** (John 4:29 NLT)

When God, who loves us unconditionally, speaks truth to us, life and hope and a desire for healing fills our hearts. God wants to reveal the deception and lies we've been told by society and those we've lived under, because lies always harm and drag us down. God wants to set us free from the bondage of lying, lift us up, and draw us closer to Himself.

What sorrow for those who drag their sins behind them with ropes made of lies, who drag wickedness behind them like a cart! (Isaiah 5:18 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for always speaking the truth in love to me. Help me to live in the freedom of always speaking truth to you, to myself, and to others. AMEN

WEDNESDAY, JULY 5, 2017

LISTENING FOR GOD'S VOICE

How are we expected to know what is right? How do we know what is wrong? What is helpful? What is harmful? How can we be sure that we are making the right choices? God knew we would need help in this area and, through the scriptures recorded in the Bible, gave us moral laws that instruct us how to live a purposeful and pleasing life. God has a plan for each person's life and has provided the wisdom we will need through each step of the journey.

Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track. (Proverbs 3:5-6 MSG)

One of the practices we are encouraged to maintain in recovery is taking daily inventory with God. At the end of the day we reflect on the events that took place that day. We inventory what we did right. We inventory where we went wrong. We look at the circumstances, attitudes, and ways of relating which we know have the potential to draw us back into the darkness, resentment, and shame that we have been journeying away from. This practice of taking a daily inventory helps keep us on the right road and restricts any bitterness from taking root in our hearts.

See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance. (Hebrews 12:15; Proverbs 1:5 NIV)

As we take inventory at the end of the day, let's listen for God's voice. Let's ask Him to help us accept the things we cannot change, for the courage to change the things we can, and to give us the wisdom to know the difference.

Prayer: Loving God, I confess that I don't always seek You about the choices I make. Help me to improve my conscious contact with You and purposefully listen to what You say. AMEN

God has a plan for each person's life and has provided the wisdom we will need through each step of the journey.

THURSDAY, JULY 6, 2017

GOD'S WILL FOR MY BODY

In the areas of eating, exercise, rest, sexual activity or substance abuse, how am I choosing to honour God with my body? Am I guilty of not caring for it as the temple of the Holy Spirit? Anyone who has lived life just to satisfy the passions of the flesh knows that those cravings cannot be satisfied. Momentary pleasure is all that can be achieved. Even a healthy activity like exercise can become a demanding passion when we allow it to become the main focus of our life.

Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NLT)

*How am I
choosing
to
honour
God with
my body?*

What about complaining, finding fault, or arguing with others? Do I have a critical spirit? Do I carry a grudge when I don't see eye-to-eye with another person? Do I speak unkindly about a person when they are not present? Do I spend more time talking about problems than seeking solutions? Do I complain and condemn? Do I fail to name the good that others are doing?

God simply says to us: ***Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*** (Ephesians 4:31-32 NLT)

Am I using filthy language or telling off-colour jokes? Would God approve of the ugly words that come out of my mouth or the snicker that occurs when an inappropriate joke is told?

God says: ***Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.*** (Ephesians 4:29 NLT)

Today is another opportunity for each of us to live in God's will in everything we do and say.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for the times I have corrupted my body, mind and spirit by ugly words and behavior. Purify my heart so I can live a clean life that pleases You. AMEN

THURSDAY, JULY 27, 2017

HOW MANY LIES MAKES A LIAR?

Life with God in recovery is structured around telling the truth in all circumstances. We've heard the slogan, "You are only as sick as your secrets" and that's a simple description of a life based on lies. Another AA slogan points us towards the new life in recovery we seek, "Trust God, clean house, help others." God's word makes this principle crystal clear.

Stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. (Ephesians 4:25, 1 Peter 3:10 NLT)

The move from telling lies to telling the truth is often harder than we think. It's so easy to excuse little white lies, half-truths, exaggerations, and lies of convenience where we tell ourselves that it's mostly truth. We live in a society where lying is an accepted way of doing business or doing politics. "Fake news," "alternate facts," and "political spin" are terms that seek to condone telling lies. To rationalize telling lies we talk about "fudging the truth, bending the truth, being economical with the truth." How many lies does a person need to tell to be labelled a liar? Sadly, all around us we are seeing the negative impact of a society that has made lying a way of life.

The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in those who tell the truth. I am writing to you not because you don't know the truth but because you know the difference between truth and lies. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. (Proverbs 12:22, 1 John 2:21, John 16:13 NLT)

The only issue that really matters when it comes to truth and lies is the answer to these questions we may ask ourselves: What am I saying? When I speak, can others trust that I'm telling the truth?

When we ask Him, God is ready to help us become persons of truth and integrity.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you are the way, the truth, and the life. You have filled me with the Spirit of Truth who will guide me into all truth. Help me to listen well and practice truth in all my affairs. AMEN

*When I
speak,
can
others
trust
that I'm
telling
the
truth?*

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2017

STOP LYING

During our time in addiction, we didn't give a second thought to telling lies. It was simply a way of life, a way of survival. We lied so we'd look better than we were acting. We lied to try to gain advantage. We lied because we were angry with someone and wanted to get back at them. We lied to ourselves to minimize and excuse our addictive behaviour. The truth is, whenever we try to live without God we quickly descend into a habit of telling lies.

They all fool and defraud each other; no one tells the truth. With practiced tongues they tell lies; they wear themselves out with all their sinning. For you

are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. (Jeremiah 9:5, John 8:44 NLT)

*Lying
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and destroys
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the truth.*

The life we are called to recover is shaped by letting go of lying and choosing to always tell the truth. Our character is most like that of the evil one when we are lying. It reflects God's character when we speak truth.

Every town and city has regulations and practices for good sanitation. Why? They know they need to provide a clean environment so their citizens can stay healthy. Similarly, God wants us to experience a rich and blessed life. Lying contaminates and

destroys relationships and so life in God's world is based on His spiritual sanitation system of telling the truth.

Who may climb the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies. They will receive the Lord's blessing and have a right relationship with God their savior. (Psalm 24:3-5 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, forgive me for the many times I've lied to you, to others, and to myself. Help me to always speak truth and to be transparent in all my ways. AMEN

FRIDAY, JULY 7, 2017

SURRENDERING TO GOD'S WILL

Do feelings of inferiority keep us from serving God and living life to the full? Do we fail to attempt things for God because we think we are not talented enough? Are we depending on our own strength to get through life or are we looking to God to be our strength?

Most of the time we estimate what we and others can or cannot do by what we have observed. However, God does not see us as we tend to see ourselves or others. At some point God may be encouraging us to do something that we are fearful of doing. We put obstacles in our way because of what is going on inside us.

A story in the Bible tells us about a fearful man named Gideon who was working in a hidden place because he was afraid of the enemies of Israel. God chose Gideon to save Israel and called him a "Mighty Warrior," not a name Gideon, nor you, nor I would have given him.

Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior." "Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, 'Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian." The Lord turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?" (Judges 6:11b-14 NIV)

Gideon was doubtful, but eventually submitted to God and was given the knowledge and strength to defeat Israel's enemies. With God, all things are possible. As we journey with God in recovery, listening to Him and submitting to His ways, we will find that we will accomplish more than we could ever have thought or dreamed of.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Remove all fear from me so that I may surrender to Your will for my life. AMEN

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SATURDAY, JULY 8, 2017

SPIRIT SATURDAY – GENTLENESS

Our former lifestyle in addiction and destructive life habits was harsh and difficult. We operated in an environment of angry words and bullying. The new life in recovery to which God invites us is one of gentleness and lovingly speaking the truth to each other.

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. (Colossians 3:12 NLT)

The new life in recovery to which God invites us, is one of gentleness and lovingly speaking the truth to each other.

We see gentleness in a kind gesture or action. We hear it in the tone of voice of encouraging and comforting words. We recognize gentleness in the way we hold a little baby or kiss the cheek of a beloved parent or grandparent. To be present with love and compassion for someone is an expression of gentleness, particularly when that person is frail or vulnerable.

A person who is speaking and acting in a gentle way is safe to be around and we can all relax and feel at ease in their presence. They don't just bring their own agenda and try to force us to live their way. They bring respect for who we are and are attentive to what we are saying. God is gentle, and he wants His gentleness to be expressed through us every day of our lives, in all our relationships.

We need to move away from our fearful, angry, impatient way of life that we've grown used to in addiction. God wants us to get rid of everything that flaws our relationship with Him and with others. Jesus wants us to be kind and compassionate towards one another so that we reflect Him living in us.

Jesus said: ***Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*** (Matthew 11:29 NLT)

Many of us think we are more gentle than we actually are. To give God an opportunity to teach us and transform us into living in a gentle way, we'll be exploring the gentle lifestyle each Saturday of this month.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, we want to learn how to be gentle people. Help us to open our hearts to your kind and gentle ways and, from that place of rest in our souls, be gentle in our attitude towards others. AMEN

TUESDAY, JULY 25, 2017

I CAN'T. GOD CAN. I THINK I'LL LET HIM.

The familiar slogan "*I can't. God can. I think I'll let Him*" describes the first three steps of the Twelve Step program of Alcoholics Anonymous. We can apply these words to many situations we encounter in our daily lives.

The story is told of how one rainy afternoon, a father came up with an idea to entertain his bored eight-year-old daughter. He tore a large map of the world into small pieces, mixed them up, and told her to put them back together like a jigsaw puzzle. To her father's surprise, the girl completed the puzzle in just a few minutes. "How did you do it?" the father asked. "It was easy," she said. "At first I couldn't fit all the lines and dots and colors together on the map. Then I saw part of a man's face on the back of one of the pieces. So, I turned all the pieces over. When I got the man on the back of the pieces together, the world on the front took care of itself."

Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you. He will make your innocence radiate like the dawn, and the justice of your cause will shine like the noonday sun. (Proverbs 37:5-6 NLT)

God sent His son Jesus into the world to redeem sinful, broken, screwed-up individuals like us. By dying on the cross, Jesus paid the price of new life for each one of us and offers it to us today. If accept it, we can receive that new life today. Alternatively, we can continue to live in frustration as we try to sort out our complicated lives by ourselves. When we choose to apply the simple principle, "I can't. God can. I'll let Him" we'll experience new and satisfying life – life with God in recovery.

Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. (James 1:17 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit that I am powerless over people, places, and things. I invite you to live in me and work in me so I fulfill Your good purpose for my life. AMEN

When we choose to apply the simple principle, "I can't. God can. I'll let Him" we'll experience new and satisfying life – life with God in recovery.

MONDAY, JULY 24, 2017

FIRST THINGS FIRST

One of our first priorities in recovery is sorting our life practices according to the truth. We come to recovery weary and weak, sick and sinful and we're powerless to do anything about that until we first make a change to our thinking and believing. Then and only then can we think about setting our circumstances, our relationships, and our world in order. First things first.

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

One of our first priorities in recovery is sorting our life practices according to the truth.

We cannot even see what is good or sane until God works in us to remove the fog of pain and the lies we've believed. As sincerely as we have asked God to remove the obsession to our substance of choice or our addictive habits, so we must ask God to give us an undivided heart. We must have the foundation of truthful thoughts and healthy desires in place before we can hope to safely build our life in recovery.

For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. (Romans 7:18 NIV)

Doctors can help us with sickness but only God can forgive the sin of our destructive and addictive lifestyle. We need to allow God's truth to bring enlightenment and healing to our deceitful hearts. Doctors and counsellors can then provide us with physical and psychological help to reveal the choices which contributed to our seeking comfort in addiction rather than in God.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. (1 Timothy 1:15-16 NIV)

God made us. He knows how we work. He knows where the true nature of our problems lies.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I need forgiveness, new life, and the power of Your Holy Spirit operating in me to heal me and change me from the inside out. I invite You into my life to bring me to the knowledge of all truth. AMEN

SUNDAY, JULY 9, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – TRUST IN GOD

When we are troubled and looking for help, who or what first enters our mind? Do we look first to ourselves, another person, the court, or some other agency to solve whatever we are dealing with? When we have exhausted all other options, do we then look to God for a solution? The Bible tells us that the person who looks to God and trusts God for a solution is the one who will be blessed. That should be reason enough to seek Him first when we are in any trouble.

The Lord is with me; he is my helper. I look in triumph on my enemies. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in humans. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. All the nations surrounded me, but in the name of the Lord I cut them down. They surrounded me on every side, but in the name of the Lord I cut them down. They swarmed around me like bees, but they were consumed as quickly as burning thorns; in the name of the Lord I cut them down. (Psalm 118:7-12 NIV)

When problems surround us on every side like a swarm of bees, we need God's wisdom and understanding to guide us. Jesus told us that in this world we would have trouble so we should assume that at some point, even while living a solid life in recovery, trouble will come our way. In numerous places in the Bible we are told to call on the name of the Lord for help. When we are children of God we are assured that our Heavenly Father cares for us and will meet our needs. In faith, we are to stand firm in the assurance that what God has promised, He will do.

Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods. (Psalm 40:4 NIV)

Prayer: Loving God, When I am overwhelmed by troubles, help me to trust in You for help. You Lord are the one who has the power to relieve my troubled heart and free me from my anguish. I am forever grateful that You care for me. AMEN

The person who looks to God and trusts God for a solution is the one who will be blessed.

MONDAY, JULY 10, 2017

OVERWHELMED BY PROBLEMS

For many of us life sometimes seems like innumerable strings all tangled and knotted together. Our lives are a jumbled mess of breakdowns, broken promises, destructive behaviours, and consequences. There are so many things that should have been dealt with one at a time but for various reasons were not. Unresolved childhood issues, the twists on life events that resulted, poor problems solving skills, and dysfunctional relationships only added to the mess. Life is confusing, often overwhelming, and we don't quite know where to turn. God has an answer for us in the middle of our trouble.

God is willing to help us and will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves if we will simply ask Him.

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. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them. (Hebrews 4:15 NIV, Psalm 91:15 NLT)

Sometimes we are unsure if we really want help. We're not convinced anyone understands our situation or can help us. If they did try to help, we wonder if their help would solve our problems. It's hard to believe good could come when we have a history of problems only getting worse. The experience, strength, and hope of those who have walked in similar situations before us is, that God can be trusted to sort out our problems and show us a much better way forward than we could ask for or even imagine.

Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces. In my desperation I prayed, and the Lord listened; he saved me from all my troubles. (Psalm 34:5-6 NLT)

Our part today is to simply give God a chance. God is patient and will walk with us as we come to believe that He can restore us to sanity. He will give us new life as we turn our will and our life – including our jumbled mess – over to His care. God is willing to help us and will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves if we will simply ask Him.

Prayer: God, my life's a mess. I can't fix me. I'm told that you could and would if you were sought. I'm asking you today to sort me out. AMEN

SUNDAY, JULY 23, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – SAFE GATES AND SOLID FOUNDATIONS

Gates serve several purposes. One purpose is to keep those inside safe and another is to keep out those who are undesirable and perhaps harmful to the community within. Gates may be controlled so that only those who have special permission can enter the gated enclosure. When we turn our will and our life over to the care of God we receive forgiveness for all our sin and are made pure and righteous before God. Our relationship with God is restored and the gates of Heaven are opened wide for us to enter and receive each one of God's precious promises.

Open for me the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous may enter. I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation. The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. The Lord has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad. (Psalm 118:19-24 NIV)

Builders know that the foundation for a building must be on rock otherwise the elements of nature will cause it to topple. We've already learned that trying to build our lives solely on pleasure doesn't work. It led us to addiction and ruin. Attempting to build recovery without the cornerstone of faith in God, who sent His son into the world to reconcile us to Himself, will also end in disaster.

Thankfully, when we build our lives on the solid foundation of God's word we will not have to worry about a disastrous failure. Storms and earthquakes may come and go but we will live in safety as we are receiving the kingdom of God that can never be shaken.

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire." (Hebrews 12:28-29 NIV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You are the cornerstone of life eternal. Help me to grow in faith and stand firm in the knowledge of Your word as I apply it in all my affairs. AMEN

Attempting to build recovery without the cornerstone of faith in God, who sent His son into the world to reconcile us to Himself, will also end in disaster.

SATURDAY, JULY 22, 2017

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES TO GENTLENESS

Even though we know that God's way for us in our life in recovery is one of showing compassion and kindness to everyone, we may find it difficult to sustain these qualities in the challenges of everyday living. People are often difficult. Circumstances don't work out the way we think they should. Everything seems to take more time than we have to give. We're frustrated. We feel misunderstood and not cared for. We feel vulnerable when we don't know how to solve a difficult problem. Before we know it, we are thinking and speaking with anger and impatience, or are gossiping and blaming. Can a person really sustain life with gentleness in our challenging world over the long haul? How?

As we make it a practice to receive the tender care of God in the middle of difficulties, we'll grow in our ability to live in gentleness through our challenging times.

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. (1 Peter 5:7, 2 Corinthians 9:8 NLT)

We need to remind ourselves that God cares, and that He is working in us and for us, always for our good. Circumstances might seem out of control but God is watching over us and if we ask, is available to help us and provide us with whatever we need. Once we remember that God cares and is making a way for us, it's time to listen and do what God says. God promises that when we obey Him, we'll have an amazing experience of His peace and gentleness will fill our souls.

Oh, that you had listened to my commands! Then you would have had peace flowing like a gentle river and righteousness rolling over you like waves in the sea. I will give them singleness of heart and put a new spirit within them. I will take away their stony, stubborn heart and give them a tender, responsive heart. (Isaiah 48:18, Ezekiel 11:19 NLT)

As we make it a practice to receive the tender care of God in the middle of difficulties, we'll grow in our ability to live in gentleness through our challenging times.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, with you at my side I can be a strong and gentle person. Help me to bring each problem I face to you, remembering that you care for me and you will show me a fitting solution. AMEN

TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2017

PROBLEMS! PROBLEMS! PROBLEMS EVERYWHERE!

When we look around at the lifestyle of others we may become disheartened by assuming they live problem-free lives. However, it's easy to be mistaken because we are not familiar with everything that is going on in someone else's life. In this broken world, everyone has problems. Jesus said so.

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

Problems need to be sorted as they arise otherwise life will become even more complex. When we first begin to sort through the mess we may feel overwhelmed. However, as we keep in mind that a start has been made and that God is with us, we can steadily move forward in our recovery journey. The slogan we hear often, "progress not perfection" will prove to be true. God has begun a good work in us and He will help us deal with everything that concerns us.

We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed and broken. We are perplexed, but we don't give up and quit. We are hunted down, but God never abandons us. We get knocked down, but we get up again and keep going. God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished. (2 Corinthians 4:8-9, Philippians 1:6 NLT)

One of the problems in our modern society is we expect everything to be resolved quickly and easily. If it isn't, we abandon it and move on to something else. It's difficult for us to have the patience to stay with a problem until we see a breakthrough. We need God's help, not just with the solution to the problem, but also for strength to work hard, and to persevere on the road to recovery that God has prepared for us.

Let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. (Galatians 6:9 NLT)

Prayer: Thank you God for progress in sorting out my problems. Help me to trust you today to complete the work you've begun in me and to lead me safely forward. AMEN

Problems need to be sorted as they arise otherwise life will become even more complex.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 12, 2017

FACING PROBLEMS WITH CONFIDENCE

When we were in the pit of our addiction God pursued us with His love and brought us out of darkness and despair into His wonderful light. He has promised that He will never leave us or forsake us. No matter how many troubles or trials we may encounter, we can be certain that together with God any difficulty can be worked out and overcome.

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

No matter how many troubles or trials we may encounter, we can be certain that together with God any difficulty can be worked out and overcome.

God is never in a hurry. He never quits or runs out of patience. God will help us deal with our problems one issue at a time until each issue is resolved. He will then allow us to rest for a while as we function with a different set of parameters. At the appropriate time, He will help us work on other problems.

When it seems that progress is not being made, it's often because the Lord is very patiently helping us deal with underlying issues that are the real root of the problem. Sometimes, in our own haste to get things done, we focus on an issue that is not yet resolved rather than rejoicing over all the others that have been sorted out.

Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. (Philippians 2:13 NASB)

It may be tough, and it may take time, but if we commit ourselves to the process of healing, sooner or later we will experience the victory in our lives that we have desired for so long.

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, Thank you for Your patience with me when I was busy making the mess I'm currently facing. Help me to be patient now as together we sort things out in Your timing and in Your way. AMEN.

FRIDAY, JULY 21, 2017

SOBRIETY DELIVERS EVERYTHING ALCOHOL PROMISED

There's an old slogan in AA that says, "*Sobriety delivers everything alcohol promised.*" Our new life in recovery gives us the daily experience of the companionship and help of God in every situation, particularly where we previously thought we needed the help of the bottle or a substance.

Jesus says, "***Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.***" We respond: ***I will call to you whenever I'm in trouble, and you will answer me.*** (Matthew 28:20, Psalm 86:7 NLT)

When we purposefully trust God's goodness and His willingness to help us, we can stand steady in the middle of what is happening and watch God bring about solutions that we never thought possible. God is the God of the impossible. When we accept Christ as our Saviour, we become children of God. God delights to do good things on behalf of His children. All God's amazing promises become our inheritance. Sobriety, and particularly sobriety with God, delivers everything alcohol promised.

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. 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 1:20-22 NIV)

Our Heavenly Father is waiting for us to trust Him and rely on His promises. As we choose to do so, we will no longer need liquid spirits from a bottle or a substance to help us cope. The power of the Holy Spirit within us will strengthen us and cause us to stand firm with God in our recovery. God guarantees whatever He says and He will do it.

The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. (Psalm 34:17 NIV)

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for your reliable promises. I choose to put my trust in You for You are a good Father and are faithful in all Your ways. AMEN

Our new life in recovery gives us the daily experience of the companionship and help of God in every situation, particularly where we previously thought we needed the help of the bottle or a substance.

THURSDAY, JULY 20, 2017

PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES

"Principles before personalities" is one of those sayings we hear at Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. We often repeat these words together but what do these words actually mean?

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important. (Philippians 2:3-4, Galatians 6:2-3 NLT)

We need to deal with our personal feelings about a person in a "let go and let God" way.

Some of the principles we read about and discover through our step work include things like admitting we're powerless; owning our part in any situation; surrendering to God's will; being humble and patience; maintaining respect for all. These are important spiritual principles that are a lot easier to talk about than to put into practice, particularly with others who are "works in progress" like ourselves.

Personalities vary greatly. Some personality types fit well with the person we are and are easy for us to get along with, others provide more of a challenge. We meet people from all walks of life with different values and beliefs. There are also those who are really struggling and exhibit toxic behaviours like gossip, blaming, being a control freak, playing the victim. How then do we practice putting "principles before personalities"?

Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. We will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ (Luke 6:28, Ephesians 4:15 NLT)

We are responsible for our own thoughts and actions. We need to deal with our personal feelings about a person in a "let go and let God" way. We welcome God to fill us with peace and show us how to speak and act with respect, even when we disagree with another. We work our own program and leave others to theirs. As we faithfully practice putting "principles before personalities," God will strengthen us with all the endurance and patience we need.

Prayer: Loving God, Only by Your work in and through me can I truly put "principles before personalities." Thank You that Your power is made perfect in my weakness. AMEN

THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2017

PUTTING PROBLEMS IN PERSPECTIVE

Sometimes we stand in the way of our own healing. We need to ask ourselves the question, "Do I truly want to get well?"

When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" (John 5:6 NIV)

There are some people who really don't want to get well. They have become accustomed to having their problems around and are content to live with them. They allow their problems to define everything they think, say, and do. Their life revolves around their problems. Even when life goes well for a bit, they live on edge just waiting for the next problem to show up. The idea of never-ending problems has damaged their belief about who they are and what life can be for them. This defective perspective then influences how they act.

Recovering the life God created us to live includes having our belief system transformed by truth. God is willing and able to take care of everything that concerns us and give us solutions for every problem.

The Lord will work out his plans for my life—for your faithful love, O Lord, endures forever. (Psalm 138:8 NLT)

We need to stop living our lives based on lies and injustices that took place in the past. We need to bring the events that influenced our current belief system before the Lord. We need to ask His forgiveness for any part we played in allowing those events to control our lives. As we affirm God's care for us and His power to sort out our problems, faith will grow in us and we will begin to see how God may use even problem events from our past for something good in our lives.

Give your burdens to the Lord, and he will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall. We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. (Psalm 55:22, Romans 5:3 NLT)

As we continue in the practice of surrendering our will and our lives to God, we will be strengthened to deal with any situation that comes our way.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to get well. Help me renew my mind in the truth of Your word so that my belief system is reprogrammed by the power of Your Holy Spirit. AMEN.

God is willing and able to take care of everything that concerns us and give us solutions for every problem.

FRIDAY, JULY 14, 2017

TOGETHER WITH GOD ANY DIFFICULTY CAN BE WORKED OUT

If we really want to get well, we need to stop using our problems as a means of getting attention, sympathy or pity.

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. (Jeremiah 29:11-12 NIV)

As we learned from yesterday's meditation, we need to examine our current belief system and hear and accept the truth about our life situations. It's time to stop wasting valuable time feeling sorry for ourselves and wallowing in self-pity. We must stop using our problems as an excuse to sit on the sidelines of life. We have hope and a future. Let's not waste our time on things of the past. Our daily focus must be to fix our eyes on Jesus and get excited about what the Lord has planned for us to do today. God says we can call on Him in our day of trouble and He will work on our behalf.

***We must
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problems
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excuse to
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sidelines
of life.***

For since the world began, no ear has heard and no eye has seen a God like you, who works for those who wait for him! (Isaiah 64:4 NLT)

As difficulties come our way, we can rely on God's help to face each situation calmly and with courage. When we apply God's principles in each circumstance, we can confidently leave the outcome with Him. We often don't know the way through our problems, but God does. The challenge for us is to follow His direction when we don't fully understand the way He is taking us, and simply let Him lead us one step at a time.

Let me hear of your unfailing love each morning, for I am trusting you. Show me where to walk, for I give myself to you. Rescue me from my enemies, Lord; I run to you to hide me. (Psalm 143:8-9 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I believe that You have prepared a wonderful day and a good future for me. Together with You, any difficulty I might face can be worked out and overcome. AMEN

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 2017

FREEDOM FROM GUILT THROUGH FORGIVENESS

"Unforgiveness is like drinking a cup of poison and hoping the other person dies." These words or others similar to them are shared in many 12-step circles and are true no matter where we hear them.

Jesus taught his disciples: "And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." (Mark 11:25 NIV)

We often live with underlying feelings of guilt when we refuse to forgive someone for harming us. No matter how many times we tell ourselves that we have legitimate reasons for our resentment, the grudge we hold, and the unforgiveness we cling to, we are still the ones who are suffering the consequences.

We harm some folks by our sins and others harm us by theirs. God has prepared a way forward for all of us. His way is to sort out our shattered relationships with confession, forgiveness, and healing through Jesus Christ. It's not just for us, but for all, including those who have unfairly treated us.

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. (James 5:16 NIV)

How do we put forgiveness into practice? We choose to let the person who harmed us "off our hook" knowing they are still "on God's hook" until they admit wrong and seek His forgiveness. We acknowledge the hurt and hatred we are holding in our hearts as our own sin. We ask God to touch our emotional core and to heal us and set us free from all that has wounded us.

Someone has wisely said, "When you forgive, you in no way change the past but you sure do change the future." God's healing goes deeper than our deepest hurt. Let's receive that healing today and offer forgiveness so that we can be free from guilt.

Prayer: Loving Heavenly Father, Hold me close to Your heart and comfort me as I choose to forgive as I have been forgiven. AMEN

***We often
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TUESDAY, JULY 18, 2017

LIFTING THE FOG OF GUILT

How often have we seen the promise of sunny days get taken away by fog that drifts in and settles over the city. In the early days of recovery many of us live with hope and the great promise of “sunny days” ahead. Then, somehow, happy feelings of gratitude get overcome by guilt feelings that rob us of joy.

*Let's ask for
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Yesterday we looked at feelings of guilt from wrong doing on our part and learned how to get these feelings removed by God's forgiveness and cleansing. While we may be able to admit some of our shortcomings, there are often areas in each of our lives where we try to deny and excuse wrongs that we've done. As long as we continue to deny, minimize, or rationalize wrong behaviour, we will experience guilt that weighs us down and robs us of a life that is full and satisfying.

The Bible tells us, **"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."** (1 John 1:8 NIV)

It's often easier for us to blame others, see the faults of others, and use that to excuse or rationalize our own behaviour. Jesus wants us to live free and so He invites us to reconsider this practice: **"Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well**

enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye." (Matthew 7:5 NLT)

King David, a king of Israel, learned this and said, **"Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.** (Psalm 32:5 NLT)

So, let's not let the fog of denial and guilt rob us of the joy of living today. Let's admit that, just like everyone else, we've done wrong. Let's take responsibility for the choices we've made and the actions we've done. Let's ask for and receive forgiveness from God and others and move back into the sunshine of a clear conscience.

Prayer: Loving God, Please take away the fear of truth about myself. Help me to reach out and embrace Your forgiveness and healing so that all my guilt can be removed. AMEN

SATURDAY, JULY 15, 2017

A LIFESTYLE OF GENTLENESS

If someone was to evaluate our daily communication with others, would they describe us as gentle or harsh?

Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. (Ephesians 4:2 NLT)

In Steps 6 and 7 we are preparing ourselves to have God remove all our defects of character and then ask Him to do so. It is not easy to change from being a self-centered, impatient and often unkind person, to being one who lives respectfully and gently with others whatever the circumstances. There is a natural unwillingness in us to admit that we're not living and behaving well in community. We are also reluctant to acknowledge that we are powerless to make any change on our own and need God to work in us to help us do so.

*If someone was to
evaluate our daily
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What does a lifestyle of gentleness look like?

Forgiveness that expresses kindness to those who previously harmed us: ***Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*** (Ephesians 4:32, 4:2 NLT)

Always speaking to or about someone with kindness and respect. ***They must not slander anyone and must avoid quarreling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone. A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.*** (Titus 3:2, Proverbs 15:1 NLT)

Treating everyone with sincerity and generosity: ***But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere.*** (James 3:17 NLT)

We may live gently with some people, some of the time but too often, too quickly, we find ourselves moving in the opposite direction. Let's do an inventory with God today and allow Him to show us how we can grow in this beautiful character of gentleness.

Prayer: Loving God, I want to be a strong and gentle person but I know I often fall short. I am willing to have You work in me to remove my character defects and help me exhibit gentleness in my thoughts, my words, and my behaviour. AMEN

SUNDAY, JULY 16, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – LET’S HAVE A PARTY

How many of us have fallen in life to places where we never dreamed we could have been? In a moment of clarity, we saw what we had become and were shocked by the daily existence we called life. Our family and friends counselled us to get help to change our ways but in our self-centered pride we sunk deeper and deeper into the mire of evil. In the chaos of our condition we called out to the Lord and He helped us.

I was pushed back and about to fall, but the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation. Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous: “The Lord’s right hand has done

mighty things! The Lord’s right hand is lifted high; the Lord’s right hand has done mighty things!” I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the Lord has done. The Lord has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death. (Psalm 118:13-18 NIV)

Jesus said there is a party in heaven every time one lost soul turns their will and their life over to God.

Now that we have come into recovery, we can look back and see how the Lord lifted us up. He held our hand in His and guided and directed us to the place where we could be restored to new life. As truth replaces our distorted belief system, our faith in God is growing and we are becoming stronger in body, mind, and spirit. The things that caused us pain in the deepest recesses of our soul are being healed and restored. We are becoming willing to forgive those who have caused us pain simply by realizing how much we have been

forgiven by God for the pain we ourselves have caused others. The Lord has not allowed us to die but to live in the power of His Spirit and proclaim to others the great things He has done for us.

Jesus said there is a party in heaven every time one lost soul turns their will and their life over to God. What a party they had for us!! We may also find that our family and friends rejoice and party right here on earth.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for helping me come to new life in You. I am forever grateful that You care. AMEN

MONDAY, JULY 17, 2017

ANTIDOTE FOR GUILT

While we lived in our old way of life we were hemmed in by the demands of our addiction and the guilt that accompanied it. Now that we have come into recovery, why does guilt still seem to loom over us like a shadow? Where do these feelings come from and what can we do about them?

Christ has set us free to live a free life. So take your stand! Never again let anyone put a harness of slavery on you. (Galatians 5:1 MSG)

Initially, some causes of guilt feelings are valid. We've done things that are wrong and have caused harm to others and to ourselves. We've gone beyond the boundaries of what is good and kind. Perhaps we've given into temptation or reacted in frustration.

We've chosen to walk independent of God's will and guidance. We've ignored the safe boundaries God set for healthy human living and instead done those things that are detestable to a Holy God. The truth is, we are guilty of sinful behaviour and we are unable to forgive ourselves.

All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. (Isaiah 53:6, Romans 3:23 NLT)

The good news is that we don't have to be trapped forever in that guilt. Jesus paid the price for us to be purified from all sin. If we admit we've done wrong and ask God to forgive us, God promises to do so. He washes us clean where we have been stained and restores our freedom. After we turn our will and our life over to the care of God, any remaining feelings of guilt are false messages from the evil one and we can reject them immediately.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9 NIV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank you that Your blood is an antidote for the guilt of sin. Help me to never again allow the shackles of sin to take away my freedom. I am forever Yours. AMEN

After we turn our will and our life over to the care of God, any remaining feelings of guilt are false messages from the evil one and we can reject them immediately.
