

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



March 2017

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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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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2017

OPTIMISM FUELED BY HOPE

What gives a person in recovery a positive outlook on life? Faith and hope in God are foundational. Faith is the settled knowledge that God exists and that God is for us. When we have faith in God's goodness, hope will automatically flow.

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13 NLT)

Hope is a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen. When our hope is grounded in something sure and certain then we can build on it. God is faithful and all His ways are trustworthy. As we follow Him, we will find many reasons to have hope. God is our helper and our protector and answers our prayers. God comforts us, fills us with unfailing love, and forgives us when we confess we have failed to obey His commands.

We put our hope in the Lord. He is our help and our shield. You faithfully answer our prayers with awesome deeds, O God our savior. You are the hope of everyone on earth. When doubts filled my mind, your comfort gave me renewed hope and cheer. Hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is unfailing love. His redemption overflows. (Psalm 33:20, 65:5, 94:19, 130:7 NLT)

We are filled with hope as we listen to others in recovery meetings who have shared their experience of comfort and strength, found in their time of need. We will also be encouraged as we learn from previous generations who dared to believe and hope in God. The Bible is a great place to "have a meeting" with others who have gone before us and learn from their journey so we can walk with faith and hope today.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, thank you for the faith and hope that is in us. We ask You to further strengthen us as we choose to put our trust in Your word believing You will do all that You have promised. Amen

We are filled with hope as we listen to others in recovery meetings who have shared their experience of comfort and strength, found in their time of need.

THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2017

OPTIMISM FUELED BY LOVE

Of the three important things we need in order to have a positive outlook on life, love is the greatest. ***Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.*** (1 Corinthians 13:13 NLT)

Faith and hope remind us that God exists and that God is always with us. God has demonstrated that He is reliable and His promises are sure. We can confidently rely on His goodness and mercy which is available to us today.

The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. The Lord is good to those who depend on him, to those who search for him. (Lamentations 3:22-23, 25 NLT)

"Love covers a multitude of sins" is another truth we can rely on. Our bold claims about being confident to face the day often cover feelings of vulnerability as we are aware that we don't always live up to our ideals. Fortunately, God's love for us is unfailing, no matter how many errors in judgment we may make. He will correct us, but He will never cease to love us.

Of the three important things we need in order to have a positive outlook on life, love is the greatest.

God says: ***"I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness."*** (Jeremiah 31:3 NLT)

We can dare to be optimistic today because God's love helps us when we are weak. God's love is available to us when we come to Him. God's love works for good in all life situations.

Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most. (2 Corinthians 12:9, Hebrews 4:16 NLT)

PRAYER: Gracious God, Thank You that Your love is unfailing and Your mercy is from everlasting to everlasting for all who call on You. I once again turn my will and my life over to Your care. Amen

FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2017

OPTIMISM FUELED BY FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE

Doughnuts have dough and holes when they are first cut from dough but they don't look good or taste good until they've been fried in hot oil or baked in a hot oven. In the most famous "Love Chapter" of the Bible, we find these three qualities – faith, hope, and love -- "cooked together" to produce character in a person who can then endure well through many circumstances in life and provide sweetness to all who encounter them. This is optimism grounded in the truth that God is with us and God is for us.

Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. (1 Corinthians 13:7 NLT)

Early in recovery, life is filled with many challenges. However, our reason for optimism at this difficult time is that God is good and His love is unending. ***Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever.*** (Psalm 118:1 NLT)

When life is challenging, God assures us that, with His help, we can endure: ***The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.*** (1 Corinthians 10:13 NLT)

No matter how challenging life may be, our hope is built on the fact that God is still at work on our behalf. ***God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.*** (James 1:12 NLT)

May faith, hope, and love, be the foundation on which we build our lives each day.

PRAYER: God, Whatever my circumstances, help me to look to You with faith, hope and love. I am in awe of Your faithfulness. Strengthen me to build my life on the truth of Your word. Amen

When life is challenging, God assures us that, with His help, we can endure.

SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2017

SERENITY SATURDAY – TENDERNESS and COMPASSION

God is tender and compassionate. Knowing and believing that God tenderly watches over us with compassion in whatever circumstances we are in will allow our hearts to be filled with peace. Comfort and healing for our pain will flow from the knowledge that God really does care for us.

Comfort and healing for our pain will flow from the knowledge that God really does care for us.

I myself taught Israel how to walk, leading him along by the hand. But he doesn't know or even care that it was I who took care of him. I led Israel along with my ropes of kindness and love. I lifted the yoke from his neck, and I myself stooped to feed him. (Hosea 11:3-4 NLT)

God treasures us as His beloved children and desires that we respond to Him as we would to a loving, caring Father. When we decided to give our will and our lives over to the care of God we were likely unaware of the kindness He was already making available to us. An important part of our new life with God in recovery is getting to know this generous grace of God offered to us through Jesus Christ. When Jesus looks at suffering people, His heart is filled with love and compassion for them.

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. (Matthew 9:36 NIV)

To the extent that we experience God's love by drawing close to Him, our desire for sin will diminish. When we have a relationship with God, we can tell Him all our needs and He will guide us in the way we should go. Our perspective will be changed and the focus in our recovery work will be turned to seeking to experience more of God's love and kindness, rather than on simply improving our outward behaviour, as important as that is.

For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory. The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you." (Psalm 32:7-8 NLT)

PRAYER: Lord, I ask You to teach me Your ways so that my life may reflect You in me. My desire is to honour You in all I do and say. Thank You for your love and kindness towards me. Amen

SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – SING A NEW SONG

When we are recovering from our addictive lifestyle we often do not feel like singing. Our hearts are heavy and we still feel ashamed about the chaos we left behind. Sometimes we feel like we have never been lighthearted enough to sing. Troubles have followed us since the time we were children and we continue to replay the events of our dysfunctional childhood in our heads. God knows all about our troubles and He cares. He has brought us this far and He will not desert us.

God's desire is that we bring to, and leave with Him, those things that hinder our life in recovery. He is offering us fullness of life which includes freedom from the bondage of our past. As we give our will and our life over to God's care we will soon be able to lift up our voices in praise to Him for all He has done. We might even burst into song!

Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him. Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre. Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy. For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does. The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love. (Psalm 33:1-5 NIV)

Freedom comes from knowing the truth about who God created us to be. We are not children of coincidence or chance. God intentionally and lovingly formed us in our mother's womb. He planned the time and place of our birth. His intention was that we would seek Him, and perhaps reach out and find Him. Now that we know a little about God, hopefully we will be inspired to know more. When we begin to know Him more intimately, we will shout for joy and praise this God who has unfailing love for us. We may even sing to Him a new song!

PRAYER: Gracious Father, Thank you for loving me and bringing me to new life in You. You are a faithful God and my desire is to praise Your glorious name. May the song of my heart bring joy to Your ear. Amen

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MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2017

FEELING VULNERABLE (I)

While we were in addiction our daily agenda was fully centered on meeting our own needs. We used our substance of choice to help cope with the emptiness, the nameless pain, the loneliness, and other feelings we were unwilling to deal with. Now in recovery, we have become aware that God has promised to meet all our needs. Are we willing to let Him do so? When we feel vulnerable where do we turn to for help?

God invites us, ***Call on me when you are in trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory.*** (Psalm 50:15 NLT)

*Step by step
we can come
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power
greater than
ourselves
who can
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sanity.*

No one likes feeling vulnerable but stuffing our feelings just doesn't work. When we finally admitted that we were powerless over the destructive dependencies that we used to cover up our feelings, we chose to come into a recovery program. We needed help. Our life had become empty and unmanageable. We stopped using our substance of choice and began the journey of living in a new way. Now we wonder if it is possible to handle our life situations while sober. How can we face the devastating feelings and pain of our loneliness, frustration, disappointment, and even shame, without picking up again?

Successful life in recovery is about living in truth, and the truth is that on our own, our hearts are empty. That is why we struggle with fear when we feel vulnerable and powerless. God, and trusted people in recovery around us, assure us that there is a safe way forward for us. They remind us that step by step we can come to know and believe in a power greater than ourselves who can restore us to sanity. God is powerful. God is with us. God cares for us. God will guide and bring peace to us as we turn our will and our lives over to His care.

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. (Psalm 46:1 NLT)

Prayer: God, I confess that I am powerless and my life is unmanageable. Help me to sort out my vulnerable feelings. When I'm fearful and overwhelmed, I ask you to help me trust in You. Your word says that you are powerful, you are with me, and you care about me. Help me to believe. Amen

TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2017

FEELING VULNERABLE (2)

To have a successful journey in recovery we must begin to trust God to meet our deepest needs. We need to ask Him daily to fill us up with the power of His Holy Spirit. As we intentionally draw near to God, and put into practice all that He is teaching us, we will find that His power helps us overcome and eliminate the vulnerable feelings and nagging emptiness within us.

Oh, the joys of those who trust the Lord, who have no confidence in the proud or in those who worship idols. (Psalm 40:4 NLT)

As honestly as we know how, we choose to come before God and admit our vulnerability to the painful events of our past and ask Him for healing in the deeply wounded areas of our soul. We read the Bible and pray, purposefully seeking to know God's will for our lives and to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to carry out the instructions God is giving us.

The founders of AA described this practice in Step 11 when they encouraged us, "*through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out.*" As we seek to live in God's will, we look to His principles to direct the daily events of our lives. God is faithful and will accompany us as we journey from darkness into His glorious light.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NIV)

Prayer: I am weak but thou art strong. Jesus keep me from all wrong. I'll be satisfied as long, as I walk, let me walk close to thee. Just a closer walk with thee, grant it Jesus is my plea. Daily walking close to thee. Let it be, dear Lord let it be. Thru this world of toils and snares, if I falter Lord, who cares? Who with me my burden shares? None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee. Amen

As we intentionally draw near to God, and put into practice all that He is teaching us, we will find that His power helps us overcome and eliminate the vulnerable feelings and nagging emptiness within us.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2017

FEELING VULNERABLE (3)

We will always feel vulnerable when we choose to live without God. Life is too much for humans to deal with on their own. We were created to do life well only as we live in loving relationship with God who gives us wisdom and strength.

We were created to do life well only as we live in loving relationship with God who gives us wisdom and strength

By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him ... He has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires. (2 Peter 1:3-4 NLT)

How do we get "everything we need for living a godly life" active in our lives today? 1) We admit that our addictive desires are harmful and choose to forsake them. 2) We get to know God's promises and principles by reading the Bible. 3) We practice "speaking truth to ourselves" rather than simply reacting to how we are feeling. 4) We start to put God's principles into daily practice. As we persevere, we find that peace comes, our emotions quiet down, and we begin to experience goodness filling our hearts and our minds.

Paul Baloche has written a song that reminds us that life is often overwhelming. In this song, "God My Rock" he sings of the faithfulness and reliability of God being the strength of his heart. He is assured that God will be there like a rock that will not move from him in challenging times.

When my heart is overwhelmed I will look to You alone, God my rock, God my rock, God my rock. You will stand when others fall. You are faithful through it all, God my rock, God my rock, God my rock. In the blessing, in the pain, through it all You've never failed me. You are the strength of my heart. You are the strength of my heart. I can rely on You, I can rely on You. You are the joy of my life. You are my song in the night. There is no one as true. Jesus I trust in You.

Prayer: God, I want to live well in recovery. Help me to remember that I have everything I need because you have already provided it for me. You are my strength. I can rely on you. Amen

THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 2017

FEELING VULNERABLE (4)

Loneliness, frustration, and dissatisfaction are emotions which may either trigger a relapse, or point us to God for healing and help. What practical things can we do to meet the challenge of feeling vulnerable?

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19 NIV)

In our new life in recovery, we learn to take the risk of building healthy relationships with friends and sponsors. Feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction can become signals of a need God wants to meet rather than obsessions that drive us to run away and relapse. Even though we feel vulnerable, as we seek the guidance of a mature and trustworthy mentor, we will go forward. Where we may have waited for others to come and fix us and drag us out of dark places, we now need to do the reaching out and experience the connectedness and joy of Godly relationships.

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

Feeling empty and vulnerable and clinging to thoughts or practices that present us with an opportunity to relapse, are signs that we need to seek help. There is always something we can do that will ease the craving in our mind and body. We must let go of the lie that our substance of choice will best fulfill what is occupying our obsessive thoughts. We wouldn't be in recovery today if this was true. God will strengthen those who come to Him and ask for help.

Now godliness with contentment is great gain. Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. (1 Timothy 6:6 NKJV, 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 NIV)

Prayer: God, I don't want to run on empty any longer. Please remove the obsessive thoughts that come my way. Help me to believe that You will help me stand firm in Christ and fill my mind with your peace. Amen

Feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction can be signals of a need God wants to meet rather than obsessions that drive us to run away and relapse.

FRIDAY, MARCH 10, 2017

TOGETHER WE CAN

Life in addiction is life in isolation. We figure things out on our own. We seek to get what we want when we want it, regardless of the impact on others. In recovery, God invites us to a new way of living which includes sharing our thoughts, our needs, our desires, and our daily lives with God and others.

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. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 NLT)

Since we become like the company we keep, it is important to have friends we respect.

It's important to learn from others who have walked the path before us. Since we become like the company we keep, it is important to have friends we respect. When we are struggling in a certain area, it's helpful to know that we are not alone and that friends will encourage us and be supportive as we share our pain. It is also helpful to be with fellow believers who are modeling the things that will help us overcome our current obstacles – honesty, perseverance, and accountability. God desires that we receive his forgiveness and his power to help us change. Friends who are walking with God will challenge us and support us to get the help we need. When we are made aware of our shortcomings, we can adjust our attitudes and behaviours and become a person who shares and cares about others.

Share each other's troubles and problems, and in this way obey the law of Christ. The way of foolish people seems right to them. But those who are wise listen to advice. Foolish people are easily upset. But wise people pay no attention to hurtful words. An honest witness tells the truth. But a dishonest witness tells lies. The words of thoughtless people cut like swords. But the tongue of wise people brings healing. (Galatians 6:2, NLT, Proverbs 12:15-18 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we want to embrace Your plan for our lives. Help us to be accountable to Your word and the guidance and counsel of good friends. Help us to love others and care for them as You care for us. Amen

SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2017

SERENITY SATURDAY - LIVING WITH TENDERNESS

Brennan Manning wrote a book called, *“Living In The Wisdom of Accepted Tenderness.”* What a wonderful concept for those of us in recovery who’ve experienced harshness in our past. What does living this kind of life look like and how can we experience it for ourselves? To live in the wisdom of accepted tenderness means to receive each moment of life from the gentle and loving hands of God.

Now that you realize how kind the Lord has been to you, put away all evil, deception, envy, and fraud. Long to grow up into the fullness of your salvation. (1 Peter 2:2-3 TLB)

God is good and expresses compassion and tenderness towards us. In the middle of troubled circumstances, God offers us peace of mind, acceptance, forgiveness, and the kindness we may lack from others. One moment at a time, one day at a time, we can trust God with our lives. God will teach us about forgiveness for those who have treated us harshly and asks us to leave them in His hands. God is a righteous judge and we are not. All the bitterness and resentment we have held towards others, we can release to God. As we do, we become more like Jesus who said to His tormentors, ***“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”*** (Luke 23:34 NIV)

God is inviting us to seek Him first and then all the tenderness we are looking for from others will be included in what He has for us. God desires to fill our hearts with goodness and mercy so that we can be tender and compassionate towards others. Even though we may judge others as undeserving, we may be surprised at how our own tenderness and compassion grows when we treat people with the tenderness we have received from God. As we accept and keep on receiving love and tenderness and affirmation from God, our hearts will be filled to overflowing. What God has done for us, we can then do for others.

The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please teach me today how to live with you and others with a humble and gentle heart. When troubling circumstances surround me, help me to look to You for help rather than react harshly. Amen

To live in the wisdom of accepted tenderness means to receive each moment of life from the gentle and loving hands of God.

SUNDAY, MARCH 12, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – A SOLID PLACE TO STAND

After years of uncertainty and upheaval at every turn, it's wonderful to recover a life that has some stability. It's delightful to wake up in the morning without wondering what happened the night before or to fret about how we are going to get what we need to see us through the next few hours. The heavy burden of wrecked relationships, burned bridges and broken relationships with those we cared about no longer weighs us down. How many times in the past did we wonder if we would ever find a way out of the horrible mess we were trapped in.

I waited patiently for the Lord to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit of despair.
(From Psalm 40)

In our brokenness and chaos, we cried out to God, even though we weren't sure He was there or cared about us or could do anything for us. We simply longed for someone somewhere to do something to improve our lot in life.

I waited patiently for the Lord to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along. He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what he has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the Lord. (Psalm 40:1-3 NLT)

God was patiently waiting for us to come to Him for help. Until we exhausted our own resources and knew we were powerless, we kept trying to make life work. From the weak cry of our hearts, God heard us and responded with His love for us. When we turned our will and our lives over to His care, we became God's beloved children. Now we can rejoice that God is our loving Father and we are being taught about who we are in Christ and are being equipped to do those things God has prepared in advance for us to do. We are truly standing in a solid place!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, while our lives aren't perfect and we still have a journey ahead of us, we are amazed by what you have already done for us. What seemed impossible is now a living reality. One by one we see your promises fulfilled as we put our trust in Your word. Thank you for loving and caring for us. We are forever grateful. Amen.

MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2017

RECOVERY TOOL: PRAYER (1)

Step 11 of the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous encourages us to improve our conscious contact with God through meditation and prayer. What is prayer? Simply put, prayer is talking with God.

By day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me— a prayer to the God of my life. (Psalm 42:6 NIV)

God created us for relationship with Him. Friends are people who like each other and enjoy sharing activities and spending time together. They share their thoughts and feelings with each other during good times and in times of struggle. Texts or e-mails often complement the sharing. In other words, friends get to know one another and become familiar with each other's lives. They trust one another with their life experiences. Through God's infinite knowledge He knows all about us and has asked us to open the door of our hearts and allow Him to come in so we can talk and share with one another as friends. That's prayer.

Jesus says: ***"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me."*** (Revelation 3:20 NIV)

Prayer includes listening to God as we read the Bible. We pray when we ask for understanding of what we are reading and observing in His word. We can talk to God about happenings in our day, tell God about our needs, thank God for life's simple pleasures and even seek His guidance when we bring our frustrations and complaints before Him. When we fail, we can bring our guilt and shame to God and ask for, and receive, His forgiveness and healing. All of this is done through prayer. This interaction with God helps our friendship with God grow and deepen.

God promises in His word, ***"Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking, I will hear."*** (Isaiah 65:24 NIV)

Prayer: Thank you God that our lives matter to you. The details of our day are important to you. We want to improve our conscious contact with you today and welcome the security of being in a loving relationship with you. Amen

What is prayer?

Simply put, prayer is talking with God.

TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2017

RECOVERY TOOL: PRAYER (2)

What does prayer have to do with recovery, particularly relapse prevention? Step Eleven, one of the maintenance steps of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous helps us understand this. In our relationship with God, we seek to improve our conscious contact with Him, to gain the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out. Those who have walked for a time in recovery know that it is God's power and wisdom that has brought them through the hard times. They talked with God when troubles arose and He directed them in the way they should go. Now they are enjoying a steady and satisfying existence knowing that God is working all things together for their good.

Those who have walked for a time in recovery know that it is God's power and wisdom that has brought them through the hard times.

The Lord says, "I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them. I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation." (Psalm 91:14-16 NLT)

Early in their earthly relationship, Jesus' friends wondered how to pray and asked Him to teach them. Jesus responded, ***This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*** (Matthew 6:9-13 NIV) Each phrase of this prayer indicates that when we talk to God we can share the details of our lives with Him.

We can bring our obsessive thoughts, our temptations, and all our concerns to God. We can talk about God's work in "carrying the message." We can express our thoughts about anything. We can also thank God and speak out our love and appreciation for what He and others have done for us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your forgiveness for the many times we have failed You, ourselves, and others. You alone know the road ahead of us and Your power is greater than any challenge we will face today. We ask You to grant us wisdom and strength in all our affairs. Amen

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2017

RECOVERY TOOL: PRAYER (3)

How does communication with God change lives for people in recovery? The experience, strength and hope of prayerful individuals is that God guides, supports, and protects them as they face the many and varied situations of daily life. Being in relationship with God brings peace and stability and helps us maintain growth in recovery that is steady and significant.

The Bible is full of examples of how faithful people prayed for others. One such example is Paul who prayed: ***I pray to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is the glorious Father. I keep asking him to give you the wisdom and understanding that come from the Holy Spirit. I want you to know God better. I pray that you may understand more clearly. Then you will know the hope God has chosen you to receive. You will know that what God will give his holy people is rich and glorious.*** (Ephesians 1:17-18 NLT)

Paul was a man who made a 180-degree turnaround in life from being a violent and destructive man, to one who daily followed God's plan and direction for His life. Paul prayed without ceasing and relied on God to meet all His needs. Paul also encouraged others to pray. When we pray, we need to have faith that God loves us and is who He says He is. God has brought us to this time and this place for a very specific purpose and will help us achieve His plan for our lives.

From one man he [God] made all the people of the world. Now they live all over the earth. He decided exactly when they should live. And he decided exactly where they should live. God did this so that people would seek him. And perhaps they would reach out for him and find him. They would find him even though he is not far from any of us. In him we live and move and exist. (Act 17:26-28 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, We believe you are the powerful one who can restore us to sanity and give us the strength to build a new life that is meaningful, purposeful, and joyful. We want to get to know you better today. Amen

The experience, strength and hope of prayerful individuals is that God guides, supports, and protects them as they face the many and varied situations of daily life.

THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2017

RECOVERY TOOL: PRAYER (4)

How we react to situations and events in our day to day life in recovery shows the source of our strength. It is God's plan and desire that we face everyday life with Him, remembering FIRST that God is in control, God cares for us, and God is working together for good in each situation that is going on in us, and around us.

How we react to situations and events in our day to day life in recovery shows the source of our strength.

We can make our own plans, but the Lord gives the right answer. (Proverbs 16:1 NLT)

In our addiction, we reacted to difficult circumstances in ways that usually escalated the situation. We sought to control or evade problems. We lied, bullied or sometimes tried to manipulate others to be co-dependent with us in the situation. Life in recovery is about facing problems and knowing that we don't have to face them alone. God is with us and will help us. *"God could and would if he were sought."* (Big Book Alcoholics Anonymous)

I bow before your holy Temple as I worship. I praise your name for your unfailing love and faithfulness; for your promises are backed by all the honor of your name. As soon as I pray, you answer me; you encourage me by giving me strength. (Psalm 138:2-3 NLT)

Prayer for everyone, including those of us in recovery, is tapping into the unlimited resources of our loving Heavenly Father who is interested in our problems and the problems of those whom we care about. God is greater than any problem we face – particularly those that seem unmanageable to us. God wants us to seek Him in prayer repeatedly throughout our day so our strength is renewed as each challenge arises. God's desire is for us to live successfully, regardless of circumstances, and we can do this if we seek Him in all our ways.

God invites us: ***Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me.*** (Psalm 50:15 NLT).

Prayer: Heavenly Father, when troubles come help me to remember to pray first, trusting that you have the resources I need to face my problems. Together with You, any difficulty can be worked out and overcome. Amen

FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 2017

RECOVERY TOOL: PRAYER (5)

Life is more than just about us. God wants us to have the wonderful character qualities that He has. These qualities give life and hope to the world around us. God wants us to work together with Him through compassion and care to restore those who need healing. Prayer is our way of co-operating with God so that the job gets done. God acts in answer to prayer. Many have been touched by God through prayers offered on their behalf.

If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:14 NIV)

Prayer is not designed to change God. It is designed to change us. Prayer is not calling on God to bless our activities. Prayer brings us closer to God, helps us know His will and gives us understanding of how to live life the way He intended. We need to humbly admit before God that He is the creator, and we are the created. God is in charge and our lives work best when we work together with God.

Addiction isn't just about putting "stuff" into our bodies or living in unhealthy relationships. The real root of addiction is living for what pleases me, myself, and I. The key to sustaining success in recovery is prayer and obedient action in response to God's direction. Humility in seeking God's will for our lives, together with turning from our own self-centered ways, establishes the foundation for a life that is purposeful and satisfying.

Jesus promised: ***When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment.*** (John 16:13, 8 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, you are the source of life and peace in our recovery and in our relationships. We humbly ask you to remove any shortcomings that keep us from Your good and pleasing plan for our lives. Amen.

The key to sustaining success in recovery is prayer and obedient action in response to God's direction.

SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 2017

SPIRIT SATURDAY: GENTLENESS – ONLY FOR THE STRONG

Strong people with a true sense of their identity, are often the gentlest souls around. They don't have to pretend to have courage in loud aggressive ways because they are confident in who they are and what they believe. They know themselves to be imperfect and so they graciously make allowances for the faults of others. They know they are learning and growing and they make space for others to do the same.

People who are secure in themselves don't have to fight on every point.

A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare. Gentle words are a tree of life; a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. (Proverb s 15:1, 15:4, Ephesians 4:2 NLT)

People who are secure in themselves don't have to fight on every point. They can agree to disagree and be pleasant about it. They don't have to try to build themselves up by saying one thing to a person's face and then something else behind their backs. They are genuinely people of integrity. Gentle people are some of the most admired by their colleagues and associates. Far from being weak, a gentle person exhibits an immense amount of self-control and patience. These are strong characteristics that humble people develop.

They [Leaders] must not slander anyone and must avoid quarreling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone. But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. (Titus 3:2, James 3:17 NLT)

God invites us to leave harshness, super-sensitivity, sarcasm and insincerity behind and enter into a life in harmony with His plan – a plan that displays gentleness in all our dealings with others.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You chose us to be holy people. We want to grow in Your grace so we become people with tender hearts, full of kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. We need your help. Amen

SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – POWER TO SAVE

Many of us come to recovery and seek help when the suffering in our life of addiction is too much to bear. We hear from others that God could and would help us if He were sought. Early in our journey we're not sure about God, His desire to help, or even what that might look like. We're just broken and desperate and know we can't manage life anymore on our own. The steps tell us that we can come to believe in a Higher Power who will restore us to sanity. We know we don't have any power so we are sincerely searching for something that really works.

Even though God created us in love, and watched as we turned our backs on His kindness, He still pursues us with His love. When we call out to God, He is willing to show us the way we should go. As we begin to walk with God in recovery we find peace that brings settledness in what were previously troubled areas of our thinking and feeling. We learn to find serenity in accepting the things we cannot change and receive courage from God to change the things we can.

I take joy in doing your will, my God, for your instructions are written on my heart. I have told all your people about your justice. I have not been afraid to speak out, as you, O Lord, well know. I have not kept the good news of your justice hidden in my heart; I have talked about your faithfulness and saving power. (Psalm 40:8-10 NLT)

In the beginning, we are afraid to let joy come into our hearts because we wonder when things will fall apart again. Almost without realizing it, joy begins to grow in our hearts like spring flowers bursting through the earth. When we choose to live wholeheartedly for God, we will be surprised by how God works things out. God's word is right and true and He is faithful in all He says and does. His saving power can never be extinguished!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for the joy that comes as we find our security in You. Thank you for always encouraging us, forgiving us and helping us sort out what's right and true in our circumstances. Amen

As we begin to walk with God in recovery we find peace that brings settledness in what were previously troubled areas of our thinking and feeling

MONDAY, MARCH 20, 2017

DEALING WITH DENIAL (I)

Denial is described as a refusal to admit the truth or reality of a situation. Denial is a coping mechanism people use to help them deal with uncomfortable memories or circumstances. People who have lived in addiction for some time may live in a conscious or unconscious level of denial which is difficult to sort out.

The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? But I, the Lord, search all hearts and examine secret motives. (Jeremiah 17:9-10 NLT)

Denial of our dependency on a substance and/or a person is the first obstacle we must overcome in recovery.

Denial of our dependency on a substance and/or a person is the first obstacle we must overcome in recovery. Others may have identified the behaviour associated with our dependency but we continue to deny that the problem even exists. Step One reminds us: *We admitted we were powerless over our dependency and that our life had become unmanageable.* Failure to acknowledge this keeps us from seeking the help we need and taking the necessary steps to get well.

For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. (Romans 7:18-20 NIV)

God calls us to live in truth. When we put our faith and trust in the finished work of Jesus, God will lead us into all truth by the power of His Holy Spirit who comes to live within us.

Jesus said, ***When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.*** (John 16:13 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me identify ways I am vulnerable to denial and its operation in my life. Fill me with Your loving presence and help me to walk out of denial into life-giving truth. Amen

TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2017

DEALING WITH DENIAL (2)

Denial keeps us in slavery because we are lying to ourselves. We also lie to others in an attempt to cover up our glaringly evident addictive behaviour. It is only when we break the cycle of denial and become brutally honest with ourselves about our bondage that there is any chance for real freedom.

People ruin their lives by their own foolishness and then are angry at the Lord.
(Proverbs 19:3 NLT)

Denial comes in many forms. How can we identify denial in ourselves or in someone we love? It takes time to see a pattern of denial in our own lives or even in the life of another. Following are some signs:

Avoidance: - We seek to focus the conversation on "anything but my real problem."

Arguing: We easily get into arguments and believe that strenuously denying a problem will make it go away or change what someone else is observing

Complete Denial: - Addicts refuse to admit they have a problem. They believe that others have misinterpreted their situation.

Minimizing: - An addict will minimize how much or how often they use their substance of choice or how bad an impact their problem is having. They may admit to a problem and even attempt to change by their own efforts, but, they will not admit they need help to deal with it.

Rationalizing: - Addicts rationalize their behaviour hoping that their reasoning will be enough to avoid taking action. "I can do what I want because I'm not hurting anyone except myself."

Blaming: - Addicts try to blame their behaviour on the actions of others.

Comparing: - Addicts attempt to demonstrate they don't have a serious problem by showing that someone else's problem is greater than their own.

Bargaining: - Addicts often make deals with themselves or others, "I'll just have one. I'll stop tomorrow. I just need a bit to get through today."

Manipulating: - Addicts pretend to take positive steps, hoping others will leave them alone. Addicts may admit to having a problem but do nothing, expecting someone else to fix the problem for them.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to fearlessly reject the lies that have kept us in bondage to our addictive behaviour. Help us to acknowledge the truth of who You say we are so we can live in the freedom that comes from You alone. Amen.

It is only when we break the cycle of denial and become brutally honest with ourselves about our bondage that there is any chance for real freedom.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2017

DEALING WITH DENIAL (3)

When we come to new life in Christ we will seek after truth in all our affairs. Our desire is to know what is real and good and identify what is harmful so it will no longer have power to negatively impact us. We become aware that only God can show us the way to a new life. We need to confront denial and invite God to show us where our thinking and perceiving have become twisted and where our ways and God's ways are different. God's power and wisdom will help us make those changes where necessary.

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. (Psalm 139:23-24 NIV, Matthew 11:28 NLT)

While in recovery we are taught to accept responsibility for our actions. We come to realize that our actions yield consequences. Some of us may have deceived ourselves into thinking we could escape the consequences of the things we did. But, with time, we became aware that God has made accountability a necessary element of healthy human living.

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. (Galatians 6:7-8 NIV)

The good news is that God will show us the way forward. He will also help us make amends with those we have harmed. God wants us to live in self-worth before Him and others. We may fear the humiliation and pain of naming the truth but with God's forgiveness there is great joy and deep peace in finally acknowledging truth, even when it reveals our shameful and broken past. Truth leads to freedom. Deceit and denial lead to bondage and death.

Prayer: Gracious God, Help us today to fearlessly commit to truth in all our affairs. We want to live in the freedom that comes from living life your way. Amen.

We need to confront denial and invite God to show us where our thinking and perceiving have become twisted.

THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 2017

FORGETTING WHAT IS BEHIND

When we first come into recovery, we tend to focus on our past behaviour and the things we have done wrong. For years we tried to cover our pain with addictive substances or destructive behaviour because that was what seemed good at the time. We felt anger, guilt and shame, often to an overwhelming degree. We suffered injustice and so we felt we deserved comfort and went after comfort in whatever convenient ways we found it. We didn't question the impact our choices might have had on others. We did what we felt we "had to do" to survive and have a little happiness. Sadly, despite some momentary pleasure, we fell deeper and deeper into sin and heartache. God invites us now to shift our focus from what was self-motivated destructive behaviour to a life focused on the healing power of Jesus.

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

God wants us to live a good satisfying life. We all want that life, who wouldn't? Or do we? We know we have problems – we've had them all our lives. Problems give us excuses to think about using whatever we have chosen in the past to cover the pain deep within us. Are we ready to stop allowing our problems to steal the new life God is giving us? If we are, we need to be willing to give up our obsessive thinking about how to cover up our pain, and allow the healing power of God to restore us to new life.

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

God's call to us today is to take our focus off our problems and let Him show us solutions. Are we willing to make the shift?

Prayer: Loving God, you are reaching out to us today, encouraging us to receive the healing you are offering. Help us to humbly surrender to You and walk in Your ways. Amen

God invites us now to shift our focus from what was self-motivated destructive behaviour to a life focused on the healing power of Jesus.

FRIDAY, MARCH 24, 2017

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S HELP

God's way is simple. Like little children trust the good and caring hearts of their parents so, in our new life with God in recovery, we need to believe that God is good and act accordingly.

In our new life with God in recovery we need to believe that God is good and act accordingly.

Then he said, "I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven. (Matthew 18:3 NLT)

Regardless of whatever else we may feel like doing, we should determine to follow God's ways so we can live the life we were created for. With God's help, we need to purposefully change the way we have been thinking. When our thinking and God's word clash, we lay our own thoughts down, and choose for God's. We match our behaviour to our new understanding of how life works. We read the Bible and see how God says we can do this.

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:4-5 NIV)

Without God's help, we will never be able to choose the correct pathway to a fulfilling life. We have too many incorrect beliefs imprinted on our minds and hearts. Only obedience to the word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit can keep us from falling into familiar patterns. Are we willing to wholeheartedly surrender to God and obey His Word?

But what happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely. (Galatians 5:22-23 MSG)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for giving me the will and desire to do what pleases You. Please help me change my thought patterns so that they are in line with Yours. I choose to surrender to Your ways. Amen

SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 2017

SERENITY SATURDAY - GENTLE WORDS

We live in an angry noisy world. Quiet people and their opinions and needs seem to get lost in the loud voices of protest and demand. Whenever a group feels their needs are not being attended to, they tend to ramp up the intensity and volume of their voices. History seems to tell us that the loudest voices are the ones that will get noticed and responded to. It must be tiring and frustrating to live in anger and harsh noise all the time. Fortunately, in our new life with God in recovery we are invited to tread another path.

Only in returning to me and resting in me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength. 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 30:15, 48:18 NLT)

With God, gentle words work best. God knows all about us and our needs and He is committed to meeting our needs. God will show us what to do, when to wait and when to act. He does this when we come to Him, slow down, quiet down, and listen for His gentle voice. God wants us to have peace in our souls and quietness in our minds. He knows that we desperately need this after the harsh noise of worldly voices. When we've spent a long time in places of harsh words, cursing and condemnation, we hardly know how to hear gentle words let alone believe that they carry the words of life our souls are longing for.

Gentle words are a tree of life. Is God's comfort too little for you? Is his gentle word not enough? (Proverbs 15:4, Job 15:11 NLT)

We are invited to come to God for healing and to be instructed in the way of gentleness. Are we willing to turn our will and our life over to God's care today?

You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God. (1 Peter 3:4 NLT)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, teach me your way of humility and gentleness of heart so I can find rest for my soul. Amen

We hardly know how to hear gentle words let alone believe that they carry the words of life our souls are longing for.

SUNDAY, MARCH 26, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – GOD HELPS ME

God knows that it is easy for us to let fear take control of our lives. When circumstances are overwhelming, we may be uncertain if we can handle the events of life. We are afraid of the pain and unmet needs that result when we might be pushed to the side and forgotten. We feel insignificant, abandoned with no one to help us.

We can live confidently today knowing that we will experience goodness today when we walk in God's care and follow God's direction.

The good news is, God has already promised that when we call on Him in our day of trouble, He will help us. When we give our will and our life over to God's care, we become His beloved children. God wants us to walk in the confidence of His ever-present help in trouble. King David knew something about all this when He wrote this famous poem.

The Lord is my light and my salvation—so why should I be afraid? The Lord is my fortress, protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble? ... He will conceal me there when troubles come; he will hide me in his sanctuary. He will place me out of reach on a high rock. Even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will hold me close. Teach me how to live, O Lord. Lead me along the right path, for my enemies are waiting for me. Yet I am confident I will see the Lord's goodness while I am here in the land of the living. (Psalm 27:1, 5, 10-11, 13 NLT)

During days when the news is full of violent neighbourhood attacks, God invites you and me to be at peace because His presence is with us wherever we go. When we feel abandoned and let down, God reminds us that help and strength and comfort are as close as calling out to Him. When we are not sure how to navigate life in uncertain times, God responds to our cry for help as we ask Him to lead us on the right path. We can live confidently today knowing that we will experience goodness today when we walk in God's care and follow God's direction.

Prayer: Gracious God, You are our light and our salvation and with confidence we go forward in Your care. Thank you that in times of trouble we can shelter under Your shadow for You are with us wherever we go. Amen

MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2017

ROOTS OF SELFISHNESS

Life in addiction narrowed our focus to a self-centered view of what we wanted or thought we needed. Life in recovery is a journey to gain or regain a healthy view of life in relationship with God and others. It's a journey of recognizing the selfish ways we lived in active addiction and seeking God's help to learn how to live considerately and kindly towards others.

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

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

Selfish people have difficulty seeing things from someone else's point of view. People in addiction rarely concern themselves with what is best for another person. Unfortunately, that mindset doesn't automatically change when we give up our destructive habits. Unless we intentionally come to know, and put into effect, a healthy unselfish way of living we will simply transfer our selfish mindset to a new area of focus.

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

Prayer. Loving God, Teach us how to give and receive forgiveness and to love others as You have loved us. We want to live in the security of your love and to unselfishly serve others. Amen

TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2017

RECOGNIZING SELFISHNESS

To stop using our substance of choice is a great beginning to recovery but God knows that unless we deal with the underlying root of our habits and addictive practices we are still doomed for failure. That's why selfishness is included right alongside drunkenness as things that keep us from life with God in recovery.

When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. (Galatians 5:19-20 NLT)

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

Selfishness, self-will, self-centeredness runs deep in all of us. It is the underlying cause of all our problems and expresses itself clearly in our way of relating to God and others. Without the addictive attachments, where do we see evidence that selfishness has roots in our hearts and relationships? The Bible suggests we do an inventory and deal with our selfish shortcomings. problems

An unfriendly person pursues selfish ends and against all sound judgment starts quarrels. For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind. What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. (Proverbs 18:1 NIV, James 3:16, 4:1-2 NLT)

How do we overcome selfishness? We ask God to forgive us for our self-centered ways and free us from the bondage of its power. God promises to transform us if we are willing to give our will and our life over to His care.

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

Prayer. Lord Jesus, we're so thankful that You gave Your life to set us free from the deep-rooted selfishness in our hearts. We choose to leave the misery of selfishness behind and ask You to strengthen us to move forward in our life with You in recovery. Amen

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2017

REDUCING SELF-CENTEREDNESS

The Big Book of AA describes the significance of our problem with selfishness in this way: *"There often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His [God's] aid. Many of us had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but we could not live up to them even though we would have liked to. Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God's help."* (Big Book pages 62-63)

The Big Book confirms what the Bible says about needing God to help us deal with the destructive problem of selfishness and other shortcomings we have. ***By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life ... because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.*** (2 Peter 1:3-4 NLT)

The Big Book authors mirror this important truth for us as follows: *"This is the how and why of it. First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn't work. Next, we decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director. He is the Principal; we are His agents. He is the Father, and we are His children. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well. Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life.* (Big Book pages 62-63)

In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. (2 Peter 1:5-7 NLT)

Prayer: Thank you God for your help in dealing with our selfishness. We surrender. Be the director of our lives. Work your will in us and through us so that we might share in Your divine nature. Amen

"Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God's help."
(Big Book of AA)

THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2017

DEALING WITH SELFISHNESS

We begin the process of changing our self-centered way of living by first turning our will and our life over to God's care. Both the Bible and the Big Book of AA clearly tell us that self-effort alone will not work. With God's help, what are some of the decisive actions we can take that will help us enter a new and satisfying way of unselfish living?

Help us to look beyond ourselves and become people of humility and sober judgment.

Be Humble: Combating the sin of selfishness requires genuine humility. This means having a true perception about ourselves in relation to God and to others. ***Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.*** (Romans 12:3 NIV).

Pray and Study God's Word: Prayer and meditation on God's word are necessary to our well-being in recovery. The Bible teaches us: ***Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.*** (Psalm 119:36; Philippians 2:3 NIV).

Intentionally Honor Others: As we live with God in recovery our attitude towards others becomes one of genuine care and concern rather than personal approval seeking. ***Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.*** (Romans 12:9-10 NLT)

Give Generously: An unselfish person knows that money and possessions are for sharing not hoarding. A sure cure for selfishness is the practice of giving. ***You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."*** (Acts 20:35 NLT).

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we want to learn from Your word and those who've gone before us. We want to let go of our selfish ways and allow your love to flow through us to others. Help us to look beyond ourselves and become people of humility and sober judgment. Help us to love others as You love us. Amen

FRIDAY, MARCH 31, 2017

NOTES

BARRIERS TO PEACE

The quest for peace in our souls begins at birth. As babies, we long for our mother's comforting arms, as children we yearn for happy experiences, and as adults we strive to find success and fulfillment through relationships and jobs. These pursuits are desirable—but they only give temporary peace.

Those who love your instructions have great peace and do not stumble. (Psalm 119:165 NLT)

Lasting peace cannot be attained through our own efforts. Lasting peace is a gift from God. Just as a clear mountain stream refreshes and nourishes the wildlife that come to drink, God wants to nurture our hearts with peace and joy. There is no greater peace than that which is available through Jesus Christ. God's peace washes over us like a cool stream of water—soothing our heartache, washing away doubt, and cleansing the wounds of sin and pain.

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1 NIV)

What causes disruption to our peace with God? Barriers to peace are erected by our habitual sin, unresolved guilt, and unforgiveness toward others. When we blame God for difficult circumstances or decide to live in a state of rebellion against God's truth, we add to the barrier. We strengthen the barrier and invite anxiety and worry into our lives when our minds are occupied with negative, nagging, and unproductive thoughts. Therefore, we must learn to recognize and replace negative thought patterns and actions and pursue peace in all our ways.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:1, 27 NIV)

We will experience the peace we long for when the barriers are removed.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please expose anything that may be hindering me from receiving the peace that only You can give. I want to listen with an open heart and receive and act upon what You show me today. Amen

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Come and learn and grow with us:

Christian 12-Step Recovery Meeting

Wednesdays, 7:00 pm

325 6th Street

New Westminster, BC

Christian 12-Step Recovery Meeting

Thursdays, 7:30 pm

543 Powell Street

Vancouver, BC

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

Ephesians 2:10 NLT