

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



June 2018

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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.*

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
Phone or text: 604-215-0335

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*

*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*



2018

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JUNE 2018

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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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

FRIDAY, JUNE 1, 2018

DEALING WITH LOW SELF-ESTEEM

Low self-esteem. No self-worth. We make a mistake and we feel like we are a failure. When others don't approve of us we can't seem to cope. We feel like no matter how hard we try we can't ever measure up. What are we left with? A general feeling of hopelessness that God never intended us to have. When God looked at the humans He created He said they were "very good". Our self-worth should be based on what God says, not on what we think, and not on what others say.

God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. (Genesis 1:30 NLT, Psalm 139:13-14 NIV)

The devil lies to us continuously. Because we don't feel good about ourselves, our circumstances, or our future, he tells us we're defective and we need something to make us fit in, be accepted, and feel better. The temptation is often towards an addictive substance or a relationship we think will make us feel better, but either one will end up being destructive to our well-being. When life unravels around our unhealthy life choices, the devil then emphasizes how flawed we are and how hopeless it is for us to change. Our self-esteem bottoms out as we so easily identify with our mistakes, our shattered dreams, and the pain we feel inside.

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)

God lifts us up with the truth that, when we ask Jesus to forgive us for all our wrongdoings and give us new life, the good plans God created for us long ago are activated. What could be better than that?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for your Holy Spirit who lives within me to guide me into all truth - including knowing who I truly am in Christ. Help me to renew my mind and heart with who You say I am. I am grateful that I am valued as precious in Your sight. Amen

Our self-worth should be based on what God says, not on what we think, and not on what others say.

REBUILDING SELF-ESTEEM

When we question our worth, we need to remember who God our Creator says we are. A one-hundred-dollar bill whether it is in prime condition, or is crumpled and dirty, is still worth what the creator of the bill has determined. God, our creator, has clearly demonstrated the value he puts on each person by giving His beloved son to die for us all. In our relationship with God, do we see Him as a loving Heavenly Father and ourselves as His precious children?

Self-esteem can be rebuilt. How?

We need to stop covering up inferiority feelings and instead focus on what God says works.

1) *We need to find out the facts* – those things that God says about us such as: “You are forgiven. Nothing can separate you from My love. You are created to do good works and have a wonderful future.”

2) *We need to inform our hearts and minds of these truths* until our negative thought patterns are reshaped and painful feelings are healed and settled in God’s comfort.

3) *We need to stop covering up inferiority feelings and instead focus on what God says works.* As we put His principles into practice in all our affairs we begin to experience a life that is good, satisfying and meaningful.

Don’t shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up and be alert to what is going on around Christ—that’s where the action is. See things from his perspective. Your old life is dead. Your new life, which is your real life—even though invisible to spectators—is with Christ in God. He is your life. When

Christ (your real life, remember) shows up again on this earth, you’ll show up, too—the real you, the glorious you. (Colossians 3:2-4a MSG)

God has given us gifts and talents to encourage and help others. In the same way hands and feet and eyes co-operate in the body, God planned for us to work and support one another in community. God has prepared a lifetime of adventure with Him as we build up and bring hope and healing to one another.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to stand on the truth that when I am in Christ, nothing can separate me from Your love. I reject all self-defeating lies and choose for the life You have prepared for me today. Amen

SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 2018

NEIGHBOURLY GOODNESS

God created us to be in relationship with Himself and with each other. This is the fulfilling life of belonging that God wants us to recover. God's desire for human beings is that they know they never have to be alone. In our relationship with God, we are covered by the love He has for us, and in turn, that love becomes the motivation which helps us love others.

When asked by an expert in religious law, which is the most important commandment? 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'. (Matthew 22:37-39 NLT)

If we find it hard to love those around us, let's ask God to fill us with His love and goodness, so we can love others as He loves us.

If we are being unkind to our neighbor we are saying by our actions that this is the way we want to be treated. If we treat our neighbour kindly it says we desire to be treated kindly. God's desire is that we encourage each other rather than be critical, judgmental, and seek to find fault. When we are wronged we are to forgive as God has forgiven us. It's a tough order to follow but we have been called out of darkness into light. In our new life with God in recovery we are to reflect the light of Christ to everyone around us.

So roll up your sleeves, put your mind in gear, be totally ready to receive the gift that's coming when Jesus arrives. Don't lazily slip back into those old grooves of evil, doing just what you feel like doing. You didn't know any better then; you do now. As obedient children, let yourselves be pulled into a way of life shaped by God's life, a life energetic and blazing with

holiness. God said, "I am holy; you be holy." (1 Peter 1:14-16 MSG)

Today, let's reflect on how we have been behaving towards family and friends. If we find it hard to love those around us, let's ask God to fill us with His love and goodness so we can love others as He loves us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for helping me to recover a meaningful life of belonging in relationship with You and others. Please fill me with your love and goodness so I will naturally love others as You love me. Amen

SUNDAY, JUNE 3, 2018

SUNDAY PSALM – PERSISTENT PROBLEM SOLVING

Powerful people harass me without cause, but my heart trembles only at your word. I rejoice in your word like one who discovers a great treasure. I hate and abhor all falsehood, but I love your instructions. I will praise you seven times a day because all your regulations are just. Those who love your instructions have great peace and do not stumble. I long for your rescue, Lord, so I have obeyed your commands. I have obeyed your laws, for I love them very much. Yes, I obey your commandments and laws because you know everything I do. (Psalm 119:161-168 NLT)

When we face troubles and challenges for doing the right thing, it's easy for us to become discouraged and question God's principles. We may feel harassed by people without cause. We may experience fear and insecurity or feel confused and irritated. It's so easy to feel sorry for ourselves. We think it's not fair that we have troubles. Sometimes we are tempted to lie and scheme to avoid our problems. We certainly know how to do that. We had years of practicing deception in our time in addiction. It's challenging to come to believe and admit that our old defective way of handling challenging circumstances is not superior to God's way.

God knows what is going on in every situation. God knows what we are thinking, feeling, and even planning to do, even before we are conscious of what is going on within us. When we put away dishonest ways of sorting out situations and choose for God's way, we will find great peace and will not stumble.

When we persevere in practicing God's principles in all our affairs we will discover that we are experiencing positive change in our hearts and minds, in addition to our problems being sorted. What an unexpected blessing!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, even though my circumstances may not always be as I would want them to be, help me to persevere and put Your principles into practice in all my affairs. Help me to stop doubting and believe that Your way is the best way. Amen

It's challenging to come to believe and admit that our old defective way of handling challenging circumstances is not superior to God's way.

MONDAY, JUNE 4, 2018

JUST FOR TODAY – I Will Be Joyful, Optimistic, and Grateful

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.

Early in recovery “JUST FOR TODAY” principles help us maintain sobriety. While we are not sure we can stay sober for the rest of our lives, we realize we can make a choice that, today we will have a sober and meaningful day. As we grow in both our sobriety and our relationship with God, we will come to realize that “today” is a gift from God to us. We are encouraged to enjoy this gift and use it in ways that encourage and bless others. As we take the opportunities we find within each day to use the talents and abilities that God has given us, we will find joy and fulfillment in communicating with and helping others.

Just for today I have every reason to be joyful, optimistic, and grateful.

This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24 NLT)

It takes some time for us to believe that all our bridges are not burned and there is hope for a meaningful life. With some help we can get the necessary training we need to be involved in satisfying work. We never navigate through today’s situations on our own. God goes ahead of us and prepares the way. God directs our activities as we listen for His guidance. God empowers us to do what needs doing as we stretch and learn and develop new abilities.

I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:12-13 NLT)

What a relief it is to know that God has a plan for each day of our lives and that He is willing to show it to us, one step at a time. God will provide everything we need to be successful in that plan regardless of the obstacles that we may encounter along the way. Just for today each one of us has every reason to be joyful, optimistic, and grateful.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, I put my hope in you. You’ve brought me out of the darkness of addiction to live successfully in Your plan for my life. Help me to keep my focus on what You are doing in me and through me. Please help me to trust You in all situations, regardless of how I feel. Today I am joyful, optimistic, and grateful for all You have done for me. Amen

FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 2018

WHY DO INNOCENT PEOPLE SUFFER?

A parent dies when a child is very young. Sexual abuse is inflicted on an innocent child or adult. A sibling is brutally murdered. A spouse is killed in a workplace accident. Stories of famine and injustice fill our newscasts. In the face of these circumstances, many people ask, “If there is a loving God, how could He allow such things to happen?”

God created humans to live in a loving eternal relationship with Him. God never intended that humans would know evil let alone experience it. God warned Adam that he would die if he ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When Adam and his wife were deceived by Satan into eating the fruit, they did not physically die, but died spiritually and their relationship with God was broken. The mixture of good and evil in their knowledge base led them to make choices that resulted in harmful behaviour. The rest of us have followed in their footsteps and made our own bad choices and suffered more than we could ever have imagined. Satan continues to work tirelessly to steal, kill, and destroy the lives of those who are made in the image of God.

You know the story of how Adam landed us in the dilemma we’re in—first sin, then death, and no one exempt from either sin or death. That sin disturbed relations with God in everything and everyone. We’re all like sheep who’ve wandered off and gotten lost. We’ve all done our own thing, gone our own way, and God has piled all our sins, everything we’ve done wrong, on him. (Romans 5:12, Isaiah 53:6 MSG)

God cares about the sin and suffering we see and experience. Jesus is God’s provision for every kind of suffering. Jesus died to make a way for us to live in loving relationship with God and others. One person at a time, God forgives us, heals us, and uses us to offer comfort and help to others who suffer. All of us who trust Jesus look forward to the day when all suffering is removed.

He [God] will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever. (Revelation 21:3-4 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You care about the suffering I have endured in my life and the suffering of those around the world. Thank You for sending Jesus to bring forgiveness and healing to all. Use me to spread this message of hope to others who suffer. Amen

One person at a time, God heals us and uses us to offer comfort and help to others who suffer.

THURSDAY, JUNE 28, 2018

CHECK THE LABEL

In the past, many of us have identified ourselves by the names people called us or by the labels they put on us. God has good news for us today as we seek to develop a life with Him in recovery.

The foundation of who we truly are, is based on what God says about us and He says: ***I have called you by name; you are mine. You are precious to me. You are honored, and I love you.*** (Isaiah 43:1,4b NLT)

The foundation of who we truly are, is based on what God says about us.

At times we may have identified ourselves with the ethnic origin of our biological parents, the family in which we were raised, the country or town in which we live or lived, the schools we attended, the church and organizations we belonged to, the friends we made along the way, the work we were involved in, our relationship to our spouse, our relationship to our children etc. etc. Do any of these truly explain the complex persons we are?

What if we were to identify ourselves as God intends? ***You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.*** (Psalm 139:13-14 NLT)

God knows us and sees us as the masterpiece He created. We are created in His image. As we trust in Jesus for forgiveness from our sins we become beloved children of God, freed from sin and made pure and holy. That's who we are.

Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin. Once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! (1 Corinthians 1:30b, Ephesians 5:8 NLT))

Let's stick a new label on ourselves today, one that says: I am a new creation in Christ. The old has gone and the new has come.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for the amazing person you created me to be. Help me to live with the identity I have through Jesus. I am Your honoured and beloved child. Amen.

TUESDAY, JUNE 5, 2018

BENEFITS OF WALKING WITH WISDOM

Employers negotiate work contracts with individuals and unions. The terms and conditions agreed to are then implemented into an agreement between the Employer and Employee. Part of the negotiations will likely include benefits that workers will be entitled to as part of their payment package. These may include medical and dental benefits, child care benefits or retirement plan benefits. Benefits enhance the life of the employees who receive them.

In the program of A.A. we are told about the benefits of sobriety that those who have walked the road of recovery before us have discovered to be true. In the Bible, God tells us of the benefits of a better life when we do life His way rather than trying to do life on our own. Living according to the wisdom of God has more benefits than we would ever have space to list. Following are just a few of those promised benefits:

JOY: Joyful is the person who finds wisdom, the one who gains understanding. (Proverbs 3:13 NLT)

A GOOD LIFE: Grow a wise heart—you'll do yourself a favor; keep a clear head—you'll find a good life. (Proverbs 19:8 MSG)

STRAIGHT TALKING: Wisdom will save you from evil people, from those whose words are twisted. (Proverbs 2:12 NLT)

SAFE AND SATISFYING WAY OF LIFE: Store my commands in your heart. If you do this, you will live many years, and your life will be satisfying. (Proverbs 3:1-2 NLT)

PROTECTION AND LOVE: Get wisdom; develop good judgment. Don't forget my words or turn away from them. Don't turn your back on wisdom, for she will protect you. Love her, and she will guard you. Getting wisdom is the wisest thing you can do! And whatever else you do, develop good judgment. (Proverbs 4:5-7 NLT)

Let's sign up for this benefit package today. It's a good deal!!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for the many benefits you promise as I choose to wholeheartedly live according to your principles. Give me the wisdom to daily seek conscious contact with You so that I may honour You in all I do. Amen

Living according to the wisdom of God has more benefits than we would ever have space to list.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 2018

FIRST THINGS FIRST

One of our first priorities in recovery is sorting our life practices according to the truth. We come into recovery weary, sick, and sinful. We want to feel better right away and get on with life. We think that once we are physically stronger we can sort everything else out. The truth is, God's way of lasting change and improvement in our lives is to change us from the inside out. Our circumstances and relationships will improve when we admit that we are powerless over them and ask God to change our thinking and believing. First things first!

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

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

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, we must also ask God to give us an undivided heart. We must have a foundation of truthful thoughts and healthy desires in place before we can hope to progressively 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 at the heart of our destructive and addictive lifestyle. What influences our behaviour is what we are carrying around in our hearts. We need to allow God to bring truth, as well as forgiveness and healing to our hearts. Doctors and counsellors can then provide us with medical help and counselling to help us identify what we can do to help our physical well-being.

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)

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

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27, 2018

WILLING TO CHANGE

As we become willing to have God remove our defects of character, we commit to being persons who desire God's will instead of our own. We learn to face reality by overcoming false beliefs about: a) what is right and wrong with my life; b) who has the necessary information about what works; and c) who gets to be in charge of the process of change.

On our own we are unable to identify right and wrong for ourselves. We need God's word to reveal that to us. To understand what is broken in us and then become willing to change is only possible when we rely on God's Holy Spirit to reveal to us what needs to be healed and restored. God will meet us where we are at and bring new life to us when we sincerely seek to know Him and follow His ways.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you and lead me along the path of everlasting life. (Psalm 139:23-24 NLT)

As we seek God, He will gently reveal our defects of character. He speaks clearly. He fills us with courage to see the truth and gives us the will and power to change our ways.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. (Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT)

As we choose to obey God's principles for life as revealed in the Bible, we will move steadily forward in our life with God in recovery. Our self-destructive patterns will be removed and replaced by His life-giving ways. By the power of God's Spirit, we will be transformed into a new person and come to know God's will and plan for our lives.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for calling me out of darkness into the light of life. Help me turn quickly from my own ideas and ways that get in the road of freedom and recovery. Help me to surrender to Your truth and be made whole. Amen

As we choose to obey God's principles for life as revealed in the Bible, we will move forward in our life with God in recovery.

TUESDAY, JUNE 26, 2018

JUST FOR TODAY – I Will Strengthen My Mind

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.

There are many ways we can interact with God's word on a regular basis. Most individuals in recovery start their day early with a bit of quiet time and read a selection from the Bible, from the Big Book, or from a meditation book – often a combination. It doesn't matter if the words are from a traditional book or from an app on our smart phone, these truths can help us focus on a positive agenda for the day.

**Real
change
happens
for us
when we
don't just
get to
know
God's will
but
actually
put it into
practice.**

Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me ...Then the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:9 NLT)

Our minds have long been patterned on the negative and the self-centered. By starting the day with a desire to hear from God we give ourselves fresh eyes with which to see and understand life in us and around us. God has plans for us to have a meaningful day and have a positive influence on every person and situation we encounter. We read God's Word to get to know God and to know these good plans. Spending time with God also helps us learn His principles for life and relationship and understand how He acts on our behalf.

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. Jesus said: **"Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."** (James 1:22 NLT, Matthew 7:24 NIV)

Real change happens for us when we don't just get to know God's will but actually put it into practice. Each time we read God's Word it's important to ask Him to show us what He wants us to know and what He wants us to do with what He is teaching us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for taking time to meet with me today as I read Your Word. Help me to understand what You are saying to me. Fill me with courage and power to put what I read into practice. Amen

THURSDAY, JUNE 7, 2018

THE JOY OF BEING HONOURED

It is nice to be appreciated for something that we have done or achieved. It is a natural and normal human desire to be valued and honoured for who we are.

Both riches and honor come from You, and You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. (1 Chronicles 29:12 NKJV)

When parents or care givers neglected our basic needs or caused harm to us in some way, we lost respect for them. As the years passed we withdrew emotionally or physically from them and started to seek our worth in someone or something else. We got lost in a desperate search for affirmation and approval. When we ended up in bondage to our addiction, we seldom did anything that others would consider as honourable.

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

We may find it difficult to see value in ourselves because we know we are flawed persons. However, our flaws are no surprise to God. Just as a skilled artist can restore a valuable old painting to its original luster, so God can restore our true beauty and worth.

If you keep yourself pure, you will be a special utensil for honorable use. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work. (Act 3:19 NIV, 2 Timothy 2:21 NLT)

As we give our will and our life over to the care of God, He honours us by giving us new life. When we are spiritually born again, as Jesus said we must be, we begin to live our lives in the honour that God has given us as His beloved children. Shame goes away, and dignity comes. What joy!!

Prayer – Heavenly Father, Take me, flaws and all, and restore me to my true beauty and worth. I want the new life you offer me –sins erased, clean and ready for every good work, Thank you for the great love you lavish on me. I am honoured to be called a child of God. Amen

**Just as a skilled
artist can
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FRIDAY, JUNE 8, 2018

HONOURING OTHERS ABOVE OURSELVES

God created us to live as honourable people – honouring God, honouring others, and experiencing the joy of living as a person of dignity and honour.

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10 NIV)

God knows the best way for us to live. He’s given us life principles in the Bible that show us how to act in honourable ways towards others. When we invite God to come and live in us, He fills us with the love and strength we need to put His ways of honouring and respecting others into practice in our daily lives.

God created us to live as honourable people – honouring God, honouring others, and experiencing the joy of living as a person of dignity and honour.

When someone asked Jesus which of God’s laws was most important, Jesus replied: **Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.’ This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: ‘Love others as well as you love yourself.’** (Matthew 22:37-39 MSG)

Governments make laws in the belief that the laws will cause the community to honour one another and protect property. However, today’s society seems to be on a collision course with the law and appears to be more interested in individual rights rather than in honouring God and living in a way that honours the common good. It’s no wonder so many of us find ourselves in trouble, because life without God does not lead to honouring others above ourselves.

The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. All have turned away, all have become corrupt;

there is no one who does good, not even one. (Psalm 14:1, 3 NIV)

God’s invites us to choose to honour Him, honour others, and in doing so, find the dignity and respect we long to experience.

Prayer – Gracious God, My desire is to live in a way that honours You and others. I ask You to give me the will and desire to follow Your principles in all I do and say, so I may experience Your good, pleasing and perfect will for my life. Amen

MONDAY, JUNE 25, 2018

LOVED BY GOD ALWAYS

“I am loved by God always; I am loved without condition.” These are some of the words that are said at recovery meetings to encourage each person to acknowledge that God’s love is unfailing and unconditional. In spite of our rebellion against God and society, God has never stopped loving us.

The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. (Jeremiah 31:3 NIV)

Why are we reluctant to accept and rely on the love of God for us? In the past we often felt like we were compelled to do life on our own because no one cared. We often felt unnoticed, uncared for, and unwelcome. This was our understanding of life from early childhood and was part of the reason we slid into an addictive lifestyle. We did whatever we thought we had to do to be accepted and loved -- to belong.

When we accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour we are adopted into the family of God and become God’s precious children. Even though God knows everything about us, He still loves us. He longs to have us near and always welcomes us to come close. With God as our Father we no longer need to act like children who don’t belong.

Jesus said: **If you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him. I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love. With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself.** (Luke 11:13, Jeremiah 31:3 NLT)

As we come to experience God as our loving Heavenly Father we more quickly find courage to turn our will and our life over to His care. We even begin to trust Him to heal our character defects. When we honestly acknowledge that this powerful and loving God is for us, we can move forward with courage to be who we are, where we are at, and trust God to provide what we need.

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1 John 3:1 NIV)

Heavenly Father, Thank you for loving and caring for me. Help me to receive all that You have for me. Help me to live as your precious child today and every day. Amen

I am loved by God always; I am loved without condition.

SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 2018

SUNDAY PSALM – WHO'S ON CALL WHEN I NEED HELP?

Hear me, Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. Guard my life, for I am faithful to you; save your servant who trusts in you. You are my God; have mercy on me, Lord, for I call to you all day long. Bring joy to your servant, Lord, for I put my trust in you. You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you. Hear my prayer, Lord; listen to my cry for mercy. When I am in distress, I call to you, because you answer me. Among the gods there is none like you, Lord; no deeds can compare with yours. (Psalm 86:1-8 NIV)

God is not limited by time. He is always available to those whose hearts are turned towards Him.

Often when we are in trouble we call out to God. We are desperate for His immediate attention. Because God is not limited by time, He is always available to those whose hearts are turned towards Him. When our circumstances cause us to think we are poor and needy, we can be assured that if we call out to Him, God will hear us and set events in motion to help us and provide good solutions. When we admit we have done wrong, mercy is available. When we confess the wrong we have done, God will forgive us and restore our joy.

The writer of this Psalm recognizes that God is good, forgiving, and full of love for all who put their trust in Him. When we bring our requests to God, it pleases Him. God is faithful to His promises. If we are lacking faith in God's ability to answer our prayers, we can admit our unbelief to Him and He will even be open to that cry for mercy. Jesus responded with grace to the father who asked Him to heal his son when the father cried out, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know. (Jeremiah 33:3 NKJV)

As we begin to seek God and put our trust in Him, God's word promises us that He will reward us. There truly is no other God like the Lord, and no other answers to our prayers that can compare with His.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me when I doubt Your willingness to answer my prayers. You truly are a good, good Father and perfect in all Your ways. Amen

SATURDAY, JUNE 9, 2018

DON'T JUDGE OTHERS

Judging others is a problem area for many of us and something that Jesus tells us needs to change if we are to live well in recovery and in life.

And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? 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 7:3-5 NLT)

How we judge others is often a reflection of how we have been judged by others and even by ourselves. Many of us lived in dysfunctional homes that were characterized by verbal and emotional abuse. We easily fell into that learned behaviour when we came face-to-face with those whose actions caused us pain and humiliation.

We've all made mistakes, both in addiction and in recovery. We are all learning. Our recovery journey is unique and the same is true for everyone else. Character defects differ among us. We all have some defects that are easier or more difficult to overcome. No one is worse off or better off than us. Their journey of recovery is just different. God is willing to forgive us and remove our defects of character as we humbly acknowledge them before Him and ask for His help. The same is true for others.

Someone has wisely said: "*People who criticize others are unaware of how much pain they themselves are experiencing. Truly happy people don't have the need to bring others down.*" Instead of judging and condemning others, let's offer encouraging words and loving support to fellow strugglers on the journey.

Continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. (1 Peter 4:8, Galatians 6:3 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for loving me and offering me forgiveness for my sins. Forgive me when I am tempted to judge or condemn others. Help me never to look down on someone unless I am helping them up. Amen

No one is worse off or better off than us. Their journey of recovery is just different.

SUNDAY, JUNE 10, 2018

SUNDAY PSALM – WHAT’S COMING OUT OF MY MOUTH?

O Lord, listen to my cry; give me the discerning mind you promised. Listen to my prayer; rescue me as you promised. Let praise flow from my lips, for you have taught me your decrees. Let my tongue sing about your word, for all your commands are right. Give me a helping hand, for I have chosen to follow your commandments. O Lord, I have longed for your rescue, and your instructions are my delight. Let me live so I can praise you, and may your regulations help me. I have wandered away like a lost sheep; come and find me, for I have not forgotten your commands. (Psalm 119:169-173 NLT)

The hand that reaches down is the hand of Jesus that is scarred from being nailed to the cross for our sins.

Over and over again in the above scripture the writer asks for God’s help. He asks to be given discernment; for help and deliverance from trouble; for a life that is good; for wisdom to follow God’s commands. As one request after another comes, we recognize the intensity of the needs being expressed. The writer likens himself to a lost sheep who has strayed and desires the shepherd to help it find its way.

Another picture we are given is of God reaching down with His hand to help us. The hand that reaches down is the hand of Jesus that is scarred from being nailed to the cross for our sins. It’s a loving and powerful hand, and our name is engraved on it. Not only does Jesus empower us to get out of trouble, but He walks with us and speaks to us and gives us instructions that we will “delight” to obey. How amazing is that?

Our part in walking with God in recovery is to ask for and receive God’s help; to follow His instructions; and allow Him to lift us up and steady us with His righteous right hand. Just like little children, we may stumble and fall on the way, but as we remain close to God, He will hear our cry for help and respond to our need. Soon, the sounds coming out of our mouths will be songs of joy and praise to our gracious God who tenderly loves and cares for us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, It seems like I have many needs, but I’m willing to trust You to meet each one of them. Help me to take your hand as we walk together on the path of life. Thank You for encouraging me when I stumble. Do for me what I cannot do for myself Help me to stay close to you today and every day. Amen

SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 2018

A LIFE PLAN – UNDER CONSTRUCTION

We are just moving into summer and hopefully looking forward to long hours and days in the sunshine. Summer also brings construction and road repairs. We sit in long line-ups waiting for flaggers to direct us around the ongoing work. Sometimes we wonder if there is a way to where we want to go because so many roads are being worked on and traffic is so congested. As difficult as these situations are, we must keep in mind that the construction plans for these projects, and the ability of workers to follow those plans, will result in many people experiencing less frustration when they travel through these areas in the future.

As we follow God’s plan for our lives, even if some details are inconvenient in the moment, we can be assured that the building of a wonderful life is in progress.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. (Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT)

God’s plan for each of us requires that we follow the details so that we reap the benefit. These details are clearly written in the Bible. God promises that as we follow His plan we will be blessed. Telling the truth, completing a searching and fearless moral inventory, making amends – these are challenging parts of the recovery journey as we go through the necessary repairs and reconstruction of our lives. Taking time out to complete a treatment program or even putting in the effort to go to a meeting after a long work day may not feel convenient in the moment. However, with a planned long-term view, they are a small inconvenience for the reward of smooth travel throughout the rest of our lives.

For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11 NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, I want to follow Your plans in all my affairs today. Even when it’s inconvenient, help me to surrender to Your will so I can experience the wonderful life You have prepared for me. Amen

As we follow God’s plan for our lives, even if some details are inconvenient in the moment, we can be assured that the building of a wonderful life is in progress.

FRIDAY, JUNE 22, 2018

A LIFE PLAN – THE BEST PLAN

In every area of our lives it is God's desire that we plan a good course. God has given us the ability to think and organize. As we make plans for our future it's wise to seek God's input

We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps. No human wisdom or understanding or plan can stand against the LORD. (Proverbs 16:9, 21:30 NLT)

We're just heading into summer and vacation days are ahead for some of us. Thoughts of school or work fade as times of relaxing and taking it easy come into

As we plan, God invites us to first seek His kingdom ways so that all things will work together for our good and His glory.

focus. We make travel plans and get-together plans with friends and family as we enjoy the long summer evenings. Good planning is helpful in all seasons of life. This includes planning in areas like money, career, food, business, housing, retirement etc. The truth is, we often experience anxiety as we make plans, wondering if things will fall into place and if we will be able to carry through with the plans we make.

Thankfully, God is aware that we are limited in what we know. For our plans to work well we need to bring in the expert. God is the expert and He is available to give direction to our planning so that each day of our lives is filled with purposeful activities. God is the planner and builder of time and eternity. God made us. He knows our past, present, and future and the happenings that will

impact our lives. As we plan, God invites us to first seek His kingdom ways so that all things will work together for our good and His glory.

Put God's kingdom first. Do what he wants you to do. Then all of those things will also be given to you. (Matthew 6:33 NIRV)

God wants to work our plans in a way that is even better than we could ask for or imagine. Let's determine to shape our lives according to the best plan, His plan.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am often fearful of making plans. Help me to seek You first in all my affairs so that as I plan, You will direct my steps. Amen

MONDAY, JUNE 11, 2018

HOW TO BE HAPPY – AS TAUGHT BY JESUS

The following teaching of Jesus may not be as well-known as the Ten Commandments but Jesus made these eight statements, called "The Beatitudes," describing the kind of behaviour that brings joy to a person in their daily living. Do we want to be happy? Here are eight ways to get there.

- † ***God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.***
- † ***God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.***
- † ***God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.***
- † ***God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.***
- † ***God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.***
- † ***God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.***
- † ***God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.***
- † ***God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*** (Matthew 5:3-10 NLT)

Jesus described the kind of behaviour that brings joy to a person in their daily living.

How do we implement these teachings in our recovery?

THE POOR IN SPIRIT – Humbly admit that God exists and turn our will and our life over to His care.

THE MOURNERS – Admit the pain we carry and bring it to God for His comfort and healing rather than running from it or burying it.

THE MEEK – Acknowledge that we can't do life on our own, ask God to show us His way, and then submit ourselves to follow it.

THE HUNGRY FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS - Desire for God to make all things right and good in all our relationships and dealings with others.

THE MERCIFUL - Extend God's incredible compassion and mercy to others.

THE PURE IN HEART - Submit to God's ways in all we think, say, and do, no matter who is watching.

THE PEACEMAKERS – Always seek to bring healing and enhance cooperation among individuals, family members, and community groups

THE PERSECUTED - Regardless of the consequences, follow Jesus and do what is right.

Prayer: God, I want to be happy. Help me to learn from You and follow Your ways in all I do and say. Amen

TUESDAY, JUNE 12, 2018

WHY FOLLOW JESUS

Jesus says: ***"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.*** (John 14:6 NLT) That's an exceptional statement for Jesus to make to those of us who are used to doing things our own way and basing our hopes and dreams on our own experiences. God's word clearly tells us: ***"There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death."*** (Proverbs 14:12 NLT) What do these words mean to you and me as we learn to walk in truth in recovery?

Sometimes we make choices that for the present time seem to be good, but before we know it we end up in trouble and wonder what happened. Sometimes we even blame God when we find ourselves burdened down by our own choices.

The truth is that God alone knows what is best for each one of us. Only God has the complete information necessary to give us guidance over the long haul.

We were created to live in relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

We were never made to live life on our own. We were created to live in relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We were created to live well as we allowed God to direct and empower us through His Holy Spirit. A life of following the desires of our own heart results in us needing to be forgiven and healed and saved from poor decisions and faulty plans.

God invites us today to consider the consequences of our past choices and to choose a new way of life, following His principles. It's time to follow Jesus. He lived a perfect life, so we can learn from him. He died for our sins, so we can be forgiven and begin a new life in relationship with God.

Our sins are heavy upon us; we are wasting away! How can we survive? As surely as I live, says the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of wicked people. I only want them to turn from their wicked ways so they can live. Turn! Turn from your wickedness, O people... (Ezekiel 33:10-11 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, life isn't everything I hoped it would be and I confess that the reason for that is my continuing to do things my way. Please forgive me. I surrender my will and life into your care. Come and live in me. Help me to surrender self-will and choose to do Your will, so I can experience the beautiful life You have promised. Amen

THURSDAY, JUNE 21, 2018

ACCEPTING HARDSHIP AS A PATHWAY TO PEACE

God doesn't lie. God doesn't sugar coat the truth. Fortunately for us, God always tells the truth and helps us to get ready for what we will face.

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (John 16:33 NIV)

Our problems don't disappear simply because we decide to live with God in recovery. In fact, for a while it may seem like we have more problems than we know what to do with. In addition we ran from problems, covered them up with destructive substances and habits, and blamed others for our troubles. We lied, cheated, stole, and basically did whatever we could to avoid seeing or dealing with hardship.

Jesus offers us a new and better way when we choose to surrender to Him. As we bravely face painful memories, financial difficulties, challenging obsessions, and irritating people, God promises us peace. How? Jesus' response is, "in me." What does He mean? Jesus faced hardship in his life on earth. Evil and the sin of others brought Him to death on the cross. However, by His resurrection from the dead Jesus overcame those hardships on our behalf. With Jesus living in us, the same resurrection power that raised Him from the dead gives us the strength we need to bravely face and overcome painful challenges.

God's unfailing love throughout our recovery is powerful enough to sustain us and help us overcome evil.

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. (1 John 4:4 NIV; Philippians 4:6-7 NLT)

God's unfailing love throughout our recovery is powerful enough to sustain us and help us overcome evil.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Help me to live secure in your presence and trust your promise to help me stand firm on the pathway to peace. Because I am in You, I will not fear. Amen

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20, 2018

DEALING WITH STRESS – SEEING GOD’S PERSPECTIVE

There are many reactions to everyday stress. Some people try to flee the problem in the hope that the irritation will go away. Others internalize the pressure, seeking to suppress it. However, stress usually spills over into some other area of our being. Sometimes we crumble emotionally and give way to depression and despair and addictive behaviour. God’s word in the Bible reminds us of several promises that can bring us through tough times and build up our spiritual and emotional well-being.

God knows everything about us, including our name, and deeply cares about each one of us.

But now, God’s Message, the God who made you in the first place, Jacob, the One who got you started, Israel: “Don’t be afraid, I’ve redeemed you. I’ve called your name. You’re mine. When you’re in over your head, I’ll be there with you. When you’re in rough waters, you will not go down. When you’re between a rock and a hard place, it won’t be a dead end—Because I am God, your personal God, The Holy of Israel, your Savior. (Isaiah 43:1-3 MSG)

God knows everything about us, including our name. God deeply cares about each one of us. He encourages us to realistically view the events that are causing us concern. Sometimes we worry about things that haven’t even happened and our internal pressure increases even though nothing has occurred. God knows what is ahead of us and, if we trust Him, He will provide whatever is needed when we need it.

Past events and hurts feed stress. We need to let the hurt and shame of those actions go and simply learn the valuable lessons those trials have taught us. With the practical knowledge we have gained we can move forward to a purpose-filled life and thank God for His peace and grace as He continues to sustain us.

Therefore, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. (Hebrews 12:1-2a NIV)

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to let go of stress by putting my past, present, and future into your loving Hands. You are a compassionate God with unfailing love and care for me. Help me to fix my eyes on You and throw off everything that hinders me from moving forward. Amen

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 2018

WHO REALLY KNOWS ME?

How do we feel when people who should know us don’t? Jesus understands our sadness and wants to heal our hearts from disappointing relationships. Jesus wants us to experience the joy of knowing that we are valued and that we belong.

He came into the very world he created, but the world didn’t recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:10-12 NLT)

Sir Christopher Wren was the architect of St. Paul’s Cathedral and many other buildings in London, England. Some of the most beautiful buildings in London were designed by him and he was given much respect for doing so. It seems unthinkable that people of Christopher Wren’s time would not have recognized him. Jesus, who was both the architect and creator of this world came into it, and those who should have recognized Him didn’t and, in fact, they rejected him.

He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”. (Isaiah 53:3 NLT, Hebrews 13:5b-6 NIV)

When we feel lonely and don’t think that we belong, Jesus is very close. He offers us a relationship that will fill our hearts with peace and joy. Jesus was despised and rejected in this world so that we could experience acceptance. He was acquainted with deepest grief and therefore has great compassion for us. If we open our hearts to Jesus, He will help us learn how to have a deep and abiding relationship with Him, and with others.

PRAYER: Come into my heart Lord Jesus and give me the courage to love You with all my heart. You created me to belong and experience the joy of being part of Your family. Heal me from past disappointments. I want to have a loving relationship with You and learn how to love others and experience healthy relationships. Please help me. Amen

Jesus wants us to experience the joy of knowing that we are valued and that we belong.

THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 2018

KNOWING AND DOING THE RIGHT THING

People with discernment naturally do the right thing in each situation. Spiritually discerning people have the capacity to separate and sift what is good from what is best, based on their knowledge of God and His ways.

When humans were created, we were meant to live in relationship with God forever. God gave humans free will to choose to love and obey Him. Even though we chose to disobey God and our relationship with Him was cut off, eternity remains in our hearts where it was planted.

As we spend time with God each day and practice His teachings, He gives us a discerning heart to know His ways.

God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end. (Ecclesiastes 3:11 NLT)

Many humans continue to function in this world as though they will live forever. They don't consult God with regards to what is best for them. They think they know intuitively what that is and end up suffering painful consequences. The truth is that without God's wisdom, we don't know how to live purposefully in this life, or what will happen to us in the next. What are we to do?

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16 NIV)

God invites us to know Him personally by receiving salvation through Jesus Christ. God's Holy Spirit then comes to live in our hearts to teach us the principles for life that we could never know on our own. The result is that we will have discernment in choosing what is right. This is more than our conscience speaking or "trusting our gut." This is God revealing truth to us, so we can live well. As we spend time with God each day and practice His teachings, He gives us a discerning heart to know His ways.

Deal with your servant according to your love and teach me your decrees. I am your servant; give me discernment that I may understand your statutes. (Psalm 119:124-125 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that You are the only wise God. Teach me Your ways that I may discern and choose what is the best path for my life. Amen

TUESDAY, JUNE 19, 2018

STRESSFUL EVENTS

When stressful situations come our way, and Jesus said they will, the best way forward is to make a conscious effort to turn to God and seek His help.

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (John 16:33 NIV)

Some of us obsess and get stressed over events in the past which cannot be changed. We replay the sound of unkind words said to us or envision the painful occurrences which caused us shame. We want those who hurt us to be brought to justice and the world to see how we have suffered. These memories cause us inner pain and heaviness. God wants to help reduce that inner tension. His way of relieving emotional stress is for us to receive His healing and comfort and then let go of resentments. God will give us peace and rest as we forgive those who have acted unkindly and unjustly towards us.

Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven. (Luke 6:37 NLT)

Some of us worry about future events that we feel we will be unable to cope with, **IF** they happen. We may feel overwhelmed by our responsibility to meet our own needs or those of our family and want to run away. God promises He will take care of our concerns if we ask Him.

And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus. (Colossians 4:19 NLT)

We can live free from the bondage of stress by turning our will and our lives over to the care of God. God can be trusted to show us the way forward and give us the strength to take the next right step.

Prayer: Loving God, I struggle with control in my life. Help me to let go of the things I cannot change and to purposefully change the things I can. Give me the will and the desire to trust You in all my ways. Amen

When stressful situations come our way, the best way forward is to make a conscious effort to turn to God and seek His help.

MONDAY, JUNE 18, 2018

THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR WRONGS

The exact nature of our wrongs is rooted in the lie that our problems are caused by what is around us rather than what is within us. It's time to admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being that our way of dealing with problems does not solve them. Doing things our way creates greater problems for us and for those around us. It's time to confess that we cannot do life on our own and to seek God to help us change our ways.

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Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path. I've promised it once, and I'll promise it again: I will obey your righteous regulations. I have suffered much, O Lord; restore my life again as you promised. (Psalm 119:105-107 NLT)

God's instructions should be our first choice every time rather than our "choice of last resort." We need to learn from God's word and listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit within us. We need to heed the advice of mentors and others who have faithfully walked with God for some time. With God's help we can put into practice all that we have learned.

It's time to agree with God about the exact nature of our wrongs. It's time to admit that we are guilty of wrong thinking and wrong behaving.

If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. (1 John 1:8-9 NLT).

When we finally face the reality of our sins it is helpful to recall God's loving and merciful nature. No sin is too great to be forgiven. Jesus has already paid the price for sin with his death on the cross.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit that I cannot do life on my own. I need Your help. I turn away from my independent and self-centered way of living. I choose to trust and follow Your way to a purposeful life. Amen

FRIDAY, JUNE 15, 2018

DISCERNMENT

How can I get discernment? What do I do with it when I get it? Discernment comes from God's Holy Spirit living in us and giving us understanding of God's character and His ways, so we can build a happy and safe life. God desires that we know Him intimately. Through the wisdom of God's word in the Bible, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, God will help us discern the plan He has for our lives.

Let those who are wise understand these things. Let those with discernment listen carefully. The paths of the LORD are true and right, and righteous people live by walking in them. But in those paths sinners stumble and fall. (Hosea 14:9 NLT)

As we make plans and take steps in our life with God in recovery, we need to seek God's wisdom to discern the right path for us. That is certainly the right action to take when we are uncertain, but probably even more important to do when we think we know what to do. Our familiar way of approaching a situation is often twisted by confused thinking from our past.

Some simple steps we might take in this process are:

- ✓ list the known pros and cons of our choices.
- ✓ consider the gifts God has given us.
- ✓ pray and trust that God will direct our steps in the way we should go.
- ✓ seek guidance from someone who knows us well (pastor, priest, parents, spiritual counselor) and carefully consider their advice.

This is what the Lord says—your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is good for you and leads you along the paths you should follow." (Isaiah 48:17 NLT)

We need to make a humble assessment of our will versus God's revealed will in each situation, and not allow our imagination or desires to mislead us. God promises to direct our steps as we submit our plans to Him.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is to have understanding of all Your ways so that I may have discernment in all I undertake to do. Amen

Through the wisdom of God's word in the Bible, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, God will help us discern the plan He has for our lives.

SATURDAY, JUNE 16, 2018

HEALTHY RISK OR LEAP OF FAITH

We often hear people talking about taking a healthy risk. The Bible encourages us to take a leap of faith instead – a moment where we put everything on the line for what is true.

“By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them. They shut the mouths of lions, quenched the flames of fire, and escaped death by the edge of the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight.” (Hebrews 11:33-34 NLT).

***Thankfully,
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Jesus gave up everything for us. He left heaven and came to earth in human form. He went to the cross and faced abandonment, suffering, and death because he was willing to pay the penalty for sin. The Lord of life faced death believing His Father had given Him the power over it. Only Jesus’ death and resurrection could open the way for us to have an eternal relationship with God the Father.

It’s a leap of faith to give up control of our life and believe in the new life Jesus promises us. It takes a healthy measure of trust to follow God’s principles when we don’t feel like it and have not yet proven that they really work. Thankfully, faithful people across the centuries stand as witnesses to the truth that these leaps of faith are worth taking. They have experienced that God is who He says He is and will do what He has promised. Even though we feel uncertain, as we choose to trust God with our life, we will come to know deeper satisfaction than we have experienced so far.

Those who know your name trust in you, for you, O Lord, do not abandon those who search for you. Since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. (Psalm 9:10 Hebrews 12:1 NLT)

Have we become willing to make our own leap of faith and stand on the truth of God’s Word for ourselves?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You are the way, the truth and the life. Give me the will and the desire to take a leap of faith and follow You in all my ways. Amen

SUNDAY, JUNE 17, 2018

SUNDAY PSALM – FREED FROM ALL MY FEARS

I will praise the Lord at all times. I will constantly speak his praises. I will boast only in the Lord; let all who are helpless take heart. Come, let us tell of the Lord’s greatness; let us exalt his name together. I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears. 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. For the angel of the Lord is a guard; he surrounds and defends all who fear him. Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him! (Psalm 34:1-8 NLT)

What would it look like if we were to live in freedom from all our fears? For some of us it hardly seems possible. We have hope for something better than we are living today but to believe that we could live free from ALL our fears seems a bit like “pie in the sky.”

The verses from the Bible today make this astonishing claim, “He freed me from all my fears.” We are told that when we pray to God He answers us. Day-by-day, situation-by-situation, as we encounter fear and bring it to God, it will get lifted from us. Does God know and care that we are scared and have been pounded into a fearful place by many difficult situations? Certainly! Is God able to protect us until we actually feel safe and it becomes the norm in our experience? Once again, the Bible assures us that perfect love casts out all fear.

Obviously, when we call out to God, it’s from a place where we know we need help. These verses even suggest that those who look to Him have experienced shame and desperation and trouble. Sound familiar? No matter how fearful the time or place a person finds themselves in, when they invite God to be with them, God makes changes in and around them.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You know my heart better than I do. You know when I feel anxious and fearful. I want to seek Your help and trust Your saving power to work for me in my situation today. May I always be conscious that Your perfect love casts out all fear. Amen

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