

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



MARCH 2021



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

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JUST FOR TODAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

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

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

PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

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

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MARCH 2021

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How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery

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

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

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

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

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

NOTES

MONDAY, MARCH 1, 2021

CONFRONTED BY HOPE

When we first come into a recovery meeting and someone is asked to share their experience, strength, and hope with the group, we are often skeptical in our thoughts about what the person is saying. We are just at the beginning of recovery and not even sure we can abstain from our dependency for one day never mind living the experience of sobriety and looking forward with hope to the future.

Trapped and helpless, I struggled against the ropes that drew me on to death. In my distress I screamed to the Lord for his help. And he heard me from heaven; my cry reached his ears. (Psalm 18:5-6 TLB)

The good news is, we are willing to listen and assess what another person has found to be reality in their lives. We have heard the good news about the gospel of repentance and new life and are hoping against hope that God will enable us to change and be the person we long to be. If we have earnestly prayed for deliverance from our unmanageable lifestyle, we can be assured that God has heard and, through Jesus, has already answered our prayer. The hope we have lies in God's faithfulness to His word.

God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? (Numbers 23:19 NIV)

Each day God will strengthen us to do what He is calling us to do. Our part is to learn what the Scriptures say and then conform our ways to God's ways. We will triumph over our doubts and fears and hope will grow within us when we faithfully follow the way God directs our path. Any stumbling block will be removed as we seek God and pray for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out.

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. (1 Peter 3:15 NIV)

Prayer: Gracious God, I ask You to be my rock, and my fortress, my strength, and my deliverer. I need Your help every hour to strengthen my belief that a Power greater than myself will restore me to sanity. Amen

***The Lord
alone is our
radiant hope
and we trust
in him with
all our
hearts. His
wrap-around
presence will
strengthen
us.***

Psalm 33:20

TUESDAY, MARCH 2, 2021

I WILL NOT CRITICIZE, NOT FIND FAULT

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.

It is so easy to find fault and criticize what others are saying or doing. The truth is, it does not benefit our own well-being when we fix our focus on another's flaws or failures, plus it distracts from the transforming work of God in our own lives. We may think that by criticizing and trying to control others we may change them, but it rarely has that effect. God has a better option for us today.

God's grace has been given to me. So here is what I say to every one of you. Don't think of yourself more highly than you should. Be reasonable when you think about yourself. Keep in mind the faith God has given to each of you. If you say or do things that harm one another, watch out! You could end up destroying one another. Say only what will help to build others up and meet their needs. Then what you say will help those who listen. (Romans 12:3, Galatians 5:15, Ephesians 4:29 NIRV)

Just for today I will be agreeable. I will not criticize, not find fault.

Today we are all on a journey of recovering the life God created us to live. We each have different challenges and character flaws, but God is patiently working for good in all of us. In the same way that God accepts us in our change process, it is important that we accept others in theirs. If we see someone struggling, instead of criticizing them, we should take the opportunity to pray for them and support their healing and their growth. We may not immediately see any change in the person but at least we know we are part of the solution rather than part of the problem. When we pray, we open the door for God to work a miracle in another's life.

If we are to follow God's command to speak only those words that build others up and meet their needs, we will need to change our thinking and allow God to give us a new perspective on how to treat our friends and neighbours.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, It is so easy for me to find fault and criticize those around me. Forgive me for thinking I am any less flawed than the next person. Thank You for Your transforming grace that enables me to admit and deal with my own character defects. Please help me to choose to bless rather than criticize others. Please make me more like Jesus. Amen

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2021

SALT OF THE EARTH

Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage. (Matthew 5:13 MSG)

Everything Jesus said and did demonstrated the amazing qualities of God. He had compassion for the people around Him. He healed the sick and the lame. He spoke about God's great love and forgiveness for people in such a way that crowds came and couldn't get enough of what He had to say. As strange as it may sound, we are being flavoured with hope and trust by the salt of God's word as we read the Bible and begin to understand how God can truly make a difference in our lives.

With the wisdom God gives us, we will make a positive difference in our community as we share with others about our new life in Jesus. Just as salt adds flavour to food, so our stories of God's love and forgiveness will give hope and courage to those who need to hear good news. It is also true that if we who believe in Jesus are not spreading the good news, then we are not being the salt that "brings out the God flavour" in our community.

But how can people call for help if they don't know who to trust? And how can they know who to trust if they haven't heard of the One who can be trusted? And how can they hear if nobody tells them? And how is anyone going to tell them, unless someone is sent to do it? (Matthew 10:14 MSG)

God is not willing for anyone to perish but wants everyone to come to Him. He wants people everywhere to know why Jesus died and was raised to life again. He wants each person to know that, because Jesus lives, they also will live forever. Do we who are reading this know the good news about Jesus, and if we do, are we spreading salt in our community?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to be the salt that spreads the good news of the gospel to others. I am blessed that others shared the good news with me. Amen

You are here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth.

TUESDAY, MARCH 30, 2021

A LIFE OF INFINITE VALUE

My life is of great beauty and infinite value. God has a plan for my life that is meaningful, purposeful, and joyful.

God's love for us is not dependent on the qualities we possess or whether we are rich or poor. God loves us because He created us, and we have infinite value in His sight. When we were still rebellious sinners, God affirmed His love for us by sending Jesus into the world to save us from the penalty of sin, which is eternal separation from God.

Here is what love is. It is not that we loved God. It is that he loved us and sent his Son to give his life to pay for our sins. (1 John 4:10 NIRV)

When we turned our will and life over to Him, God adopted us as His precious children. Unfortunately, we often fail to act like God is our Heavenly Father. At times we take off the new clean clothes we have been given and put on the dirty rags of self-will that were part of our old life.

But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? (Galatians 4:9 NKJV)

The good news is our Heavenly Father is a merciful Father. We are so precious to Him that if we turn away from our sins and turn to Him, He will forgive us and purify us from all our wrongs.

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

We are so wonderfully made that the Bible tells us God rejoices over us with singing. Let's live as beloved and valued sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father as we faithfully follow Him in all our ways.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am thankful that I am of infinite value in Your sight. Help me to be a faithful follower of Jesus and wholeheartedly commit to love You with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love my neighbour as myself. Amen

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2021

RELATIONSHIPS – CO-DEPENDENCY

Contentment in life does not come from trying to control someone so they will meet our needs, or by trying to please them so they will like us and make us feel secure.

We are living co-dependently when we look to those around us to affirm our value. Others have a limited ability to understand us or provide for our needs. The same limitation applies to us when we are dealing with others and trying to meet their needs. God's plan for us to have secure and satisfying relationships begins with us discovering the person God says we are – nothing more and nothing less.

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)

We need to let go of the impossible expectations we put on others. People cannot love us enough or touch us deeply enough to satisfy the deep longings in our heart. Only God can truly satisfy those longings. We have our own desires and dreams, and we need to let others have theirs. We make our own mistakes and others make theirs. We need to forgive ourselves and others and determine to learn from the mistakes that we all make.

Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. (Ephesians 1:4-5 NLT)

Fullness of life and freedom from co-dependency will come when we are primarily rooted in a relationship with our Heavenly Father. God made us in His image, and we have great value in His sight. When we base our worth and identity around this truth, rather than on the opinion of others, we will begin to experience peace, freedom, and security.

Prayer: Gracious Father, I am forever grateful that I am loved and accepted by You. Forgive me for being co-dependent with another rather than fully trusting in You. I ask You to teach me how to live in a way that honours You and accepts others for who they are. Amen

**God's plan
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THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2021

CHARACTER STRENGTH – SHOWING RESPECT

Showing respect and being worthy of respect matters to God. All human beings have value, regardless of their status in life or their behaviour. We show respect to others when we treat them as we want them to treat us. The “Ten Commandments,” (Exodus 20:3-17) were instructions given by God to His people to show them how to honour God and live respectfully with each other. The first four commandments teach people how to honour God, their creator. The following six teach them about respecting their parents and living morally in peaceful harmony with their neighbours.

Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12 NLT)

Showing respect and being worthy of respect matters to God.

It is God’s will that we be respectful of our parents, of people in authority, of people around us, and their property. This is particularly difficult when we face those who have harmed us. No matter how badly others have treated us, God’s commands do not change about the attitude we are to have towards them. It is God’s standard that as we forgive those who have been disrespectful towards us, God will forgive us for the disrespectful ways we have behaved towards them. Forgiveness eliminates our bondage to the events that caused us to stray from being the person God created us to be. God is a righteous judge and can be trusted to judge the harmful actions of all people. Each of us will be personally accountable to God for our actions.

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. People who despise advice are asking for trouble; those who respect a command will succeed. (Luke 6:27 NIV, Proverbs 13:13 NLT)

As people of God, we should be respectful towards everyone. Let’s pray each day for the grace of God to help us practice His principles in all our affairs.

Prayer: Gracious God, I am thankful that You love and care for me. Help me to honour and respect You in my thoughts, motivation, and desires, and in all I do and say. Strengthen and help me to show respect to each person I meet, even when I disagree with their ways. Help me to leave all judgment of others with You. Amen

MONDAY, MARCH 29, 2021

SETTING THINGS RIGHT THROUGH PRAYER

If we are determined to do our own thing, God will allow us to make bad choices. His desire is for us to experience true life and love, but the choice is ours. God will never take that choice away by making us powerless robots who mindlessly do what He commands. When we make a mess of things, God does not abandon us because it is not His will that any of us should die in sin and addiction. It is God’s desire that every person will find their way to life with Him and experience the joy of His unfailing love.

The Lord isn’t slow about keeping his promises, as some people think he is. In fact, God is patient, because he wants everyone to turn from sin and no one to be lost. (2 Peter 3:9 CEV)

How do we make the move out of our mess into the will of God? We pray! We admit that we have failed to do what is right. We repent of our sin and turn to God for forgiveness and healing. The amazing truth is that when we pray, God will answer us. God will set us free. We will find the life we have been searching for and the power to live it to the full.

When they pray, God will answer; they will worship God with joy; God will set things right for them again. Each one will say in public, “I have sinned. I have not done right, but God spared me. He kept me from going to the world of the dead, and I am still alive.” (Job 33:26-28 GNT)

Why would God do this? Jesus came into the world to die on a cross to pay the penalty for our sin. As we trust in the finished work of Jesus, repent of our sin, and turn away from it, God forgives us and gives us new life. That has always been His plan – not to condemn and judge us when we stumble and fall into sin but, through Jesus, to forgive us and give us new life that lasts forever.

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. (John 3:16-17 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am so grateful You desired to save me rather than condemn me. Please forgive me for my sins and failures. Set things right for me again and help me to live in Your presence now and forever. Amen

***How do
we make
the move
out of our
mess into
the will of
God?
We pray!***

SUNDAY, MARCH 28, 2021

SUNDAY PSALM – LOOKING FOR SAFETY

How can we remain at peace in a world full of troublesome circumstances? The first sentence of the following Psalm tells us what to do.

I run to the Lord for safety. So how can you say to me, "Fly away like a bird to your mountain. Look! Evil people are bending their bows. They are placing their arrows against the strings. They are planning to shoot from the shadows at those who have honest hearts. When law and order are being destroyed, what can godly people do?" The Lord is in his holy temple. The Lord is on his throne in heaven. He watches everyone on earth. His eyes study them. The Lord watches over those who do what is right. But he really hates sinful people and those who love to hurt others. (Psalm 11:1-5 NIRV)

Those of us who have lived in addiction know we never had peace of mind. We were always anxiously looking around for something to quiet our mind or body. Because of our dependencies, some of us lost our homes and jobs and existed on the streets for a time. Law and order were not high on our list of things to comply with. Our lives had become totally unmanageable and we needed help. We would love to have flown away like a bird to the mountain but knew that this was not the solution for our problems.

When we came to our senses, we ran to the Lord for safety and asked Him for help.

When we came to our senses, we ran to the Lord for safety and asked Him for help. Perhaps in our hearts we were always aware that this amazing God was close. We somehow knew in the deepest recesses of our souls that God was on His throne in the heavens. Though we may not have been able to express it, we knew God was watching over everyone on earth and that included us. God saw that we wanted to do what was right. We called on Him, and He answered us.

Through the Scriptures we are being taught God's ways and are learning not to fear, because God is always with us.

Your word is like a lamp that guides my steps, a light that shows the path I should take. (Psalm 119:105 ERV)

Prayer: Loving God, My desire is to know You more and in all my ways allow You to direct my path. Thank You that when fear surfaces, I can run to You for safety. Amen

FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 2021

REPRESS AND DENY

To cope with living an addictive lifestyle we often repressed our moral thinking and denied the downward trend we were on. We made excuses for our behavior and convinced ourselves that we were not as bad as others made out. Our dependency enabled us to selectively forget our responsibilities and we lived in an unreal world where we refused to admit the changes in our personality.

You have heard my predictions and seen them fulfilled, but you refuse to admit it. Oh, that you had listened to my commands! Then you would have had peace flowing like a gentle river and righteousness rolling over you like waves in the sea. (Isaiah 48:6a, 18 NLT)

In recovery, avoiding reality will hinder us from having the meaningful, purposeful life that we desire. Feelings of anxiety about our former lifestyle will surface and we need to be willing to put aside defense mechanisms and be honest about what is truly going on inside us. The road to addiction is often paved with dishonesty about events that negatively impacted our lives. The truth is, God made us and knows us and nothing is hidden from His sight.

You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. (Psalm 139:2-3 NLT)

To survive in our home environment, we may have fabricated lies about things we were unable to cope with and were afraid our peers might find out about. This situation may have caused us to retreat from others or to become violent towards them. Whichever way we reacted, we were repressing and denying our true self. Letting ourselves be known as the person God created us to be, and not hiding from our fears, will enable us to live the fulfilling life God intended.

My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body. (Proverbs 4:20-22 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You made me and You know me. Help me to follow Your principles in all my affairs so I can truly be the person You created me to be. Amen

Avoiding reality will hinder us from having the meaningful, purposeful life that we desire.

STEP FIVE - TELLING SOMEONE ELSE

When we confess the exact nature of our wrongs, the terrible isolation we've lived with for most of our lives will be exposed. Getting honest helps us break down the barriers we have erected against acceptance, forgiveness, and understanding. None of us is perfect. We have much to offer one another if we will approach each other with an attitude of truth, humility, and grace.

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. (James 5:16 NLT)

**Admitting
our
character
defects to
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For more years than we realize, we have been rationalizing our bad behaviour and giving ourselves permission to continue in the same pattern. Admitting our character defects to another human being helps us get past our self-pity and self-deception. It brings us to a place where we are willing to admit we need help and are choosing to receive it. We experience God's blessing and freedom when we live honestly before God and others.

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. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:1-2 NLT)

More acceptance, more realism, more humility, more openness to learn and grow in new ways, these are just some of the benefits of admitting to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs.

Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty! (Psalm 32:1-2 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Give me the courage to be radically honest with You, and with myself, and with another human being, about the exact nature of my wrongs. Deliver me from self-pity and self-delusion. Give me a teachable heart and a willing spirit to walk with You on the path of life. Amen

GETTING IT RIGHT IN THE END

There often seems to be two groups of people in life: those who speak well and look good; and those who always seem to get things wrong. Many of us who fell into addiction thought we fit into the second group. Jesus offers hope for us today in a story he told some people who thought they were better than everyone else.

Jesus said: *"A man had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.' 'I will not,' the son answered. But later he changed his mind and went. "Then the father went to the other son. He said the same thing. The son answered, 'I will, sir.' But he did not go. "Which of the two sons did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered.* (Matthew 21:28-31 NIRV)

One of the ongoing challenges of recovery is living with humility and integrity every day. Recovery is a journey, and we won't always get it right the first time. Taking new steps and doing the hard work of recovery is just that – hard work. Jesus' story shows us how to get back on track when we stumble.

If we come into recovery as approval seekers, we might too easily give our word to do what is required but not do the promised work. Others of us show our self-will by reacting negatively when we are challenged to do something and refuse to do it. Whatever our initial response, what really matters is what we do next.

Those who simply try to look good without following through will not find the good life they seek. The son who didn't look so good in the beginning is actually the one Jesus puts forward as the positive example. We may not get it right in the beginning but if we persevere, admit our defects of character, become willing to have God remove them, and then humbly walk in a new way, we will live in the joy and dignity of God's approval.

Jesus's story reminds us once again, "Don't just talk the talk but walk the walk."

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I ask You for the courage to admit when I fail to do the right thing. Please help me take all the necessary steps that will bring me back to Your will for my life. Help me to live with honesty and humility. Help me to not just talk the talk but to walk the walk. Amen

**If we
admit our
defects of
character,
become
willing to
have God
remove
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then
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we will
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joy and
dignity of
God's
approval.**

FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 2021

SORTING OUT SOFT ADDICTIONS

Soft addictions are habits or behaviors we use to control distressing moods or thought patterns. They satisfy a shallow want but ignore or block a deeper need. They numb us to feelings we don't like or are unfamiliar with. They substitute a superficial high for genuine feelings of accomplishment. God does not want us to lean on these temporary supports. He wants us to acknowledge the truth about our real needs. When we are willing to deal with reality and seek God, He promises to strengthen us and hold us steady.

**Are we
engaging in
an activity to
improve our
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or are we
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discontent, loneliness, or anger? These are some of the issues we need to consider as we determine whether the activity is healthy or a soft addiction.

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

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to recognize any way I am misusing good things to avoid dealing with negative feelings. I ask you to mend those places in me that cause pain. I want to follow You in all my ways. Amen

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

Soft addictions are formed through the misuse of ordinary things in life such as, our phones, sleeping, eating, shopping, work, or exercise. We have to be radically honest about the underlying root of our behaviours – all of them – not just those that are easily labeled “addictions and dependencies.” Asking ourselves some simple questions can help us recognize if something has become a soft addiction for us.

Are we engaging in an activity to improve our life and our relationships or are we simply trying to numb our feelings and let the world go by? Are we conscious of God’s presence in us and around us as we participate in the activity or are we seeking satisfaction in it rather than from living in the truth? Do we believe we are serving God’s purposes in what we are doing or are we using the activity to comfort and distract us from feelings of

SUNDAY, MARCH 7, 2021

SUNDAY PSALM – BELIEVE GOD AND BE BLESSED

In the process of getting to know God and coming to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity, we are often not sure that God will hear and answer our prayers. We are hopeful that He might answer, but we do not have the full assurance that God knows and cares and has the power to meet our needs.

The Bible assures us that ***“The eyes of the LORD search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.”*** (2 Chronicles 16:9 NKJV)

What does it mean to have a heart fully committed to God? It means we choose to believe that God exists, that His word is truth, and we live our lives based on those facts.

Lord, save us! Lord, grant us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you. The Lord is God, and he has made his light shine on us. ... You are my God, and I will praise you; you are my God, and I will exalt you. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. (Psalm 118:25-29 NIV)

The Bible tells us that a man named Abraham believed God, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith. Abraham had favour with God and God blessed him and granted him success. The founders of AA included Step 2 because they knew that God delights in us when we have faith to believe: that He exists, that His word is truth, and that we show it by putting those beliefs into action in all our affairs.

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry. (Hebrews 11:6; Psalm 34:15 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I choose to believe that You exist and that You hear me when I call out to You in prayer. Help me to honour You and obey Your word in everything I do and say. Amen

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MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2021

WHAT MAKES A GREAT PERSON?

What do we think makes a person great and someone we would highly regard? Some of us would name a talented sports star, or a notable actor or singer. Others might name a politician, or a teacher or mentor, or someone whose judgment they greatly respect. The answers we might give are numerous, but they usually give an indication of the values we hold. What did Jesus say about what makes a great person?

Jesus' disciples were arguing about which one of them was the greatest. Jesus knew what they were thinking, and he had a child stand there beside him. Then he said to his disciples, "When you welcome even a child because of me, you welcome me. And when you welcome me, you welcome the one who sent me. Whichever one of you is the most humble is the greatest." (Luke 9:46-48 CEV)

**Whichever
one of you
is the most
humble is
the
greatest**
Luke 9:48 CEV

Many of us have told exaggerated stories about our family or achievements to make ourselves appear superior to others. A mature person is one who is humble before others and willing to acknowledge their failings and who they truly are on the inside. They neither struggle nor strain to appear great before others but are childlike in their attitude and accept that without God in their life they can do nothing of value.

I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you stay joined to me, and I stay joined to you, then you will produce lots of fruit. But you cannot do anything without me. (John 15:5 CEV)

A mature vine is pruned each year so that it is enabled to produce a more abundant harvest. We need to allow our gracious God to prune our thoughts and actions and anything that is clinging to us from our rebellious years. We need to allow God to cut deeply, so that we can become mature and empowered to do those things that He has prepared in advance for us to do.

My friends, stop thinking like children. Think like mature people and be as innocent as tiny babies. (1 Corinthians 14:20 CEV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to humble myself before You and allow You to raise me up. I give You permission to strip away from me anything that causes me to think more highly of myself than I ought to. Amen

THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 2021

CHARACTER DEFECT: SELF-JUSTIFICATION

In certain situations, when our behaviour is challenged, we are quick to try to justify ourselves. If we are challenged for doing wrong, we justify it by saying, "This is just the way I am." We justify anger by saying "He or she made me mad." We justify being rude by saying "I just speak my mind." Sometimes we are unwilling to see the exact nature of our wrongs.

Suppose we claim we are without sin. Then we are fooling ourselves. The truth is not in us. But God is faithful and fair. If we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins. He will forgive every wrong thing we have done. He will make us pure. (1 John 1:8-9 NIRV)

In our addiction, we often lied to others after failing to fulfill the commitments we made. We became experts at making up believable excuses and even justified lying to ourselves. Self-justification is rooted in the thinking that we are better human beings than we truly are. It's time to admit that wrong is wrong, and that we are guilty of wrong thinking and wrong behaving.

I, the Lord, am the one speaking to you. Come, let's discuss this. Even if your sins are as dark as red dye, that stain can be removed and you will be as pure as wool that is as white as snow. (Isaiah 1:18 ERV)

When we acknowledge and repent of the exact nature of our wrongs and accept forgiveness from God for our self-justification, we will then be free to become the person God created us to be. God is with us to help us change. We can bring every deceptive thought captive to Jesus and be transformed in our thinking. When our thinking is right, our behaviour will follow.

God has given me a special gift, and that is why I have something to say to each one of you. Don't think that you are better than you really are. You must see yourself just as you are. Decide what you are by the faith God has given each of us. (Romans 12:3 ERV)

Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to see myself as I truly am and resolve not to justify my wrong doing. I want to be transformed in my mind so that I am no longer captive to self-justification. Amen

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2021

WISDOM FOR THE JOURNEY: TWO ARE BETTER THAN ONE

Leaving behind a lifestyle of self-centered isolation and coming into community with others is both a gift and a challenge.

Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.

(Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 NLT)

Clearly God knows that we need one another in order to successfully get ahead. We need to be encouraged by one another's experience, strength, and hope and learn from each other. We need the mentoring and challenging of sponsors and those who have walked this road ahead of us and picked up useful lessons. We need the strength that comes from both giving and receiving comfort and understanding when times are tough. We need to hear warnings when we are going astray and affirmation when we have achieved tough goals.

Carry one another's heavy loads. If you do, you will fulfill the law of Christ. A friend loves at all times. They are there to help when trouble comes. We are many persons. But in Christ we are one body and each part of the body belongs to all the other parts. (Galatians 6:2, Proverbs 17:17, Romans 12:5 NIRV)

God's view is that we need one another just like a body needs each of its parts. We are called to work, pray, and worship together. If we try to live distant or disconnected, we harm not only ourselves but others. While we are all growing and learning how to let go of character defects it is difficult to tolerate each other, but God will surely help us. We will grow stronger more quickly when we do our part in the community, together with others, as God planned.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for your gift of my brothers and sisters in recovery. Help me to see where I am meant to be and to be a useful member of my family and the recovery community. Amen

TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 2021

PART OF THE SOLUTION RATHER THAN THE PROBLEM

Someone has rightly said, "If you are not part of the solution then you are part of the problem." Our life with God in recovery is about making the transition from being part of the problem to becoming part of the solution. A key word in that slogan is "part." God is now in control of our lives. We make space for Him to do His part and we actively engage in the part that He has prepared for us to do.

Call out to me when trouble comes. I will save you and you will honor me. 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. (Psalm 50:15, James 1:5 NIRV)

Fear and pride often show up in the middle of a difficult situation and if we allow these to govern our thinking process, the problem will only get worse. If we seek God for a solution, we will find that it will be better than anything our fearful minds could conjure up.

In our new life with God in recovery our first response should be to call out to God, ask Him for wisdom, and then find out what our part might be in bringing about a solution. Sometimes we will have a major role in the solution and at other times we will need to simply wait and allow God to work. One of the hardest lessons to put into practice is that of letting go and giving God a chance to demonstrate that He has a solution. We often lack confidence in the waiting process and our impatience may cause us to add complications to the initial problem.

I will give you words of wisdom. None of your enemies will be able to withstand them or prove them wrong. I am sure that your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life. (Luke 21:15, Psalm 23:6 NIRV)

God invites us to trust in His wisdom. Our part is to live with a peaceful heart; get to know God's ways by reading the Bible; seek good counsel from sponsors and mentors; pray to be conscious of God's will for our lives, and to have the power to carry it out.

Prayer: Loving God, I want my actions to be part of the solution to any problem rather than the addition of complications. Help me recognize what is helpful and what comes from my defects of character. Help me to live in peace while waiting for a solution knowing You are in control and Your wisdom is wiser than any solution I could ever conjure up. Amen

**God invites
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Our part is
to live with
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heart.**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2021

WISDOM FOR THE JOURNEY – PAY ATTENTION

Each day we have many decisions to make. At any given time, we may find ourselves at that place where two roads meet and wonder which road we should take. If we are willing to seek God, wait, listen, learn, and obey, we will find that God's wisdom will guide us to make the right decision. Through the reading of His word and obedience to it, we will develop maturity and a good sense of where God wants to lead us on the road we have chosen.

Listen! Wisdom is calling out. Reason is making herself heard. On the hilltops near the road and at the crossroads she stands. At the entrance to the city, beside the gates, she calls: Are you immature? Learn to be mature. Are you foolish? Learn to have sense. Listen to my excellent words; all I tell you is right. (Proverbs 8:1-3, 5-6 GNT)

Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions.

Psalm 119:18 NLT

There's no doubt that our way of thinking and dealing with situations has been seriously compromised by life and by addiction. Our minds have attached themselves to false information and our thinking is distorted. We must learn new ways to deal with emotions and thoughts. We must learn from wise people who have walked with God and found restoration by taking practical steps each day. Most importantly we need to pay attention to the instructions God gives in the Bible. We need to pay attention to the promptings of the Holy Spirit who helps us sort out what is right and what is wrong in each circumstance.

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. (John 16:13a NIRV)

The unfailing promise we have is that when we do things God's way, we will find life. If we chose not to obey God, the consequences are also clearly specified.

For those who find me find life and receive favor from the Lord. But those who fail to find me harm themselves; all who hate me love death. (Proverbs 8:35-36 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I hear You speaking truth to me today. With every decision I need to make, help me to pay attention to Your direction and to walk in the way You have chosen for me. I desire Your favour as we journey together on the road of life. Amen

TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2021

LIVING SOBER – WATCHING OUT FOR COMPLACENCY

As our time increases in recovery one of the enemies we need to guard against is becoming complacent. We think we are doing okay so we skip doing the things that helped us get sober and find a productive life. We get busy earning money and we don't go to church or meetings anymore. We used to take time in the morning for prayer, meditation, and reading our Bible but now we hit the snooze button one more time and just grab a coffee and get on with the day. After all, we are feeling okay, we've got recovery covered. It's at this time of feeling self-satisfied that we are most vulnerable to relapse to our substance or habit of choice, or to slide into new unhealthy behaviours.

Sin and self-satisfaction bring destruction and death to stupid fools. (Proverbs 1:32 CEV)

Sometimes the signal that we have become complacent shows in an attitude. We get irritated and find ourselves reacting negatively towards others. We excuse our attitude and blame it on annoyance with those newer in recovery than ourselves. Perhaps we begin to feel a bit isolated and find ourselves sleeping more or vegging out in front of a screen instead of getting in touch with supportive friends. We begin to tell ourselves that maybe we could hang out at the bar and just have one drink or gather with familiar friends who are still using. In these circumstances it is time to take inventory and check in with a sponsor or someone who can speak the truth to us, whether we feel it is convenient or not.

They have lost all feeling for what is right. So they have given themselves over to all kinds of evil pleasures. They take part in every kind of unclean act. And they are full of greed. (Ephesians 4:19 NIRV)

The Bible warns us to be alert and to stay on guard because our enemy is just waiting for an opportunity to get us when we are most vulnerable.

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

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I need you just like I needed you the first day I came into recovery. Help me to reestablish my relationship with you and to get back on track with prayer and meditation, seeking only to know your will and have the power to carry it out. Amen

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.
Deuteronomy 6:5 NIV

MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2021

HEALING FOR OUR HEARTS AND BODIES

Every day of our lives, and especially when we come into recovery, we need the healing power of God to bring us to new life. Our bodies and our relationships are broken, and had we continued in our chaotic lifestyle, we might have died. To fulfill the demands of our dependency, we alienated our friends and family and abandoned all sense of right and wrong. We need help and we know it!

Have the gates of death been shown to you? Have you seen the gates of the deepest darkness? (Job 38:17 NIV)

The above words were spoken by God to Job who was being persecuted by Satan and was in deep distress. Job needed the healing power of God to restore health to his body and to deal with the traumatic events of his life. Does that sound familiar? One

thing we know from the Scriptures is that Satan wants to steal, kill, and destroy us whereas Jesus went to the gates of deepest darkness and death on our behalf. Jesus took the sin of the world upon Himself and tasted death for everyone, so we never have to. The choice of whom we will serve is ours alone.

But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. (Hebrews 2:9 NIV)

When we begin to make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves, we can often see where we began to go down the wrong path. Most of us needed healing from the genuinely inflicted harm we suffered, or from the harm which was a product of our sensitivity to what was being said or done to us or around us. Instead of seeking healing for our hurts we chose to allow the character defects of resentment, revenge, rage, anger, and bitterness govern our lives. Through Jesus, God made provision for us to be forgiven, healed, and restored to life. Are we entirely ready to do what is right and allow God to bind up our broken hearts and heal all our wounds?

You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. (1 Corinthians 6:19b-20 NIV)

Prayer: Loving God, I am entirely ready to have You remove all my character defects. Please heal and restore me to new life. My desire is to honour You and others in all I do. Amen

He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.

Psalm 147:3 NIV

THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2021

CHARACTER DEFECT – SELF-IMPORTANCE

Have you ever tried to put together a toy or a piece of furniture which came with detailed instructions which you ignored, and then near the end found an important piece that needed to go in place at the beginning for the whole thing to fit together? Life is like that when we consider our ideas and ways of doing things are more important than God's.

The counsel of the Lord stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations. (Psalm 33:11 NKJV)

In our addictive lifestyle, some of us considered ourselves so important that we thought the world revolved around us. When faced with a situation that involved others, we believed our rights mattered more than their rights. At times, the most vulnerable members in our family suffered because we disregarded their personal rights and lied to them or stole from them.

God has given me a special gift, and that is why I have something to say to each one of you. Don't think that you are better than you really are. You must see yourself just as you are. Decide what you are by the faith God has given each of us. (Romans 12:3 ERV)

God has given each of us gifts, abilities, and knowledge but when we don't follow His instructions, we never get to be the whole person He created us to be. When we are self-important in our own eyes, we are not fulfilling the command of Jesus to love God and others. We need to humble ourselves and be honest before God about who we truly are on the inside. If we choose to humble ourselves, God will lift us up at just the right time.

So be content with who you are, and don't put on airs. God's strong hand is on you; he'll promote you at the right time. Live carefree before God; he is most careful with you. (1 Peter 5:6-7 MSG)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for thinking too highly of myself and for being a lover of pleasure rather than a lover of God. Help me to follow You in all my ways and to consider others as better than myself. Amen

When we are self-important in our own eyes, we are not fulfilling the command of Jesus to love God and others.

FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 2021

COURAGE TO BELIEVE IN CHANGE

"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."

In the Bible we read the story of a man named Gideon. He was discouraged and had little self-respect. His family was extremely poor, and he was the least in his family. An angel appeared and called to him, "**Mighty hero, the Lord is with you!**" (Judges 6:12 NLT). Gideon did not feel or look like a mighty hero. God was calling him to deliver his people from their enemies and Gideon felt inadequate in the face of this great task. God, however, chose him and simply said, "**I will be with you.**" (Judges 6:16 NLT) By the end of the story, Gideon was the mighty deliverer of his people God had identified Him to be.

We need to find the courage to change – the courage to see life, even our life, as God sees it.

Gideon's first step toward success was finding the courage to change. What in Gideon needed to change? Gideon needed to see himself as God saw him – a mighty hero.

Many of us feel weak and think we are failures. We had problems with addiction. We made bad choices. We've struggled to put our life back together again. Now in the sanity of our recovery we wonder how God could possibly care about people like us and give us a successful life. Just like Gideon, we need to find the courage to change – the courage to see life, even our life, as God sees it.

No matter what we need, God can and will supply it. Our part is to trust God. God is with us and He will give us the strength and ability to overcome each difficulty we encounter. Just like Gideon, our faith in God will grow and we will have the courage to change the things we can and the wisdom to know what to leave in God's hands.

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. (Isaiah 41:10 NIV, Philippians 4:13 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to remember that You are with me as I face the challenges of each day and, that through Christ who gives me strength, I can do everything that is required of me. Amen

SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 2021

SUNDAY PSALM – CONTINUOUS PRAISE

When we wake up each morning, are our first thoughts a desire to praise God for His grace and goodness to us or, are they focused on our problems and things that need to be done? When we begin our day focusing on our problems or personal agenda, we may miss the many valuable resources that God wants to make available to us for a productive day.

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, you his servants; praise the name of the Lord. Let the name of the Lord be praised, both now and forevermore. From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised. The Lord is exalted over all the nations, his glory above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God, the One who sits enthroned on high, who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth? (Psalm 113:1-6 NIV)

"*God could and would if He were sought*" should be front and center in our minds as we begin each new day. When we put God first, He provides the wisdom and strength we need to achieve what is on our agenda. On the other hand, when we begin our day trying to think of solutions for circumstances that may cause problems, we often find that we are ill equipped to handle what we actually encounter.

When we take time to have conscious contact with God, we will find that He, the maker of the heavens and the earth, really does listen and strengthen those whose hearts are turned towards Him.

The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. (2 Chronicles 16:9 NLT)

Why worry and complain all day long about our hardships when God is ready to help us? All we need to do is ask for His help early in the morning and continually throughout the day.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to remember to seek You early, and all day long. I want to trust You in all my affairs, for there is no hardship that You are unable to resolve. Amen

When we put God first, He provides the wisdom and strength we need to achieve what's on our agenda.

STEP SIX – READY

Every week, or every other week, people put out trash cans and recycling bins so they are ready for the scheduled collections in their community. God also wants us to get rid of the trash that accumulates in our lives and the founders of AA recognized this when they included Step Six in the 12-Step program. “*We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*”

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. (Psalm 139:23-24 NLT)

We must seek God and give Him control in revealing what needs to go, as well as when and how.

What does it mean to get ready for God to do this work? We must first seek God and give Him control in revealing what needs to go, as well as when and how. That is the hard part. We’re willing to work on our character defects but only on the bits we want to change, and in the time frame we want them changed. In our mind we have decided to take control of how to proceed.

Are we willing to consider that God might know the best way and the appropriate timing for whatever defects need to be removed? Much of what’s gone wrong in the past is our application of our own flawed solutions to our inaccurate understanding of our real problems. It’s time to think about things from God’s viewpoint. The Bible is the place to find the guidance we need.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NKJV)

If we humbly come to God and surrender all that we are to Him, in His perfect timing, God will prepare a way for us to let go of the trash we’ve accumulated.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I ask that You reveal my character defects and give me the desire and the strength to let go of all that hinders my life’s purpose. Help me to be completely honest about what is going on inside me. I truly want to follow Your principles in all my ways. Amen

BEATITUDES – THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Hunger and thirst are basic human needs. When basic needs are not met it’s difficult or impossible to give ourselves to other tasks. For example, it’s hard for children to study at school when they have not had breakfast, or for recovering addicts to focus on getting a job when they have no safe housing to return to at night.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. (Matthew 5:6 NIV)

Jesus teaches that the foundation of life is to know and live as God intends. Whether we admit it or not, the guilt and shame that comes from living life out of sync with God’s purposes leaves us feeling edgy and dissatisfied. We know something is wrong but we’re not sure what. We’ve told ourselves we need more money, sexual gratification, a new toy, or our drug of choice. The hunger within us is God given, but we have been trying to feed it with things that will not satisfy.

Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. (Isaiah 55:2 NV)

The recovery journey of: seeking God; getting to know His will; letting go of our character defects; building respectful and loving relationships; and coming more and more into conscious contact with Him; is the only way we will truly be filled up and satisfied.

It sounds like a long and difficult challenge and we wonder if we are up to the task. Fortunately, we don’t have to wait to be satisfied until we are successful in all these areas. We simply stay hungry and thirsty for what is right each step of the way. To be physically healthy, we need to drink several glasses of water and eat three healthy meals each day. To be spiritually healthy, we need to be in conscious contact with God each day through prayer and meditation on His word. How hungry and thirsty for righteousness are we today?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I have sought after many things to satisfy my aching heart. Please help me to seek Your food and drink today and every day, and live filled up on You. Amen

We simply have to stay hungry and thirsty for what is right each step of the way.

SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2021

SAY WHAT WE MEAN AND MEAN WHAT WE SAY

Many of us have been in the company of others who think they know everything but when they open their mouths not much wisdom comes out. Know-it-alls have little respect for those around them and lie through their teeth to save face when the truth about a situation is exposed. The person who wrote the following Psalm is asking God for help to deal with people like this who lived in his community.

Help, Lord! No one does what is right anymore. Those who are faithful have disappeared from the human race. Everyone tells lies to their neighbors. With their lips they praise others, but they don't really mean it. May the Lord close all lips that don't mean what they say. May he stop every tongue that brags. They say, "What we speak with our tongues will win the battle. What we say with our lips will keep us safe. No one will have victory over us." (Psalm 12:1-4 NIRV)

**We need
to learn to
“say what
we mean
and mean
what we
say.”**

While living in a dysfunctional lifestyle, we often thought those who tried to help us were cramping our style. We moved away from anyone who spoke to us about doing what was right. We thought most highly of those who were supplying us with the substance we needed to get high or helped us relieve the pain we were suffering. We decided we knew what was best for us and that was the end of any discussion about the harm we were causing ourselves and our loved ones. We lied to others. We made promises we had no intention of keeping. Our self-will brought us to the place where we were uncertain what was right anymore and our life was totally unmanageable.

When we came into recovery, we were broken but reasoned that we could still have victory by continuing to do things our way. However, the only sure way to win the battle is by becoming a person who is faithful to God, to others, and to living as the person God created us to be. We need to learn to “say what we mean and mean what we say.” We need to seek God to guide us and, as we do, we will find that He is faithful to keep us safe and give us strength to persevere, and also be persons who do those things that we say we will do.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I repent of my arrogance in thinking that my ways are better than Your ways. Today I acknowledge that in You are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Help me to seek Your will and to be a person who faithfully does what I say. Amen

FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 2021

GRATITUDE AT EVERY STAGE OF THE JOURNEY

In sharing our recovery journey at meetings, we often look to the model of, “what life was like in addiction, what happened, and what life looks like now.” In each of these stages of our recovery journey it is good to acknowledge God’s input into what was going on and thank Him for all He has done.

Thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.
(1 Corinthians 15:57 NLT)

Only God could have brought us to a place where we recognized that we were powerless and that our lives had become unmanageable. God, in His wisdom, may have brought someone across our path to share a message of hope with us, or He simply may have stirred a desire in us for something other than what we were living. God gave us the strength and courage to seek help and here we are. One day at a time, one moment at a time God gives us sobriety and a new life worth living. Have we taken time today to thank God for all He has done?

But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. Everything you say and everything you do should be done for Jesus your Lord. And in all you do, give thanks to God the Father through Jesus. (Romans 6:17 NIV, Colossians 3:17 ERV)

There's no doubt that the power of our addiction brought us to a place of being a slave to our drug of choice, and to a lifestyle of doing whatever was necessary regardless of the harm caused to others. That slavery was broken by the power of God as we put our trust in the forgiveness and healing that Jesus won for us on the cross.

As we have studied God’s word and put His principles into practice in all our affairs, we have found freedom to speak and behave in ways we never could have imagined. We can wake up each day with a heart filled with gratitude and offer our experience, strength, and hope to others.

Prayer: Loving God, I cannot begin to tell you how grateful I am for what You have done for me. Each breath I take is a gift from You. I don’t want to take my sobriety for granted. Today, and every day, I want to thank You for my life and my recovery. Amen

***It is good to
acknowledge
God's input
into what
was going on
and thank
Him for all He
has done.***

THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2021

CHARACTER STRENGTH – CONFIDENTLY DECISIVE

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

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. (James 1:5 NIV)

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

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

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

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

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

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

MONDAY, MARCH 15, 2021

MAKING ROOM FOR THE NEW BY CLEARING OUT THE OLD

How can a person become complete in God lacking nothing? Circumstances that are happening around us often add to what is already happening inside us. If we had a cupboard which was already packed and we were trying to get more in, some stuff would spill out all over the place because the cupboard is not equipped to contain everything we are trying to get in. Our minds are like that. We have already stored our life to date happenings. We need to clear out some of the old before we can add the new, otherwise confusion will result, and life will become unmanageable.

So get rid of all that is wrong in your life, both inside and outside, and humbly be glad for the wonderful message we have received, for it is able to save our souls as it takes hold of our hearts. (James 1:21 TLB)

When something is complete it means that it has been worked on to bring it to that state. To be complete in God we need to work on getting rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behaviour that we have been exhibiting. Life's hurts may have intensified our behaviour, but God wants us to forgive those who have harmed us and instead, be kind and compassionate towards them, just as He has been towards us.

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32 ESV)

You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete.

James 2:22 NLT

When we have cleared out some of the old behaviours we can then replace them with the new lifegiving behaviours that will draw us closer to God. We need to have daily conscious contact with God. We need to keep a personal inventory and be honest about what is causing us to keep doing something which is harmful to us. God wants us to be complete, lacking nothing, but we need to be willing to have faith in His word and practice His principles in all our affairs.

You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. (James 2:22 NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, Please give me the will and desire to get rid of my harmful ways and, in all that I do, let my actions make my faith complete. Amen

TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2021

TRUSTED SERVANTS and ULTIMATE AUTHORITY

As we hear Tradition 2 read in each AA meeting, we are reminded that, "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern." Whether we are those who jump in and try to get our own way in a situation or those who step back because we feel inferior to others, this principle invites all of us to share and do our part in the group.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but they all come from the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve the same Lord, and we can each do different things. Yet the same God works in all of us and helps us in everything we do. (1 Corinthians 12:4-6 CEV)

**This love
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God's plan has always been for us to live in relationship with Him through Jesus Christ, loving Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and then loving our neighbour as ourselves. This love recognizes the gifts that God gives each person and the need for one another for something to be complete. Nothing seems less perfect than a jigsaw puzzle of a beautiful scene missing a few pieces when it is put together. We each need to enjoy one another and do our part in what we are doing together.

I realize how kind God has been to me, and so I tell each of you not to think you are better than you really are. Use good sense and measure yourself by the amount of faith that God has given you. A body is made up of many parts, and each of them has its own use. That's how it is with us. There are many of us, but we each are part of the body of Christ, as well as part of one another. (Romans 12:3-5 CEV)

Thank God we can let go of the pressure of having all the answers, being right all the time, or always being in control. Without fear we can confidently bring our perspective and our service because God knows how to fit all the pieces together to accomplish His good plan.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, you have called us to serve you and one another in love. Thank you for the many different gifts You have given each of us. Help me to humbly offer my service today with the gifts You have given me and welcome the gifts and service others bring. Together may we give full expression of all You have planned for us to do. Amen

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2021

ST. PATRICK – MODEL FOR LIFE IN RECOVERY

Deep pain that results from unfair and unjust treatment by others is the reality of many people. Some of us try to cover up that pain with substances and other destructive addictions. With the memories we choose to carry, it's hard to believe that we could live sober, let alone live well.

If you are tired from carrying heavy burdens, come to me and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28 CEV)

Saint Patrick, who is celebrated around the world today, was just a child when he was captured by pirates, taken to Ireland, and sold as a slave to herd and tend sheep. We can only imagine the fear and loneliness he experienced while he was separated from his family and familiar surroundings and held captive by strangers who only wanted to use him for their own gain.

Patrick managed to escape when he was twenty years old and was reunited with his family. However, some time later he responded to the call of God to return to Ireland and bring the message of God's hope and love to the very people who had used and abused him.

Patrick's faith in God helped him rise above his circumstances to live not only in forgiveness but in a life dedicated to blessing and uplifting others.

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. (Luke 6:27-28 NIV)

What about you and me? Do we believe God can bring good out of the bad things that have happened to us? Are we willing to ask God to bless others as we tell our story of God's redeeming love for us, even our enemies?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to learn from St Patrick's example that Your extravagant love is more than enough to overcome the deepest hurts in my life. Help me to let go of resentments and offer forgiveness to others. I want to bless others as You have blessed me. Amen

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