

**LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY**

# **Daily Meditations**



**JUNE 2021**

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*Partners in Hope Recovery Society  
is a Christian community  
outreach organization  
offering hope, support, and healing  
through Jesus Christ  
to victims of  
harmful circumstances and dependencies,  
as they reclaim the gift of their life.*

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### **JUST FOR TODAY**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

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

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

## PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

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

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**JUNE 2021**

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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.*

## HOPING FOR HELP

All of us rely on ourselves to some degree to do those things that are important for life and happiness. That is why we are reluctant to seek help when we are troubled by an event that has caused us pain. We tend to look to our own solutions and allow the pain to increase. When we came into recovery it took a giant step for us to admit that we were powerless over our dependency and that our life had become unmanageable. When we feel powerless we are hopeful that we will find someone who is powerful enough to help us.

***We put our hope in the Lord. He is our help and our shield. Let your unfailing love surround us, Lord, for our hope is in you alone.*** (Psalm 33:20, 22 NLT)

In our time of need someone may be willing to help us by giving us a bed for the night, or a meal, or valuable counsel, but who, other than God, can give us hope for a new life? We can work on doing a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves but when it is exposed, what hope do we have that the garbage we have uncovered can be removed? We can tell another person about the garbage but what hope do we have that they can do anything about it? A surgeon may be skillful at healing a broken leg but who can heal a broken spirit?

***Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and my God!*** (Psalm 43:5 NLT)

God wants us to have hope in His ability to restore our fractured spirit. He demonstrated His great love for us by sending Jesus into the world to take our sin and brokenness upon Himself. When our sin is exposed and repented of, we do not keep it. We give it to Jesus who was sentenced to death for its penalty and, in exchange, receive the gift of new life.

***For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.*** (2 Corinthians 5:21 NLT)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You that through Jesus my sins are no longer counted against me. I am grateful that I have cause to hope in Your unfailing promise of a new life. Amen***

***Why am I  
discouraged?  
Why is my  
heart so sad? I  
will put my  
hope in God! I  
will praise him  
again—my  
Savior and my  
God!***

***Psalm 43:5 NLT***

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2, 2021

# NOTES

## JUST FOR TODAY – WALK HUMBLY

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

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

As we choose life with God in recovery we will soon come to a place of challenge where we want to do what we want to do rather than what we know God wants us to do. Perhaps we are having fun and it would be inconvenient to stop and listen to a person who needs to share or needs help with something. We want to stay with what we are doing rather than meet the other person's need. We hear the quiet voice in our head saying, "Do the right thing." Will we ignore it or respond?

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

Self-centered ways are childish ways. God invites us to grow up and, as mature adults, make good choices and act responsibly. We have allowed our wants to be our guide for too long, and that has been our downfall. God calls us to live as Jesus did, showing compassion and mercy to others, even when it is inconvenient.

***He makes the whole body grow and build itself up in love. Under the control of Christ, each part of the body does its work.*** (Ephesians 4:16a NIRV)

We may not know why it is important to do inconvenient things in order to grow into the person we were created to be, but at that place, the principle mentioned above will give us guidance: "***be humble as you live in the sight of your God.***" We are the students. God is the teacher. Only God knows the proper sequence of instruction needed to free us from our character defects. God wants us to depend on Him and each object lesson will come at just the right time. He will show us the best way and will strengthen us to be thoroughly equipped for every good work. On our part, it requires humility and surrender to His will.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Teach me to do what is right and help me to be willing to do things Your way and in Your time. Please give me the grace and strength to serve others with kindness even when it is inconvenient to my own schedule. Amen*

## SELF-CONTROL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## STEP ELEVEN - THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER AND MEDITATION

When we turn our will and our life over to the care of God, He immediately begins to work to help us change. The discipline of prayer and meditation helps us hear from God and correctly handle the ongoing events of our lives. As we put God's word into practice, we will learn to recognize His voice as He guides and directs our ways.

***Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.*** (Jeremiah 33:3, James 1:5 NIV)

God has a wonderful plan for each of our lives. No day is wasted. In every moment there is a lesson for us to learn as God rebuilds us according to His original plan. Even our past mistakes can be used by God to bless others and let them know how much He loves them. As we continue to obey God and do what He says, His will for our lives will become clearer. God promises that we will have a life that is better than we ever could have thought of or imagined.

***But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.*** (Jude 20-21 NIV)

Reading and meditating on scripture reveals to us the nature of God and His desire to affirm the unfailing love He has for us. In our daily devotions we are not simply seeking to learn facts about God but are consciously seeking to get to know Him more intimately.

As we become familiar with God's character and ways we will be empowered by God's Holy Spirit to live fully surrendered to His ways.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I welcome the work of Your Holy Spirit to reveal Your will and Your ways to me. Help me to live humbly before You and honour You by practicing Your principles in all my affairs. Amen***

***The discipline of prayer and meditation helps us hear from God and correctly handle the ongoing events of our lives.***

## IT'S NOT FAIR – OR IS IT?

It's easy for us to become discouraged and feel sorry for ourselves when life doesn't go the way we think it should. We cry, "It's not fair" when we have troubles; when the system doesn't give us what we think we need when we need it; when our family members don't trust us even though we said we have changed. The fact that we cheated and stole and lived for a long time in a destructive way may have something to do with why life is not how we would like it to be.

Sometimes life seems to get better more quickly for others than it does for us and we feel resentful. We see others get housing, get an opportunity for education, or get a job that we wish we could have. We complain that life is unfair. Where is God in the middle of all of this?

**It is  
better to  
be poor  
and do  
right  
than to  
be rich  
and do  
wrong.**

*Proverbs 16:8  
ERV*

**The Lord is good and does what is right. He shows sinners the right way to live. He teaches his ways to humble people. He leads them with fairness.** (Psalm 25:8-9 ERV)

God has a good plan for our lives. His priority is that we get to know Him and through obedience to His word, have a loving relationship with Him. God knows what is best for us and will provide those things that are good for us at just the right time. Sometimes that may mean not having as much money or as much independence as quickly as someone else. God knows we have certain character defects that need correction and, in His wisdom, may keep us in our current situation until we are mature and strong enough to live responsibly. God is protecting us from future harm. From our point of view, it seems unfair but from His, it is pure love and kindness.

**God is fair, and he will remember all the work you have done. He will remember that you showed your love to him by helping his people and that you continue to help them.** (Hebrews 6:10 ERV)

God is generous and gracious in all His ways. When we trust Him, He will make a way forward for us that is good, pleasing, and perfect, and we will praise Him for all that He has done.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Sometimes I feel that life isn't fair, and things never go right for me. Help me to trust Your knowledge of what is best for me and Your word that says that all things will work together for my good. Please help me focus on knowing You and following Your ways. Amen*

## JESUS TEACHES US HOW TO PRAY

When Jesus was here on earth, He often went off on His own to pray. Jesus knew the value of seeking His Father's direction for the daily events in His earthly life. With His divinity set aside, Jesus was truly a son of man operating in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray and He gave them a prayer that is 65 words long and yet offers wisdom and insight into the most important issues of life.

**Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.** (Matthew 6:9b-13 NKJV)

When we pray, have we considered who God is and the issues we are bringing before Him? Are we inviting His will, not ours, to be done here on earth? Do we believe as we ask Him, that He will truly meet our needs? Are we willing to forgive those who have wronged us, as He has forgiven our wrongs? Do we sincerely desire to overcome temptation and be delivered from the evil one? Do we identify as children of God and recognize that we have transferred into the Kingdom of His dear son Jesus in whom all power and glory exist forever?

**For he has rescued us out of the darkness and gloom of Satan's kingdom and brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who bought our freedom with his blood and forgave us all our sins.** (Colossians 1:13-14 TLB)

When we give our will and life over to the care of God, we move out of Satan's kingdom and enter the Kingdom of God. We must stand firmly on this truth. Through prayer and meditation on God's word, we will increase our conscious contact with God and experience His help in every area of our life.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to stand firm on the truth of Your word and to pray continually for Your guidance in all my affairs. May my words and actions reflect Your Kingdom here on earth. Amen*

**I am praying  
to you  
because I  
know you  
will answer,  
O God.  
Bend  
down and  
listen as I  
pray.**

*Psalms 17:6 NLT*

OLD GROWTH GOODNESS

Across the planet there are discussions about how to protect old growth forests. Wildfires from Australia to California to the Amazon have had a negative impact on these forests that have developed over a long period of time. To be designated as old growth forests they will have developed over a period of at least 120 years and withstood fire, storms, and logging. They are precious because they create amazing conditions for soil nutrition, plant growth, animal life and so on.

God's word uses the picture of old growth trees – trees with deep roots – to give us a picture of the value of experiencing life together with God over a long period of time.

***An evil person tries to hide behind evil; good people are like trees with deep roots. God blesses those people who refuse evil advice and won't follow sinners or join in sneering at God. Instead, the Law of the Lord makes them happy, and they think about it day and night. They are like trees growing beside a stream, trees that produce fruit in season and always have leaves. Those people succeed in everything they do.*** (Proverbs 12:12, Psalm 1:1-3 CEV)

**Experience over time is something treasured in recovery circles.**

Experience over time is something treasured in recovery circles. We've all been refreshed and encouraged by the stories and advice of old-timers. They've gone through a lot and seen a lot – both what has worked and what has failed.

The verses above suggest that we spend time following God, reading and thinking about what He says works, and then putting those principles into practice. To achieve "old-growth" status we must stand strong through time. God promises we will become one of those successful old-timers by living life in recovery with Him. God uses a picture of trees to help us picture how beautiful life in heaven will be. Today's question for all of us is, "What am I putting into practice today so I can become an old-timer blessed by God and able to share His goodness with others?"

***On each side of the river are trees that grow a different kind of fruit each month of the year. The fruit gives life, and the leaves are used as medicine to heal the nations.*** (Revelation 22:2b CEV)

*Prayer: Loving God, thank you for being the one in whom I can root my life and persevere through whatever I face in life. Help me to learn from faithful old-timers and make good choices that will build strength and maturity into my life and recovery. Amen*

APPROVAL SEEKING

All of us like to be appreciated when we feel we have acted wisely or done a good job. We know that after Jesus allowed John the Baptist to baptize Him, God spoke and said that He was well pleased with Jesus. God is an encourager and is pleased with us when we choose to follow His principles in all our affairs.

***And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.*** (Matthew 3:17 NIV)

In the above scenario, Jesus did not seek His Father's approval. It was freely given. Often when we have received no encouragement or appreciation for a wise decision we have made or a task we have completed with much effort, we are offended that no one took the time to say, "Well done." Because our efforts were not acknowledged, we felt the good we did was not valued, and rejection and self-pity flooded our thinking.

***Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.*** (Hebrews 10:35-36 ESV)

In the past we served our own selfish desires until our lives became unmanageable. Now we are beginning to make wise decisions and we want others to notice. We should not be discouraged when we feel this need for approval. Instead we should look to the God who sees everything and tell Him what is going on within us. God will comfort and strengthen us in our time of need, and we will grow stronger in the knowledge of His ways if we do not give up.

***He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.*** (Psalm 25:9, 5 ESV)

For a time, we acted totally in self-interest. Now we are learning God's ways, and in time, God's approval will be enough.

*Prayer: Loving God, Help me to recognize and appreciate what others do as they minister in Your name. My desire is that I will be fully satisfied with Your approval alone. Amen*

***Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.***

***Matthew 25:23 NIV***

**FIRING “THE COMMITTEE IN MY HEAD”**

God’s Word often speaks about our enemies and these are the “enemies of our soul.” Sometimes we speak about them as “our demons” or “the committee in our head.” We have various descriptions for those powers that seek to steal our recovery and destroy our life. While we have our part to play in choosing to hear God’s voice and staying the course during times of trial and testing, God’s promise to us is that He will bring success to our lives as we trust in Him. Our enemies will be defeated and God’s good plan will move us forward one day at a time, one moment at a time.

***Don’t let my enemies kill me. Hide me from evil people who talk about how to harm me. Hide me from those people who are planning to do evil. They make their tongues like sharp swords. They aim their mean words like deadly arrows.*** (Psalm 64:1b-2 NIRV)

***Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.***

***Matthew 11:28  
NIV***

We often tire of the fight with the “committee in our head.” Sometimes our head feels like it is pounding from the injustice and meanness of all the harsh words we hear. Thank God that He has prepared a place where we can come and ask Him to quiet the storm and give us peace.

***My faithful God, answer me when I call out to you. Give me rest from my trouble. Have mercy on me. Hear my prayer. Remember that the Lord has set apart his faithful servant for himself. The Lord hears me when I call out to him.*** (Psalm 4: 1, 3 NIRV)

How do we get from the ugliness in our heads to the place of peace and rest? We speak to God. We ask God to help us rest. We affirm that God is with us. We ask for His help. We remind ourselves that God is greater than the obsessive voice that is swirling around in our heads. God will do for us what we are powerless to do for ourselves. God has His way of doing that, and we can be assured that God’s way is effective. We just need to call on Him.

***But God will shoot my enemies with his arrows. He will suddenly strike them down. He will turn their own words against them. He will destroy them.*** (Psalm 64:7-8a NIRV)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, You know of the horrible voices in my head when the enemies of my soul turn up the volume. I put my trust in You to give me rest and peace, and to “fire the committee in my head.” Help me to focus on Your unfailing love for me at these times. Amen***

**SUNDAY PSALM – FAITHFUL IN TIMES OF NEED**

How many times in our addictive lifestyle were people looking for us, seeking to do us harm? Perhaps we cheated them, stole something from them, or twisted their words so that we got something we wanted. Maybe we lied or made promises we knew we couldn’t keep. Perhaps there has simply been a misunderstanding, but now they are after us. No matter the reason, if we have repented of our past and invited God into our lives, we can call out to God for help.

***O God have mercy on me, for people are hounding me. My foes attack me all day long. I am constantly hounded by those who slander me, and many are boldly attacking me. But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you. I praise God for what he has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me? They are always twisting what I say; they spend their days plotting to harm me. They come together to spy on me—watching my every step, eager to kill me.*** (Psalm 56:1-6 NLT)

Before he became king of Israel, King David was hounded by many enemies who wanted to take his life. When he wrote the above Psalm, he was on the run from someone who hated him and was trying to kill him, even though David had done no wrong against this person.

David told God about his circumstances, admitted to being afraid, but then affirmed that even though he was fearful, he would trust God. David was building faith in God by reminding himself of the promises God had made to him and of the fact that God was faithful to keep His word.

We may be in a place where we are calling out to God because of the troubles that surround us. Perhaps we are wondering if God will fulfill His promises to us. God fulfilled His promises to David, and He will do the same for us. Today, in spite of our fears, let’s once again put our trust in God, praise Him for what He has promised to do, and watch as He keeps His word.

***Prayer: Loving God, There are lots of challenges before me. I lack faith and find myself getting stressed and worried. I’m asking You to help me and trust that You will do as You have promised. With You at my side, I have nothing to fear from people around me. Amen***

***I praise God for what he has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid?***

***(Psalm 56)***

## AVOIDABLE TROUBLE

Who wants trouble? None of us do and if we listen to God's counsel there's a lot of trouble that we can avoid. A loving and protective parent wants to safeguard their child so they will teach them not to touch a hot stove, not to eat poisonous berries, and not to interact with strangers on their own. God, through His word in the Bible, also provides warnings for us that help us live safely and avoid problems that may arise.

Following are some ways we can avoid trouble in our daily lives:

***If we listen to God's counsel, there's a lot of trouble that we can avoid.***

It's not always convenient to tell the truth but God clearly warns us that harm and trouble come when we try to sidestep His truth or hide the truth from others and lie about our circumstances and activities.

***These people always cause trouble. Their minds are corrupt, and they have turned their backs on the truth.*** (1 Timothy 6:5 NLT)

How many times did we think we were smart when we got away with something that was dishonest, and it didn't matter what we did as long as we weren't caught? To avoid problems in life and in our recovery this kind of thinking and behaving will need to change.

***People who wink at wrong cause trouble, but a bold reproof promotes peace.*** (Proverbs 10:10 NLT)

Sponsors make themselves available to newcomers in a recovery program because newbies need reliable help to move away from trouble and into the peace and blessings of life with God in recovery. Seeking and following the wisdom of those who are successfully walking with God in recovery is an established way of avoiding unnecessary trouble.

***People who despise advice are asking for trouble; those who respect a command will succeed.*** (Proverbs 13:13 NLT)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to set my heart to doing what You say is right and turn away from what You say is harmful. Give me the humility I need to seek out and follow the wisdom of others who are successfully walking with You. Amen*

## WILLINGNESS IS THE KEY

Becoming willing to live each day in a new way is a challenge for those of us who are used to running our own lives and doing our own thing. A necessary key to success in recovery life is the purposeful practice of having a heart and mind willing to follow the ways of God.

We need to be willing to admit we can't do life on our own. We need to become willing to believe that a power greater than ourselves exists and has our best interests at heart. We need to become willing to admit our shortcomings and to have God remove them. We need to be willing to review each day with God in an ongoing inventory and make any necessary changes.

For change to take place and the serenity of life with God in recovery to become our lived reality we have to wholeheartedly turn our will and our lives over to the direction and care of God. God is the one who gets to decide what is best for us, what is best in our relationships, and what is best for our well-being today for the long haul. What God says needs changing gets worked on until it changes. What God says needs removing gets removed. When God says to bear with something patiently, we hang in and tolerantly bear with it.

***God has chosen you and made you his holy people. He loves you. So, your new life should be like this: Show mercy to others. Be kind, humble, gentle, and patient. Don't be angry with each other but forgive each other. If you feel someone has wronged you, forgive them. Forgive others because the Lord forgave you. Together with these things, the most important part of your new life is to love each other. Love is what holds everything together in perfect unity.*** (Colossians 3:12-14 ERV)

We must be willing to have God, through His word in the Bible, guide us along new pathways of discernment in our minds and hearts. We must be willing to ask ourselves, "God, what do I need to change so Your kingdom will come, and your will done in my life here on earth as it is in heaven?"

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to be willing to submit to Your ways in all I do and say. In particular, I ask You to help me grow in my faith and trust in You. Amen*

***A necessary key to success in recovery life is the purposeful practice of having a willing heart and mind to follow the ways of God.***

## MATURITY – TOOLS AT THE READY

Living life with God in recovery is a learning process. When we gave our will and life over to the care of God, the decision we made included dying to the person we had become and being born again into a new life with God where we grow and mature into the person God created us to be.

***So don't remember what happened in earlier times. Don't think about what happened a long time ago, because I am doing something new! Now you will grow like a new plant. Surely you know this is true. I will even make a road in the desert, and rivers will flow through that dry land.*** (Isaiah 43:18-19 ERV)

We have humbled ourselves and repented before God of our former ways. The change in our attitude and actions will confirm that we are no longer slaves to our past but are maturing in our love for God and for those around us. We are showing mercy and compassion in our relationships rather than exhibiting self-serving actions and bullying of those who are defenseless against our demands.

***Our tools are ready at hand for clearing the ground of every obstruction and building lives of obedience into maturity.***

***2 Corinthians 10:6 MSG***

be to carry this message to others who are still being deceived by their own thinking and need to be born again into new life.

***Our tools are ready at hand for clearing the ground of every obstruction and building lives of obedience into maturity.*** (2 Corinthians 10:6 MSG)

***Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to die to my old self and persevere in the gift of new life with You. My desire is to honour You and walk humbly before You, showing justice and mercy to everyone I meet. Amen***

change in our attitude and actions will confirm that we are no longer slaves to our past but are maturing in our love for God and for those around us. We are showing mercy and compassion in our relationships rather than exhibiting self-serving actions and bullying of those who are defenseless against our demands.

***Change your hearts! And show by your lives that you have changed. The ax is now ready to cut down the trees. Every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.*** (Luke 3:8a, 9 ERV)

As any newborn child, growth and maturity in our new life will take time. We will need the sustenance of God's written word and the help of others to grow and mature. On our own we will not survive, but with God, and others, and our willingness to persevere, we will grow and produce the fruit of peace and contentment in our lives. As we continue to mature our desire will

## RECKLESS BEHAVIOUR OR SOUND JUDGMENT

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

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

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

The problem for many of us in recovery is that we attach our reckless behaviour only to our substance abuse and fail to include things like being ungrateful and sneaky which are equally unacceptable. We need a radical change of heart and we need to change our perspective to become willing to see things as God sees them. We need humility to come to God with a willingness to have Him remove all our defects of character.

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

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

***Prayer: Loving God, my life on my own is like a train wreck, I have proved that over and over again. Today, I choose to turn away from all expressions of reckless behaviour. I turn my will and my life over to Your care. Please help me! Amen***

***The wise are cautious and avoid danger; fools plunge ahead with reckless confidence.***  
***Proverbs 14:16 NLT***

RECEIVING MORE BY GIVING UP MORE

One day Jesus and his followers discussed the challenges that people experience when they choose to give up self-will and follow God’s will. Our world has different values and we are told to pursue things like pleasure, popularity, power, and money. These are held out as necessary if we are to experience satisfaction and happiness in life. Too many of us have gone down those routes and found addiction and suffering at the end of the road. Jesus reminds His followers that for anything we give up in the short term in order to follow Him, we will receive more in return than we could ever imagine.

**Who then can be saved? Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible but with God all things are possible.**

**Matthew 19:25b-26 NIV**

*Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Peter answered him, “We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?” Jesus said to them, “Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.” (Matthew 19:23, 27, 29-30 NIV)*

The Scripture quoted above contains important promises from God that we can hang on to as we choose to let go of things that hinder our life in recovery. Challenges occur when we first enter treatment and must step away from people, places, and things that are familiar. The pull also comes when the busyness of a job and making money does not leave time for God or meetings. Too many of us have watched sobriety slip away with every paycheck as we drifted further and further away from fellowship with God and others. The desire for sex and companionship also takes many of us away from God’s plan for our lives.

Each of us needs to ask ourselves if there is something we need to leave behind in order to follow God with our whole heart. We are assured that when we choose to put God first, we will experience His promise of great blessings in return.

*Prayer: Loving God, I confess my heart can easily be pulled in different directions. Help me to honour You with my time and to give priority to those things that keep me alive to Your presence in my life. Give me the courage to leave behind anything that hinders Your will for my life. Amen*

BEFORE YOU SAY “I CAN’T”, SAY “I’LL TRY”

When we are being taught something new, we often feel overwhelmed by the process we must follow. We may shy away from learning about something by telling ourselves or others, “I can’t” or, “This or that is impossible for me.” Our approach to learning to live a sober life after years in addiction often raises a similar response. We need to remind ourselves that with time and determined effort we can succeed, as many before us have. Sobriety may seem impossible to us if we are solely relying on self-will but, when we put our hand into the hand of God and follow His ways, we will find success.

**You can hear the victory celebration in the homes of those who live right. The Lord has shown his great power again!** (Psalm 118:15 ERV)

God has made many promises to those who give their will and life over to His care. Success is achieved by following God’s ways rather than our limited human ways. God tells us to bring our old thought patterns to Him for renewal. Inviting God to help us and choosing for His direction brings success and this boosts our self-confidence. Choosing to quote God’s word over our faulty thinking is one way to bring about change that lasts.

**The weapons we use are not human ones. Our weapons have power from God and can destroy the enemy’s strong places. We destroy people’s arguments, and we tear down every proud idea that raises itself against the knowledge of God. We also capture every thought and make it give up and obey Christ.** (2 Corinthians 10:4-5 ERV)

At times we may be tempted to turn back to our old ways but if we call out to God, He will give us the strength to keep moving forward rather than giving in to defeat. Today, before we say, “I can’t” let’s say, “With God’s help, I’ll try.”

**Don’t worry—I am with you. Don’t be afraid—I am your God. I will make you strong and help you. I will support you with my right hand that brings victory.** (Isaiah 41:10 ERV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am weak, but You are strong. Help me choose to walk in Your will and Your ways in all my affairs and to fully rely on Your strength for victory over all my dependencies. Amen*

**Today, before we say, “I can’t” let’s say, “With God’s help, I’ll try.”**

**MONEY – A BALANCED PERSPECTIVE**

We all need a certain amount of money to buy food and clothes, pay the rent, and get around from one place to the next. We are also advised to save some of what we earn for an emergency and for retirement. In our lives, when is it wise to consider money and when does our focus on money become a problem?

**Anyone who loves money never has enough. Anyone who loves wealth is never satisfied with what they get. Money gained in the wrong way disappears. But money gathered little by little grows. The love of money is a root of all kinds of**

**evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.** (Ecclesiastes 5:10a, Proverbs 13:11 NIRV, 1 Timothy 6:10 NIV)

**In our lives, when is it wise to consider money and when does our focus on money become a problem?**

Money is a problem when we refuse to work to supply our need. Money is a problem when we spend more than we earn and run up debts we are unable to pay. Money is a problem when we are willing to engage in dishonest behaviour in order to get it. Money is a problem when we gamble and are unable to buy necessities. Money is a problem when we refuse to give an offering of thanks to God or help someone in need. Money is a problem when we think money is a solution to all our problems.

**Some of you are living idle lives, refusing to work and meddling in other people’s business. We command such people and urge them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and work to earn their own living. It is**

**better to live right and be poor than to be sinful and rich. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.** (2 Thessalonians 3:11-12 NLT, Psalm 37:16 CEV, Matthew 6:33 NLT)

God encourages us to work to earn a living and not simply live off the generosity of others. God promises that we will have all we need when we seek Him first and live according to His will and His ways. Today is an opportunity to look at both our practice of using money and our attitude toward it.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to have a healthy attitude towards money. Forgive me for the ways I’ve tried to gain and use money to solve my problems only to end up with increased problems. Help me to live simply and honestly, trusting that as I focus on You, You will provide for all my needs. Amen*

**IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING TRIGGERS**

Emotions, stress, illness, troubles in a relationship, or just talking about the past can trigger an obsession in us to relapse. Even something that is good, giving us a desire to celebrate, can be a challenging trigger. Many of us have learned to be alert to situations that make up the acronym “HALT” (hungry, angry, lonely, tired) as conditions that carry a lot of risk for relapse.

**Through Christ we feel sure before God. I don’t mean that we are able to do anything good ourselves. It is God who makes us able to do all that we do. The Lord is the only one who can save us. Only he can make us strong.** (2 Corinthians 3:4-5 ERV, Isaiah 45:24 NIRV))

We should not face triggers and obsessions on our own and hope to overcome them. God wants us to be successful in recovery and, if we ask Him, He will give us what we need to get through each moment of every day. Maintaining communication with God on a regular basis makes it easy for us to call out to Him when a trigger strikes.

God will help us identify triggers and make provision for a future crisis. When a trigger happens, we are then prepared to handle the situation in a healthy way. It’s also good to list people that have knowledge of what we are going through and have arranged to call when we are in trouble. It is wise to seek their help while we are in crisis and not wait until our thought patterns change. Some folks memorize one of God’s promises and speak it to themselves as often as necessary until the crisis passes.

**God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted any more than you can take. But when you are tempted, God will give you a way out. Then you will be able to deal with it.** (1 Corinthians 10:13 NIRV)

Learning how to recognize what triggers us, and developing ways to manage the cravings that result, is an important part of living well in recovery each day.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you that I don’t have to face challenges alone for You are always with me. Together with you any difficulty can be worked out and overcome. Amen*

**Learning how to recognize what triggers us, and developing ways to manage the cravings that result, is an important part of living well in recovery each day.**

## BEING PERSISTENT IN CALLING OUT FOR HEALING

Our hope for healing is not centered on anything we may think we deserve but is founded on the grace of God towards us who believe in Jesus. When we gave our lives over to the care of God, we became His precious children and were given an inheritance based on His love and favour towards us. There is no unimportant child in the family of God.

***Lord my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me. Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.***  
(Psalm 30:2; Matthew 7:7 NIV)

***Are we calling out to God for healing, and if so, are we ready to live the new life that God will give us?***

There is a story in the Bible of a blind man named Bartimaeus who was sitting by the roadside begging when he heard the noise of a great crowd passing by. He must have asked what the noise was all about and was told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. He started to shout, "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!" Many told him to be quiet, but that did not stop him, he shouted all the more. When we call out to God for healing, are we persistent?

***I call to you, Lord, come quickly to me; hear me when I call to you. May my prayer be set before you like incense;*** (Psalm 141:1-2a NIV)

***Jesus ignored the crowd and stopped and said to them, "Call him." At this the crowd said, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." Throwing his cloak aside – maybe the only security he had – Bartimaeus jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. When Jesus asked Bartimaeus what he wanted him to do for him, he replied, "I want to see." Immediately he received his sight.*** (Mark 10:46-50)

When Bartimaeus received the healing he asked for, it meant leaving behind his former lifestyle, his source of income, and more than likely the friends with whom he begged. Having his sight meant everything in the future would be new to him. Are we calling out to God for healing, and if so, are we ready to live the new life that God will give us?

***Prayer: Loving God, I ask that You fill me with the knowledge of Your will for my life and give me wisdom and understanding in all I ask You to do for me Amen***

## CHARACTER DEFECT – INSINCERITY

We all long to be genuine and sincere in our relationship with God and with others and yet we often find ourselves being fake and insincere. Self-centeredness, fear, co-dependency, approval seeking, irritation and control issues are just a few of the things that push us over the slippery slope to that ugly place where we are not truthful in what we are saying and are actually hiding from what is going on inside us.

***People will love only themselves and money. They will be proud and boast about themselves ... They will have no love for others and will refuse to forgive anyone. They will talk about others to hurt them and will have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. People will turn against their friends. They will do foolish things without thinking and will be so proud of themselves. Instead of loving God, they will love pleasure. They will go on pretending to be devoted to God, but they will refuse to let that "devotion" change the way they live. Stay away from these people!*** (2 Timothy 3:2-6 ERV)

It's time to stop pretending. We need to say what we mean and mean what we say. We need to speak the truth with kindness, admit when we are wrong, and forgive others when they fail. If we make plans, we need to keep them, even when it is inconvenient. When we say we care, we need to really listen and perhaps lend a hand. We need to watch our words and quit the negative talk and gossip. If we have a problem with someone, we need to learn how to talk it out in a healthy way. We don't know everything and can't always attend to someone else's need. We need to become genuine and humble, admitting our limits. We need to remember what we can do in the light of how far we have come. Rather than making insincere and foolish promises we know we can't keep, we need to have respect for the circumstances and say "No" or "I can't" to the person asking for help.

***Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.*** (Romans 12:9, 1 John 3:18 NIRV)

***Prayer: Loving God, you are faithful and sincere in all Your ways. Teach me to be truthful and kind in every circumstance. Please forgive me when I falter. Amen***

***It's time to stop pretending. We need to say what we mean and mean what we say.***

SATURDAY, JUNE 12, 2021

## NOT AS I WOULD HAVE IT

The full version of the Serenity Prayer said at most recovery gatherings contains the words, *“Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it”*. Jesus left heaven, where He was known and praised, and came to earth in human flesh to save the world from the power of sin. His environment here was certainly not as He would have had it. Jesus was despised and rejected by those who ought to have known who He was. To protect their status and way of living, these people bore false witness against Jesus and handed Him over to be mocked, tortured, and killed by oppressive rulers.

***“Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it.”***

***People looked down on him. They didn’t accept him. He knew all about pain and suffering. He was like someone people turn their faces away from. We looked down on him. We didn’t have any respect for him.*** (Isaiah 53:3 NIRV)

Even though Jesus suffered many things, He chose not to judge the people who treated Him harshly. He knew every person – not just those suffering from addiction – and He knew they were in bondage to sin, and that He had come to set them free. How do we respond to those who are rude to us and do not treat us kindly? Do we see them, as Jesus does, as people God loves who have not yet been set free? This world may not be as we would like it, but because of what Jesus has done for us, we can carry this message to others – “normies” as well as fellow addicts – and tell them of Jesus’ love for them, and His power and willingness to set them free and give them new life.

***I’m sending you off to open the eyes of the outsiders so they can see the difference between dark and light, and choose light, see the difference between Satan and God, and choose God. I’m sending you off to present my offer of sins forgiven, and a place in the family, inviting them into the company of those who begin real living by believing in me.*** (Acts 26:17-18 MSG)

Next time we pray the Serenity Prayer, let’s truly desire to be more like Jesus in the way we respond to others.

***Prayer: Lord Jesus, I want to be like You and take this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it. Help me to accept the things I cannot change and give me the courage to change the things I can. Amen***

MONDAY, JUNE 21, 2021

## PEACE THAT MELTS HARSHNESS

Too many of us carry a harsh picture of God and believe He looks for ways to be displeased with us. Sometimes we review our actions and condemn ourselves and think that God also condemns us. We seldom see the kindness and tenderness of God as He comes alongside us.

***Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 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 11:28-29 NLT)

God views our life situations with a caring heart. He welcomes us to come to Him and find peace when we are hurting, confused, or feeling threatened. He encourages us to bring painful memories out of the darkness of our souls and into the light of His healing presence so we can be set free from their power over us.

Sometimes our peace is challenged by the displeasure of others. We react with frustration and often, almost without thinking, we strike out violently at the source of our frustration. This is not God’s way. In the same way God comes alongside us with grace and patience, acceptance and forgiveness, so He instructs us to maintain peace with others.

***Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other’s faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.*** (Colossians 3:12-14 NLT)

Today is a good day to ask God to help us let go of harshness and embrace the gentleness of spirit that allows our hearts and minds to be at peace.

***Prayer: Loving God, Help me to receive Your love and healing so I can let go of harshness and embrace gentleness. I want to live in perfect harmony in my relationship with You and with others. Amen***

***Today is a good day to ask God to help us let go of harshness and embrace the gentleness of spirit that allows our hearts and minds to be at peace.***

### HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

Today is a day to honour fathers. Some of us are fathers. All of us have a father. The relationship of a loving father to his child is a picture of God's heart for us.

Nothing stirs a father's heart more than looking at his newborn child. We love to see a dad carrying his little one on his chest in a baby carrier. Squeals of joy come out of the mouth of a toddler as their dad throws them in the air and catches them again in his strong arms. There is a natural God-given desire in a father to care for his child, to protect that child even to the point of laying down his own life on behalf of the child. This is God's heart for you and me.

***A father is tender and kind to his children. In the same way, the Lord is tender and kind to those who have respect for him.*** (Psalm 103:13 NIRV)

***Even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will hold me close.***

*Psalm 27:10 NLT*

Some of us have suffered the abuse or absence of our biological father and that is a significant issue in our journey. This is where God, in His tenderness, graciously offers to be the good father we never had, to care for us and meet our needs for safety and protection which our earthly father either could not, or did not, provide. Only a father's love can meet that deep need within us.

***Even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will hold me close.*** (Psalm 27:10 NLT)

Whatever our past, whether it's being well-loved, or wounded and abandoned by our father, or even being disappointed in ourselves as a father, God invites us today to make a connection to His family. Our Heavenly Father will receive us as His precious children. He will love and care for us and heal our wounds.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, You gave life to me. You are familiar with my personality and all the things that have gone on in my life. It is your desire every day, including today, to lavish your love on me and heal my wounds. Thank You for inviting me into Your family and making a way for that to happen through the death and resurrection of Your precious son, Jesus. I receive Your love today. I want to live as Your beloved child, to walk in Your ways and be obedient to Your will. Amen*

### BEING WITH GOD IN THE PLACE WHERE HE IS

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

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

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

Have we made a firm decision to follow the ways of God in our life in recovery? If so, God is with us wherever we are. When we practice God's principles in all our affairs, even in places that are dry to the word of God, we can be the ones who bring the peace of God that flows like a refreshing stream in that place. As we witness about the love of Jesus, the Power of God will flow, and the neighbourhood will be filled with more and more people who are praising God for releasing them from the bondage of sin. When we move on, that place will continue to be blessed by God and the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control – will be evident among that community.

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

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please strengthen and uphold me to be a fountain of living water spreading the fruit of Your Spirit wherever I go. Help me to practice Your principles in all my words and deeds. I ask for Your help to walk the walk and not just talk the talk. Amen*

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

**WISDOM FOR THE JOURNEY – PROTECT YOUR EYES**

Good eyesight is a great gift. With our eyes we see and admire the beauty that God has put in our natural environment. Sight helps us see what is needed to accomplish our daily tasks. We use our eyes to read and learn, to see love in the eyes of another, and to make necessary changes when we look in a mirror. We use our eyes to read the wisdom sayings in the book of Proverbs which help us understand the treasures of God’s truth.

***My child, remember what I say and never forget what I tell you to do. Do what I say, and you will live. Be as careful to follow my teaching as you are to protect your eyes. Keep my teaching with you all the time; write it on your heart. Treat wisdom as your sister, and insight as your closest friend.*** (Proverbs 7:1-4 GNT)

When we cannot see clearly, we get prescription glasses. When the sun is bright, we wear sunglasses. If pressure in our eye is too much it can destroy our ability to see, so many people put drops in their eyes to relieve the pressure. At times even surgery is required when things grow in our eyes (cataracts) or one part of the eye detaches from another part. We do our best to take good care of our eyes because our ability to see is precious to our well-being.

***Give me understanding so that I may keep your law and obey it with all my heart.***

***Psalms 119:34 NIV***

***Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*** (Psalm 119:97, 119:11 NIV)

What will we do today to welcome God’s truth into our lives and let it give us insight for going forward?

We are told to “never forget” what we’ve learned. We do this by asking the Holy Spirit to grow a real love in our hearts for God’s truth and then by scheduling time to daily learn from God’s Word and from the experience, strength, and hope of others. Learning is not the goal. We must put what we learn into action in all our affairs and rely on the Holy Spirit to give us clear vision and guidance in all we do. When we feel pressured, we come to God for His healing medicine. We must allow God to remove anything in our lives that is harming our ability to see.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your Word is precious and the wisdom and insight it brings to my life is essential for my clear vision as I move forward in my life in recovery. Help me to pay attention to those things You are teaching me and, as the Holy Spirit guides me, help me to apply Your principles in all I do or say. Amen***

**THE POWER OF GRATITUDE**

We will come to experience a secure and happy life in recovery as we learn to be grateful and appreciate the smallest blessing in each day. Being grateful and taking time to give thanks to God and others nurtures healthy growth. A successful life in recovery will not be sustained when irritation and focusing on our problems is our normal mode of operating. Strength comes as we learn to give thanks to God, who is good, and whose love is available to us 24/7.

***Give a lot of time and effort to prayer. Always be watchful and thankful. Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus. Give thanks to the only one who can do great miracles. His faithful love continues forever.*** (Colossians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Psalm 136:4 NIRV)

The miracle of being sober today is a gift from God. Have we given God thanks for our sobriety? Jesus died for our sins and offers us forgiveness for all the wrongs we have done. Have we accepted His offer and given thanks for the clean slate we have today?

Since the practice of gratitude is so powerful, how can we make it an intentional part of our daily living? At the top of our "To Do" list each day, why not put "Take time to be grateful." What a burst of energy and joy we receive when we take time to give thanks. Perhaps it’s making a gratitude list in our daily journal or writing notes of appreciation to those who have helped us. As we make a phone call or send a text to thank them, it might even lift them out of a dull or difficult moment they are experiencing. When many individuals and families gather around a table for a meal they take time to pause and give thanks before they begin to eat. Maybe it's time we paused and added a prayer of gratitude at our mealtimes.

It's important to be grateful today and every day. There's great power in the ongoing practice of gratitude.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, You have given me so many gifts in my life. I take this moment to remember and give You thanks. Thank you for loving and caring for me. Amen***

***Strength comes as we learn to give thanks to God, who is good, and whose love is available to us 24/7.***

## CHARACTER QUALITY – ATTENTIVE

Whether we admit it or not, we all long for someone to listen to and care for us. Sometimes when we are speaking we feel the person we are addressing is not listening to us, and assume they do not care. How many times have we offended God and others by not paying attention to what they have said? Genuine relationships are built on listening to God and to others.

God listens to us and His attention to our thoughts and prayers bring comfort and stability to our daily life.

***The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry.*** (Psalm 34:15 NIV)

***God's Holy Spirit will help us listen attentively to what others are saying, so that we can comfort and help them find the healing they need.***

God wants to care for others through us. God's Holy Spirit will help us listen attentively to what others are saying, so that we can comfort and help them find the healing they need. Caring enough to listen well is something we can all develop. It begins with a willingness to stop being preoccupied with self and forcing the attention of another to be directed towards us. To be attentive we must stop speaking and focus on listening. We must quiet the voices in our head that have a response prepared before a person has finished saying what they are trying to convey to us.

***Be humble. Value others more than yourselves. None of you should look out just for your own good. Each of you should also look out for the good of others.*** (Philippians 2:3-4 NIRV)

It takes undivided attention and effort to become interested in what someone is saying and really listen to what they are trying to share. However, it is a wonderful way to let go of our attention seeking and express our love and care for the needs of someone else.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, You listen to me every time I come to You and You care about what is going on in my life. Help me to love like You love and give the gift of a listening ear and an attentive heart to what someone is saying. Help me to truly care and lift others up by being present to them while they are speaking. Amen*

## START AT THE BEGINNING

When a building is at the planning stage, blueprints need to be drawn up and submitted to the local district council for approval permits. As the work proceeds, a building inspector will review the work at strategic steps on the way to ensure the work adheres to the plans submitted. The inspector will also note any defects in the work done and require that these be put right before the work continues. These inspections are required to ensure that the building is complete and sufficient for its future use.

When we give our will and life over to God's care, we also need to follow established practices if we are to be complete and sufficient for use in the Kingdom of God.

***You accepted Christ Jesus as Lord, so continue to live following him. You must depend on Christ only, drawing life and strength from him. Just as you were taught the truth, continue to grow stronger in your understanding of it.*** (Colossians 2:6-7a ERV)

The first step in any building process is to clear the land and dig down to the bedrock for the foundation. If this is done properly, the building will be stable. Our bedrock is the written Word of God and Jesus is the cornerstone. When we seek to improve our knowledge of the Scriptures and put the principles we learn into practice then we are building our lives on a solid foundation.

***Because of these things, the Lord God says, "I will put a rock—a cornerstone—in the ground in Zion. This will be a very precious stone. Everything will be built on this very important rock. Anyone who trusts in that rock will not be disappointed."*** (Isaiah 28:16 ERV)

Being repentant of our sin, not just being remorseful or sad about the consequences of what we have done, is the place where we start to build our solid foundation in Christ. If we leave some of the rubble from our past, then the foundation will not be stable, and the building will not be complete or approved by God.

***What people say about themselves means nothing. What counts is whether the Lord says they have done well.*** (2 Corinthians 10:18 ERV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me lay the foundation of my life on the bedrock of what Jesus has done for me. My desire is to become perfect and complete, ready for Your service. Amen*

***You accepted Christ Jesus as Lord, so continue to live following him. You must depend on Christ only, drawing life and strength from him***

*Colossians 2:6 ERV*

## OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE – CARRY THE MESSAGE

We are reminded repeatedly in the AA Traditions, the Twelve Step program, and the experience of many, that it is the simplicity and focus of sticking with one primary purpose that inspires us to help each another. *Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.* (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions page 150) This is the focus we need as we gather to support one another in sobriety and in the new life God has given us.

***What you should want most is God's kingdom and doing what he wants you to do. Then he will give you all these other things you need.***  
(Matthew 6:33 ERV)

***As we share the message with others, the gift of our new life becomes more powerful and more alive in us as well.***

The foundational principles for our new life in recovery are: admitting we are powerless without God in our lives; coming to believe in a power greater than ourselves; and turning our will and our life over to the care of God.

God's word also encourages us to have a single-minded focus on what matters. When Jesus was asked what the most important focus of life was, this is what He said: ***Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and most important command. And the second command is like the first: 'Love your neighbor the same as you love yourself'.***  
(Matthew 22:37-39 ERV)

Drinking and drugging are responses to deeper issues of the heart to which God alone has the solutions. As those who have found the key to living free from the effects of this deadly disease, we now need to share this message of freedom from bondage with others. We know that as we share the message with others, the gift of our new life becomes more powerful and more alive in us as well.

***God did not keep back his own Son, but he gave him for us. If God did this, won't he freely give us everything else? Give freely, and you will profit. Help others, and you will gain more for yourself.*** (Romans 8:32 CEV, Proverbs 11:25 ERV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for Jesus who brought the message of Your love for me to earth, even to the cross where He died for my sins. Help me to focus on what matters today and with love and clarity carry this message to those who still suffer. Amen*

## STEP TWELVE – GIVE IT AWAY

A common recovery saying is that “you must give it away in order to keep it”. How are we to live this out today?

***The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, for the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the Lord's favor has come....he will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair.*** (Isaiah 61:1-3 NLT)

Our new life, free from the destructive dependencies of the past, is a living witness that recovery is possible. Whether we are sitting at a recovery meeting or simply interacting with others, we are sure to be in contact with hurting people who need to know how to find a new way of life. God has given each of us the assignment of sharing our experience, strength, and hope with others so they are encouraged to give Him the opportunity to set them free from their dependencies.

Today, as on our first day in recovery, we know that we are powerless without God. When we gave our will and life into God's care, we saw a power greater than ourselves in action. Others also encouraged us as we heard their stories of God's faithful companionship on the recovery journey. Now it is our turn to share with others. We do not have to pretend we know more than we know or have experienced. God wants us to share our truthful experience of life in recovery so that it might bring hope to others.

What we have received, we can share with others. As we share, we become more conscious of the fact that God was our guide each step of the way. We can truly tell others that God never leaves us to walk alone.

Telling our story will bring comfort and hope to others who don't know which way to turn. Let's give this gift to those who need it today.

*Prayer: Gracious God, Thank you for this day with you in recovery. Help me to recognize the opportunities you are giving me to share my experience, strength, and hope with others who still need to be set free. Amen*

***God wants us to use our truthful experience of life in recovery so that it might bring hope to others.***