

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



March 2018

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

We want to hear from you.

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

Partners in Hope Recovery Society
1906 – 615 Belmont Street, New Westminster, BC V3M 6A1

Email: pihrecovery@gmail.com
Phone or text: 604-215-0335

Come and learn and grow with us:

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

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

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



2018

JANUARY

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MARCH 2018

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Evelyn Leeburn, Elsie Quick

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How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery

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

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

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

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

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

NOTES

THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 2018

ROOTS OF SELFISHNESS

Life in addiction narrowed our focus in life to a self-centered view of what we wanted or thought we needed. Life in recovery is a journey of recognizing the selfish ways we have lived and then seeking God and mentors to teach us how to live considerately and kindly towards others.

The founders of AA were not wrong when they described the selfishness problem this way: *“Selfishness -- self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate. Sometimes they hurt us, seemingly without provocation, but we invariably find that at some time in the past we have made decisions based on self which later placed us in a position to be hurt. Above everything, we must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us!”* (Big Book pages 62-63)

The Bible instructs us: ***Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.*** (Philippians 2:3-4 NLT)

Selfish people have difficulty seeing life from anyone else's point of view. People in addiction rarely concern themselves with what is best for others. Unfortunately, that self-centered mindset doesn't automatically change when we give up our destructive habits. Unless we intentionally learn and put into effect an unselfish way of living, we will simply transfer our current selfish mindset to a new area of self-interest.

It is important to focus on our beliefs and behaviours in early recovery, and it is equally important to compare those beliefs and behaviours with what God says in His word. ***I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.*** (John 13:34 NLT)

Prayer. Heavenly Father, Forgive me for my self-focused way of living. Help me to live in the security of your care and unfailing love for me. Teach me how to love and care for others and keep me from evil that I may not cause harm to anyone. Amen

Life in recovery is a journey of recognizing the selfish ways we have lived and then seeking God and mentors to teach us how to live considerately and kindly towards others.

FRIDAY, MARCH 2, 2018

RECOGNIZING SELFISHNESS

To stop using our substance of choice is a great beginning in recovery but God knows that unless we deal with the underlying root of our habits and addictive practices we remain doomed for failure. That's why selfishness is listed with drunkenness and other traits as the outcome of following the desires of our sinful nature.

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 5:19-20 NLT)

Selfishness runs deep in all of us. It is the underlying cause of most of our problems and expresses itself in our way of relating to both God and others. What does it look like? Regardless of what God says or how our selfish behaviour impacts others, we continue to chase after whatever pleases us. The Bible suggests we do an inventory of ourselves and deal with the primary cause of our selfish shortcomings.

An unfriendly person pursues selfish ends and against all sound judgment starts quarrels. For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind. (Proverbs 18:1 NIV, James 3:16 NLT)

How do we overcome selfishness? We ask God to forgive us for our self-centered ways and submit our will and our life over to His care. When we wholeheartedly surrender our lives to God, He promises us freedom from the bondage of preoccupation with self and our own affairs.

Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 7:24-25a)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I am so thankful that You gave Your life to set me free from the deep-rooted self-absorption in my heart. I choose to leave the misery of selfishness behind and ask You to strengthen me to move forward in my life with You in recovery. Amen

SATURDAY, MARCH 31, 2018

FRIEND FOREVER

God was reaching out in love to each of us long before we knew Him. God does not love us because Jesus died for us. Jesus died for us because God loves us. God is a true friend.

Since I live, you also will live. When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them. (John 14:19-21 NLT)

When we turn our will and our lives over to the care of God we have a powerful friend who comes to live within us. Because He lives, we also will live. It's an incredible statement that Jesus made when He said that we become one with our Heavenly Father, and with Him, and receive the Holy Spirit who leads us into all truth. Turning our will and our life over to the care of God accomplishes amazing things.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. (John 14:16-17a NLT)

God is a power greater than ourselves, and His promise to never leave nor forsake us is reliable. With this truth firmly engraved on our hearts we can move forward in our recovery. When we face problems we have all the resources of heaven available to us right here on earth because God is not just with us but is also in us. The Holy Spirit will guide us and empower us to what's right. God is the most faithful friend we will ever know.

One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Proverbs 18:24 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to honour You as my best friend. I want to walk close to You and allow You to guide and direct me as I journey through each day of my life. Amen

***God knows
that unless
we deal with
the
underlying
root of our
habits and
addictive
practices we
remain
doomed for
failure.***

***Jesus said: I
no longer
call you
slaves ...
Now you are
my friends,
since I have
told you
everything
the Father
told me.***

(John 15:15 NLT)

FRIDAY, MARCH 30, 2018

MY LIFE HAS GREAT BEAUTY AND INFINITE VALUE

In some recovery circles we affirm this “Life Affirmation #2” on a regular basis: ***My life is of great beauty and infinite value. God has a plan for my life that is meaningful, purposeful and joyful. There is a work for me to do today that will bless others and give me deep satisfaction.***

God knew each one of us before we were formed in our mother’s womb and considers us extremely valuable. Our value is not due to our wealth, our education, or our social standing. We are valuable because we bear the image of our Creator.

Our value is not due to our wealth or our education or our social standing. We are valuable because we bear the image of our Creator.

[God said] ***Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us.” Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!*** (Genesis 1:26, 31 NLT)

Throughout history, God has gifted artists with vision and skill to paint and sculpt beautiful pieces that we gaze on and appreciate. God is the ultimate artist and He has expressed great beauty in us. With loving care and attention to the finest details, God crafted each one of us.

You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.
(Psalm 139:13-14, 16 NLT)

God’s attention and artistic skill was not completed in us on the day we were born. As a weaver takes many threads and weaves them into intricate patterns for a wall hanging or a rug, so God continues to bring beauty into our being and world as He weaves together the details of each day of our life. God is making something beautiful of our life.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for making me the intricate person that I am. Help me to recognize and follow the life You have planned for me as You weave all the threads of my life into a beautiful work of art. Amen

SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 2018

HELP FOR THE HELPLESS

When we admit to our helpless state and surrender ourselves to the care of God, we will be born again into a new life. God cares for us more than we care for ourselves. He knows the way to abundant life and will empower us to get there safely. To get the help we need, God invites us to call out to Him. With God’s help we will be able to do more than we ever thought possible or even imagined.

“Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.” (Psalm 50:15 NRSV)

In the Bible we are told there are two powers active in our world, the devil who is seeking to bring us harm and God who desires to give us fullness of life.

Jesus said, ***“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*** (John 10:10 NIV)

We are powerless against the forces of evil on our own. However, with the power of God in us, we can overcome any power that would seek to work against us. The first step in living the life that Jesus died to give us is to admit that we are powerless, and our lives have become unmanageable. Secondly, we invite Jesus to rule and reign in our hearts and seek His guidance in all our affairs. The third step is to make a resolute decision that, regardless of our feelings or the cost, we will follow God’s principles.

On our own we are powerless. However, when we wholeheartedly surrender our lives to God, His great power will achieve awesome works in us and through us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit I am powerless to live life on my own. I give up trying to meet my own needs. I give up covering pain and confusion with substances and destructive habits and relationships. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit so that I might have the desire to follow Your principles in all my affairs. Please empower me to live life to the full and do those things You have planned for me. Amen

With God’s help we will be able to do more than we ever thought possible or even imagined.

SUNDAY, MARCH 4, 2018

SUNDAY PSALM – THE GOOD LIFE

It doesn't take a long time in recovery for us to realize how much better life is than we ever thought possible. As healing takes place and God's presence fills our hearts with peace and joy, we realize our life with God is very precious and better than anything we've ever experienced.

Do good to your servant according to your word, Lord. Teach me knowledge and good judgment, for I trust your commands. Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees. Though the arrogant have smeared me with lies, I keep your precepts with all my heart. Their hearts are callous and unfeeling, but I delight in your law. It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees. The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold. (Psalm 119:65-72 NIV)

Security in life requires boundaries and limits to be established, particularly in the areas of our out-of-control desires and demands

In addiction we lived uncaring self-centered lives and our hearts became callous and unfeeling. In recovery we are learning that security in life requires boundaries and limits to be established, particularly in the areas of our out-of-control desires and demands. Though we sometimes struggle with God's way of disciplined choices and balanced living, we believe, and are assured that as we continue to surrender to His ways, we will experience the overflowing goodness of God in our lives.

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—a paradise crown. He wraps you in goodness—beauty eternal. He renews your youth—you're always young in his presence. God makes everything come out right; he puts victims back on their feet. (Psalm 103:3-6 MSG)

Today is another opportunity to think about the goodness of God in sending Jesus into the world to die for our sins so that we could have eternal life.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You are a tender loving God and You have demonstrated how much You care for Your people. Please strengthen my resolve to follow You in all my ways. Amen

THURSDAY, MARCH 29, 2018

DISCOVERING TRUTH

If we hold something in our hand and then let go of it, it will drop to the ground. It doesn't matter if it is large or small, light or heavy, it will drop. Why? The law of gravity on earth is in operation.

Has the law of gravity always been around? Yes. But it wasn't until the 1600's that a scientist named Sir Isaac Newton described it and then Albert Einstein in the early 1900's more accurately helped us understand it through his theory of relativity. Much of modern science in physics and aerodynamics is based on these principles. Scientists did not invent gravity. It had always been there; we just didn't understand it.

The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. (Psalm 19:1, Romans 1:20 NLT)

The God who created this earth and put natural laws in place has also given us spiritual laws that are in operation. In Step 11 the founders of AA invited us to the process of discovering life as it really is when they said, "We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out." Reading and putting into operation God's laws as recorded in the Bible will lead us to a richer and more satisfying life, because we are living according to truth rather than trying to go against it.

We know that stepping off a balcony on the 4th floor will lead to serious injury or even death because of gravity. In a similar way, we will sustain injury and sometimes even death when we live in ways that go against the laws of God. Today, let's get to know and put into practice the safe and caring principles God has established for recovery, and for life.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to know and practice Your principles for recovery and life in all my affairs. My desire is to know Your will for my life and have the power to carry it out. Amen

The God who created this earth and put natural laws in place has also given us spiritual laws that are in operation.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 2018

UNFORCED RHYTHMS OF GRACE

Do I truly want a life of intimacy with God in recovery? To have this intimacy with God, what would I need to change? God desires us to wholeheartedly turn our will and our life over to His care. Life is a gift. Healing is a gift. Am I willing to give my life to God so He can come close and help me enjoy the life I was created for?

God says: ***Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? 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. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.*** (Matthew 11:28-29 MSG)

***Walk with
me and
work with
me—watch
how I do it.
Learn the
unforced
rhythms of
grace.
Matthew 11:28***

When we come into recovery, the road to a stable and healthy life can seem long and hard. We wonder if we have the energy to do what it takes to work our program and maintain our sobriety. Tragically, many of us tire of the effort and relapse.

The only true way out of addiction into a settled life is to depend on the love and grace of God rather than on our own effort. We can't wait to come to God until we have sorted out the mess in our lives. Rather, we must invite Jesus to come into the mess to accompany us, comfort us, strengthen us, and show us the way out.

God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. (Ephesians 2:8-9 NLT)

While there are choices to make and work to be done, it's only as we walk with God and experience His unconditional love that we find the desire and strength to keep working our program of recovery, even when times are tough.

Prayer: Loving God, On our own our lives are chaotic and unmanageable and filled with brokenness and pain. Help us to surrender to You, and learn from You, about the unforced rhythm of a gracious life lived in Your love and care. Amen

MONDAY, MARCH 5, 2018

"KEEP COMING BACK. IT WORKS IF YOU WORK IT"

At the end of many recovery meetings we say the words, "Keep coming back. It works if you work it." While it is important to do our part, we can be thankful that our recovery has hope because God works on our behalf. Our Higher Power, the God who put the sun and moon and stars in place, has perfect plans and arranges things that bring about a good and satisfying life for us. We can hardly imagine love and commitment like that when we begin our new life in recovery.

No one has ever seen or heard anything like this, never so much as imagined anything quite like it—what God has arranged for those who love him. But you've seen and heard it because God by his Spirit has brought it all out into the open before you. (I Corinthians 2:9-10 MSG)

***God has
perfect
plans and
arranges
things that
bring about
a good and
satisfying
life for us.***

God meets us where we are at and promises to take us forward into a bright future. One of our greatest hindrances to experiencing that bright future is—we think we know what the good life is. In recovery we sort out some of the wreckage of our past and begin to form an idea of what we think a good life looks like. The truth is, our vision is very narrow when it is based on our own flawed beliefs and limited knowledge. To envision the reality of what God has begun and is actively weaving together to bring success to our lives, we need to intentionally get to know God and His ways.

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. (Psalm 37:3-5a NLT)

The first step in working a successful recovery plan is to give our will and lives over to God's care and acknowledge the fact that He is at work in our lives and is bringing about a future with hope for us. God's plans for us are better than we could ask for or even dream about for ourselves.

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to give up my own agenda for a better life and receive with thankfulness the life You have planned for me. I trust Your unfailing love to sustain me as I allow You to guide and direct me in my life with You in recovery. Amen

TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2018

A LIFE PLAN – GOD’S PLAN FOR ME

Many of us lost our way because of unfortunate events that happened to us, or around us. For a variety of reasons, we were unable to see a life plan for our future and allowed ourselves to be drawn into an addictive and destructive lifestyle. Even now, as we come into recovery, we are unsure of who we are or where we fit in society. We desperately need our understanding to be transformed so we can embrace the purposeful life that God has marked out for us.

From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’ (Acts 17:26-28 NIV)

**God’s plan
for each of us
is that we
would live
meaningful
lives, secure
in His
unfailing love
for us.**

To be successful in our life plan we need to believe that there is a God who created us. We are made in God’s image and His plan for us is to live meaningful lives, secure in His unfailing love for us. As members of the human family, God has gifted each of us with qualities that make us unique. These abilities are meant to equip us in fulfilling the amazing plan God has for us. If we seek Him, God will work together with us to complete His good purpose for our lives. His Holy Spirit will come and live within us to guide and empower us each step of the way.

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it. (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 NIV)

When we come to the realization that God has a good plan for our lives, we should embrace every opportunity to discover what that plan is. As we quickly respond to God’s direction, we will find life more pleasing than we ever dreamed it could be.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I choose to give my will and life over to Your care. Please strengthen and empower me to follow the path You have prepared for me to travel. Amen

TUESDAY, MARCH 27, 2018

JUST FOR TODAY

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

For years what we considered a normal life was actually a self-centered dysfunctional existence. Now, in recovery, we are seeking to live in a way that contributes to a healthy environment for both ourselves and others we come into contact with. God simply and clearly outlines what is required to embrace this new life.

O people, the Lord has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8 NLT)

God invites us to a gentle and humble way of life that gives us peace and fills us with joy. We must first ensure we are in right relationship with God, seeking knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out. Then we need to be kind to others. If someone struggles we should be gentle and humble as we try to help them get back on the right path. We need to support the desire in the spirit of a person to carry out their new life choices even while their flesh is weak. We need to give warnings against harmful behaviour in a way that calls people to safety. We need to continue to give people an invitation to more than what they are currently experiencing.

Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. (Galatians 6:1 NLT)

Humility will help us remember how dark our world in addiction became and how far God stooped down to rescue us. We need to remind ourselves that without God’s care we could easily go wrong again. When we appreciate the tenderness and grace we have received from God, we will then be willing to offer forgiveness and encouragement to others. As God forgave us for the wrongs we did, we now choose to forgive our family and friends for the wrongs they did to us. As God has blessed us, we now choose to bless others with whom we have contact.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to live with gentleness and grace and offer forgiveness and encouragement to those who have harmed me. As You have loved and cared for me, help me to love and care for others. Amen

**God invites
us to a
gentle and
humble way
of life that
gives us
peace and
fills us with
joy.**

MONDAY, MARCH 26, 2018

VIEWING MY RELATIONSHIPS IN A NEW WAY

Our addictive behaviour was rooted in incorrect beliefs about relationships. Painful memories of hurtful actions by others twisted these ideas and beliefs. To live in relationship in life-giving ways we must ask God, "What does life in a healthy relationship actually look like?"

God's response to that question may be to teach us some ways that seem like minor adjustments. At other times we will be shocked by how different His interpretation of life in relationship is from the experience we have had. God will show us how to move past self-centered interest, that blocks friendship, to respectful attention to the interests of others that builds strong and mutually beneficial relationships.

To live in relationship in life-giving ways we must ask God, "What does life in a healthy relationship actually look like?"

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. (Philippians 2:3-5 NIV)

Our behaviour in relationship is rooted in what we really believe. That is why we must look not only at what we did, but also why we did it. God will help us uncover and remove all those things that have hindered us from living in love with Him, and with others. Wounds can be healed. Bad motives can be forgiven. False beliefs can be transformed. Healthy boundaries can be learned. This is God's way of helping us find a new way forward in loving relationship.

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (1 John 4:9-11 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, As I inventory my relationships in the light of Your word, please teach me how You intended life in relationship to be. Amen

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7, 2018

A LIFE PLAN – "GET WITH THE PLAN"

Before the beginning of time, God had a plan that included a loving relationship with each one of us. God made us in His image so that we would reflect His qualities on the earth. Even though we made choices that went against God's design for our lives, God's overall master plan made it possible for our relationship with Him to be restored. Now it is time for us to "get with the plan."

God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure. And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan. (Ephesians 1:9-11 NLT)

Jesus paid the price for our sin by dying on the cross so that our relationship with God could be restored. When we open our hearts to receive what Jesus has provided, we begin to experience the satisfying life God planned for us. We don't deserve it. We can't earn it. As cared for sons and daughters our Heavenly Father desires that we live fully dependent on Him.

For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 1:9 NLT)

Life in addiction has taught us that life on our own terms just doesn't work. Many of us have experienced the pain of a broken heart and the loneliness that isolation brings. In "How It Works" from the Big Book of AA we are reminded that we have someone who wants to help, "God could and would if He were sought."

Today, let's get with the plan and begin to enjoy the wonderful life God has prepared for us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to get with the plan You have for my life. I am worn out by the life I have been living. Please renew me from the inside out and reproduce Your character in me. Amen

Even though we made choices that went against God's design for our lives, God's overall master-plan made it possible for our relationship with Him to be restored. Now it is time for us to "get with the plan."

THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 2018

HONOURING OUR PARENTS

We have much to learn from generations that preceded us. They sometimes made mistakes and perhaps didn't parent us well. How does God want us to respect and learn about life through our parents, in spite of their imperfections?

Pay attention to your father, and don't neglect your mother when she grows old. Invest in truth and wisdom, discipline and good sense, and don't part with them. Make your father truly happy by living right and showing sound judgment. Make your parents proud, especially your mother. (Proverbs 23:22-25 CEV)

We don't have to have perfect parents to honour them as God intends. We can learn from their wisdom and their mistakes.

When the 10 Commandments were given to God's people the fifth one carried a wonderful promise for those who fulfilled it. ***Respect your father and your mother, and you will live a long time in the land I am giving you.*** (Exodus 20:12 CEV)

The pattern for living that Jesus demonstrated was one which gave priority to listening to and obeying His Father. Jesus said: ***For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will.*** (John 6:38 NLT) God expressed His pleasure in His son as Jesus lived in the wisdom that came from their times of shared prayer. At Jesus' baptism God spoke these words, ***"This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.*** (Matthew 3:17 NLT)

No human relationship is perfect. We don't have to have perfect parents to honour them as God intends.

We can learn from their wisdom and their mistakes. We can give them joy by allowing them to see us rise above life's difficulties to live with dignity and compassion. Why not make our parents proud today by following God's word and living right? They will be proud of us if we show sound judgment in our decision making. If it is possible, let's make it a priority today to build a healthy relationship with our parents.

Prayer: Gracious God, thank you for being our Heavenly Father and for giving us life through our biological parents. Fill us with Your love so that we can live in a respectful way that honours You, our parents, and those around us. Amen

SUNDAY, MARCH 25, 2018

SUNDAY PSALM: SAVE ME, FOR I AM YOURS

Your word, Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures. Your laws endure to this day, for all things serve you. If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction. I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have preserved my life. Save me, for I am yours; I have sought out your precepts. (Psalm 119:89-94 NIV)

God takes delight in walking with us in our new life in recovery. This fact enrages the evil one and each day he is waiting and looking for ways to destroy this relationship. Alone, we are no match for the wicked one. However, as we turn our will and our life over to the care of God, we enter a relationship with the God of infinite power who is able to make us stand firm in vulnerable times.

In Step One we admitted that we were helpless and desired to be free from the unmanageable circumstances of our life in addiction. In Step Two we were introduced to God, who not only created us, but sent His son Jesus into the world to give His life for us, so that we could be free from sin. He then filled our hearts with His Holy Spirit and we are now empowered to live successfully in challenging times in recovery and even beyond that, forever with God in heaven.

Our only claim to this amazing security is that we belong to God. Have we come into a living relationship with God by putting our trust in Jesus Christ and receiving forgiveness for the many ways we have lived in rebellious self-will? We are not perfect, and we never will be, but as we choose to honour God in all our affairs we will experience His faithfulness and unending love.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to be sure that I belong to You. Forgive me for my rebellious ways and come into my heart and give me new life as Your precious child. Thank you for adopting me and empowering me to live in relationship with You. Amen

As we turn our will and our life over to the care of God, we enter into a relationship with the God of infinite power who is able to make us stand firm in vulnerable times.

SATURDAY, MARCH 24, 2018

SHIFTING OUR FOCUS

In our addiction we tried to cover the hurts in our past with substances or destructive behaviour because that was what seemed good at the time. We suffered injustice and so we believed we deserved comfort and pursued comfort in whatever convenient ways we could find it. We didn't consider the impact our choices might have on others. We did what we felt we "had to do" to survive and have a little bit of happiness. Sadly, despite some momentary pleasure, we fell deeper and deeper into sin and heartache. As we move forward in recovery, God invites us to shift our focus from our self-centered and harmful actions to a life focused on the healing power of Jesus.

God invites us to shift our focus from our self-centered and harmful actions to a life focused on the healing power of Jesus.

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14 NIV)

In the past, in our misguided effort to cover up the pain deep within us, we allowed problems to give us excuses to use. Now in recovery, it's time to decide whether or not we are ready to stop allowing our problems to steal the good life God has for us. If we are, we need to be willing to give up our obsessive thinking about our problems and shift our attention to the care and guidance of God. We need to train our hearts and minds to stay focused on solutions and the healing power of God which is always available to us, even in the middle of our problems.

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2 NIV)

Persevering in shifting our focus from obsessing on our problems to embracing God's love and care for us, will result in a life that is safe and satisfying.

Prayer: Gracious God, please set me free from the obsession of justifying my behaviour based on past hurts. Help me to refocus my mind on Your power to heal and restore me to new life. Amen

FRIDAY, MARCH 9, 2018

THE GRUDGES WE CARRY

Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. (Romans 12:17 NKJV)

When someone has treated us badly, taken something away from us that is rightfully ours, or offended us in some way, we feel hurt by their actions. We want them to make amends. If, for whatever reason, amends are not made for sustained hurts, we may carry a grudge against the offender.

Some of us bury the grief of unresolved offenses inside us and try to relieve the pain and hopelessness we feel with addictive substances or co-dependent relationships. We are causing ourselves more grief and bitterness by not dealing with the wrongs we have sustained.

See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. (Hebrews 12:15 NIV)

Forgiveness is the only way to stop the pain of a buried grudge. For some of us who have been victimized, forgiveness seems unthinkable. We are in pain and forgiveness rips at our sense of justice. We want the offender to pay; to suffer in return for the suffering they inflicted on us. But, until we forgive the offender, he or she will continue to hurt us because we are tied to this person, and to the past event, by our unwillingness to forgive and be healed.

The Bible gives us the following advice: **Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written, "I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it," says the Lord. Instead, do what the Scriptures say: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink, and they will be ashamed of what they have done to you." Don't let evil get the best of you, but conquer evil by doing good.** (Romans 12:18-21 NLT)

Prayer: Dear God, please help me to forgive others for their offenses as you have forgiven me for mine. Amen

Forgiveness is the only way to stop the pain of a buried grudge.

SATURDAY, MARCH 10, 2018

RECOVERING MY WHOLE PERSON – SPIRIT, SOUL, AND BODY

God created us to live forever, to be secure in His love, to live with curiosity and wonder, and to interact with other people and creation in ways that bless and bring joy to them.

Jesus said, “Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.’ This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: ‘Love others as well as you love yourself.’ These two commands are pegs; everything in God’s Law and the Prophets hangs from them.” (Matthew 22:37-40 MSG)

God created us to live forever, to be secure in His love, to live with curiosity and wonder, and to interact with other people and creation in ways that bless and bring joy to them.

Before coming into recovery, we recognized that our life was unmanageable and admitted that we needed a power greater than ourselves to restore us to a life that was worth living. In the Bible we learned that Jesus said He is the way, the truth and the life. How do we make sense of this? How does this help us maintain sobriety?

In order to answer these questions, it's important that we understand who we are. We are more than skin and bones. We are even more than thoughts and feelings. We are spiritual beings who have a soul and we live in a body. The interaction between these parts that make up our being has everything to do with living well and finding freedom from addictive and destructive lifestyles.

Jesus said: ***“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”. 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.*** (John 8:32, Romans 12:2 NLT)

We speak often about our core issues. We know change must start on the inside and work its way out. As God brings new life to our spirit, things begin to change in our thinking and feeling. Only then are we able to choose new ways of behaving that will bless others and give us deep satisfaction.

Prayer: Loving God, My desire is to be transformed by the renewing of my mind so that I may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. Amen

FRIDAY, MARCH 23, 2018

BRINGING MY VULNERABILITY TO GOD

To prevent relapse in vulnerable times we need to allow our lives to be shaped continuously by God's principles.

The Bible teaches: ***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)

Where we experience feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction God invites us to see them as signals that something is wrong and then seek His help to identify and deal with the underlying problem. Where we used to wait for others to come and fix us and drag us out of dark places we now need to do the reaching out and experience the joy of connectedness. We can also reach out to God. He’s always available to help. Rather than running away from a problem in frustration, we can persevere and seek possible solutions that might be even closer than we think.

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. (Hebrews 10:36 NIV)

Sometimes our feelings of vulnerability can be dealt with by simply taking time to be grateful. There will always be things that aren’t working the way we want them to but at the same time, there are also many undeserved blessings and gifts for which we can give thanks.

Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle’s! (Psalm 103:2-5 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, When I feel vulnerable, please help me to run to You instead of running away. You are the source of my strength and I will trust You to work for good in whatever problems I encounter. Amen

To prevent relapse in vulnerable times, we need to allow our lives to be continuously shaped by God’s principles.

THURSDAY, MARCH 22, 2018

VULNERABILITY TO EMPTINESS

At various times in recovery, especially early on, we feel vulnerable. We've stepped away from the familiar life we knew. Even though our lifestyle was destructive to our well-being, it was still the life we knew. Now we are experiencing a nagging sense of unsettledness brought on by this major life change. In these times of vulnerability and weakness God makes some astounding promises to us.

By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him ... he has given us great and precious promises.

These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires. (2 Peter 1:3-4 NLT)

***We persist
and
practice
"speaking
truth to
ourselves"
rather than
simply
reacting to
how we are
feeling.***

Some of us may say, "That's a lovely promise but how do we activate the switch that unlocks these resources for us?" Fortunately, it's not a complicated process.

1) We may not know how to overcome all that's wrong, but today we can choose to learn a new way of living. God promises to give us more and more understanding as we go. ***The fear of the Lord is true wisdom; to forsake evil is real understanding.*** (Job 28:28 NLT)

2) We become more and more stable as we read about God's plans and promises in the Bible, and then choose to behave accordingly. ***All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.*** (2 Timothy 3:16 NLT)

3) We persist and practice "speaking truth to ourselves" rather than simply reacting to how we are feeling. ***We reject all shameful deeds and underhanded methods. We don't try to trick anyone or distort the word of God. We tell the truth before God, and all who are honest know this.*** (2 Corinthians 4:2 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to persevere in putting Your principles into daily practice. I trust You for peace of mind and heart as I quiet my rebellious thoughts and choose for the peace and contentment that comes from doing what is right and good. Amen

SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 2018

SUNDAY PSALM – TRANSFORMED LIVING

One of the greatest challenges in recovery is making the transition from a negative view of ourselves to one that embraces who God says we are. God tells us that He formed us and marked out our time to be born and the place where we would dwell. How does embracing this truth transform the way we understand life?

Your hands made me and formed me; give me understanding to learn your commands. May those who fear you rejoice when they see me, for I have put my hope in your word. May your unfailing love be my comfort, according to your promise to your servant. Let your compassion come to me that I may live, for your law is my delight. May those who fear you turn to me, those who understand your statutes. May I wholeheartedly follow your decrees, that I may not be put to shame. (Psalm 119:73-74, 76-77, 79-80 NIV)

When we put our faith in God's word and obey Him wholeheartedly, our lives will be changed forever. Our family and friends will rejoice when they see the transformation in our outlook and in our behaviour. Our community will benefit from our love and service to others. We will become persons who have compassion on others because we have received compassion from God. In times of trouble God will comfort us and give us peace. God is always with us, we need never face our problems alone.

Through faith in this God of all comfort, we are empowered to come alongside others who are struggling. With the same love that brought us comfort, we can comfort others and introduce them to the God who loves and cares for them. Remember, God is pursuing others with His love, just like He pursued us.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for caring for me. Help me to be a faithful witness and a living example in my family and community of Your power to transform lives. Amen

***When we put
our faith in
God's word and
obey Him
wholeheartedly,
our lives will be
changed forever***

MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2018

A LIFESTYLE OF TRUTH

It is God's plan that we not only know truth but believe truth, speak truth, and reorder our lives so that all our actions reflect truth.

Truth stands the test of time; lies are soon exposed. You will know the truth and the truth will set you free. (Proverbs 12:19, John 8:32 NLT)

Truthful living is a huge turnaround from life in active addiction where deception was the rule of the day. For many of us, even prior to active addiction, truth was hard to live because it often wasn't safe to acknowledge the truth. We believed we had to hide behind a mask and pretend we were someone other than who we were. We felt we had to say something other than the truth, so we wouldn't create trouble in our home or bring abusive actions upon ourselves. Sometimes we were even forced to lie as violent people tried to beat out of us the words they wanted to hear.

It is God's plan that we not only know truth but believe truth, speak truth and reorder our lives so that all our actions reflect truth.

To establish a lifestyle of truth, the first action for many of us is to break free from the underlying falsehood that Satan has rooted in our hearts and minds – that truth is not safe, not worth the trouble to tell, and will never get us what we desire. It's time to renounce what is false, affirm what is true and accept God's forgiveness, grace, and healing for the pain these twisted beliefs have brought us.

We will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ. (Ephesians 4:15 NLT)

In the place where lies functioned, we can now fill our minds and hearts with the truth that, God's Spirit is active in our lives filling us with comfort and blessing, healing and power, and everything we need for a meaningful purposeful life. As we daily read the Bible, God will progressively reveal His truth to us and our lives will be transformed. We will experience the security that only living in the truth of God's word can bring.

Prayer: Loving God, Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you. Amen (Psalm 25:5 NLT)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 2018

DORMANT OR DEAD

An essential part of our life with God in recovery is recognizing what is harmful and decaying and what is healthy and returning to life after a time of dormancy.

I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father. (John 15:5-6, 8 NLT)

In early spring lots of branches on trees and bushes look quite dead. However, given time and proper pruning, those trees and bushes will soon have green leaves, buds, and then delicious fruit. Row after row of what now seem like dead bushes will be filled with strawberries, raspberries, and blueberries that are sold at farmers' markets and then fill our tables.

God wants our lives to be filled with fruitfulness. He has created us with life giving abilities and talents but knows that we need to balance seasons of action with periods of recreation and reflection.

It takes the seasoned eye of a gardener to know what's dead and what is still alive and healthy and resting until the right time to grow and flourish and bear fruit. In our new lives with God in recovery, it takes God's wisdom to identify which thoughts, behaviours, and even relationships are harmful and need to go and which are life-giving that need protection and nourishment for the season ahead.

This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace. (Colossians 1:6 NLT)

As we turn our will and our life over to the care of God, He can be trusted to give us joyful and fruitful lives.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for sorting out dormant branches from dead ones in our lives. Feed us with Your Word so that we can be everything You created us to be. Amen

God knows that we need to balance seasons of action with periods of recreation and reflection.

TUESDAY, MARCH 20, 2018

NEW SEASON OF GROWTH

Seasons change. The temperature warms up. The grass begins to grow again. Landscapers clear gardens of old growth debris and we see new green shoots and blossoms appearing. Our new season of life with God in recovery can also be a wonderful time of freshness and new growth. However, we need the skillful planning and work of God, our “spiritual landscaper”, to remove the weeds and dead leaves and branches that clutter the garden of our hearts and choke the new growth. We need the right fertilizer to be applied to the soil. When this is done we will have nutrient rich soil in us to sustain new growth.

If real change and growth is to take place, our lives need to be given over to the care of God.

I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. (John 15:1-2 NLT)

If real change and growth is to take place, our lives need to be given over to the care of God. Only God knows what is best for us, for our relationships, and for our well-being. It's at the beginning of a new season that we particularly need to pay attention to and cooperate with what God is saying so our lives are available for all the fresh new things God wants to teach us and grow in our hearts.

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. (Psalm 1:1-3 NLT)

Reading God's word plants new seeds. Planting truth helps shape our beliefs, thoughts, and behaviours. God's Spirit will water and feed what has been planted. As we surrender over and over again to God's Spirit working in us, our hearts will be stirred up and we will become ready for a season of rich new life.

Prayer: Wonder Working God, You know the right time for planting what is necessary in this new season of my life. I surrender my will and my life to Your care. May this be a time of abundant growth and fruitfulness. Amen

TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2018

LIVING BY THE TRUTH

How we got to where we are today is the result of our own faulty thinking and flawed solutions. However, where we go from here can be beyond all we could ask for or even imagine if we consistently apply God's truth to our daily living.

Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2 NIV)

Who do the tapes playing in our heads say that we are? Who does God say we are? What are our felt needs right now? How does God say He'll meet those needs? Where do we think our lives are headed? What does God say about His plans for us? We will have the life we desire when we base our life on God's answers to these questions.

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. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life."*** (John 8:31-32 and 10:10b NLT)

The events of the past, no matter how difficult, are not to blame for our present emotional and spiritual state. We are in this condition because we have chosen to interpret and respond to situations based on our own limited knowledge and beliefs. Jesus Christ has opened a new path for us, one of relationship with God based on truth. God will reveal truth to us if we ask Him. God will fill us with His Spirit who will give us the will and power to live according to the truth of God's word. He will enable us to forgive those things that happened in the past and let go of emotions and thoughts that surround them.

As we ask for and apply God's truth to each situation that arises, we will move from hoping and desiring a new way of life to actually experiencing it.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I have gone my own way and done my own thing based on my own understanding. Show me where my thinking needs to change. My desire is to experience the satisfying life You offer me. Help me to walk in the truth of Your word every day. Amen

Where we go from here can be beyond all we could ask for or even imagine if we consistently apply God's truth to our daily living.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2018

SHARING HEART TO HEART

It is God's desire that we walk safely and securely in the conscious awareness of His great love and care for us. In the past, we didn't know or even care about God. The outcome of our self-willed, self-directed way of life was a chaotic lifestyle in destructive addiction. God's ongoing invitation is that we enter into a deeply satisfying heart-to-heart relationship with Him.

How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me! (Psalm 139:17-18 NLT)

***If we seek
God
throughout
each day, He
will give us
guidance and
encouragement
to deal with
those things
that concern us.***

There's no better friend and companion than God. God's heart is always turned towards us. He pays attention to what is going on in our lives and cares about how circumstances are impacting us. He is willing to listen to us as we share with Him whatever is troubling our minds and hearts. We don't have to wait until our thoughts are "tidied up." God offers to be that close friend to whom we can pour out our hearts and have Him help us sort what is really going on.

God loves us for who we are, not what we do. The Bible reminds us that God gazes on us with great delight and even rejoices over us with singing. God always has our best interest at heart. He knows better than us what we need. If we seek God throughout each day, He will give us guidance and encouragement to deal with those things that concern us.

I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (Jeremiah 31:3, 1 Peter 3:12, 1 Peter 5:7 NIV)

Today, let's give thanks for God's faithful love for us and enter more deeply into a heart-to-heart relationship with Him.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is to live in conscious contact with You, to know Your will, and have the power to carry it out. Please direct my steps in all I undertake to do. Amen

MONDAY, MARCH 19, 2018

TOOLS FOR PEACE

Most people long for peace of mind and heart. Life with God in recovery provides many tools which help satisfy this deep longing within us. Jesus willingly died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. When we know we are free from all condemnation, peace will fill our hearts.

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5 NIV)

Knowing and trusting in God's word is an amazing source of comfort that quiets our souls. When we become children of God, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us and He guides us into all truth. As we follow God's principles in all our affairs, we experience great peace, and nothing causes us to stumble.

Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful. (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 NLT)

God wants us to be at peace rather than harassed by bitterness and resentment. Not only can we experience the peace that results from God's forgiveness for our failures, but we can know even greater peace when we choose to forgive those who have wronged us.

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

God's principles are valuable tools which bring forgiveness, healing and peace.

Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You that Jesus' death on the cross brought me forgiveness and healing. Help me to forgive those who have harmed me so that I may live in peace and blessing. May my offenders also come to know the power of the cross of Jesus. Amen

***As we follow
God's ways
in all our
affairs, we
experience
great peace,
and nothing
causes us to
stumble.***

SUNDAY, MARCH 18, 2018

SUNDAY PSALM – TROUBLESOME DAYS

My soul faints with longing for your salvation, but I have put my hope in your word. My eyes fail, looking for your promise; I say, "When will you comfort me?" How long must your servant wait? When will you punish my persecutors? All your commands are trustworthy; help me ... In your unfailing love preserve my life, that I may obey the statutes of your mouth. (Psalm 119:81-82, 84, 86, 88 NIV)

Troublesome days are a time to walk the talk and begin to see God's faithfulness to help and support us in our time of need.

There are seasons in recovery where it seems like everywhere we look we encounter trouble. Things aren't working out the way we thought they would. People we considered friends are not acting friendly towards us. We feel tired and discouraged. We long for things to change and the promise of recovery to be ours. What are we to do? Where are we to find comfort and help?

God's word reassures us that His love is unfailing, His guidance is trustworthy, and His power is more than enough for us in our times of weakness. When we are concerned about the way things are going we can cry out to God for help. He will calm our fears and assure us that He is in control. New thoughts and solutions often come to mind as God shows us how to proceed. Most of all, when our minds are turned towards God, He strengthens us to stay with our recovery plan rather than relapsing into our former ways.

Troublesome days are a time to walk the talk and trust God's faithfulness to help and support us. God will meet us in our time of need. God will take us forward. Together with God, we will find solutions. These days will pass, and we will praise God that we stayed the course.

Prayer: Gracious God, As Your precious child I will not fear but look to You when troubles surround me. You are my strength. Thank You that You are always with me and will work all things together for my good and Your glory. Amen

THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 2018

RELATIONSHIP INVENTORY

Our life in addiction was shaped by a controlling relationship with a destructive substance, a habit, a person – or, a combination of these. At some point we began to believe that we were entitled to whatever would give us pleasure and keep pain at a distance. We became focused on ourselves and our needs to the exclusion of every other relationship. We did not know how to love others in a healthy way and believed, because of our feelings of self-rejection, that we were unlovable.

'...no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love. Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, Doesn't have a swelled head, Doesn't force itself on others, Isn't always "me first," Doesn't fly off the handle, Doesn't keep score of the sins of others, Doesn't revel when others grovel, Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, Puts up with anything, Trusts God always, Always looks for the best, Never looks back, But keeps going to the end. (1 Corinthians 13:4-5 MSG)

When we come to God in recovery we must humbly acknowledge that we don't know how to live in relationship. We truly can learn from those things that happened in our lives, even those that caused our brokenness. Through reading and believing God's word, we will come to the knowledge of His love and truth. As we enter into a caring relationship with God, He will teach us how to live in wholesome relationships with others. We need to freely receive and give love. We need to allow God to take the broken person we have become and change us into the person He created us to be.

No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us. (1 John 4:12 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, forgive me for living as a self-centered individual. Teach and empower me to live in loving relationship with You, my family and those in my community. Please help me to love and care for others as You love and care for me. Amen

When we come to God in recovery we must humbly acknowledge that we don't know how to live in relationship.

FRIDAY, MARCH 16, 2018

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.” A 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.

When we think that God cannot, or will not help us, we leave ourselves open to negative actions. When we are too afraid to do what is good, we end up experiencing emptiness. Too often we choose addictive habits to fill the gap. When we assume we must take care of ourselves, we get tired, we fall short, and we get hurt. In our frustration, we lash out at others. We blame them for our circumstances. We vent our fears and angry thoughts on whoever is closest to us. Then we end up experiencing discouragement, loneliness, and increased pain from the angry conflicts.

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 and obediently follow His principles in all our affairs. As we do this, we will come to experience the peace and security that God promises.

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 for the truth that You lovingly watch over me and keep me from harm. Amen

SATURDAY, MARCH 17, 2018

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 paralyzes and drives us to dark and lonely places. Precaution helps us to avoid foolish mistakes and maintain safe steps. A cautious person thinks clearly but may take reasonable risks. When real danger exists, they will choose a different path. God knows that in life we will face troubles. In the scriptures God tells us to call on Him and He will be with us in our time of 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, God is working everything together for our good. Our faith will grow stronger as we observe the positive results of God guiding the events of our life.

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. Our trust must be in God even when we don't understand everything we are going through. God tells us that He is our refuge and strength in times of trouble and we are not to fear for He is always with us.

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

Our trust must be in God even when we don't understand everything we are going through.
