

**LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY**

# **Daily Meditations**



**JUNE 2022**



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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***

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### **Daily Meditations**

**JUNE 2022**

#### **CONTRIBUTING EDITORS**

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## 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 style="text-align: center;"><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 style="text-align: center;"><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 style="text-align: center;"><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 style="text-align: center;"><b>RELATIONSHIP ADDICTIONS:</b></p> <p><b>Abusive Relationships:</b>              Includes: Intimidation, Isolation,              Domination, Blaming, Humiliation,              Withholding, Forcing acts against              one's will  <b>Approval dependency</b>  <b>Attention Seeking</b>  <b>Codependence/Rescuing</b>  <b>Power/Control</b></p>

### PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

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

**How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery**

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

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

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

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

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

**SEEK FIRST GOD'S KINGDOM**

When we came to admit that our lives were unmanageable, we knew that many decisions needed to be made if we were to choose for the road to recovery. In our dysfunctional lifestyle, our relationship with family members, our overall health, and our living conditions all declined. Somehow, we came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity and we became willing to give our will and life over to the care of God. At this point we need to ask ourselves, "Will I truly desire conscious contact with God and seek to know and obey His principles as I navigate my new life with Him in recovery?"

***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)

Half measures will not get us to the new life that we desire. We need to give up our old way of thinking and behaving and get on board with God's teachings as recorded in the Bible. The right way of living is not found in ourselves, it is the gift of God to us through Jesus. As we improve our conscious contact with our Heavenly Father and obey the Scriptures, we are promised that He will take care of all our needs.

***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.*** (2 Corinthians 4:18 MSG)

Belief in Jesus, who paid the debt for our wrongdoing and made us right with God, will cause us to have faith that as God's precious children He is committed to provide for all our needs. If we are patient and not seeking our own way, we will have no worries about future challenges because God will be with us in all our tomorrows.

***Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.*** (Matthew 6:34 MSG)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, When life's challenges come my way, please help me to seek first Your Kingdom ways, and be obedient to Your principles in all my affairs. Amen*

***Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.***

Matthew 6:33 NLT

JUNE 2, 2022

## CONFIDENTLY DECISIVE

# NOTES

How many of us are confident in our decision making? When something feels right do we just do it or do we stop for a moment and think on the principles contained in the Scriptures that help us make good decisions. Being confidently decisive comes from knowing what God's principles are and practicing them in all our affairs. If we are unsure about anything, we can ask God for direction with whatever is going on and He will graciously give us the instruction we need.

***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.*** (James 1:5 NIV)

***Being confidently decisive comes from knowing what God's principles are and practicing them in all our affairs.***

Those of us who have had a spiritual awakening will have made a decisive step to have daily contact with God by reading the Bible. In the past we did not know, or chose not to follow, the ways of God. Since giving our life over to the care of God we feel confident that His ways are the pathway to a good life. Making decisions about what to do when temptation comes is vital to maintaining our sobriety. We can be certain that temptation will come and we will need to have a plan for how to handle it.

***Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.*** (James 1:12 NIV)

Being decisive about our faith in God, and His actions on behalf of those whose hearts are turned towards Him, is a sure way to please God and establish His favour towards us. This does not mean we will never have problems, but it does mean that God will accompany us through every situation we encounter in life and will strengthen us to do what needs to be done. With God any problem can be worked out and overcome.

***Without faith it is impossible to please God. Those who come to God must believe that he exists. And they must believe that he rewards those who look to him.*** (Hebrews 11:6 NIRV)

***Prayer: Loving God, I want to be decisive in all my ways according to Your Word. Please strengthen my faith in the truth of Your Word so I can consistently be an overcomer. Amen***

STAYING CONNECTED

In active addiction, trying to stay connected and maintain a close, healthy relationship with another was impossible. Only our drug of choice had our full attention. As we come into recovery, God invites us to regain the beautiful plan He has for us to live in a loving and caring relationship with Him, and then with others. Jesus prayed about this long ago, echoing what God's heart was from before creation:

***I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.*** (John 17:21 NLT)

***For in him we live and move and have our being.***

*Acts 17:28 NIV*

Staying connected means that we come close and allow ourselves to be attached. We do not hide. We joyfully open up our thoughts and feelings to someone with whom we feel safe and accepted. We find ways to get to know this person. As our relationship flourishes, we want all that we are to be known and shared, each with the other.

***And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.*** (John 17:3 NLT)

Jesus left heaven to come to earth so we would know the depth of God's love for us. We get to know God and His gracious heart towards us as we learn and obey what He tells us works. We can then avoid those things that harm us.

***I can do nothing alone. I judge only the way I am told. And my judgment is right, because I am not trying to please myself. I want only to please the one who sent me.*** (John 5:30 ERV)

Are we willing to live connected to God today? What would it take for us to do only those things that are on God's heart for us to do? The truth is, life outside of this connection to God through Jesus, we do not have a foundation to build on. This step-by-step, moment-by-moment connection with God is the only way we will overcome our addiction and maintain sobriety.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please heal my heart and help me to respond to Your kind invitation to live close to You each day and follow Your ways in everything I do and say. Amen*

STEP NINE – WORKING FOR RECONCILIATION WITH CARE

Honesty, balance, and realism are essential tools to keep at hand as we sort out and rebuild relationships.

***She [Wisdom] will guide you down delightful paths; all her ways are satisfying. Wisdom is a tree of life to those who embrace her; happy are those who hold her tightly.*** (Proverbs 3:17-18 NLT)

Nothing takes more sensitivity and care than dealing with people with whom we have had painful experiences. It doesn't matter if they are close family members or acquaintances, whether the injury happened a decade ago or ten minutes ago, we need to take great care and walk with humility as we work towards reconciliation.

If we find ourselves leaning towards self-justification, we may find it useful to remember ***“Do to others as you would like them to do to you.”*** (Luke 6:31 NLT)

As we seek Him, God will teach us the truth about our lives, past, present, and future. Humility says we have much to learn. Our part is to identify and do the work of cleaning our side of the street and then patiently walk in forgiveness until the other party is ready for more. This is the willingness to take responsibility for the harm we have caused and the desire to make amends to which the steps call us.

***Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace.*** (Luke 1:78-79 NLT)

When the time is right, and with a prayerful attitude of seeking God to heal the people we have harmed, we can be confident that God will guide us safely on the pathway to peace and restoration with others.

*Prayer: Gracious God, Thank you for your unending love and forgiveness. Please help me to sort my motives as well as my actions as I do the work of restoring relationship with those I have harmed. Help me to be teachable and humble. Holy Spirit, please give me courage and discernment as step by step You guide me on the pathway of peace and love towards others. Amen*

***Honesty, balance, and realism are essential tools to keep at hand as we sort out and rebuild relationships.***

BE ALERT AT ALL TIMES

We have all experienced the ups and downs of recovery. We may work hard for a time and then wander from our essential agenda and choose to focus on other things. We get comfortable with where we are at and, particularly around the times we mark significant periods of sobriety, we feel satisfied with ourselves and what we are currently doing. It's at these times that we are very vulnerable to relapse.

The Bible gives us instructions for times like these, **"Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil."** (Ephesians

6:11 NLT) Each day we need to be aware that we are in a battle for our sobriety and should not allow ourselves to be complacent but stay alert and persistent.

**Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak**

Matthew 26:41 ESV

**Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers.** (Ephesians 6:18 NLT)

We dare not let our guard down because our enemy prowls around every moment of every day seeking to destroy us and the precious life in recovery that God has given us.

**Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.** (Mark 14:38, 1 Peter 5:8 ESV)

It is important that we continue to do practical things such as: - embrace what is going on in our lives rather than avoid difficulties, even if it means living through painful circumstances; allow thoughts and feelings of regret to pass; connect in meaningful ways with others; serve others with love and compassion. However, the bottom line to successful and consistent recovery is to stay alert to God's voice and be persistent in prayer.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, In this day and as often as necessary, I will seek, through prayer and meditation, to improve my conscious contact with You, praying only for knowledge of Your will for me and the power to carry it out. Amen*

GET EVEN OR GET AHEAD

*Time wasted in getting even can never be used in getting ahead.*

**Be sure that no one pays back wrong for wrong. But always try to do what is good for each other and for all people.** (1 Thessalonians 5:15 ERV)

We feel hurt and violated when another's unkind words or actions take away our dignity and leave us scarred and in need of healing. We want an admission of guilt for the harm done to us. We want them to make amends. If they don't, we often find that something arises within us and makes us want to "get even."

While we may think we will feel better if we shout back at a person who has shouted at us or retaliated by bringing shame or harm to someone for what they have done, research tells us we're not better off even as soon as five to fifteen minutes later. We violate our own soul and our own standards of right and wrong when we speak and behave badly in pursuing revenge. God has a better plan.

**Don't do wrong to anyone to pay them back for doing wrong to you. Or don't insult anyone to pay them back for insulting you. But ask God to bless them. Do this because you yourselves were chosen to receive a blessing. A gentle answer makes anger disappear, but a rough answer makes it grow.** (1 Peter 3:9, Proverbs 15:1 ERV)

The bottom line is that each of us has done many wrong things over the course of our lives, and often even in the past few days. We come to God and seek His forgiveness for what we have done, and we should. But our forgiveness for what we have done is impacted by our willingness to forgive others for the wrongs they have done. Let's not waste time trying to get even and instead co-operate with God, receive His peace and move on.

**When you are praying and you remember that you are angry with another person about something, forgive that person. Forgive them so that your Father in heaven will also forgive your sins.** (Mark 11:25 ERV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, It's so hard for me not to seek revenge when I have been wronged. I choose to lay the desire to "get even" aside and ask You to fill my heart with the higher good of blessing others, so blessing and honour can come to my own life. Amen*

**Let's not waste time on trying to get even and instead co-operate with God and really get ahead.**

## DIFFICULTY FOLLOWING THROUGH

Many of us have never been disciplined in the art of following through on the commitments we make. We start something and then get tired of it when it takes more effort than we are willing to give. Committed relationships often suffer from this type of attitude. While a relationship is contributing to our needs, we are fine but when it starts requiring effort that we are unwilling to give, then we are ready to walk away rather than work on the challenges.

*If God didn't hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and exposing himself to the worst by sending his own Son, is there anything else he wouldn't gladly and freely do for us?*  
(Romans 8:32 MSG)

**Following through requires that we be like Jesus and do the will of God no matter the cost.**

Because of our Heavenly Father's love for us, Jesus was willing to die in our place for the sins which separate us from our loving God. Through forgiveness of our sins, our broken relationship with God is restored and we have life with Him forever. Jesus endured the ridicule of people around Him and the agonizing pain of dying on the cross so that He could fulfill God's perfect plan of salvation.

*We despised him and rejected him—a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief...He was despised, and we didn't care. Yet it was our grief he bore, our sorrows that weighed him down.* (Isaiah 53:3-4a TLB)

What is required for us to follow through and be a doer of God's will? When we repent of our sins and turn our will and life over to the care of God, we receive everything we need to live the life God has planned for us. The Scriptures teach us the ways of God and we need to follow through on what they say, regardless of our feelings. Before Jesus went to the cross, He asked, *"My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me"* but in obedience to God's will finished with, *"Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."* (Matthew 26:39b NLT)

Following through requires that we be like Jesus and do the will of God no matter the cost.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am weak but You are strong. Please strengthen me to follow through and do the next right thing in all my affairs. Amen*

## DEALING WITH DISGUST

Disgust is a reaction that arises when a person's good taste or moral sense of respect is offended. That is not to say that everyone is disgusted by the same thing. Disgust may be aroused in many people by something as simple as observing the eating traditions of certain ethnic groups. In our addiction, our family and acquaintances may have reacted with disgust at the degrading effect our substance of choice had on us. On the other hand, we may have reacted with disgust at the actions of anyone who tried to interfere with our way of living.

*An offended friend is harder to win back than a fortified city. Arguments separate friends like a gate locked with bars.*  
(Proverbs 18:19 NLT)

God created us for a joyful relationship with Him and also with one another. The best way to avoid disgust is to follow the principles for living as set out in the Bible. We are told not only to look out for our own well-being, but to also look to the well-being of others. Instead of criticizing and finding fault with one another, we are to love and encourage one another to good works, and with grace, forgive one another when we are offended. When we feel disgust rising in us, Jesus' advice is to find a way to respond in love. That doesn't mean we endorse ugly behaviour, but it does mean that we find a way to think and react to what we see or hear in a way that offers love and calls forth peace. In our destructive lifestyle of addiction Jesus, who rightfully could have been disgusted by our behaviour, chose not to react with judgment but to offer Himself as a sacrifice to save us.

*For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.* (John 3:17; Romans 14:10 NKJV)

When we have given our will and life over to the care of God, we are freed from all condemnation. For this reason, let's be more like Jesus and not judge others, but be willing to love and care for each person's well-being.

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, You gave Your life so that I might be saved from sin and judgment. Please help me to encourage those around me to know Your love and forgiveness which will set them free from all condemnation. Amen*

**When we feel disgust rising in us, Jesus' advice is to find a way to respond in love.**

THE GOD WHO SEES ME

It is so easy to feel like an anonymous person in the middle of a crowd. Someone has said that the greatest loneliness we experience is when we are with lots of people but feel disconnected and unnoticed. The amazing fact is, God knows us, God is with us, God is watching us, and caring for us as individuals every moment of our lives.

There's a story in the Bible of a day when Jesus was very busy and had lots of people crowding around Him. His friends had to be like 'bodyguards around celebrities,' as they tried to form a security barrier around Him. However, one woman, who had a medical condition for more than 12 years, was determined to get to Jesus and touch Him, even just his clothes, in order to receive healing for her condition. She was successful.

***I love the LORD because he hears my voice and my prayer for mercy.***

Even though Jesus had healed many people in the past and on this particular occasion crowds were pressing around Him, when this woman touched Him, Jesus stopped and was determined to find out who she was.

***"Who touched me?" Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you." But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me."*** (Luke 8:45-46 NIV)

***Psalms 116:1 NLT***

This woman was not just someone in the crowd who got healed. She was someone who had faith in Jesus and came to Him in her time of need. Even in this large crowd of seekers pushing in on Him, Jesus felt power go out of Him to this one person who had faith in Him for her healing.

Each person matters to God and when we go through troubled times God invites us to come to Him so He can rescue us. How we respond to God matters. Trusting God and acting in faith according to the Scriptures matters. God sees us. God knows us. God responds to us individually as we reach out to Him.

***The Lord hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles.*** (Psalm 34:17 NLT)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am so thankful that I do not live alone for You are always with me. You watch over me and all that I experience. You wait for me to reach out to You so You can bless me. I put my hope in Your Word. Help me to reach out to You in every situation I encounter so You can rescue me from all my troubles. Amen*

KNOW-IT-ALL

The longer we are in sobriety the more we recognize that we have lots to learn. It is interesting though, how in early sobriety some of us become a "know-it-all" who hardly needs a sponsor, and certainly does not need the advice a sponsor might give when it is inconvenient to act on it.

This kind of arrogance is rooted in denial and insecurity. Underneath the egotism we might realize that there truly is a lot we don't know, but we feel we dare not admit it. People who are solidly grounded know that there is a great deal to learn, and they have their ears and hearts open to the experience, strength, and hope that others are willing to share.

***Be friendly with everyone. Don't be proud and feel that you are smarter than others. Make friends with ordinary people.*** (Romans 12:16 CEV)

How do we know we are living humbly rather than as a know-it-all? One obvious way is in our willingness to learn from God how life really works. The Bible was written to help us, to correct us, and to show us how to live. Are we consulting it, or do we think we can do fine with our own understanding of how things work? As we learn what God says is the right way to do things, are we willing to adjust and adapt our thinking and life habits, or do we simply carry on as we have in the past?

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

God's thoughts are full of wisdom and His ways of doing things are much higher than ours. Are we living in that truth today? Compiling our Step Ten inventory each evening is one way we can observe our behaviour and determine how willing we are to learn from God and others.

***The Lord says: "My thoughts and my ways are not like yours. Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, my thoughts and my ways are higher than yours.*** (Isaiah 55:8-9 CEV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your thoughts are so much wiser than mine and Your ways are so much better than any way I could figure out on my own. Help me to live humbly in this truth and learn all I can from Your Word and from those who are walking in Your ways. Amen*

***The longer we are in sobriety the more we recognize that we have lots to learn.***

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

As kids many of us sang an action song with the words, “The head bone connected to the neck bone, the neck bone connected to the shoulder bone” and on and on down the bones to the toes. With each bone named kids would touch that area. It was lots of fun. Our bodies are a wonderful metaphor of the connection and support God wants us to have in community. We all need a support system, and to be part of a group that supports one another.

***But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.*** (1 Corinthians 12:18-20 NIV)

***We all need a support system, and to be part of a group that supports one another.***

Each body part has a specific function. An eye sees and a hand holds. An ear can't smell, and a nose can't hear. In life we need the work that each person does, so that together we make a functioning whole. Our little toe is not a big part of the body but stub the little toe and the whole body adjusts to cover for the pain it is feeling. We cannot see the enzyme called magnesium but if we don't have enough of it in our bodies many things suddenly don't work the way they should.

***There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.*** (1 Corinthians 12:4-6 NIV)

We all have different personalities and family backgrounds. We choose sponsors and create personal networks with people we can communicate with. The reason we gather in meetings and share our stories is to support one another. Our input is needed as much as the next person's input. Each person has different skills to offer and so together with God we can support one another and provide for particular needs. The input from those who just cleaned up in the past 24 hours is as necessary as the experience of old timers.

None of it works well without God as “the head,” and that is why we need both the Word of God and the grace of God. We need to stand firmly on the truth of God's Word which helps us filter out other sounds or thoughts that may tear us down.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to know You more and always stay connected to You so I can be an effective link to help others in my community. Amen***

HIDING IN THE SHADOWS

All of us are vulnerable to relapse when we are feeling lonely, frustrated or dissatisfied with life. When our minds are obsessed with shadows from our past, we need to seek help from God and our sponsor, or another person we can trust. We need to be honest about what we are experiencing. The devil's desire is to steal, kill, and destroy us. He had power over us until we gave our will and life over to the care of God. Now, even though he is no longer our master, he lurks in the shadows seeking an opportunity to reestablish his power over us.

***When sin had power over your life, you were not right with God. What good did you get from the things you are ashamed of now? Those things bring death. But now you are free from the power of sin. You have become a servant for God. Your life is set apart for God-like living. The end is life that lasts forever.*** (Romans 6:20-22 NIV)

Feeling empty and vulnerable and clinging to thoughts or practices that present us with an opportunity to relapse are signs that the devil is working hard to enslave us again. We must tell ourselves the truth, that giving in to our addiction will bring ruin to our lives once again. Our substance or dependency will not give us the life we are longing for. If it had, we wouldn't be in recovery today. Instead of thinking about relapse, we need to seek help from God and other trusted friends to help us persevere through this temptation.

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

God will give us the will and strength to persevere and have victory over our trials. God desires us to have fullness of life. The devil wants to kill and destroy us. Whom will we choose to trust and obey?

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please strengthen me and help me persevere through the times of trial in my life. I want to follow You in all my ways and have fullness of life. Help me to daily affirm the truth that, I am no longer a slave to fear, I am a child of God. Amen***

***All of us are vulnerable to relapse when we are feeling lonely, frustrated or dissatisfied with life.***

JUNE 8, 2022

## TAKE UP YOUR CROSS AND FOLLOW ME

We say we want to be followers of Jesus and have turned our will and our life over to His care. It all sounds good when we are hurting and need the healing and forgiveness that God promises us when we repent of our sin and destructive life habits, come to God, and ask for the new life He has promised through Jesus.

But then Jesus says something challenging like: ***Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?*** (Mark 8:34-36 NIV)

***Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.***

***Mark 8:34 NIV***

raw into recovery with a desire to grow and change. We were not always easy to get along with and yet they denied themselves any judgment of our actions and stuck with us.

God's way of life, demonstrated in the action of Jesus laying down His life for us on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin, is to find out what God has in mind for us today, and then do it no matter how inconvenient it may be. This is how we deny our old way of life and gain a life that is everlasting.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I could so easily ask for the softer, easier way of life, but I know I no longer desire it to exist for me anymore. Give me the strength each day to turn from self-centered ways and to seek Your way of love and sacrifice in all my affairs. Amen***

We thought we were coming to God to get a new life and now He's telling us to lose our life? How can that be good for us? What does He mean?

We tell ourselves often in the program that we need to "give it away in order to keep it." In Step 12 we are taught, *"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."*

All of these things remind us that just looking out for our own interests is a selfish and life diminishing way of existence. We were created for supportive and caring relationships. Love always costs something. A parent denies themselves the comfort of a good night's sleep in order to comfort and care for a crying baby. Many folks have worked hard to support us as we came ragged and

JUNE 25, 2022

## WILL GOD ACCEPT MY PRAYER?

Our Psalm today tells of one who is in agony and deep sorrow over what he has done. How often have we called out to the Lord in our distress and struggled to put our thoughts together before Him?

***I cry out to God for help. I cry out to you, God; listen to me! My Lord, in my time of trouble I came to you. I reached out for you all night long. My soul refused to be comforted. I thought about you, God, and tried to tell you how I felt, but I could not. You would not let me sleep. I tried to say something, but I was too upset. I kept thinking about the past, about things that happened long ago. During the night, I thought about my songs. I talked to myself, trying to understand what is happening. I wondered, "Has our Lord rejected us forever? Will he ever accept us again?"*** (Psalm 77:1-7 ERV)

The person who wrote this Psalm is praying with great intensity that God would hear and listen to him. He is unable to put into words what he has done and how he feels about it. He keeps thinking about the past and perhaps God's goodness to him. Because of what He has done, He wonders if God has rejected him forever.

Sometimes we make bad decisions that negatively impact our recovery and we feel shame before our loving God. Knowing that God is a Holy God we may feel that repentance is not enough, and we choose to beat up on ourselves. We may judge that we fully deserve that God withdraw His love and favour from us. God, however, has made provision for our forgiveness of sin through the blood of Jesus. Jesus was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. In God's eyes the high price paid by Jesus is more than enough to forgive His children when they slip and fall into sin. Do we dare say that it is not enough?

***Prayer: Gracious God, I am forever grateful to Jesus for coming into this world to pay the high price of sin. May my life always exhibit my gratitude. It is enough that Jesus died and that He died for me. Amen***

***In God's eyes the high price paid by Jesus is more than enough to forgive His children when they slip and fall into sin.***

STEP TWELVE – MAKING A MATCH

Step 12 encourages us to share the message of our spiritual awakening with others and to practice the principles we have learned in all our affairs. This means we keep on doing those things that have helped us retain our sobriety and share with others about the Power that enables us to keep going.

**May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.** (Romans 15:13 NIV)

We have a message to share with others, but we need to be careful that our lives match what we have learned. We need to be sensitive to those who are still in addiction or perhaps have just entered the recovery process. We need to remember how we felt when the program was new and intimidating to us. In our enthusiasm to share we might scare someone away by being thoughtless in our approach. Remember how vulnerable we were in dealing with our guilt and shame?

**We need to be careful that our lives match what we have learned.**

**Keep a close watch on all you do and think. Stay true to what is right and God will bless you and use you to help others.** (1 Timothy 4:16 TLB)

Every person we encounter is special in the eyes of our Heavenly Father and we need to demonstrate the love of God in us by being understanding, patient, and kind in all we say and do. We need to allow a person to be where they are at and encourage them to take one step at a time. We should ask ourselves “Who were we drawn to when we first came into recovery? What was it about them that encouraged us”? Now we can be that kind of encouraging person for someone else. The message of hope for recovery needs to be shared with the grace that God alone can give us. As we greet others today, let’s have kind words to encourage them and good deeds to help where we can.

**May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.** (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 NIV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to carry the good news of life with You in recovery and help me do it in the Power of Your gentle Spirit. Amen*

LEARNING FROM OUR MISTAKES

We all make mistakes but it’s what we do after the mistake that is the measure of who we are as a person.

**If you refuse to learn from your mistakes, you will be poor, and no one will respect you. If you listen when you are criticized, you will be honored.** (Proverbs 13:18 ERV)

It is no surprise to God that we make mistakes. His plan for us is not to sit in a corner because we are fearful of making a mistake. God desires that we limit our mistakes by seeking to know, and then applying His will in all our affairs. When we do stumble, we need to admit the error we made and learn from it. God even promises to honour us when we take this route.

The Bible is full of stories of people who made mistakes. God’s people have never been perfect people. The stories of their mistakes are included in God’s record of human history, not to shame the individuals, but rather that we might learn from their mistakes and avoid making the same ones.

**The things that happened to those people are examples. They were written to be warnings for us. We live in the time that all those past histories were pointing to.** (1 Corinthians 10:11 ERV)

Someone outlined a simple plan for dealing with mistakes that included these five points: Own it. Apologize. Accept the consequences. Learn from it. Let it go.

**Don’t quit your job simply because the boss is angry with you. If you remain calm and helpful, you can correct even great mistakes.** (Ecclesiastes 10:4 ERV)

God made a way for us to deal with our mistakes. Jesus died in our place so that our sins could be forgiven and His blood cleanses us from all wrongdoing.

**But if we confess our sins, God will forgive us. We can trust God to do this. He always does what is right. He will make us clean from all the wrong things we have done.** (1 John 1:9 ERV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to work hard and to make as few mistakes as possible by seeking Your will in all I do. When I do get it wrong, give me the courage to deal with it quickly and let it go. Amen*

**It’s what we do after the mistake that is the measure of who we are as a person.**

STEP TEN – TAKING A LOOK AT MY LIFE TODAY

It's a useful practice to take regular inventory of our lives. It will help us maintain spiritual, emotional, and relational health.

*But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. Exercise daily in God—no spiritual flabbiness, please! Workouts in the gymnasium are useful, but a disciplined life in God is far more so, making you fit both today and forever.*"  
(James 1:22, 25 NLT, 1 Timothy 4:7-8 MSG)

**Regularly taking inventory helps keep us on the path as we get to know God's good plan for our lives.**

SPOT CHECK INVENTORY: In each situation where we begin to experience things not going well, we need to pause and note what's right and what's wrong. What are we feeling? What's going on beneath the feeling? What are we expecting? What is God's direction in what is going on? Are we living the Golden Rule in this moment, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you?"

DAILY INVENTORY: At the end of each day, we talk with God about the events of our day and listen for His encouragement, His correction, and His instruction. Any actions that we think we need to repent of, we ask God for forgiveness and receive it. Where we behaved with good intentions, good thoughts and good actions, we note them and give God thanks for supporting us in all our ways.

*The Lord makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand.* (Psalm 37:23-24 NIV)

God has a plan which will bring meaning and joy to our lives. As we plot our course, God will direct our steps and we will be enriched by goodness and love through each step of the journey. Regularly taking inventory helps keep us on the path as we get to know God's good plan for our lives.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to see myself as you see me. Help me to rejoice in what is going well and promptly admit what needs to be confessed and changed. Thank you for being with me in every circumstance and for teaching me Your principles for living life well. Amen*

OUR LIFE IS SHAPED BY OUR THOUGHTS

We all know that our thoughts and emotions significantly impact our health. Negative and stressful thinking is at the root of many of our physical illnesses. There is so much research available on this topic that we just cannot deny it. Long before science proved it, God's word pointed us to this truth.

*Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts.* (Proverbs 3:23 GNT)

One of the smartest ways to let God change the way we think is to obey His principles and allow Him to filter out those thoughts that are harmful and help us to focus on those things that give us life to the full.

*Never say anything that isn't true. Have nothing to do with lies and misleading words. Fill your minds with those things that are good and that deserve praise: things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honorable.* (Proverbs 4:24, Philippians 4:8 GNT)

As a rule of life, God's word instructs us to be alert and filter the messages we receive from news reports, in social media, and by word of mouth. We need God to transform our thinking, so we know what is good and pleasing and perfect. We need to let go of angry and hurtful things that others say and focus on what God says.

*Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God—what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect.* (Romans 12:2 GNT)

A careful inventory of our thinking is as important as a daily inventory of our behaviours. Only God knows what is best for us and we will do well if we seek His wisdom and rely on that to guide our thinking.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to fill my thoughts with the truth of Your word. Help me to sort my thoughts according to Your principles and enjoy the benefits of Your wisdom. Give me grace to let go of any negative thinking and to intentionally fill my mind with positive and encouraging truth. Amen*

**Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know.**

Proverbs 3:5 GNT

## RECOGNIZING JESUS

Jesus came to earth when the nation of Israel was under Roman rule. We know from the Bible that the Jewish leaders did not accept who Jesus was and conspired to have Him killed. The Jewish leaders should have been familiar with the events of the day because they were foretold in the Scriptures. However, they saw Jesus as a threat rather than a redeemer.

***Why are the nations so angry? Why are the people making such foolish plans? Their kings and leaders join together to fight against the Lord and his chosen king. They say, "Let's rebel against them. Let's break free from them!" But the one who rules in heaven laughs at them. The Lord makes fun of them. He speaks to them in anger, and it fills them with fear. He says, "I have chosen this man to be king, and he will rule on Zion, my holy mountain."*** (Psalm 2:1-6 ERV)

***Do we recognize how much Jesus suffered so that we could be set free from the power of sin?***

We know that Pilate, the Roman governor, recognized that Jesus was spitefully accused of wrongdoing. Pilate said He could find no fault in Jesus, but he gave in to the Jewish leaders and to public opinion and sentenced Jesus to die.

What do we do with Jesus today? Do we recognize Him as the one who gave His life for us and willingly surrender our will and our lives into His care? God loved us so much that He sent Jesus into the world, not to judge us for our wrongs, but to save us. Do we recognize how much Jesus suffered so that we could be set free from the power of sin?

***The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.*** (John 12:48 ESV)

Not only do we have the benefit of history and the story of Jesus written in the Bible, but we also have the experience, strength, and hope of so many who found sobriety and new life by following God's principles. If we do not believe what Jesus has done on our behalf, the Bible says the words that God has spoken will judge us on the last day. How will we measure up when that day comes?

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I repent of my sin and accept Jesus' death on the cross as the payment for my sins to make me whole. I proclaim that Jesus is my Lord and King. I choose to give my will and my life into Your care. Please strengthen me to live for You alone. Amen***

## THE GOOD LIFE

Addiction for many of us focused on trying to find happiness in all the wrong places and things. Some of us thought that escaping pain by medicating our feelings would bring happiness. Others sought after worldly pleasures to enhance their way of life. God, however, shows us the way to true happiness. He lays out a path for us to follow that is good. He also reveals traps and obstacles that are to be avoided along the way.

***Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do. But not the wicked! They are like worthless chaff, scattered by the wind. They will be condemned at the time of judgment. Sinners will have no place among the godly. For the Lord watches over the path of the godly, but the path of the wicked leads to destruction.*** (Psalm 1:1-6 NLT)

We are programmed every day by media and in conversation with others to believe that the good life comes from doing what we want, when we want. God says the good life comes from spending time with Him, letting His words fill our hearts and His Spirit guide us in the way we should go. It's easy to just drift along with the crowd without giving much thought to what we say or do. When we behave in this way, God says we are just like dust on a windy day that gets blown around.

God invites us to recover the life He created us to live, a life that is strengthened by His word and fruitful as a healthy tree planted along a riverbank. God wants our lives to bless others. When difficult times come, God wants to refresh us and help us prosper. God invites us to freedom and purity of heart as we follow His ways and live under the protection of His watchful eye.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to listen to You and follow your ways so I may joyfully live under the protection of your watchful eye and experience the fullness of life you desire me to have. Amen***

***God says the good life comes from spending time with Him, letting His words fill our hearts and His Spirit instruct us in the way we should go.***

JUNE 12, 2022

## SETTING THE RIGHT GOALS

Many who struggle with addictive behaviour are not happy because their lives are unfulfilled, and they are not achieving what they really want in life. Happiness and satisfaction are measures of reasonable success in the goals and plans one is working to achieve.

Living effectively with goals requires planning and being accountable for how one is progressing according to the plan. Some goals are short-term and include activities that can be accomplished in a day or a week. Others are longer term goals and require plans for years going forward. Our plans must include the reshaping of our character according to God's principles, and not just for today but for the rest of our lives. All of these are important components of a satisfying and successful life.

**Focusing on God's plan will lead to ultimate success: success as defined in God's Word.**

***Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.*** (2 Peter 1:5-7 NIV)

What would character development look like in my life if I applied common "goal setting strategies" and identified a few things that are important to me that I am willing to work on? What would be required in the short term to work towards these goals? Am I willing to get specific about the steps to be taken and the time frame required to accomplish them? Am I willing to note my progress and see any stumble in the light of the overall progress I am making?

***I cry out to God Most High, to God who will fulfill his purpose for me.*** (Psalm 57:2 NLT)

The first task we should engage in is to agree with God's plan for character development. Character goals include: goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. Focusing on God's plan will lead to ultimate success, success as defined in God's Word. We are promised that as these qualities are practiced in our life, we will be useful and fruitful and will not stumble. Sounds like a great relapse prevention plan.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to give You the opportunity to grow my character. Show me the goals I should set that will fulfill Your plan for my life. Amen***

JUNE 21, 2022

## GIVING UP THE LIE

Addicts tell lies. We tell ourselves we need our substance of choice in order to deal with the issues of the day. We believe that we're different, that the truth about our lives is too painful to face, and that our circumstances are too traumatic to overcome. We lie because we are in denial about where our addiction has taken us, and we are embarrassed and ashamed. The bottom line is, lying helps us remain in the familiar place where we are at.

***Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds.*** (Colossians 3:9 NLT)

One of the greatest challenges we face in recovery is giving up the lie we tell ourselves that, "We need to lie." We have not changed much if we insist on lying to obtain money from government sources or are unwilling to tell the whole truth about our past because we are too ashamed to admit what we have done.

***Honest people can always feel secure but lying cheaters will be caught. Kind words are like a life-giving tree but lying words will crush your spirit.*** (Proverbs 10:9, 15:4 ERV)

Lies keep us hidden in isolation and shame. They cloud our ability to implement solutions that will bring us freedom. Now is the time to choose truth and change the environment of lying that we have created. One truth at a time – even an acknowledgement that we just lied – will bring freedom and relief. Nothing brings peace and a sense of well-being more than living in the truth. Our recovery is a journey of developing trust in the truth that God's principles are reliable, and God is trustworthy. Regardless of the inconvenience it may cause us, each time we tell the truth we will deepen our experience of true freedom and become more stable, because God is faithful to His word and will bless us.

***But you must do this: Tell the truth to your neighbors. When you make decisions in your cities, be fair and do what is right. Do what brings peace.*** (Zechariah 8:16 ERV)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit that lying often seems much easier than telling the truth. I want the life of freedom and peace You promise to those who live in the truth. Today, please help me to notice when I lie and give me the courage to deal with it immediately. Amen***

***One of the greatest challenges we face is giving up the lie we tell ourselves that, "we need to lie."***

**GOD GIVES US OUR IDENTITY**

In the face of mockery and false accusation, the hardest things to stay focused on are our identity, and our purpose in life. When Jesus was dying on the cross, laying down His life voluntarily for the sins of all people, many were standing around His cross insulting and mocking Him.

***Those who passed by hurled insults at him ... In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.*** (Matthew 27:41-42a, 44 NIV)

***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***

I think most of us would have said, "Forget this," and come off the cross or at least called out for those false accusers to be severely punished. But not Jesus! He knew who He was, and that His Heavenly Father loved Him completely, and He was willing to fulfill His Father's divine purpose for mankind.

***Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*** (Hebrews 12:2-3 NIV)

Do we know who we really are? We are who God says we are, doing the things that God has set for us to do. That should give meaning and purpose to our daily life. Others will have lots to say about what we do, both positive and negative, but we will not really live for God if we follow after the admiration of others or run from their scorn.

If we will take time with God each day, reflect on how much we are loved by Him, and enthusiastically fulfill His plan and purpose for our lives, we will be able to do things that amaze us as well as those around us. We will have peace and a sense of well-being as we experience our identity in Christ Jesus.

***Prayer: Lord Jesus, Help me to know and hold fast to my identity in You, and to remain committed to Your plans for me in this day, and every day. I give my desire for praise, and my fear of accusation and condemnation to You. Remind me today of who You say that I am. Restore my sense of purpose and root me in Your love. Amen***

**WELCOMING GOD TO COMPLETE HIS WORK IN US**

When we look at people who appear to have it all together, we envy them, especially when our life is not harmonious or as complete as we would like it to be. That is not to say that those we think have a perfect life really do, for Jesus said that in this world we will have trouble, and that is true for everyone. What we should consider is that discontent might be a sign that God is working in us to move us forward from where we are at right now, to a place where we will have additional wisdom and understanding of His plan for our lives.

***We have not stopped praying for you since the first day we heard about you. In fact, we always pray that God will show you everything he wants you to do and that you may have all the wisdom and understanding that his Spirit gives. Then you will live a life that honors the Lord, and you will always please him by doing good deeds. You will come to know God even better.*** (Colossians 1:9-10 CEV)

We know from the Scriptures that God has a plan for us, and He promises that what He starts He will complete. We will have good days and bad days but, in each day, God has a purpose for us. We need to persevere through the tough days and pursue God, accepting the fact that He will make known to us the mystery of His will which He planned for us before we were even born.

***God is the one who began this good work in you, and I am certain that he won't stop before it is complete on the day that Christ Jesus returns.*** (Philippians 1:6 CEV)

When the spirit of heaviness surrounds us, we need to proclaim the truth that God is with us and for us. We need to shake off the darkness and live in the light as God is in the light. We need to allow God to work in us to complete the work He has begun.

***His glorious power will make you patient and strong enough to endure anything, and you will be truly happy.*** (Colossians 1:11 CEV)

***Prayer: Gracious Father, Help me to live in the light as You are in the light. My desire is to endure and persevere through anything I encounter believing that You will make all things right as I surrender to Your will. Amen***

***We need to allow God to work in us to complete the work He has begun.***

## NO RECORD OF WRONGS

Keeping a record of wrongs often leads to the winding path of relapse and active addiction. When someone harmed us in the past we may have been unable to deal with the situation at that time, so we buried the pain. The pain, however, was not dead and it festered with evil thoughts about the person who committed the offence. Other incidences may have added to this event, and we just kept pushing each one down. We became angry and intolerant and verbally exploded in situations which did not meet with our approval. To deal with the pain and distress we sought medication to make us feel better. At first the medication worked but eventually more and more was required to help us live with the hurt and bitterness that was inside us.

**Keeping a record of wrongs often leads to the winding path of relapse and active addiction.**

***Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil. For those who are evil will be destroyed, but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land.*** (Psalm 37:8-9 NIV)

Our record of wrongs influences the way we think and behave. For example, we often think evil about a person who has harmed us and want them to suffer for what they have done. Increasingly we become agitated and anger builds within us. Vengeful thoughts fill our mind. Others find it hard to be around us because we have a super-sensitive attitude, and the fuse of anger is always smoldering. What can we do about this?

***Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*** (Ephesians 4:31-32 NIV)

If we have turned our lives over to the care of God, He has forgiven us for the sins we have committed, and He asks us to forgive those who have harmed us. This may be one of the hardest tasks we will face but God will give us the power to do what we cannot do on our own. Obeying God will free us from the wickedness of an unforgiving spirit. Refusal to do so means we are still entertaining it.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You that through Jesus all my sins are forgiven. Please help me to forgive my offenders and turn them over to You to deal with. As I choose to live by the power of Your Holy Spirit, help me to hear no evil, see no evil, and think no evil. Amen*

## 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 each one of us. Today, let's celebrate all fathers by wishing them a "Happy Father's Day".

A father's heart is greatly stirred when he looks at his newborn child. Onlookers also experience joy when they see a dad carrying his little one close to his heart in a baby carrier. Squeals of delight come out of the mouth of a toddler as a dad throws them in the air and catches them in his strong arms. There is a God-given desire in a father to care for his child, to protect that child even to the point of laying down his 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)

Sadly, for many who struggle with addiction, the abuse or absence of a father is a significant issue in their healing journey. This is where God makes the gracious offer to be the good father we never had, to care for us and meet our needs for the safety and protection which our earthly father either couldn't or didn't 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 come into His family. Our Heavenly Father will receive us as His precious children. He will love and care for us and heal our wounds.

***For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.*** (Matthew 12:50 NIV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for inviting me into Your family. I receive Your love today. I want to live as Your beloved child. In the safety of Your loving care, help me to sort out any issues I may have with my earthly Dad and find healing and restoration. Amen*

***The relationship of a loving father to his child is a picture of God's heart for each one of us.***

**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 God’s 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 even louder. 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.” Bartimaeus jumped up, threw his cloak aside, – maybe the only thing of worth he had, – 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 10:46-52)

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 sight meant everything in the future would be new to Bartimaeus. Are we calling out to God for healing, and if so, are we willing to leave our old life behind and live the new life that God is giving us?

***Prayer: Loving God, I ask that You fill me with the knowledge of Your will for my life and, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, instruct and guide me on the pathway to new life. Amen***

**MY WORDS WILL NOT PASS AWAY**

When Jesus and His disciples were leaving the temple in Jerusalem, the disciples drew His attention to the great building and its adornment with beautiful gifts and stones that had been dedicated to God. The disciples must have been shocked when Jesus replied, ***“As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down.”*** (Luke 21:6) The Jewish nation took great pride in the temple, and it was unbelievable that a time would come when the temple would be reduced to rubble. However, Jesus’ prophesy was fulfilled for decades later, in response to a Jewish revolt, the Roman Army destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple in the year 70 AD.

***Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.*** (Luke 21:33 ESV)

As we seek to know God and through prayer and meditation understand the Scriptures, do we make a choice to truly believe the words that are recorded there? We might doubt or outright reject what we read and choose to continue in our rebellious ways, but the truth is, the Words of God as recorded in the Bible do not change. Jesus said:

***Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.*** (John 6:47; 12:48 ESV)

Jesus came into the world not to judge us for our wrongdoing but to save us from it. Some of us ended up in prison through being judged for disobeying the law of our country and were removed from our family and friends for the period of our sentence. If we disobey God’s law by rejecting the truth of His Word, then on God’s judgment day we will be removed from Him for all eternity because His Word will not pass away, it will be fulfilled.

***Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*** (Mark 16:16 ESV)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I choose to believe that Your complete Word as recorded in the Bible is truth. Please help me to practice Your principles, in all my affairs. Amen***

***Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.***

Luke 21:33 ESV

JUNE 16, 2022

## GOD GIVES MERCY

When we say that God gives mercy, do we understand why? God, who created us, has the overall authority and power to judge us on how we live the life that He has given us. Eternal separation from God is the penalty set for those who reject God's plan of salvation. But God, because of His love and great mercy, sent His beloved Son Jesus into the world, not to judge it, but to pay the price of sin. Jesus overcame death and separation from God for all humans. Jesus did this so that the power of sin might be broken and our relationship with God restored.

**But you, O Lord, are a God of compassion and mercy, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.**

*Psalm 86:15 NLT*

***He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our guilty deeds. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him.*** (Psalm 103 10-11 NASB)

God's will for us may have been hindered by all sorts of things in the environment where we grew up. Then, by decisions we made as adults, we added to our rebellious ways. However, when we come to believe that our life without God is unmanageable, we should be mindful of God's great mercy towards us. If we confess our sins and accept the death of Jesus as our death and Jesus' resurrection as our certainty of new life, we can then begin to follow the ways of God in all our affairs.

***He forgives your sins—every one. He heals your diseases—every one. He redeems you from hell—saves your life! He crowns you with love and mercy.*** (Psalm 103 3-4a MSG)

Through prayer and meditation on the Scriptures we can get to know our merciful God and His just ways. God knows we are weak and are made of dust. To help us follow His ways, God has given us His Holy Spirit to guide us. He will strengthen us to reject what our sinful nature craves and to do what pleases God.

***For He Himself knows our form; He is mindful that we are nothing but dust. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and remind you of all that I said to you.*** (Psalms 103:14; John 14:26 NASB)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your mercy in preparing a way for me to be forgiven for my wrongdoing. Please help me to obey You in all my affairs. Amen*

JUNE 17, 2022

## STEP ELEVEN – MEDITATING IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND

In Step Eleven, through prayer and meditation, we seek to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us, and the power to carry it out. We achieve this through meditating on what we read in the Bible, seeking to understand why Jesus came to earth to do the will of His Father, and why He tells us to follow Him.

***My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me.*** (John 10:27 ERV)

Jesus' friends often didn't understand what He was telling them right way. Jesus often spent time alone with His friends to explain things He'd taught that day to the crowds. When Jesus spoke of the plans that were in place for Him to complete His work on earth and return to His father, one of His friends straight up told him he didn't understand. Another asked Jesus to show them the Father and then they could perhaps understand. Like the first followers of Jesus, we also need to take time to meditate on what He is saying, ask questions that may arise, and listen intently for explanations.

***Thomas said, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. The only way to the Father is through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father too. But now you know the Father. You have seen him." Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father. That is all we need." Jesus answered, "Philip, I have been with you for a long time. So you should know me. Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father too. So why do you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*** (John 14:5-9 ERV)

When we understand why Jesus came to earth, we will know the heart of God for us. Jesus knew that each person would need help to fulfill the Father's will for their life. At Jesus request, the Holy Spirit was sent to earth to be with us and in us. He is the Power who helps us persevere and accomplish the will of God for our lives.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please fill me with the knowledge of Your will for my life, and also give me the Power to carry it out. Amen*

***Like the first followers of Jesus, we also need to take time to meditate on what He is saying, ask questions that may arise, and listen intently for explanations.***