

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



June 2017

These meditations are available online
for computer, tablets, and smart phones
at:

www.pihtoday.blogspot.com



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

Come and learn and grow with us:

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

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

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

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



2017

January

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

February

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

March

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

April

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

May

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

June

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

July

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

August

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

September

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

October

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

November

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

December

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

31

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY Daily Meditations

JUNE 2017

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Evelyn Leeburn, Elsie Quick

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Scriptures taken from:

Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Holy Bible. New Living Translation copyright© NLT, 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

New King James Version®. NKJV, Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

The Message (MSG), Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002 by Eugene H. Peterson

PHOTOS

Cathie Bolan © 2017 Cathie Bolan

Elsie Quick, Evelyn Leeburn, Linnea Groom © 2017 Partners in Hope Recovery Society

How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery

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

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

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

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

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

NOTES

THURSDAY, JUNE 1, 2017

DEALING WITH STRESS – THIS TOO SHALL PASS

When we are dealing with stress the slogan ‘this too shall pass’ is a helpful principle to remember. God’s unfailing love surrounds us in every situation and His strength is sufficient for all our needs. Even in challenging days we can get through, get the rest we need, and face the next new day with confidence, because God fills us anew each morning. While our hope is in the living God, we cannot fail. Troubling times will come, but good days will return.

The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. I say to myself, “The LORD is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!”
(Lamentations 3:22-24 NLT)

God will never permit circumstances to break or shatter us. He knows our limits and will not allow us to be stretched beyond what we can bear. God seeks to use our stressful times as opportunities for us to gain His perspective, lean on His strength, and develop perseverance with which we can better run life's course. God may not alter the circumstance that is currently pressing on us. He may not remove the person who is bothering us. He may not heal the condition that daily grates away at our body and soul, but God will dramatically alter our emotions and responses as we improve our conscious contact with Him, and seek answers from His word. As we trust in the wisdom of God to resolve our situations, we will gain spiritual maturity and endurance.

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise—in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? (Psalm 56:3-4 NIV)

We deal best with stress when we call on God for help, acknowledge that He is on our side, and faithfully do what He says. With God's help, “this too shall pass.”

Prayer: Heavenly Father, When life seems overwhelming and I feel distant from You, help me to remember that You are listening when I pray, and that You are working in all situations for my good. I am forever grateful that You care for me. AMEN

God seeks to use our stressful times as opportunities for us to gain His perspective, lean on His strength, and develop perseverance.

FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 2017

DEALING WITH STRESS – PLAN AND PRAY

Stress comes with daily living. Problems show up without notice. We need to have a plan in place to handle the unexpected events and stress that life brings.

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8 NIV)

We gain strength as we allow God to stabilize our emotions with His peace, infuse our hearts with His joy, and provide us with His wisdom.

God is aware of all our circumstances. They are no surprises to Him. When we pray, God is ready and willing to give us wisdom and the strength to endure the event that has surprised us, or perhaps even shocked us.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7 NIV)

We have an enemy of our soul who lurks around seeking someone to destroy. Satan's desire is to drive us to a breaking point as he tries to deceive us into thinking we can, or must, handle stress in our own limited ability and cleverness. By having us focus and obsess on a problem and our inability to handle it, he brings us into fear which weakens our trust in God. The key to handling stress is to rely on God's power at the initial stage of any problem. Knowing and trusting in God's word is another essential component in a stress reducing plan. We gain strength as

we allow God to stabilize our emotions with His peace, infuse our hearts with His joy, and provide us with His wisdom.

A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. (Ephesians 6:10-11 NLT)

The Bible is a toolbox containing tools which enable us to stand firm in every stressful situation. Let's not neglect to use them.

Prayer: Loving God, Forgive me for the times I have allowed a stressful situation to devastate me. Help me to not lean on my own understanding but always to remember that You could and would help, if you were sought. AMEN

NOTES

FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 2017

DISCOURAGING THOUGHTS

Doubt and discouragement begin to settle on us when we start to think that God is not coming through for us. We may not say those words but if we look below our feelings of dissatisfaction, that's often what we'll find. We "should" be able to have this or do that by now – after all, we've been making the choice to not drink and drug haven't we? Why aren't things going our way?

If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

(1 Corinthians 10:12-13 NLT)

The key to overcoming discouraging times is to recognize what is happening within and around us.

The more we entertain thoughts of entitlement and allow frustration to grow under our skin, the more easily the desire for the old "fun and games" lifestyle sneaks in. I deserve to have a good time, to have some fun, to take some time off, to do what I want when I want. Before long we find ourselves in the wrong place at the wrong time and we are heading for relapse.

So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. (1 Timothy 6:8-9 NLT)

The key to overcoming discouraging times is to recognize what is happening within and around us. It is extremely important to walk closely with Jesus at this time, telling him exactly what we are feeling and trusting Him for the victory. It's the time to stay close to friends and mentors and put their advice into practice rather than just listen and nod our heads when they speak. Often when we do this, we find that the peace and joy we seek breaks through quite quickly and everything we need comes about at the perfect time.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that discouragement makes me want to run away. Help me to realize that You are continuing to do a good work in me and I will see Your goodness here in the land of the living. AMEN

SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 2017

OUR STORY OF A FAITHFUL GOD AS WE RECOVER FROM ADDICTION

As we experience healing and transformation through daily living in the love and grace of God, we need to share our story – our experience, strength, and hope - with others.

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23 NIV)

God is faithful and does not want anyone to be destroyed. No matter how deep the darkness and brokenness of addiction has been, God is faithful and will tenderly bring us out of the pit when we choose to surrender our lives to Him. Each day in recovery is a testament to God's unfailing love and faithfulness to us. God never tires of accompanying us and guiding us. We are never left to face our problems alone. We have times when we feel conscious of God's presence and times when we do not. However, God is always with us and He is working for our good in every situation. Only with God's help will we take permanent steps forward in our recovery for He promises He will never fail us.

God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you." He will send help from heaven to rescue me, disgracing those who hound me. My God will send forth his unfailing love and faithfulness. (Hebrews 13:5, Psalm 57:3 NLT)

Even when we are unfaithful, God is still faithful. He gives us the power and the wisdom we need to be the person He created us to be. Recovery is more the story of God's faithfulness to us than our strength to endure. If God didn't hold onto us we'd give up and be lost again in the despair of brokenness. However, God consistently reminds us that He has a purpose for our lives and His strength is working in us. When we mess up, His forgiveness is available the instant we confess our failure. We recover as we hold onto a faithful God through each challenge we encounter.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am grateful for your unconditional love for me. Thank you that I can depend on You being with me in whatever I face today. Help me to be conscious of your presence ever with me as I am transformed into the likeness of Jesus. Amen

Recovery is more the story of God's faithfulness to us than our strength to endure.

SUNDAY, JUNE 4, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – HOW WELL DO WE HEAR

Have you ever been for a hearing test? The tester gives instructions, then puts the person in a glass cubicle and puts ear phones on their ears. The tester closely watches the person being tested and in various scenarios tells the person to raise their hand each time they hear a sound. The tester will also speak some words and ask the person to repeat what they have heard. To correctly assess how well a person can hear, the person being tested must obey the instructions of the tester. How well do we hear when God speaks to us?

*I will listen
to what God
the Lord
says;
he promises
peace to his
people, his
faithful
servants.*

Psalm 85:8 NLT

Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord; Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you. I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning. Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins. (Psalm 130:1-8 NIV)

After we pray do we stop speaking and listen to hear how God is instructing us? Like the tester, God is always watching us to see if we follow His instructions. Let's demonstrate that we have heard the Lord by praying some of His words back to Him. In place of the name "Israel" we can put "our name" and remind ourselves that with God is full redemption, He has redeemed us from all our sins, filled us with His unfailing love, and given us hope.

"I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. Israel, (our name) put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. He himself will redeem Israel (our name) from all their sins."

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to listen to You and put your words into action – not just talk the talk, but walk the walk. Help me to follow Your instructions in all my ways.
AMEN

THURSDAY, JUNE 29, 2017

DASHED HOPES

When we hit bottom in our addiction and finally admitted that without help our future hopes were dashed, we decided to turn our will and our life over to the care of God. Initially we were grateful to hear and respond to God's invitation to life. However, a few weeks or months into the recovery journey, one of the trials we face is the doubt that we could actually have a good life.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV)

The battle against addiction, struggles with poverty, and related issues seem endless. We hardly know how to handle things on a good day, let alone deal with these frustrations on a bad day. Hope dwindles. We get discouraged and tempted to give up. It seems easier to hide away from life in front of the television or just pass the time with friends.

We need to challenge ourselves in the middle of these circumstances. What is amiss within us that has caused us to be in this negative space? Perhaps we are again looking to people, places, and things to satisfy us when only God's tender love will keep us contented over time. Are we taking time to notice the gifts that surround us even though they may look different from what we expected? Are we trusting God to work things out in His time?

Stay with God! Take heart. Don't quit. I'll say it again: Stay with God. There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears. (Psalm 27:14; Philippians 1:6 MSG)

It's time to simplify our thoughts once again and remember: God is good. God is with us. Our hope is in God alone. God is making a way where there seems to be no way.

Prayer: Gracious God, Forgive me when I take my eyes off you and look at my circumstances. My hope is not dashed for in Your light, I see light and life. Thank you for caring for me.
AMEN

*It's time to
simplify our
thoughts
once again
and
remember:
God is good.
God is with
us. Our
hope is in
God alone.*

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 2017

TEMPTING THOUGHTS

Many people face temptation by hoping that it will just disappear, but temptation will forever be part of life. We may get beyond a craving in one area only to find ourselves drawn down another path. The first step to winning the war against temptation is to realize that temptation comes from our own fleshly desires. However, with God's help, we have the power to overcome temptation in whatever form it presents itself.

Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death. (James 1:14-15 NLT)

With God's help, we have the power to overcome temptation in whatever form it presents itself.

There are several actions we can take to avoid temptation. The first one is the most obvious: avoid those places and people that stir up tempting thoughts. We need to know our limitations. Empty time breeds thoughts and feelings that tempt us to harmful activities. We need to get serious about finding ways we can be involved in positive activities, gainful employment, or service to others.

So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak! (James 4:7; Matthew 26:41 NLT)

When we turn our will and our lives over to the care of God and accept new life through Jesus Christ, we become a new person. Under God's protective care, old desires disappear and new desires are formed. Some of the old sinful "tapes" that play in our minds are hard to erase but by studying and memorizing God's Word, we can delete them and replace them with something new.

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV)

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to resist the tempting thoughts that pass the gate of my mind. My desire is to renew my mind by making it obedient to Christ. AMEN

MONDAY, JUNE 5, 2017

THE FREEDOM OF A CLEAN SLATE

We experience true freedom when we have a clean slate with God. Even though our faults and sins are ongoing, when we admit them to God with a sincere desire to be changed, God is faithful to forgive us.

If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts. (1 John 1:8-10 NLT)

Sometimes we appear to do good things for others and tell ourselves we are caring people even though we have a bad attitude and hold hidden resentments. We list the things we've done right and use that list to excuse ourselves from taking responsibility when we do wrong. The Bible makes a clear distinction between doing good to "look good" and practicing goodness as a character quality.

Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. (Romans 12:9 NLT)

As followers of Jesus we are required to choose for good regardless of the trials we may face. We are told that a sign of the presence of God within us is a lifestyle of goodness. God created us for a work He has prepared in advance for us to do, a work that flows from a pure heart. The challenging question for us is: are we doing things to make us "look good" or, are we loving others because God has transformed us and made us whole?

If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. (John 8:31b – 32 NIV)

Freedom comes when we acknowledge the truth that without Jesus we can do nothing good but with Jesus, all things are possible!

Prayer: Gracious God, I acknowledge that freedom to truly love others comes only through obeying Your word. Help me to choose to do what is right, to be merciful, and to walk humbly with You in all my ways. AMEN

We experience true freedom when we have a clean slate with God.

TUESDAY, JUNE 6, 2017

FREE TO LIVE WELL IN RECOVERY

God invites us to live in freedom. Freedom for us is so important to God that He was willing to give the life of His Son so that we could experience new life and peace.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.
(2 Corinthians 3:17 NIV)

You're blessed when you stay on course, walking steadily on the road revealed by God.

Psalm 119:1 MSG

Some of us who have come from a lifestyle of "doing as we please" may sometimes feel that following Jesus limits our freedom. However, the limits that God sets for us can be compared to the function of guard rails that keep us safe from conditions that would harm us. As we choose to follow God's principles in all our affairs, we avoid deceit and shame, and the fear that often accompanies doing what is "right in our own eyes."

You're blessed when you stay on course, walking steadily on the road revealed by God. You're blessed when you follow his directions, doing your best to find him. That's right—you don't go off on your own; you walk straight along the road he set. You, God, prescribed the right way to live; now you expect us to live it. Oh, that my steps might be steady, keeping to the course you set; Then I'd never have any regrets in comparing my life with your counsel.

(Psalm 119:1-6 MSG)

A person who chooses a life of self-will and sin is eventually trapped by their choices, for sin produces evil desires. Initially the person is deceived into thinking they will always be free to choose. However, sin is not satisfied with just a little bit of our lives. When sin has its way with us we are mastered by its bondage and are doomed to obey its evil desires. This is well described in the AA slogan, "One drink is too many and a thousand is never enough."

Choosing God's way helps us avoid the tyranny that sin brings. Freedom to live well today is worth having.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for the wisdom of Your word. Help me to walk steadily with You on the road you have chosen for me. My desire is to live in the freedom from tyranny that sin brings. AMEN

TUESDAY, JUNE 27, 2017

THOUGHTS THAT PARALYZE

How are we to live without paralyzing fear in an unsafe world? God teaches us to distinguish between damaging fear and sober precaution. Fear paralyses and drives us to dark and lonely places. Precaution helps us to avoid foolish mistakes and maintain safe steps. A cautious person thinks clearly and takes reasonable risks, but also recognizes when real danger exists and chooses another path. God knows that we will face trouble.

Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty. The Lord says, "I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them. I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation." (Psalm 91:1, 14-16 NLT)

When we are convinced that God's power is greater than any evil that could come our way, we can live with confidence, hope, and optimism. We can face disappointment, failure, and even disaster with soul-settling faith. As we open ourselves to God's truth we are assured that, regardless of our circumstances, everything that is happening is working together for our good. God is building our faith as we see His hand guiding the events of our lives.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take.

(Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT)

The test of trust always comes when life stops making sense. When we are faced with life's troublesome situations, our trust must be in God even when we don't understand everything we are going through. In whatever circumstances we find ourselves, God promises to be with us. When we seek Him, He promises us rest, even in the middle of trouble.

Prayer: Gracious God, When trouble comes my way and paralyzes my ability to think clearly, help me to first seek You for comfort and help. I am so thankful that You are aware of everything that touches my life. You truly are an amazing God in whom I can put my trust. AMEN

When we are faced with life's troublesome situations, our trust must be in God even when we don't understand everything we are going through.

MONDAY, JUNE 26, 2017

NEGATIVE THINKING

What we think about has a powerful impact on what we do. Thought usually precedes action. If our thoughts are flawed, then our actions will miss the mark. One of the great spiritual dangers, for people in recovery, is “stinking thinking.” One false thought we often believe is that God, or others, cannot or will not help us. When we think that way, we tend to allow ourselves to be dominated by fear – fear of the past, fear of guilt, fear of embarrassment, fear of loneliness, fear of being hurt. Our flawed thinking is controlling us, causing harm, and making us vulnerable to relapse.

God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?” (Hebrews 13:5b-6 NIV)

God invites us to the peace and security of living in the truth that He truly does care for us.

The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life. (Psalm 121:5-7 NIV)

God invites us to the peace and security of living in the truth that He truly does care for us. Our part is to acknowledge God's truth to ourselves, and then allow our actions to follow in obedience. As we do that, we come to experience all the peace and security God has promised us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess my thoughts are sometimes negative and cause me to fear. Please set me free from stinking thinking and help me to uphold the truth of Your word. I am forever grateful that You care for me. AMEN

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 2017

THE SLAVERY OF ADDICTION

Anyone who has lived in addiction knows that our entire life's focus was on our next drink or fix. We were slaves, bound to obey our cravings. When we did whatever we wanted whenever we wanted life was painful, even though we were getting our own way. The thing that we once thought was pleasurable enslaved us. Darkness and chaos that we never could have imagined became our reality.

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (Galatians 5:1 NIV)

In our despair, we admitted that we were powerless over our lives and began to look around for freedom from the ugliness of daily life. In our quest for freedom, we came to believe that there must be a power greater than ourselves that could restore us to sanity. Jesus said He was sent to earth for that very reason.

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:18-19 NIV)

When a person is free they can come and go as they please. A slave can't. A slave must be obedient to his master, otherwise he lives in fear of what that master might do to him. In the same way, persons living in addiction are bound by the desperation of what their body is craving. Thankfully, Jesus came to speak God's favour on everyone who believes in Him and to set slaves free.

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. (John 8:36 NIV)

We have hope and freedom today as we turn from addiction and surrender ourselves, including our cravings, to God. The forgiveness of Jesus breaks every chain that kept us in bondage.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank You for coming to free me so I can live in freedom. Help me to stand firm in Your truth and not allow the bondage to sin make me a slave. AMEN

We have hope and freedom today as we turn from addiction and surrender ourselves, including our cravings, to God.

THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 2017

LIVING RIGHT

When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, we can be assured that we are God's children and that He will care for us. We are instructed by God's word, as recorded in the Bible, to do what He says. When we choose to obey God's commands He gives us the desire and power to do what pleases Him and we experience a satisfying and good life.

Be careful to obey all my commands, so that all will go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is good and pleasing to the LORD your God. (Deuteronomy 12:28 NLT)

To live right, we need to make every effort to have the same attitude as Jesus.

As we seek to develop a lifestyle of loving God and loving our neighbour, we must consider how our actions impact the lives of others. Giving up our right to revenge by forgiving others for what they have done to us sets all of us free to relate to each other in safe and healthy ways. Humbly asking for forgiveness from others for what we have done to them frees us to let go of shame and live with dignity and respect for ourselves and others. Praying for those who are giving us a hard time and causing trouble brings peaceful solutions to complex problems.

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. (Luke 6:36-37 NIV)

To live right, we need to make every effort to have the same attitude as Jesus. When He was beaten and nailed to the cross Jesus prayed for the people who did it to be forgiven. Although he never sinned, Jesus humbled Himself and went to the cross so that we could be set free from sin. As Jesus loves us, He commands us to love our neighbours.

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had. (Romans 15:5 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to live according to your ways and to forgive those who have harmed me and to pray for them. Please remove all my shortcomings and help me to love others as You love me. AMEN

SUNDAY, JUNE 25, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – THE GOOD SHEPHERD

In the Bible, sheep and shepherds are often used to teach us important spiritual lessons. Jesus Himself said He was the "Good Shepherd." Sheep are helpless animals and have no defense features against predators. If one sheep wanders aimlessly, the others will follow. That is why sheep need a shepherd to guide them and provide for their needs. Without the guidance and care of God in our lives, we are defenseless against the attacks of the devil and of the crowd mentality of doing as others do.

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalm 23 NIV)

In rocky terrain, a sheep may fall over and land on its back. This is called a "cast down" position and is serious for the sheep as it is unable by itself to get back on its feet. It will flail around and its stomach will begin to fill up with gas. As its stomach hardens, the air passages get blocked and eventually the sheep will suffocate. When the shepherd finds a "cast down" sheep, he rubs its legs to restore circulation, gently turns it over and comforts and holds onto it until its equilibrium is restored. When the sheep is restored, the shepherd allows it to return to the flock.

When we came into recovery we were much like a "cast down" sheep unable to help ourselves get back on our feet. If we meditate on today's Psalm we will understand how the Good Shepherd takes care of us in our time of need.

Prayer: Loving God, I confess that I am prone to wander from Your guidance and care. Help me to follow You only in all my ways. AMEN

Without the guidance and care of God in our lives, we are defenseless against the attacks of the devil and of the crowd mentality of doing as others do.

SATURDAY, JUNE 24, 2017

RATIONALIZING (4)

Today we are continuing to look at the excuses and faulty reasons we give for making poor choices and our tendency to justify our actions.

We don't always make the right choices, certainly not in active addiction and now in recovery it's still a learning process. God has provided a way for us to learn and grow. That way is to first receive the forgiveness God is offering us because Jesus died on the cross to pay for the damage of all our wrong choices. We need to stand in the truth of who God says we are—flawed human beings but precious and valued sons and daughters of God who are washed and cleansed from all our sins.

*We need to seek
God to awaken
us to the
harmful choices
we are making.
He knows the
poison stored in
the roots of our
destructive
actions and
reactions.*

we still need to admit that we were wrong or did wrong.

Sometimes we've rationalized our behaviour for so long that it has become an unconscious process rather than a deliberate deception. We need to seek God to awaken us to the harmful choices we are making. He knows the poison stored in the roots of our destructive actions and reactions. He knows and understands the actual impact of all the events that make up our lives – good and bad.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to take responsibility for my actions, give up excusing and rationalizing my behaviour, and live in the freedom you are offering me as I live in the truth. Amen

FRIDAY, JUNE 9, 2017

LIVING FREE

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (Galatians 5, 1 NIV)

Are we living in freedom from the bondage of sin and addiction now that we have turned our will and our life over to the care of God? There are signs in our thought patterns and behaviour that will indicate whether we are or not. If we are living free we will be able to say "yes" and "no" at appropriate times. When we have made a wise choice, we will be able to "stick with it", regardless of changing circumstances.

Just say 'yes' and 'no.' When you manipulate words to get your own way, you go wrong. (Matthew 5:37 MSG)

To live free we need to say "no" to our old way of life and "yes" to the new way. We need to live in our present reality as a child of God. We need to leave behind our old haunts. We need to get rid of all the lies and pretense that supported our former chaotic lifestyle, and begin to live in truth. We need to let the love of God fill our hearts. We need to be kind to others and forgive those who hurt us just as Christ has forgiven us. God's Holy Spirit will enable us to do this. We just need to allow Him to guide us in all our ways.

I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. (Ephesians 3:16-17 NLT)

Living free requires that we don't just know what God says works but we actually put it into practice. We can begin afresh each day because God's mercy is new and available to us every morning.

Prayer: Loving God, I confess that often I allow things from my past to hinder me from upholding the truth of Your word. Please help me to uphold Your truth which will allow me to live in freedom. AMEN

*Living free
requires
that we
don't just
know what
God says
works but
we actually
put it into
practice.*

SATURDAY, JUNE 10, 2017

DEPENDABLE HELP FROM A FAITHFUL GOD

Who can we trust? Who's reliable? Who tells the truth? Who has the strength and the ability to carry out the things they promise us? These are the questions we wrestle with after coming out of addiction where truth and dependability were almost non-existent, both in our own behavior and in the behavior of those around us.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

(Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV)

*As we learn
to rely on
our faithful
God, we will
find that He
consistently
works on our
behalf.*

The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it. He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion. If we are faithless, he remains faithful for he cannot disown himself. (1 Thessalonians 5:24, Philippians 1:6, 2 Timothy 2:13 NIV)

We don't know what is best for ourselves over the long haul. We can't just ask once for help and be done with it. We must be persistent and ask repeatedly as needs arise. As we learn to rely on our faithful God, we will find that He consistently works on our behalf. God knows who we are, what resources we have available, and the true nature of the problem before us. He will faithfully be at our side providing everything we need.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for being reliable over the long haul. I am often not faithful, but you are always faithful. Help me to believe in, and rely on, Your promise of unfailing dependable help today and always. Amen

FRIDAY, JUNE 23, 2017

RATIONALIZING (3)

Rationalizing endorses the internal belief that we are victims of circumstances beyond our control. Having lived for so long not taking responsibility for our actions and being unwilling to work through problems, it can now seem overwhelming to sort through and own our part in where we stand today. We make excuses for our actions based on the hurt we have sustained. We reason that our wrong choices are justified because of what we have experienced.

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. (2 Corinthians 9:8, {Philippians 2:13, 4:13 NLT)

There may be traumatic events in our past to which we still have emotional links and the resulting fear translates into rationalizing. God wants to heal our wounds and set us free from the false belief the evil one attached to those memories. Are we willing to be healed, or will we continue to let the devil "kick us while we are down?"

The trigger to our rationalizing may be a bitter root of unforgiveness against someone who harmed us or didn't help us when they should have. Our way is to hold on to the hate and rationalize why we have a right to it. God's way is restoration through forgiveness given, and received. Continuing to choose our own way through rationalizing, rather than God's way of forgiving, will have a damaging effect on our recovery.

We need to ask the God who loves us unconditionally to show us the root of those things that cause damage to our lives. As we seek God in all our ways, we can be sure He will give us guidance and the power to make good choices that will set us free.

Heavenly Father, Help me to forgive those hurtful things that set me on a wrong course in life. Today, I choose to surrender my will and life over to your care. I trust You to give me the desire and power to do what pleases You. Amen

*Continuing
to choose
our way
through
rationalizing,
rather than
God's way of
forgiving,
will have a
damaging
effect on
our
recovery.*

THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2017

RATIONALIZING (2)

One reason for rationalizing poor behaviour is that we want the pleasure or the power it offers. The harmful behavior has captured our imagination and grows more and more appealing as we obsess on it. Rationalizing provides convenient explanations so we can go ahead with our plan.

Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death. (James 1:14-15 NLT)

*One reason
for
rationalizing
poor
behaviour is
that we
want the
pleasure or
the power it
offers.*

We justify our wrong behaviour by telling ourselves that we just need a little bit of comfort and relief. We tell ourselves that no one really understands us. We blame others for the pressure they are putting on us in the moment. We believe the false claims of the evil one that life in recovery is just too difficult. We lie to ourselves that the behaviour isn't actually all that bad and that we can start and stop whenever we choose.

If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure. (1 Corinthians 10:12-13 NLT)

at others didn't sort out our relationship issues. Gambling didn't solve our financial problems. Pornography and casual sex didn't take away our loneliness. Food didn't meet the comfort needs in our soul. Are we, Hungry Angry Lonely Tired? We need to HALT, and listen to God's invitation.

"Are you tired? Worn out? ... Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. ... Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." (Matthew 11:28-30 MSG)

Prayer: Loving God, I accept your invitation to life. I bring to You my longing for joy and my need for comfort. Show me how to find rest and relief as I once again turn my will and life over to Your care. Amen

SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – WHOM DO YOU TRUST?

When we turn our will and our life over to the care of God, one question to ask ourselves is, "Do we really trust in God to do everything He says He will do"? In the past, many people have let us down by making promises and then not fulfilling them. After repeatedly feeling hurt and insignificant, we decided to rely only on ourselves to get through life. Perhaps at that point in our lives we never knew that there was a God to whom we really mattered and to whom we could confidently turn to for comfort.

Praise the Lord! Let all that I am praise the Lord. I will praise the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praises to my God with my dying breath. Don't put your confidence in powerful people; there is no help for you there. When they breathe their last, they return to the earth, and all their plans die with them. But joyful are those who have the God of Israel as their helper, whose hope is in the Lord their God. He made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them. He keeps every promise forever. (Psalm 146:1-6 NLT)

We build trust in a person by observing that their actions are consistent with their words. We intentionally watch and listen to how they interact with others and as we see respect and reliability we begin to trust. However, even people seeking to live trustworthy lives can sometimes let us down and our trust in people is at best, fragile.

Learning to trust God is like learning to trust people with one huge difference: God is never going to let us down. We need to know God's word so that we can observe how He is consistent in all that He says. We need to listen attentively to others who have walked with God and confirm His helpfulness, His character, and His faithfulness. Over time we will come to know that God is a trustworthy friend who is constantly there for us, and will never let us down.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to praise and confidently trust You, for You are perfect in all of Your ways. AMEN

*Learning to
trust God is
like learning
to trust
people, with
one huge
difference:
God is never
going to let
us down.*

MONDAY, JUNE 12, 2017

A BLAMELESS CONSCIENCE (I)

God created us as moral beings. His word teaches us how to live in relationship with Him and with others. He has given us a conscience that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is intended to help us recognize when our behaviour is morally right or wrong.

The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith. (1 Timothy 1:5 NLT)

An important part of life with God in recovery, is restoring proper function to our conscience.

Unfortunately, we live in a world that has been infected and broken by sin. We hear all kinds of false messages and we spend years becoming familiar with ways of living that are contrary to God's way. Our conscience gets corrupted and we can no longer rely on its direction for good in our daily lives.

Everything is pure to those whose hearts are pure. But nothing is pure to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, because their minds and consciences are corrupted. (Titus 1:15 NLT)

An important part of life with God in recovery, is restoring proper function to our conscience. A renewed conscience clearly indicates what is morally right and good and gives warning when we are straying into wrong doing. What is the process of restoring proper function to our conscience? We feed our minds with God's word and choose for His way every time our thinking and His word differ.

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. When outsiders who have never heard of God's law follow it more or less by instinct, they confirm its truth by their obedience. They show that God's law is not something alien, imposed on us from without, but woven into the very fabric of our creation. There is something deep within them that echoes God's yes and no, right and wrong. (Psalm 119:105, NIV, Romans 2:14-15 MSG)

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for forgiveness of my sins and the new life you offer me through Jesus. Help me to obey the urgings of your Spirit so that I may be guided into the knowledge of all truth and once again have a reliable and good conscience. AMEN

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2017

RATIONALIZING (I)

Addicts are experts at creating excuses to rationalize their behavior and to minimize the complexity of their problems. Rationalizing is an attempt to explain or justify one's behaviour with complicated excuses or reasons. It is a way to minimize the significance of the risky actions one intends to proceed with, or defend things they've already done.

There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death. (Proverbs 14:12 NLT)

As fallen human beings, in a broken world, our reasoning is flawed by the misinformation we process every day. Rationalizing our behaviour is rebellion against God whether we specifically disobey God's commands or just silently choose to say "no" to God's quiet voice in our spirit. No matter how much we try to justify our sinful behavior it has its consequences and will hurt us. This includes not only harmful thoughts and behaviour but also sins of omission – those things we know we should do but avoid doing or just can't be bothered making the effort to do.

We are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth. But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it. (1 John 1:6-7, James 4:17 NLT)

Rationalizing is a sin because it means telling lies, and telling lies has grave consequences. Making excuses for sin gives it a foothold in our lives, damages our relationship with God, and causes harm to us and to others. If we continue to rationalize our rebellious actions, our hearts will become hard and the Holy Spirit's voice in our ears will grow increasingly faint. A relapse won't be far behind.

Prayer: Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. AMEN (Psalm 139:23-24 NIV)

No matter how much we try to justify our sinful behavior, it has its consequences and will hurt us.

TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 2017

COMMITMENT (2)

What kind of commitments do we make? How do we feel when we keep a commitment, even when it's challenging to do so? These days, commitment seems to have become something to avoid, something that is bound to result only in inconvenience at some point. Commitment involves hard work. Choosing to honour our promises regardless of other possibilities that present themselves isn't easy, so, is it worth doing?

So you should try very hard to add goodness to your faith. To goodness, add knowledge. To knowledge, add the ability to control yourselves. To the ability to control yourselves, add the strength to keep going. To the strength to keep going, add godliness. To godliness, add kindness for one another. And to kindness for one another, add love. All these things should describe you more and more. They will make you useful and fruitful as you know our Lord Jesus Christ better. (2 Peter 1:5-8 NIRV)

The benefit of choosing to stay committed only shows after a period of staying the course.

Any success in life whether in business, sports, or a relationship is the result of making a choice and sticking with the plan. Practice makes perfect. It takes commitment to a chosen practice until the desired skill comes. Many things look more pleasant than the monotony and hard work included in doing the same thing again and again. The benefit of choosing to stay committed only shows after a period of staying the course.

Commitment requires that we learn how to "live and let live," "let go and let God," and "accept the things we cannot change, courage to change the things we can, and

the wisdom to know the difference."

Understand, therefore, that the Lord your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and lavishes his unfailing love on those who love him and obey his commands. (Deuteronomy 7:9 NLT)

Commitment to God's way brings favour and honour and blessings to our lives as we continually choose to turn our will and our life over to His care.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to choose commitment over convenience in all my ways. As You are faithful to me, help me to be faithful to those with whom I live and work and play. Amen.

TUESDAY, JUNE 13, 2017

A BLAMELESS CONSCIENCE (2)

Folklore advises, "Let your conscience be your guide." This has serious limitations since our conscience can be wrongly programmed by our experiences and the values of the people around us. We need to renew our conscience so it is a trustworthy mirror of the wisdom of God's Word within us.

I do my level best to keep a clear conscience before God and my neighbors in everything I do. With Christ as my witness, I speak with utter truthfulness. My conscience and the Holy Spirit confirm it. (Acts 24:16, Romans 9:1 NLT)

From early childhood we've heard many twisted messages because of "fake news", the half-truths of a political spin, and the simple distortions human beings speak from their limited perspective on life. We need to get to know truth as God has revealed it in the Bible, and sort error from truth based on God's standard. This is a learning process which God will guide us in one day at a time as we maintain conscious contact with Him and surrender to His will.

My conscience is clear, but that doesn't prove I'm right. It is the Lord himself who will examine me and decide. (Acts 24:16, 1 Corinthians 4:4 MSG)

Sometimes people are incorrectly guided by false guilt which does not come from doing wrong but is a psychological guilt typically developed in early childhood. These persons' consciences are programmed by efforts to escape abuse or violence. Their consciences became seared by fear, self-hatred, and ugly words. Their actions reflect what they have come to believe.

God wants to release us from the fear that has clouded our view of reality and damaged our conscience. Only God is wise enough to help us discern right from wrong and support us as we renew our minds with truth.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. (2 Timothy 1:7 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, reveal to me false beliefs about myself that lead me into false guilt which is often called people pleasing, approval seeking, and co-dependency. Help me to reprogram my conscience and recognize truth in all my ways. Amen.

Only God is wise enough to help us discern right from wrong and support us as we renew our minds with truth.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14, 2017

A BLAMELESS CONSCIENCE (3)

Many people are perfectionists who labor under condemnation even though the Bible says, “**there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus**” (Romans 8:1 NIV). Self-condemnation distorts the conscience and keeps us from living in recovery as God intends. Those of us who are perfectionists are not led but are driven. We constantly look for affirmation. We tend to be people-pleasers. We have turned up the volume of perfectionist demands for so long that it is now difficult to hear God’s truth as He guides us into the knowledge of all truth.

The key to living in recovery with a blameless conscience is to seek to know and affirm who God says we are, regardless of the opinions of others

God created us to live for Him and has a specific plan for each of us. When our conscience is shaped by a wounded spirit we will find we are mechanically acting out of people pleasing motives, rather than God pleasing love.

If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ. (Galatians 1:10 NIV).

Here are some things we think or say that indicate people pleasing is likely active in our lives:

- ✓ I try to be who someone wants me to be.
- ✓ I am afraid to rock the boat.
- ✓ It is hard for me to know what I want.
- ✓ I avoid speaking my mind.
- ✓ I find it easier to go along with what someone wants or with their opinion.
- ✓ It is difficult for me to say “No.”
- ✓ I try to be nice rather than expressing how I really feel.
- ✓ I want everyone to get along.

The key to living in recovery with a blameless conscience is to seek to know and affirm who God says we are, regardless of the opinions of others. As we turn our will and our life over to the care of God, He can be trusted to give us hope and a future.

Jesus said, “**You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**” (John 8:31-32 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please give me the desire and the will to trust You so that my conscience may be reprogrammed with truth. I want to follow You, and the directions You give through Your Word. Amen

MONDAY, JUNE 19, 2017

COMMITMENT (I)

Commitment is asked of us in a number of areas in our lives: marriage vows, appointments, recovery meetings, work, volunteer jobs, friendships, contracts, bill paying, promises made to parents or children, getting to work or school on time, etc. Commitment takes effort. God invites us to live a satisfying life in recovery by making, and honoring healthy commitments.

Trust in the Lord and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you. He will make your innocence radiate like the dawn, and the justice of your cause will shine like the noonday sun. Be still in the presence of the Lord, and wait patiently for him to act. (Psalm 37:3-7a NLT)

We live in a world that expects us to look out for ourselves, take the best deal when we can get it, and only worry about the next guy when it doesn't get in the road of our own progress. God asks something quite different of us. God wants us to commit to one another when it is appropriate, and to keep our word. Commitment is one of the ways we encourage, strengthen, and take care of one another.

God wants us to honour our commitments through good times and bad. God invites us to wait patiently for things to work out. God is working all things together for our good in a variety of situations, even when it may not be immediately evident. Sometimes honouring our commitment means staying in a marriage that has problems. Sometimes it means remaining in a job even though there are some challenging issues. Sometimes it's staying in our recovery program when we are restless and the rules don't make sense to us. At other times, it's doing what a trusted friend or sponsor suggests even when we don't feel like doing it.

Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you.
(Psalm 37:5 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I commit myself – my will and my life – into your care. I commit to follow Your ways during good times and bad times because You are faithful and trustworthy. Amen.

God invites us to live a satisfying life in recovery by making, and honoring healthy commitments.

SUNDAY, JUNE 18, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – FREEDOM TO BE FREE

Before we came into recovery, we admitted that our lives were unmanageable and we needed a power greater than ourselves to restore us to sanity. We may have been unsure about God and what to expect from Him, but were open to accept all the help we could get. We no longer wanted to be a slave to our addictive practices and longed to be free to choose what is right and good for a focused life.

He gives justice to the oppressed and food to the hungry. The Lord frees the prisoners. The Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are weighed down. The Lord loves the godly. The Lord protects the foreigners among us. He cares for the orphans and widows, but he frustrates the plans of the wicked. The Lord will reign forever. He will be your God, O Jerusalem, throughout the generations. Praise the Lord!
(Psalm 146:7-10 NLT)

Through the tender love of God, we have been freed from the oppressive power of sin and it no longer has authority in our lives.

In recovery, God has opened our blind eyes to reveal the mess we were in, and through the redeeming work of Jesus, has unshackled us from those things that restricted our freedom. Through the tender love of God, we have been freed from the oppressive power of sin and it no longer has authority in our lives. We are blessed and have favor with God as we continuously turn our will and our life over to His care. God gives us the desire and the power to do what pleases Him. It is for our freedom that Jesus set us free.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for freeing me from the bondage of my former lifestyle. Please help me to remain free and never again be oppressed by slavery to sin. AMEN

THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 2017

A BLAMELESS CONSCIENCE (4)

As we seek to restore a clear conscience before God we need to examine the truthfulness of our society's values. The beliefs we form need to be compared with what God says is right and good and not simply by what is acceptable in our culture.

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:2 NLT)

Many whom society considers "normies" are simply those whose addictive and destructive tendencies take a socially-acceptable form that is different from those who struggle with substances but is just as destructive. We don't want to trade addictions. We want to live free. We need to observe and learn the difference between values of our common culture and God's values.

God defines sin this way: *When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these.* (Galatians 5:19-21 NLT)

From God's view point, sex outside of marriage is wrong even though our culture leaves that decision to personal choice. Anger and rage are wrong, even though we excuse our outbursts by blaming others for injustice done to us. Many people consult psychics and mediums to have fortunes told, tarot cards read, etc. God says that kind of information will harm us, and we need to avoid it.

Our conscience will be reprogrammed as we read and believe the tried and tested truth of God's word. In a situation where we might need discernment, the Holy Spirit will bring truth to us and our renewed conscience will guide us to make the right choice.

The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. (Romans 14:22 NASB)

Prayer: Teach me your ways, O Lord, that I may live according to your truth! Grant me purity of heart, so that I may honor you. Amen (Psalm 86:11 NLT)

The beliefs we form need to be compared with what God says is right and good and not simply by what is acceptable in our culture.

FRIDAY, JUNE 16, 2017

A BLAMELESS CONSCIENCE (5)

As we seek to establish something new in our lives, there is always a learning curve. That is why spiritual counselors and mature followers of Jesus need to be consulted early in the process of renewing our conscience. We need help in distinguishing between our familiar way of thinking and the Holy Spirit's guidance.

To have a good conscience we need to acknowledge God's way of living as the true way, give up any of our own understandings that conflict with that, and allow God to direct our path.

We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV).

To have a good conscience we need to acknowledge God's way of living as the true way, give up any of our own understandings that conflict with that, and allow God to direct our path. Sponsors and others who are walking with God will listen as we share our thoughts and responses to life's daily events in recovery. They will help us recognize God's voice, God's way, and even God's affirmation as we move forward on our new path.

Where there is no counsel, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety. Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down the other can help him up. But if someone is alone ... there is no one to help him. Two men can resist an attack that would defeat one man alone. (Proverbs 11:14 NKJV, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 GNT)

The wisest counselor of all is the Holy Spirit who now lives within us. As we form the habit of asking for His guidance in all we say and do, we will develop a blameless conscience both before God and men.

This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. (1 John 3:19-22 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to maintain a clear conscience by receiving the forgiveness Jesus has provided for me, by believing and doing what You say, and by loving and serving others as You have commanded. Amen

SATURDAY, JUNE 17, 2017

GOD'S FAITHFUL LOVE AND MY RECOVERY

The *Jesus Culture* band sings a song called "He Is Faithful." The words offer great hope to those of us who are recovering our lives and coming to believe in a power greater than ourselves who can restore us to sanity. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmNLgQr-0wM>)

Some of the lyrics are: *"I have heard a sound coming on the winds, changing hearts and minds, healing brokenness. I feel a generation breaking through despair. I hear a generation full of faith declare, ...: He is faithful, He is glorious, He is Jesus, all my hope is in Him. He is freedom, He is healing right now. He is hope and joy, love and peace and life. ... He has paid the highest price. He has proven His great love for us. We will praise Him with our lives and proclaim our love for Him."*

The truth, and theme of the song is, we come out of our darkness into light only because God is faithful. We find healing for our brokenness only because God fills us with hope and joy and love and peace and life.

Jesus Christ has proven God's unfailing love for us by dying on the cross and overcoming death on our behalf. His resurrection life is our steadfast hope for today. Jesus Christ living in us and through us gives us the power to overcome any difficulty past, present, or future. The life we are recovering is this power-filled relationship with God that Jesus has made available to us.

To all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God. So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

(John 1:12-14 NLT)

When we turn our will and our life over to the care of God, He promises to fill us with new life. God always keeps His promises.

Prayer: Into my heart, into my heart, come into my heart Lord Jesus. Come in today. Come in to stay. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Amen

We come out of our darkness into light only because God is faithful.
