

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY



Daily Meditations



MARCH 2020

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.*

For your personal print copy send your request to:

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

Email: pihrecovery@gmail.com

Phone or text: 604-215-0335

Website: www.partnersinhope.ca



LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY
Daily Meditations

MARCH 2020

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 © 2020 Cathie Bolan

Elsie Quick, Evelyn Leeburn, Linnea Groom © 2020 Partners in Hope Recovery Society

© 2020 Partners in Hope Recovery Society. All rights reserved. Printed in Canada.

VOLUME 05, NUMBER 03

SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 2020

CAN I EVER ESCAPE THE PAIN OF THE PAST?

When we are trying to do what is right and live according to God's principles, we will often experience comments from others who remind us of our past and the things we did. Some people find it hard to allow us to move on. Others have doubts that we have turned our life over to God and may even be resentful that we should be forgiven. The person who wrote the following words from the Bible appears to have been dealing with a similar situation.

I am about to collapse from constant pain. I told you my sins, and I am sorry for them. Many deadly and powerful enemies hate me, and they repay evil for good because I try to do right. You are the Lord God! Stay nearby and don't desert me. You are the one who saves me. Please hurry and help. (Psalm 38:17-22 CEV)

When others remind us of the exact nature of our wrongs, the guilt we feel flares up and we are in constant pain. We know the hurt we caused and, where possible, have sought to make amends. We have repented before God and have been forgiven. With God's help, we are now trying to do what is right and live as forgiven children of our Heavenly Father. Where we have been unsuccessful in making peace for the hurts of our past, we need to pray and ask Jesus to come near and comfort and heal those who are still suffering because of our wrongs.

Most of all, love one another deeply. Love erases many sins by forgiving them. (1 Peter 4:8 NIRV)

In a song entitled "To God Be The Glory", there is a line that is forever true regardless of what we have done. "The vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus a pardon receives." To persevere in our life with God in recovery, we need to ask God for His strength to practice His principles in all our affairs. When we obey His word, He will surely be our help and guide in times of need.

Prayer; Loving God, When others cause me pain, please help me to remember that Jesus bore the pain of my sin on the cross. Remind me to pray, as Jesus did, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Amen

We need to pray and ask Jesus to come near and comfort and heal those who are still suffering because of our wrongs.

MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2020

VICTIM MENTALITY

In recovery, as well as in addiction, one can have a victim mentality. A person with a victim mentality tells their life story with the intent of having people feel sorry for them. Through a person's sympathy they begin to control and manipulate that person. A person with a victim mentality always wants others to meet their needs. They will not take responsibility for their own behaviour because they believe someone else is always to blame when things go wrong.

Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death. (Proverbs 7:26-27 NIV)

God never intended for us to carry our own burdens or for that matter to manipulate others to carry them for us. No human person is equipped to handle the emotional and physical abuse of their own sin, never mind that of another. God saw the trouble that sin brought on all humankind and He had a plan to deal with it. Because of God's great love for us, Jesus willingly came to fulfill God's plan of redemption.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:4-5 NKJV)

There is no need for any of us to be either a victim or a saviour. Jesus is the only one who can set us free from the disease of sin. When we find ourselves operating with a victim mentality or are trying to be a saviour, we need to let Jesus heal us and bring us peace.

Let us throw off any sin that holds on to us so tightly. And let us keep on running the race marked out for us. Let us keep looking to Jesus. He is the one who started this journey of faith. (Hebrews 12 1b-2a NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to draw near to You for You alone can break the chains of bondage to sin that so easily entangle me. I want to receive all that You offer me through Jesus. Please set me free to run the race set out for me. Amen

If we have a victim mentality or are trying to be a saviour, we need to let Jesus heal us and bring us peace.

TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2020

TAKING CARE AS WE MAKE AMENDS

When we come to the point of making amends, fear can overwhelm us as we think about those we have harmed. We were enemies of God and serving a different master when we caused the harm. Now we have been reconciled to God and are willing to admit the error of our former ways. God has forgiven us for the wrongs we have done and now we need to reconcile with others.

At one time you were separated from God. You were his enemies in your minds, because the evil you did was against him. But now he has made you his friends again. He did this by the death Christ suffered while he was in his body. He did it so that he could present you to himself as people who are holy, blameless, and without anything that would make you guilty before him. (Colossians 1:21-22 ERV)

When we are reconciled to God, we have the power of the Holy Spirit in us strengthening us to do what we need to do. God cares for the people we have harmed. Some of our relationships may no longer exist but we need to be willing to make amends for the harm we caused others, except when to do so would further injure them or others. We need to pray and seek advice from God, our sponsor, or another trusted friend, as to when and how we can properly make our amends.

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. (Romans 13:8 NIV)

Though we may dread doing the work of reconciliation, in the end it will give us peace in our hearts. Hopefully the persons we have harmed will offer us forgiveness, but if they choose not to, that choice remains with them. We chose to make amends and when we have done what God requires of us, we can leave the outcome of our obedience with Him.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, As I do the work of making amends with those I have injured, I ask for the courage to do all that needs to be done. Help me to have love for those I have harmed, and with my amends, want what is best for them. Amen

God has forgiven us for the wrongs we have done and now we need to reconcile with others.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2020

INHERITING THE PROMISES OF GOD

When we accept Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we receive the same right to the promises of God as a son or daughter has when they inherit property from a parent after their death. God's promises are given to those who inherit salvation, so we might participate in God's divine nature and escape the corruption of our sinful desires. We share in the very nature of God because God's Spirit lives within us guaranteeing all that God has promised.

He has also given us his very great and valuable promises. He did it so you could share in his nature. You can share in it because you've escaped from the evil in the world. This evil is caused by sinful desires. (2 Peter 1:4 NIRV)

If we were told we have inherited money through the will of a deceased person we would need to get a copy of the will and read it. If we meet the criteria stated in the will, we can claim what has been gifted to us. To claim the promises of God we need to read the details of our inheritance as recorded in the Bible.

To claim the promises of God we need to read the details of our inheritance as recorded in the Bible.

...All of you must turn away from your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then your sins will be forgiven. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. God has made a great many promises. They are all "Yes" because of what Christ has done. (Acts 2:38; 2 Corinthians 1:20 NIRV)

If we meet the criteria in the paragraph above, we first receive two priceless promises: our sins are forgiven, and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. These two gifts bring us into a whole new way of life where our inheritance is the many promises of God.

As we improve our conscious contact with God through prayer and reading His Word, we will grow in our knowledge of who God is and share in His nature. Having had this spiritual awakening, we will desire to carry this message to others, and practice God's principles in all our affairs.

Prayer: Gracious God, Thank you for making a way for me to escape the evil of this world caused by my sinful desires. I want to get to know You and enjoy the many gifts promised to me through believing in Your beloved son. Amen

THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 2020

SURPRISE

Some people throw surprise parties to celebrate the birthday of a friend. It's always interesting to watch the face of the person who is being surprised. They often seem pleased but sometimes the surprise can be overwhelming. A Jewish ruler once surprised Jesus by coming to Him at night. He said that he knew Jesus came from God because of the miracles He was doing. However, the Jewish ruler was surprised and baffled by Jesus' reply.

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus. He was one of the Jewish rulers. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. We know that God is with you. If he weren't, you couldn't do the signs you are doing." Jesus replied, "What I'm about to tell you is true. No one can see God's kingdom unless they are born again." (John 3:1-3 NIRV)

Nicodemus was confused by what Jesus said. He started to reason about earthly birth and how someone couldn't go back inside their mother's womb and be born again. Jesus told Nicodemus that he should not be surprised because people give birth to people, but the Spirit of God gives birth to the human spirit. Jesus came into the world to save the world from sin, so that our dead spirits could be made alive.

He saved us by washing away our sins. We were born again. The Holy Spirit gave us new life. God poured out the Spirit on us freely. That's because of what Jesus Christ our Savior has done. (Titus 3:5b-6 NIRV)

Are we surprised that Jesus came into the world so we could be without sin and our dead spirit could be made alive? When we give our will and life over to the care of God, our spirit is revived and we are enabled by the power of God's Holy Spirit, who is in us and around us, to do those things that please God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your great love that caused Jesus to come into the world to die for my sins so that I might be born again by the power of Your Holy Spirit. Amen

Are we surprised that Jesus came into the world so we could be without sin and our dead spirit could be made alive?

FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 2020

A POSITIVE APPROACH TO FEELING BORED

When we first come into recovery our expectation for a life free from crippling dependencies is huge. We are excited about what the future may hold and say we are willing to do whatever it takes to get life back on track. As the weeks go on our routine becomes dull and we start to be less enthusiastic. We feel sorry for ourselves and easily get angry with others. The truth is we are bored. We feel challenged and vulnerable in our new routine and have begun to focus on our old familiar pattern of life.

We have all these great people around us as examples. Their lives tell us what faith means. So we, too, should run the race that is before us and never quit. We should remove from our lives anything that would slow us down and the sin that so often makes us fall. (Hebrews 12:1 ERV)

It is a fair question to ask why we are bored and impatient with where life is at today.

It is a fair question to ask why we are bored and impatient with where life is at today. Are we seeking out people who can help us understand what is going on in us, or do we just like to complain and blame? Everything in life takes time to accomplish. Perhaps we could spend time being helpful to others while waiting for things to happen for ourselves. Telling ourselves that we are bored and feeling depressed about it does not produce change. When nothing changes, then nothing changes!

Finally, my brothers and sisters, always think about what is true. Think about what is noble, right and pure. Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect. If anything is excellent or worthy of praise, think about those kinds of things. (Philippians 4:8 NIRV)

Boredom is brought about by lack of action. Perhaps we need to change our thought patterns and think about those things that are worthy of praise. Maybe we need to work on establishing conscious contact with God, praying for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out. Let's allow any boredom we experience to point us to positive action and deeper growth in our recovery and relationship with God.

Prayer: Loving Father, I admit that boredom is pushing me back into darkness, and I need help to remove it from my life. Please help me make wise decisions in the use of my time and help me do those things that please You. Amen

SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2020

LEARNING FROM SOUND ADVICE

Wise people are willing to listen to sound advice and learn. When we begin our journey with God in recovery, we need to welcome help from people whose desire is for us to succeed in being restored to sanity. We can learn from their experience, strength, and hope because they have gained wisdom by listening to others and by following the principles for a successful life as recorded in the Bible.

Wisdom is found on the lips of those who understand what is right. But those who have no sense are punished. (Proverbs 10:13 NIRV)

Those who have walked the spiritual journey to recovery will tell us of prayers that God answered when they felt like giving up. They persisted in doing the next right thing and God made a way for them to be overcomers, even when they doubted there was a way forward. When we are choosing to disregard the truth that God will give us the power we need to hold on, in our foolishness, we will end up back in the same place we came from. We punish ourselves over and over again by choosing not to do what is right and good.

Knowledge begins with fear and respect for the Lord, but stubborn fools hate wisdom and refuse to learn. But now you know the true God. Really, though, it is God who knows you. So why do you turn back to the same kind of weak and useless rules you followed before? Do you want to be slaves to those things again? (Proverbs 1:7; Galatians 4:9 ERV)

God wants to take us through to victory, but if we are unwilling to pay attention to His sound advice, we will forever be on the same old roundabout. God's word, as recorded in the Bible, assures us that He will honour all the promises He has made. Why not trust and obey what God says? Why not be a person who gains wisdom?

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to listen and learn from others who have walked this journey of recovery before me. Please give me the will and desire to trust and obey Your word so that I may gain wisdom and walk in Your ways. Amen

Wisdom is found on the lips of those who understand what is right.

***Proverbs 10:13a
NIRV***

SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 2020

RECOGNIZING JESUS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2020

HOUSING FOR THE HOMELESS

Some of us have had the experience of being homeless while we lived in our dysfunctional lifestyle. The emptiness of heart and the loneliness we felt took us to the lowest hell. What power took us down the road to that place? What power will restore us to sanity and give us a place that we can call home forever?

I'm asking the Lord for only one thing. Here is what I want. I want to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. I want to look at the beauty of the Lord. I want to worship him in his temple. (Psalm 27:4 NIRV)

When we called out to God, who we somehow understood was able to help us, we knew we were powerless to do anything for ourselves. Perhaps we obtained shelter in an overnight facility or were able to get into a recovery house. Perhaps we ended up in a correctional facility. Wherever it was, it was a starting place to get to know Jesus who also knows what it is like to have no place to lay His head.

And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." (Luke 9:58 NKJV)

Jesus came to earth and was born in a shelter for animals because there was no room for Him in the inn. Jesus never owned any property. He was stripped of the clothes He was wearing before He died on a cross for our sins. He was buried in a borrowed tomb. He was raised to life again and returned to the glory of heaven from which He came. He is now preparing eternal housing for all who believe in His name. In the meantime, while we live on this earth, He will be with us wherever we are and make His home with us.

Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them. We will come to them and make our home with them. There are many rooms in my Father's house, and I am going to prepare a place for you." (John 14:23 NIRV, John 14:2a GNT,)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, In this world I may have problems securing the housing I need but I have hope because God has promised, through You, to supply all my needs from His abundant riches. Thank You that, wherever my home is here on earth, You are always with me. Amen

***What
power will
restore us
to sanity
and give us
a place that
we can call
home
forever?***

TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2020

PROMPTLY DEALING WITH WHAT'S WRONG

Step 10 of the 12-Step program encourages us to stay on track in our recovery with the following words: *"We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."* The working of this in our lives means we schedule time on a regular basis to monitor our present thought patterns, actions, and communication with others. Where we recognize some of our old behaviour or thought patterns are creeping in, we promptly admit it and seek, with God's help, to put things right.

Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. 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. (Hebrews 7:25; 2 Corinthians 9:8 NIV)

***We continued
to take
personal
inventory and
when we were
wrong
promptly
admitted it."***

Big Book of AA

When we repent of our sin and give our will and life over to the care of God, we are washed clean by the blood of Jesus and in God's eyes are "justified," which means, "we are just like we had never sinned." What comes next is something called "sanctification," which means letting go of our sinful ways and allowing God to teach us His ways. If we are not vigilant as Step 10 teaches, we can easily slip back into our sinful ways and relapse.

So be careful. When you think you are standing firm, you might fall. Then I admitted my sin to you. I didn't cover up the wrong I had done. I said, "I will admit my lawless acts to the Lord." And you forgave the guilt of my sin. (1 Corinthians 10:12; Psalm 32:5 NIRV)

We need to be honest with God, with ourselves, and with others, and try not to rationalize our behaviour when we do wrong. Taking personal inventory and promptly dealing with our wrongs will enable us to keep on the path of recovery. If we ask God for help in any area we are battling, He promises He will help us.

Prayer: Loving God, When I examine my ways and admit the wrongs I have done, please help me to humble myself and seek Your forgiveness. My desire is to follow You in all my ways. Please help me! Amen

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2020

WE WILL KNOW PEACE

One of the Twelve Promises of AA tells us: *We will comprehend the word serenity, and we will know peace.*

Addiction results in a constant state of inner turmoil. What many of us who find life with God in recovery know is that the longer we stay sober and work on our recovery, the more we begin to experience times of calmness and peace of mind. These times are pretty fleeting in the beginning, but they increase in both time and depth as we live one day at a time, trusting God to do in us what we cannot do for ourselves.

May the God who gives hope fill you with great joy. May you have perfect peace as you trust in him. May the power of the Holy Spirit fill you with hope.
(Romans 15:13 NIRV)

The Serenity Prayer is both a description of the process of finding contentment in this life and a tool we can use over and over again to help us enter the peace that is surely God's heart for us. This prayer gives us words to say that follow the instructions we read in the Bible for finding inner peace – even in times when logically we shouldn't be at peace.

Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God. Then, because you belong to Christ Jesus, God will bless you with peace that no one can completely understand. And this peace will control the way you think and feel.
(Philippians 4:6-7 CEV)

We won't necessarily understand WHY we are at peace, but we recognize a calmness and a serenity in a deep place within us that wasn't there before. It's what we sometimes describe as feeling "grounded." This serenity is not just something we hope for because the founders of AA said it was possible, it's God's promise to us, and all God's promises to us are life giving truths we can "take to the bank."

Prayer: God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen

We won't necessarily understand WHY we are at peace, but we recognize a calmness and a serenity in a deep place within us that wasn't there before.

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2020

LETTING GO OF DEFENSIVENESS

Letting go of defensiveness is one necessary adjustment we need to make in order to experience growth and success in our life with God in recovery.

It's hard to admit weakness or mistakes. We've spent so much time covering up those things with denial and substances that now it is a real challenge to hear truth and admit truth when there is something negative that needs to be faced. We feel insecure and we don't have substances to cover up this painful emotion.

Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. (Psalm 25:5 NIV)

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Romans 12:18
NIV

One of the first signs of being defensive is that we blame others or find excuses for what took place. Now and again there is a valid reason for the problem we face, but more likely than not our excuses come from a place of defensiveness. To sort out what's really going on when we are defensive, we need to turn our attention to God and ask for His help to reveal what is true. Accusations from others are not necessarily any truer than our own fearful rationalizations. We want clarity and God wants to help us see what is right. When we see, then we can take the next right step.

When I felt my feet slipping, you came with your love and kept me steady and when I was burdened with worries, you comforted me and made me feel secure. (Psalm 94:18-19 CEV)

We can give ourselves permission to be a "work in progress" without ignoring the need to take corrective action. Our self-worth is not altered by whatever the situation is or by the criticism we are hearing. We need to listen well and maybe even get help to determine a truthful response, but these actions need to grow from a place of value for who we are rather than a desire to cover up a feeling of inferiority. In fact, when we come to a place of valuing ourselves as God values us, we will welcome the opportunity to make positive change rather than hiding in defensiveness.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to live in the truth of who You say I am and what You know about the situations I am facing. Help me to turn to You when I feel defensive so You can comfort and guide me in the way I should go. Amen

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2020

WHITE KNUCKLING

We usually say an individual is “white knuckling” when they are just using willpower to stay sober. They have stopped drinking or using but have not dealt with the issues underlying their addiction. They are desperately hanging on and very much at risk of relapse because they experience life away from their substance of choice as something to be endured. They are not staying sober to benefit themselves but for other people. They feel like they are in prison rather than having a life. They muddle through one day of not using and hope for another but have a low tolerance for other people and life’s challenges. They are often filled with anger and resentment.

This is not the life in recovery that God wants for us. He gives us insight into what we need to be truly well, strength for the journey as we tackle complex issues, and comfort and healing for all the painful things we will bump into along the way.

I am the Lord All-Powerful. So don't depend on your own power or strength, but on my Spirit. (Zechariah 4:6 CEV)

When we begin to feel worried and anxious about our sobriety it's time to look again to God who knows us better than we know ourselves. As we read the Bible, God will teach us those things we need to know and will help us practice His principles in all our affairs. We need to listen to others share their experience, strength and hope and perhaps learn from them. God will help us identify the source of our pain and through Jesus, healing and forgiveness is available to us.

You are my strength; I wait for you to rescue me, for you, O God, are my fortress. In his unfailing love, my God will stand with me. He will let me look down in triumph on all my enemies. (Psalm 59:9-10 NLT)

We can't “fight our demons” on our own but our all-powerful God will give us the power to do so when we ask for it.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, When I am feeling frustration and pain, I pray for the willingness to reach out to You for strength, and healing. Help me to surrender every area where I stubbornly “white knuckle” through problem situations. Please guide me to a place of peace and stability. I put my trust in You. Help me to trust You more. Amen

He [God] gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.

Isaiah 40:29 NLT

SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2020

CARRYING THE MESSAGE BY ACTING WISELY

The book of Proverbs in the Bible is a collection of wise sayings for us to learn and put into practice. Proverbs chapter 11 has 31 sayings covering a wide range of topics that contrast right and wrong and good and evil. The sayings address things like honesty, pride, gossip, keeping secrets, being kind, family relationships, and our use of money. Many of these sayings have promises attached to them such as:

If you do the right thing, honesty will be your guide. But if you are crooked, you will be trapped by your own dishonesty. Dishonest people use gossip to destroy their neighbors; good people are protected by their own good sense. Kindness is rewarded—but if you are cruel, you hurt yourself. Try hard to do right, and you will win friends; go looking for trouble, and you will find it. (Proverbs 11:3, 9, 17, 27 CEV)

These are helpful descriptions of the behavioural choices we make and the positive or negative results that come from our actions.

Close to the end of the chapter is a sentence that encourages us to live right by reminding us that if we choose to do the right thing, we not only find the life we long to have but will have a positive influence on others as well.

Live right, and you will eat from the life-giving tree. And if you act wisely, others will follow. (Proverbs 11:30 CEV)

In recovery groups, we talk about carrying the message to others and sharing our experience, strength, and hope with them. Too often we think this is all about the words we speak. While it is important and helpful to attend meetings and share our story with others, these wise sayings from Proverbs suggest that an especially powerful way to carry the message to others is to live well and do what is right in God's eyes. It is certainly a way to live the “attraction rather than promotion” principle.

Prayer: Loving God, help me to carry the message well by practicing Your principles in all my affairs. Help me to live with honesty, kindness, and transparency before You and others, praying only for knowledge of Your will and the power to carry it out. Amen

SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2020

THANKS GOD, FOR MY LIFE AND MY RECOVERY

Each day in recovery is another opportunity to learn and grow. We all know that to stand strong in recovery we need God to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves, but we also need to do for ourselves what we can. Today we are invited to remember, celebrate, and give thanks for what God has done for us that we could never have done for ourselves.

Let me tell you what God did for me. I called out to him with my mouth, my tongue shaped the sounds of music. If I had been cozy with evil, the Lord would never have listened. But he most surely did listen, he came on the double when he heard my prayer. Blessed be God: he didn't turn a deaf ear, he stayed with me, loyal in his love. (Psalm 66:16b-20 MSG)

Sometimes winter months seem long and gloomy and there are also moments in recovery when we feel like the journey has been long and hard. At times like these, it is good to pause and reflect on how different things are now compared to when we were struggling in the darkness of our brokenness. Today, let's take time to hit the "pause button", look around us, and see what we have to be grateful for.

At the core of our recovery is the God who was there for us when we recognized our powerlessness and admitted that our life was unmanageable. He listened to us and, as the Bible quote above says, "***came on the double when he heard my prayer.***" God didn't just come quickly and help us take that first step, but He has stayed with us and tenderly expressed His love for us during days in recovery when it was hard for us to hang on and keep going.

Bless our God, O peoples! Give him a thunderous welcome! Didn't he set us on the road to life? Didn't he keep us out of the ditch? (Psalm 66:8-9 MSG)

Wherever we share today – on our phone, in a conversation, or at a meeting – let's share with gratitude about this God who set us on the road to life.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for being there for me when I couldn't even be there for myself. Thank You for making a way for me to receive forgiveness and healing and life before I even asked You for it. Today, I reaffirm my trust in Jesus, who has done for me on the cross what I could never do for myself. Today I thank You for my life. Amen

Today, I reaffirm my trust in Jesus, who has done for me on the cross what I could never do for myself.

MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2020

LOVE IS NEVER JEALOUS

Jealousy is a negative and damaging emotion. It's the feeling we have when something we believe should be ours is given to someone else. We hold resentment against that person, believing we are more deserving of the status or success they have received. Jealousy also brings mistrust of that person. We may be jealous of someone's attention towards someone we are in relationship with. This is often an expression of our own insecurity, but it is expressed in anger and jealousy. When God describes how to be loving people, He tells us that it never includes being jealous.

Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud, or rude. (1 Corinthians 13:4-5a CEV)

We often think an angry person is dangerous to be around, but the Bible tells us that a jealous person is even worse.

An angry person is dangerous, but a jealous person is even worse. (Proverbs 27:4 CEV)

We can fall into jealousy when we live in low self-esteem and begin to compare our lot with the lot of others. Sadness, loneliness, uncertainty and suspicion are all trap doors we don't want to fall through and move towards jealousy. Control, co-dependency, and even violence (with words or actions) can also be expressions of jealousy.

And by all means don't brag about being wise and good if you are bitter and jealous and selfish; that is the worst sort of lie. For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, inspired by the devil. (James 3:14-15 TLB)

God's invitation to us today is to leave jealousy and selfishness behind and focus on kindness, patience, acceptance, and the honouring of others.

Prayer: Loving God, forgive me for the times I've lived with jealousy towards others. Help me to know my value in Your sight, trusting that You are working in me to build safe and life-giving relationships. Help me to honour and respect others. Help me to grow in my love for You and for others. Amen

Be done with dishonesty and jealousy and talking about others behind their backs.

(1 Peter 2:1b TLB)

TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2020

DESIRING MORE CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD

In Step 11 we purpose to improve our conscious contact with God. Our desire is to understand more about God, how He interacts with us, and gives us knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out. None of us are here by accident. The God who knew us before we were even formed in our mother's womb watches over us and draws us to Himself. The choice of coming close to God rests with us. God will never override our will. He waits for us to come to Him.

So obey God. Stand up to the devil. He will run away from you. Come near to God, and he will come near to you. (James 4:7-8a NIRV)

We live in a world that does not follow the ways of God. In fact, it seems like everyone wants to do what is right in their own eyes. Once we were like that ourselves. Our sin and self-will distracted us from being conscious of God's goodness towards us. Because of God's great love for us, Jesus came to earth to die for our sin so we could live in freedom from sin and in the presence of God forever. Why would Jesus do that? What prompted God to give His only Son in our place? The answer is, LOVE, the love of our gracious Heavenly Father that we will never fully understand.

If any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. He will give it to you. God gives freely to everyone and doesn't find fault. God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through him. (James 1:5; John 3:16-17 NIRV)

God's will for us is that we accept Jesus as our Saviour and follow Him in all our ways. As we meditate on God's word, praying to know God's will and the power to carry it out, He will give us what we seek – not only improved conscious contact with Him, but a peaceful heart that comes from belonging to God and living as His beloved son or daughter.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to improve my conscious contact with You so I can know You more. Please give me the wisdom and the power to follow Jesus in all my ways. Amen

***Heavenly
Father, I
want to
improve
my
conscious
contact
with You
so I can
know You
more.***

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2020

DEALING WITH WORRY AND ANXIETY

God has told us to give all our cares and anxieties to him because He cares for us. God promises that He won't give us more than we can handle and will give us the grace that is sufficient to meet every need.

For all of God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding "Yes!" And through Christ, our "Amen" (which means "Yes") ascends to God for his glory. It is God who enables us, along with you, to stand firm for Christ. He has commissioned us, and he has identified us as his own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything he has promised us. (2 Corinthians 1:20-22 NLT)

To trust God rather than be filled with worry and anxiety requires that we hold on to what is true when, for a time, circumstances may challenge that. We need to pray and then pray some more. We need to see what is good alongside what is troubling. We need to persevere even when we feel like giving up. In times of trial it is easy to believe that getting help for our need of the moment is the one and only priority. Until the problem is resolved we need to believe that God is for us and not against us.

I give you peace, the kind of peace that only I can give. It isn't like the peace that this world can give. So don't be worried or afraid. (John 14:27 CEV)

God's new life-giving way for us in recovery is to come to believe that He is the power greater than ourselves who can restore us. Our part? Turn our will and our life – including this particular situation – over to His care. What does this require? That we begin to trust that God is good, that God is for us, and that God will give us what we need – maybe something different from what we think the solution to the situation is – but ultimately what we need to take us through. Sometimes we need our character strengthened more than we need an instant solution. We don't prefer that gift from God but thankfully God is more interested in our long term peace and stability than in our demand of the moment.

Prayer: Loving God, You are good and You are with me. You promise to never leave me nor forsake me. Help me to trust in Your faithful care when challenges fill me with worry and anxiety. Amen

***God is more
interested
in our long
term peace
and
stability
than in our
demand of
the
moment.***

THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2020

BUILDING A GOOD REPUTATION

When we were living in addiction, we were not people who had a good reputation. In fact, even though we tried to hide our problems, we often sunk so deep into our addiction that our character and reputation were destroyed by our repeated poor choices. Dealing with a bad reputation is one of the most difficult things to face as we seek to live well in recovery with God.

God's word describes the value of a good reputation and has lots of helpful advice for us as we seek to rebuild ours.

A good reputation and respect are worth much more than silver and gold. Never let loyalty and kindness leave you! Tie them around your neck as a reminder. Write them deep within your heart. Then you will find favor with both God and people, and you will earn a good reputation. Always let others see you behaving properly, even though they may still accuse you of doing wrong. Then on the day of judgment, they will honor God by telling the good things they saw you do. (Proverbs 22:1 CEV, Proverbs 3:3-4 NLT, 1 Peter 2:12 CEV)

The list of good choices that are foundational to good character are clearly laid out in these Bible verses: be loyal; be kind; behave properly, do good. Rebuilding our reputation is about letting God remove our character defects and developing positive character qualities and being humble in the learning process. There is no mistake we have made that we cannot learn from. When we have blown other's trust many times, it may take time for them to trust us again. However, when change is consistent over time, many of us have experienced that people do come around and respond with kindness.

Jesus came to earth and laid down His perfectly good reputation to die a sinner's death on the cross in order to give us forgiveness and life in recovery with God. He sacrificed everything for us. As tough as it is to rebuild our reputation, God has what it takes to help us do that.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Jesus came to earth and gave up His good reputation so I could have a new life. Help me to do the work, empowered by Your Spirit, to build character and be a person who finds favour with You and with others by the way I live. One choice at a time, help me to honour You with my thoughts, words, and actions. Amen

A good reputation and respect are worth much more than silver and gold.

*Proverbs 22:1
CEV*

FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2020

RELYING ON GOD'S PROMISES

To succeed at living well in recovery with God, we need to rely on His promises. His comforting words help us persevere through the trials and the pain that we experience. Some of us thought that when we gave our will and life over to the care of God we would automatically be exempt from the troubles of the world. Jesus did not tell us that, and He is the one who should know.

I have told you these things, so that you can have peace because of me. In this world you will have trouble. But be encouraged! I have won the battle over the world. (John 16:33 NIRV)

The promise Jesus made was that we can have peace because of Him. How can we experience that peace when sin and sickness and death are all around us? Our position is protected because Jesus has already won the battle. Jesus is always with us. This should encourage us because no matter what happens, we never have to face life's circumstances alone. If God is our helper in times of trouble, why should we fear anything that might come our way?

For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:5b-6 NKJV)

God promises to strengthen those whose hearts are turned towards Him. When we are in trouble, is God the first person we turn to? Do we truly believe that He exists and rewards those who seek Him? God has made numerous promises to us, but faith to believe that He exists is required to activate His promises. If we truly believe God is our higher power, let's confidently stand on His promises today.

God looks down from heaven to see if there is anyone who is wise, anyone who looks to him for help. (Psalm 53:2 ERV)

Prayer: Almighty God, To You all hearts are open, and all desires known. Cleanse my heart of everything that would doubt Your word and help me to stand firm on Your promises. Amen

Then they cried out to the Lord because of their problems and he saved them from their troubles. He brought them out of the deepest darkness. He broke their chains off.

*Psalms 107:13-14
NIRV*

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2020

OLD GROWTH GOODNESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prayer: Loving God, thank you for being the one in whom I can root my life and grow strong no matter what I face in life. Help me to learn from faithful old-timers and make good choices that will build strength and maturity into my life and recovery. Amen

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

SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2020

AFFIRMED AND ACCOMPANIED BY A LOVING GOD

After years of listening to other's harsh and condemning words about us, it's wonderful to have an opportunity to experience the affirmation of God and to be reminded that as we walk with Him, He is pleased with us.

God, have mercy on us and bless us. May you be pleased with us. Then your ways will be known on earth. All nations will see that you have the power to save. God, may the nations praise you. May all the people on earth praise you. May the nations be glad and sing for joy. You rule the people of the earth fairly. You guide the nations of the earth. (Psalm 67:1-4 NIRV)

These verses remind us that it was God who, in his mercy, reached out and rescued us. He didn't just set us on a path and expect us to find our own way but, with great joy, He accompanies us. In an amazing turnaround of events, God now gets praise from others through the witness of our life with Him in recovery.

We invited Jesus into our lives to forgive and save us and, by the power of God's Spirit, we are now being transformed into His likeness. Others notice, and perhaps some ask about what happened that caused us to change. As we share our experience, strength, and hope with them, they come to know that it was God's power that made the difference in our lives.

Recovery does not bring about a perfect world but, as we navigate relationships with others and walk with God without hiding behind substances, God will show us what is right and what is wrong. Seeking recovery with others can be messy. Life itself is sometimes messy. But together with God, who guides and governs individuals and whole groups of people fairly and with justice, we can take the necessary steps that will help us all live together in peace.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, It really is a pleasure to walk in the acceptance and affirmation of Your love. You have called me to belong and through Jesus, made that possible for me. At times, where it is a challenge to endure others, help me to take a moment and reach out to You for guidance and then do as You say. Help me to see myself as Your beloved child and know that You are pleased with me. Amen

***God now
gets praise
from
others
through
the
witness of
our life
with Him
in
recovery.***

MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2020

BEING DILIGENT ABOUT MY RECOVERY TODAY

Those who make steady progress in recovery and find one day becoming one month, one year, and then one decade, are those who remain focused and give careful attention each day to what works. We call this being diligent.

Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked so hard to achieve. Be diligent so that you receive your full reward. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. (2 John 1:8, NLT 2 Timothy 4:15 NIV)

Through practice and consistent effort, we get better at living the spiritual practices that are foundational to healthy living. Our conscious awareness of God's presence increases the more we pray and meditate on His Word. Peace and rest in our body and soul grows as we regularly make a moral inventory of what has gone on in our day. We promptly admit anything that has harmed us or someone else and ask God for His forgiveness and a fresh start. Our relationships will grow strong as we make the effort to assess what our part was in any tension or hurt and with God's help make amends.

The challenge for each of us is not to slack off or get distracted when things are going well. Where we are today did not come by our own power or smarts. It is God working in us. It is God giving us what we need in each set of circumstances, and us being willing to pay attention to His guidance and follow His direction.

God can bless you with everything you need, and you will always have more than enough to do all kinds of good things for others. (2 Corinthians 9:8 CEV)

We are as reliant on the forgiveness and healing of Jesus as we were when we wrote our first description of our "Last 90 Days" or our first Step 4 inventory. Thank God we have new strength and some stability in our relationships and our recovery, but we must always be mindful and diligent in our efforts to get rid of everything that would distract us from what keeps us strong and free. It is God who does that. May we find Him close today.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am powerless without You. Help me each day to be diligent in the spiritual practices that keep me conscious of Your will for me, and give me the power to continue to carry it out. Amen

The challenge for each of us is not to slack off or get distracted when things are going well.

TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2020

CARRYING THE MESSAGE BY PRACTICING THE PRINCIPLES

Sometimes we breathe a sigh of relief when we reach Step 12 of the 12-Step program. We have almost completed what we set out to do and are pleased that we stayed the course. During the past months we have learned a lot about ourselves and the power of addiction to take us to places where we never thought we would go. The program also taught us a lot about ourselves and how we treated people. We never knew much about God but now our desire is to improve our conscious contact with Him. We have had a spiritual awakening! Our past is in the past, and our future is open to everything God has for us. We now want to carry the message of this Good News to others.

It's important that a church leader, responsible for the affairs in God's house, be looked up to—not pushy, not short-tempered, not a drunk, not a bully, not money-hungry. He must welcome people, be helpful, wise, fair, reverent, have a good grip on himself, and have a good grip on the Message. (Titus 1:8-9a MSG)

We now want to carry the message of this Good News to others.

When we start to share with others we need to be practicing, as best we can, God's principles in all our affairs. Others will not want to listen to us talk about God and how our lives were changed if our behaviour does not match what we say. Jesus said others would know we are His disciples by the love we demonstrate towards one another.

Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples—when they see the love you have for each other. (John 13:34-35 MSG)

God wants us to gain wisdom by putting into practice all that we have learned. The journey ahead will always be one step at a time allowing God to keep us focused on His word as He brings us to the knowledge of all truth.

Let wise people listen and add to what they have learned. Let those who understand what is right get guidance. (Proverbs 1:5 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to carry the message of what Jesus did for me to others. Please help me to do so. Amen

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2020

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

Going forward in recovery is about becoming mature and doing things differently. Jesus' instruction to us today is very challenging. It's not for the faint of heart but it is truly life-giving.

Jesus said: ***You're familiar with the old written law, 'Love your friend,' and its unwritten companion, 'Hate your enemy.' I'm challenging that. I'm telling you to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer, for then you are working out of your true selves, your God-created selves.*** (Matthew 5:43-44 MSG)

We've heard many times that to be successful in recovery we need to "stick with the winners," and while it's important to choose our companions well, God often brings attention to those relationships that we avoid because we still have pain and resentment in our hearts. It may be that we struggle with family members or colleagues and how they have treated us in the past or how they continue to deal unfairly with us.

God is not asking us to co-dependently give access to them to harm us or pretend that what they do is not the work of an enemy. God is inviting us to pray for them and give them the best opportunity to find forgiveness and transformation through Christ. While we were still a mess, Christ died for us. While others are still struggling with anger and bitterness, God wants to touch them with His love. His response to our prayers is assured. Best of all, our character will blossom and become strong because we are allowing God to work His work through us.

This is what God does. He gives his best—the sun to warm and the rain to nourish—to everyone, regardless: the good and bad, the nice and nasty. (Matthew 5:45 MSG)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, it's so much easier to just avoid people who have harmed me. Within safe boundaries, I ask You to bless them and to help them to come to know Your love so they can find peace and healing. I admit to being weak in this area. Help me to even want to bless them. I want to be like You. Amen

**God often
brings
attention to
those
relationships
that we avoid
because we
still have pain
and
resentment in
our hearts.**

THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2020

DESIRE TO CHANGE

Whether in Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous, Tradition Three highlights that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking or using.

Jesus tells us: ***Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.*** (Matthew 26:41 NIV, Philippians 2:13 NLT)

**As we
experience
conscious
contact
with God,
He
faithfully
makes
changes in
our
desires.**

Most of us find it is not difficult to dislike the suffering and inconvenience we experience alongside using and drinking. It really does take an act of God, though, to change our desire to drink and use again. It really is a miracle that God can work in us so the obsession to pick up is removed. We're told that we can expect a "daily reprieve" as we maintain our life with God on a daily basis. We need God's help to be sober today. We need our actions to be led by God so inner change in our desires deepens.

As we add one day of sobriety to another, we notice change around us. Our relationships are more joyful and peaceful. We experience some success and confidence begins to grow in us. The blur in our minds begins to clear. We find ourselves laughing and enjoying simple pleasures. All these things added together support our desire to not drink or use.

Underneath all of this is the fact that, as we experience conscious contact with God, He faithfully makes changes in our desires. The more we do what God says works, the more we experience the peace of God and a sense of well-being deep in our soul. Life with God shows itself to be sweeter than a life of drinking or using.

Find your delight in the Lord. Then he will give you everything your heart really wants. Live by the Holy Spirit's power. Then you will not do what your desires controlled by sin want you to do. (Psalm 37:4, Galatians 5:16 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, change me from the inside out. Help me to enjoy the blessings of today but most of all to enjoy You and how trustworthy and good You are. Help me to experience this promise that life with You is sweeter than a life of drinking or using. Amen

FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2020

PRAYING FOR HOPE TO BELIEVE

When we come to believe that God forgives and saves us through Jesus and choose to turn our will and our life over to His care, God makes us His own. We belong. We become those who can identify ourselves as “His people.” God also promises that when we ask Him to remove our sin and character defects, and pray with humility for His help and guidance, He will hear. He will forgive. He will make our lives prosper again.

If my people who are called by my name become humble and pray, and look for me, and turn away from their evil ways, then I will hear them from heaven. I will forgive their sin and heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:14 ERV)

After living so long under the cloud of attacks and slurs on our reputation and other’s negative labels about who we are because of what we have done, it’s hard to hear the possibility of something wonderful coming alive in us and being lived out in new habits in recovery. One part of what God is restoring in us is a true perspective of our current and future life. We may struggle to come out from under the burden of failure and inferiority, but God knows us well and invites us to pray for the hope to believe in a better future and His ability to guide us into it.

I pray that God will open your minds to see his truth. Then you will know the hope that he has chosen us to have. You will know that the blessings God has promised his holy people are rich and glorious. (Ephesians 1:18 ERV)

We were created to know joy and satisfaction and to be part of God’s beautiful plan of blessing for others. Our future of purpose and meaning is assured when we hope in God and put our trust in His ability to transform our wrecked lives into lives that benefit everyone we meet.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You have been so kind to lift me out of the despair and darkness of my past life. Help me to believe that Your power working in me can bring about this wonderful future that You promise me. Open my mind to the truth and help me experience the hope You are offering me today. Amen

God knows us well and invites us to pray for the hope to believe in a better future and His ability to guide us into it.

SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2020

COMMON SENSE WISDOM

Common sense and wisdom are learned in many ways. We are encouraged to build habits that draw wisdom into our daily living and interactions with others.

Wise people always think before they do anything, but fools show how stupid they are by what they do. If you refuse to learn from your mistakes, you will be poor, and no one will respect you. If you listen when you are criticized, you will be honored. Be friends with those who are wise, and you will become wise. Choose fools to be your friends, and you will have trouble. (Proverbs 13:16, 18, 20 ERV)

Think before you act or speak. Most of us have heard that advice from the time we were small. It’s easy not to practice it when we feel pressured, but it’s still a wise practice to develop.

Common sense and wisdom are learned in many ways.

We all make mistakes but are we willing to learn from those mistakes? Shame and embarrassment keep some of us from being able to admit and confront our mistakes. John Newton said, ““We serve a gracious Master who knows how to overrule even our mistakes to His glory and our own advantage.” The sooner we realize that we are all learning and growing and some of our most important lessons are attached to our greatest failures, the sooner we will humbly accept that God is working for good in all things – including our mistakes.

So turn away from your sins. Turn to God. Then your sins will be wiped away. The time will come when the Lord will make everything new. (Acts 3:19 NIRV)

Criticism is so hard to swallow but we are told that we will become wise if we listen and learn when we are criticized. We are within our right to check with a trusted sponsor or guide to sort what is real and what is someone else’s baggage. However, we can all learn from another’s perspective on our actions.

Our choice of companions and people we listen to for wisdom and guidance is important also. We are told to love everyone and serve others, but we are advised to wisely select our friends, those we share our heart with.

One simple practice at a time, we can walk in common sense wisdom today.

Prayer: God, I want to be wise, but I know I have much to learn. Help me to see and humbly receive the lessons that You are teaching me today. Amen

SUNDAY, MARCH 29, 2020

FIRING "THE COMMITTEE IN MY HEAD"

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

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

Often, we tire of the fight with the "committee in our head." Sometimes our head feels like it is pounding from the meanness and the unfairness of all the harsh voices we hear. Thank God that He has prepared a place where we can come and ask God to quiet the storm and give us peace.

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

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

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

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

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

***Matthew 11:28
NIV***

MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2020

STAYING GROUNDED

Of all the four seasons of the year, spring seems to describe our new life in recovery the best. The temperatures warm up. We hear birds begin to sing again. There are more hours of daylight. New flowers bloom. The bears come out of hibernation and we feel a desire to get outside and enjoy the freshness and hope of the season.

After long periods in the darkness of our addiction, it is refreshing to see the light of hope glimmer and allow our hearts to welcome the return of positive action and safer daily practices in relationships.

I wonder if Jesus wasn't seeing spring around Him when He said these words:

If we ground ourselves in God's will, He will take care of the rest.

Look at the birds: they do not plant seeds, gather a harvest and put it in barns; yet your Father in heaven takes care of them! Aren't you worth much more than birds? And why worry about clothes? Look how the wild flowers grow: they do not work or make clothes for themselves. (Matthew 6:26, 28 GNT)

Along with hope and growth in a new season, we often begin to worry about the vulnerability we feel and the uncertainty about our future. God knows how frail we are inside and He encourages us to stay simple, stay focused on Him, and do the work of recovery He's called us to do. He promises He will take care of all the rest. Just like a farmer prepares the fields, puts seed in the ground, and leaves the seed to grow in the soil, so we can trust that if we ground ourselves in God's will, He will take care of the growth that we can look forward to.

But more than anything else, put God's work first and do what he wants. Then the other things will be yours as well. Don't worry about tomorrow. It will take care of itself. You have enough to worry about today. (Matthew 6:33-34 CEV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to believe in the new life You have given me. Help me remain simple and just get to know and do Your will each day. Help me to let go of worry about the future. I trust You to make all things right as I surrender to Your will so that I will be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You in the next. Amen

TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2020

NOTES

CONFRONTING WITH LOVE

Confrontational people tend to approach situations with aggression. We might describe them as argumentative or even hostile. They are often pushy with their thoughts and opinions. They seem to work in an "I'm right and you're wrong and you need to get with the program" attitude. They are ready to tell anyone who will listen what is on their mind. They "tell their truth" regardless of its impact on the person listening to them. They say they are being assertive, but others experience it as being demanding and perhaps even abusive.

Everyone has the right to be treated with respect and to have an opportunity to express their needs or opinions, even when they differ from ours. We all need to respect the boundaries of others and let each person live within their borders.

My friends, if someone is caught in any kind of wrongdoing, those of you who are spiritual should set him right; but you must do it in a gentle way. And keep an eye on yourselves, so that you will not be tempted, too. By speaking the truth in a spirit of love, we must grow up in every way to Christ. (Galatians 6:1, Ephesians 4:15a GNT)

Our purpose in all our conversations is listen to one another with kindness and where we disagree, show respect for the other person's point of view. An aggressive manner of interacting will not facilitate the goal of peace in a matter that needs to be challenged. God teaches us to speak the truth. but to do so in a spirit of love and gentleness.

Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good. (Hebrews 10:24 GNT)

When we bring a humble attitude to our conversation, even when challenge is included, we will not come off as being confrontational and aggressive.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, It's hard to confront others with truth and even harder to know how to do that in a loving and encouraging way. Please help me communicate clearly and effectively, and to do it with kindness. Help me to listen for Your direction with a humble heart as I approach conversations where confrontation is involved. Amen

***Our purpose
in all our
conversations
is listen to
one another
with kindness
and where we
disagree
show respect
for the other's
point of view.***

SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

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

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

PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

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

How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery

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

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

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

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

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

JUST FOR TODAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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