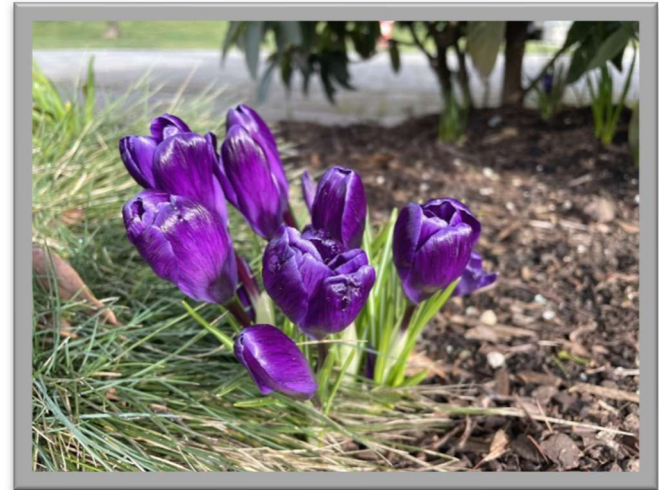


LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



MARCH 2024



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

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www.pihprayer.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:

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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 Caffeine Injected or smoked substances such as: Crack, Crystal Meth, Heroin Marijuana Prescription Medications Sugar Tobacco	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)
SOFT ADDICTIONS:	RELATIONSHIP ADDICTIONS:
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	Abusive Relationships: Includes: Intimidation, Isolation, Domination, Blaming, Humiliation, Withholding, Forcing acts against one's will Approval dependency Attention Seeking Codependence/Rescuing Power/Control

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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Daily Meditations

MARCH 2024

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

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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

MARCH 1

GOD IS ALWAYS WITH ME

God is always with me. I need never face my problems alone. Together with God, any difficulty can be worked out and overcome.

Life in recovery is not without its problems. Often, because we are sober and dealing with our problems, we think we have more of them than when we were running in our addiction. Fear, worry, and frustration arise within us because we don't have a history of successfully facing our problems.

The God who loves us knows exactly where we are in our recovery journey. He promises us comfort in all our difficulties and will make a way where there seems to be no way through each challenge that arises. God invites us to let go of our fear, ask Him for His wisdom and guidance, and trust in His personal care for us.

The Lord himself will go ahead of you. He will be with you. He will never leave you. He'll never desert you. So don't be afraid. Don't lose hope. (Deuteronomy 31:8 NIRV)

God made the universe. He set the sun to come up every morning and to go down each night. The God who controls the power of the ocean, who protects a pretty flower as it grows through a crack in the sidewalk, and who feeds each little bird, will certainly take care of us and the problems we are facing.

Jesus said: ***"I tell you, do not worry. Don't worry about your life and what you will eat or drink. And don't worry about your body and what you will wear.... Look at the birds of the air. They don't plant or gather crops. They don't put away crops in storerooms. But your Father who is in heaven feeds them. Aren't you worth much more than they are?"*** (Matthew 6:25-26 NIRV)

Our lives and circumstances matter to God. Life in recovery is about believing that God is always with us, working on our behalf. With this assurance, we can trust Him to help us do the next right thing.

Prayer: Thank you Heavenly Father that I don't have to face my problems alone. Help me to have faith and trust that, together with You, any difficulty can be faced, worked out, and overcome. Amen

God invites us to let go of our fear, ask Him for His wisdom and guidance, and trust His personal care for us.

MAKING THINGS RIGHT

Making amends is a responsibility we must take seriously if we want to protect our sobriety. It is not simply offering an apology for bad behaviour and restitution wherever possible. Making amends is about doing all we can to put things right and to make it as easy as possible for healing to come to those we have harmed.

Don't be concerned for your own good but for the good of others. I, too, try to please everyone in everything I do. I don't just do what is best for me; I do what is best for others so that many may be saved. (1 Corinthians 10:24, 33 NLT)

Making amends is about doing all we can to put things right and to make it as easy as possible for healing to come to those we have harmed.

Taking the first step in making amends to others would be impossible if God had not first demonstrated the way for us. Over and over again we failed to keep God's commandments and yet, while we were still in our rebellious state, God sent His Son Jesus into the world to atone for our sin so we could be reconciled to Him. Jesus completed the work necessary to bring us peace with God, and God calls us to extend that peace to others. As we begin the work of restoring our troubled relationships, we can reflect on God's plan of reconciliation.

For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:19 NLT)

To make amends requires that whatever we do we must do it for the good of the person we have harmed. This is not intended to be a one-time event. It is meant to be

our pattern for living each day. Our goal is not just to feel better about ourselves but to lift others up and, if possible, lighten their load.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for forgiving me for the times I have failed to act with love towards others. Help me to forgive those who have harmed me and to do what is necessary to make amends to those I have harmed with my own bad behaviour. From this day forward, help me to live my life in a way that lifts others up and lightens their load. Amen

LIVING HOLY LIVES

When it comes to murder, everyone recognizes that it is wrong and something to be avoided and punished. Jesus puts evil thoughts and sexual sin in the same category as murder. Jesus teaches that indulging in sex outside of marriage spoils and pollutes us and ruins and degrades us. Those who engage in such activity are not just disobeying human rules but are actually rejecting God's perfect plan for their lives.

For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander. These are what defile you. God has called us to live holy lives, not impure lives. Therefore, anyone who refuses to live by these rules is not disobeying human teaching but is rejecting God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. (Matthew 15:19-20, 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8 NLT)

The Bible also teaches us that we may be offensive to God in the way we talk, the way we think, the jokes we tell, the offhanded comments we make. These fit in the category of impurity of mind. God warns us that if we engage in such activity, we will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. (Ephesians 5:4-5 NLT)

Impossible standards? On our own, YES! But God is faithful to do in us that which we cannot do for ourselves.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You have called me to be holy because You are holy. Give me the strength to live according to Your principles. My desire is to live my life by faith in Jesus, who loved me and gave His life for me. Amen

Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people.
(Ephesians 5:3 NLT)

CHARACTER STRENGTH – CONFIDENTLY DECISIVE

How many of us are confident in our decision making? When something feels right, do we just go ahead and 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 God's principles and putting them into effect in all our affairs. If we are unsure about something, we can ask God for direction 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
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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 to knowing a good life. Making decisions about what to do when temptation comes is vital to maintaining our sobriety. We can be certain that temptation will come, and we 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

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 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)

It is God's will that we respect our parents, people in authority, 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 commandments do not change regarding 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.

***Showing
respect and
being
worthy of
respect
matters to
God.***

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 say and do. 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

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 cynical in our thoughts about what the person is saying. We are just at the beginning of recovery and are unsure if we will be able to 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 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

It is good to be 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. When we faithfully follow the way God directs us, we will triumph over our doubts and fears and hope will grow within us. 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

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 have a productive life. We get busy earning money and 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 have recovery mastered. 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)

Often 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 safely gather with familiar friends who are still using. In these circumstances, whether we feel it is convenient or not, it is time to take inventory and check in with a sponsor or someone who can speak the truth to us.

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

HOW FAR IS THE EAST FROM THE WEST?

How far is the east from the west? It is a distance we cannot travel and a destination we can never reach. Based on our repentance for our sins and acceptance of the death and resurrection of Jesus to give us new life, God removes our sins from us and chooses to remember them no more. We can leave the disgrace and damage of our destructive lives at the cross of Jesus and, in exchange, receive a completely new life from Him.

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:8-12 NIV)

**God
removes
our sins
from us
and
chooses to
remember
them no
more.**

When God separates us from our sins, we are washed clean from them, and they are removed to a place that is as far as the east is from the west. What then is going on within us when we continue to remember the guilt and shame, and the pain and condemnation? The simple answer is the enemy of our soul sits on our shoulder telling us lies. The one who seeks to destroy us is deceiving us into thinking those dark things remain some place in our soul. He is a liar as Jesus called him, because our sins are truly gone. God says He remembers them no more so why should we?

What are we to do when we are faced with this kind of accusation? We are to proclaim the truth that Jesus paid our sin debt on the cross, and because we believe in His sacrifice, our debt has been 'paid in full' and God has forgiven us. We are to speak this truth to our thoughts and emotions. We then tell the enemy he is a liar and command him to take off. We will experience the satisfaction of God's freeing work when we simply proclaim this truth, "Jesus has set us free".

Jesus said, *"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* (John 8:31-32 NIV)

Prayer: Dear Jesus, Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins and removing them from me as far as the east is from the west. Help me to reject all shame and condemnation and live in the joy and freedom of full forgiveness. Amen

CONTROL ISSUES

Control issues are widespread in addiction and are a problem for both the addict and for those who care about them. Those involved in unhealthy activities or abusing substances often lie to themselves about how they have everything under control.

The idea that somehow, someday he will control and enjoy his drinking is the great obsession of every abnormal drinker. (Big Book Chapter 3)

Those who live with or around addicts often feel that their own well-being is threatened and try to control their environment with rigid rules. There are many expressions of attempting to control someone including anger, ridicule, reward, etc.

The truth is, only God can bring about change in us or in our loved one, because the satanic enemies behind addiction are too strong for us to face alone. Only God has the power and authority to control all things. If we ask Him, He will act on our behalf.

He saved them from the power of their enemies. He set them free from their control. When evening came, many people controlled by demons were brought to Jesus. He drove out the spirits with a word. He healed all who were sick. (Psalm 106:10, Matthew 8:16 NIRV)

God has made provision for us to be free from the power of addiction and the fear that makes us control freaks. As we give our will and life over to the care of God, we will see how He defends us against the power of our enemies. Safe in God's care, we can stop trying to control others and simply invite them to also trust God.

Don't live under the control of sin. If you do, you will think about what sin wants. Live under the control of the Holy Spirit. If you do, you will think about what the Spirit wants. (Romans 8:5 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am out of control and I don't know how to proceed. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit so that in His power my enemies will be defeated, and I can obey You and experience the blessed life You have prepared for me. Amen

**Only God
has the
power
and
authority
to control
all things.**

CHARACTER QUALITY – ATTENTIVE

Whether they admit it or not, everyone longs for someone to listen to them and care for them. Sometimes when we are speaking, we feel someone is not listening to us and assume they do not care. How many times have we offended God and others by not being attentive and paying attention to what they said? Real relationship is built on listening to God and to each other.

God listens to us and His attention to our thoughts and needs brings comfort and stability to our daily living.

The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry. (Psalm 34:15 NIV)

God's Holy Spirit will help us listen attentively to what others are saying, so that we can comfort and help them find the healing they need.

God wants to care for others through us. God's Holy Spirit will help us listen attentively to what others are saying, so that we can comfort and help them find the healing they need. Caring enough to listen well is something we can all develop. It begins with a willingness to stop being self-centered and needing another's attention to be directed to us. To be attentive, we must stop speaking and try listening. We must quiet the voices in our head that have a response prepared before a person has half a sentence spoken.

Be humble. Value others more than yourselves. None of you should look out just for your own good. Each of you should also look out for the good of others. (Philippians 2:3-4 NIRV)

It takes effort and intention to stay interested in what someone is sharing and to really listen to them. Let's choose this way of expressing our love and care for someone today as we choose to listen closely to what they are saying.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You care about what is going on inside me and listen every time I come to You with my concerns. Help me to love like You love and give the gift of a listening ear and a caring heart to those who speak with me. My desire is to truly care for others by being attentive to whatever they are sharing with me. Amen

FINDING OUR WAY 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 will 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. I repent and turn away from my many sins and failures. Please set things right for me, so that I may 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!

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 our 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 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 daily 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 allow Him to do so, we will find Him faithful to keep us safe and give us the strength to persevere and be a person who does those things 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 be a person who faithfully does what I say I will do. Amen

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 the ways of God 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. My desire is to live in peace while waiting for a solution, knowing that Your wisdom is wiser than any solution I could personally conjure up. Amen

God invites us to trust in His wisdom. Our part is to live with a peaceful heart.

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.

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

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)

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 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 words that build others up and meet their needs, we will need to allow God to teach us new ways of thinking and behaving towards each of 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

GETTING IT RIGHT IN THE END

There appears 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 turned to 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 on their commitment will not find the good life they seek. The son who didn't look so good in the beginning is 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 have failed 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

***Recovery
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time.***

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.

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

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 which needed to go in place at the beginning for the whole thing to perfectly fit together? Life turns out like that when we think our ideas and ways of doing things are better than the ways of God as recorded in the Bible.

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. We believed our rights mattered more than another's rights when we faced a situation that involved them. At times, the most vulnerable members in our family suffered because we disregarded their personal rights and lied to them or stole from them in order to sustain our selfish lifestyle.

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.

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 thought to be the least in his family. An angel appeared and called to him, ***"Mighty hero, the Lord is with you!"*** (Judges 6:12 NLT). Gideon didn't feel, or even look like, a mighty hero. God was calling him to deliver his nation from their enemies and Gideon felt inadequate in the face of this great task. God, however, could see his potential and simply said, ***"I will be with you."*** (Judges 6:16 NLT) By the end of the story, Gideon had become the champion and deliverer of his people.

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 can grow and we will have the courage to change those 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, Fill me with faith in Your great power. As I face the challenges of each day, help me to remember that You are with me and that I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength. Amen

SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

What is the spiritual awakening we come to experience as we walk with God in recovery? What is the message that we share? What is the life we seek to practice?

Before we came into recovery we probably never thought much about God or consulted Him about the plan He had for us when we were created. We lived our lives as though God did not exist. As we came to believe that God, our Higher Power, could and would restore us to sanity, we turned our will and our life over to His care. What does that mean? It means we confess and turn away from our sin and admit that living in separation from God results in our lives becoming unmanageable. We humbly ask God to come into our miserable existence, take control, make us children of God, and fill us with the new life that Jesus died to make available to us. The Holy Spirit of God awakens our spirit, and we begin to know the unfailing love of our Heavenly Father. We make a choice to abandon our old life and humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings and to empower us to live in His ways. Life begins to change.

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. See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1 John 1:9 NIRV, 1 John 3:1 NIV)

Only a spiritual awakening could bring us to that place where we believe God and enter into an intimate relationship with Him. Our relationship with God is the foundation on which we build a purposeful life. The reality of the unfailing love of God and His presence with us confirms the hope held deeply within our being, that our future will be fine. This is the life experience we've always desired and now have found in the embrace of the Living God. This is what gives us rest, gives us comfort, gives us peace.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You, thank You, thank You for this new life I have with You in recovery. Once again, I surrender my will and life into Your care. I truly want to know Your will for my life and have the power to carry it out. Amen

Only a spiritual awakening could bring us to that place where we believe God and enter into an intimate relationship with Him.

PEACE THAT MELTS HARSHNESS

Too many of us carry a harsh picture of God and believe He looks for ways to be displeased with us. Sometimes we look at our actions and condemn ourselves and think that God also condemns us. We seldom see the kindness and tenderness of God as He comes alongside us.

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:28-29 NLT)

Today is a good time to ask God to help us let go of harshness and embrace the gentleness of spirit that allows our hearts and minds to be at peace.

God views our life situations with a caring heart. He welcomes us to come to Him to find peace when we are hurting, confused, or feeling threatened. He encourages us to bring painful memories out of the darkness of our souls and into the light of His healing presence so we can be freed from their power.

Sometimes our peace is challenged by our displeasure with others. We react with frustration and often without thinking when we hear judgmental words spoken against us or someone we care about, and we strike out violently at the source of our frustration. This is not God's way. In the same way God comes alongside us with grace and patience, acceptance, and forgiveness, so He instructs us to maintain peace with others.

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgives you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. (Colossians 3:12-14 NLT)

Today is a good day to ask God to help us let go of harshness and embrace the gentleness of spirit that allows our hearts and minds to be at peace.

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to receive Your love and healing today so I can let go of harshness and embrace gentleness as I live in peaceful relationship with You and others. Amen

REPRESS AND DENY

To cope with living in our 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 addictive 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 dysfunctional family 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 know me. Please heal me and 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.

WHAT MAKES A PERSON GREAT?

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 it is that makes a person great?

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. Whoever one of you is the most humble is the greatest." (Luke 9:46-48 CEV)

Whoever 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 shortcomings 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 anything that causes me to think more highly of myself than I ought to. Amen

FOCUSING ON GOD or ON OUR PROBLEMS

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 the day focusing on our problems or personal agenda, we may miss the many valuable resources that God desires 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 the circumstances that may cause us problems, we might find that we are ill equipped to handle what we do 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 is on our agenda.

STEP SIX – READY

Every week, or every second 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 A.A. 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 have accumulated.

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

BEATTITUDES – THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

To keep a body healthy, hunger, thirst, and shelter from the elements of climate must be satisfied daily. When these 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 are hungry 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)

If we desire to be filled up and satisfied, the following steps are ways to follow in our recovery journey: 1) Seek God. 2) Get to know God's will for us. 3) Let go of our character defects. 4) Build relationships that are respectful and loving. 5) Continually seek conscious contact with God.

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 for satisfaction 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 the food and drink of Your Word first, and live filled up on You. Amen

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

WISDOM FOR THE JOURNEY – PAY ATTENTION

Each person has many decisions to make each day. 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 mature and develop 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 healing and 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 choose another way, the consequences are 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 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 I journey together with You on the road of life. Amen

JUST FOR TODAY – NOTICE THE GIFTS

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

Brothers and sisters, continue to think about what is good and worthy of praise. Think about what is true and honorable and right and pure and beautiful and respected. (Philippians 4:8 ERV)

Both in the Bible and in the "12 Promises of A.A." we are encouraged to trust that, as we build our lives on the unfailing love of God and maintain our sobriety, we will notice certain gifts coming alive in us. They include experiencing new freedom and joy in life; seeing how our experience can benefit others; shifting from self-seeking to interest in others; growing the ability to handle situations that used to baffle us. The best gift is saved for the last, we will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Give thanks to the Father. He has made you able to have what he has promised to give all his holy people, who live in the light. (Colossians 1:12 ERV)

While it's valid to maintain an inventory around our character defects so we don't slip into destructive attitudes and behaviours, it's strengthening and life-giving to pay attention to what is changing and growing and becoming beautiful in us.

One of the "12 Promises" reminds us that *"We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it."* God promises to use each of our lives to show His goodness and glory to others – that includes our story of how He brought us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

God chose you to be his people. You are royal priests. You are a holy nation. You are God's special treasure. You are all these things so that you can give him praise. God brought you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9 NIRV)

Prayer: Thank you God for the many gifts I have already experienced in this life with You in recovery. Help me to be aware of even more today. Amen

God promises to use each of our lives to show His goodness and glory to others.

RESENTMENT and BURIED GRUDGES

We feel hurt when another's unkind words or actions cause our self-worth to be devalued. If amends are not made, we often carry grudges against those who offended us, and this causes us even further harm. Vengeful thinking and bitter grudges will sicken our soul and cause damage to those who are close to us.

Forgiveness is the only way to stop the ongoing pain from buried grudges. For some of us who have been victimized, forgiveness is unthinkable. We still feel the pain of the offence and forgiveness rips at our sense of justice. We want the offender to pay, to suffer in return for the suffering they inflicted on us. However, until we choose to forgive the offender, the committed offence against us will continue to harm us. Unforgiveness will cause resentment to fester in our souls and the connection between us and the person who harmed us will remain and grieve us. The Bible gives us the following advice:

***Forgiveness
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the ongoing
pain from
buried
grudges.***

Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written, "I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it," says the Lord. Instead, do what the Scriptures say: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink, and they will be ashamed of what they have done to you." (Romans 12:18-20 NLT)

Healing will come if we are willing to let go of the wrong we suffered. Why not take the lingering pain of the offence against us and the grudge we are carrying to the cross where Jesus atoned for both? Why not choose to forgive and turn the person who harmed us over to God? Why not be guided in all our ways by the love of God?

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. (1 John 3:1a;3 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, As You have forgiven my sin against You and others, help me to forgive others for their sin against me. I desire to be free from all the grudges and bitterness that I have held against those who harmed me. Please help me to let go and allow the healing process to begin. Amen

AN AMAZING MUSTARD SEED

A mustard seed is very small but in only three months it can grow and produce a mature harvest. The growth it exhibits in such a short space of time is amazing. At times we may feel quite small and vulnerable, wondering if we can sustain recovery. We can take hope from what Jesus is saying about the mustard seed.

If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, it is enough. You can say to this mountain, "Move from here to there." And it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you. (Matthew 17:20-21 NIRV)

If we take the little bit of faith we have, enter the process of "coming to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity," and turn our will and our lives over to God's care, then even in a short space of 90 days amazing changes can be ours. Our faith is not in our own ability but in God's unfailing love and power to uphold us in our life in recovery.

I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. (Philippians 1:6 NLT)

Mustard on hamburgers, hot dogs, and ham sandwiches makes them taste even better. Mustard leaves add pleasing flavour as salad greens and do great things for our digestive system. Mustard oil has healing benefits as a health-boosting agent. Who knew a little seed could make such a difference?

God created us with amazing potential that may still be waiting to discover. Our addiction, however, blocked us from being all that God created us to be. Now, in recovery, we can receive what God has for us each day. We can grow strong and steady in God's unfailing love and become the unique person He created us to be.

No one has ever seen, no one has ever heard, no one has ever imagined what God has prepared for those who love him. (1 Corinthians 2:9 ERV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I want to have faith, even faith as small as a mustard seed, to trust You to make something amazing of my life with You in recovery. Amen

***Our faith is
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SLOGAN – LIVE AND LET LIVE

"Live and let live" is one of those slogans that encourage us to consider if our desire for control is becoming an issue we need to deal with. The Serenity Prayer wisely encourages us to ask God to grant us the serenity to "accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

Be humble under God's powerful hand. Then he will lift you up when the right time comes. Give all your worries to him, because he cares for you. Control yourselves and be careful! (1 Peter 5:6-8 ERV)

***We live
trusting
God and
respecting
the
choices
others
make.***

We are not in control of other people, places, or things. Some of our family members struggle with addiction and our desire is that they find sobriety. Others continue to exhibit character defects that are harmful to themselves and to others. People in positions of power in our work or community will make choices that we don't like but are powerless to change. Some people will hold mistaken understandings of who we are and why we are choosing for the life choices we make.

While we can hope for things to be different, we need to let go of situations that are out of our control. We need to focus our thoughts and efforts on those things God has given us to do – *"praying only for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out."* We need to trust God and respect the choices others make. Live and let live.

It's too easy to live co-dependently worrying about others, trying to rescue and fix things beyond our control, or just obsessing in our thoughts and emotions about things we don't like.

Today is another opportunity for us to live as the person God created us to be. Today is a day to relax, to be ourselves, to let go of things that are not ours to hold, and to let God be God.

Prayer: Loving God, I surrender my life and the circumstances around me into Your hands. Help me to stay focused on Your plan for me today and let everything else go. Amen

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, sometime 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 for me is enough to help me overcome the deepest hurts in my life. Help me to let go of resentments and offer forgiveness to others. Like St Patrick, I want to love and bless others as You love and have blessed me. Amen

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