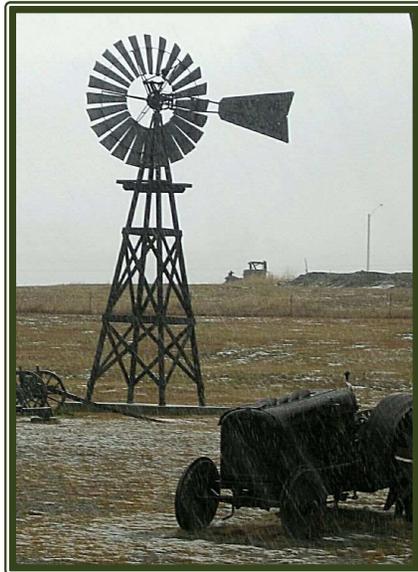


LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY



# Daily Meditations



**MAY 2020**

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

[www.pihtoday.blogspot.com](http://www.pihtoday.blogspot.com)

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

For your personal print copy send your request to:

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

Email: [pihrecovery@gmail.com](mailto:pihrecovery@gmail.com)

Phone or text: 604-215-0335

Website: [www.partnersinhope.ca](http://www.partnersinhope.ca)



# LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

## Daily Meditations

**MAY 2020**

**CONTRIBUTING EDITORS**  
Evelyn Leeburn, Elsie Quick

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Scriptures taken from:

Scripture quotations taken from:

Holy Bible, Contemporary English Version (CEV), Copyright © 1995 by American Bible Society

Holy Bible, Easy-to-Read Version (ERV), Copyright © 2006 by Bible League International

Good News Translation (GNT), Copyright © 1992 by American Bible Society

The Living Bible copyright © 1971 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

New King James Version® (NKJV), Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Holy Bible, New International Version®(NIV),® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

New International Reader's Version (NIRV), Copyright © 1995, 1996, 1998, 2014 by Biblica, Inc.®. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Holy Bible. New Living Translation (NLT) copyright© 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

New Life Version (NLV), Copyright © 1969, 2003 by Barbour Publishing, Inc.

The Message (MSG), Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002 by Eugene H. Peterson

### **PHOTOS**

Cathie Bolan © 2020 Cathie Bolan

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

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

**VOLUME 05, NUMBER 05**

FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2020

## MORAL EXCELLENCE

When we chose to believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we were reconciled to our Heavenly Father. We were born again from above into the family of God and given the will and desire to live a life of moral excellence that is pleasing to God. We inherited a divine nature. We became children of God who belong in God's kingdom.

***Jesus answered: I tell you for certain that before you can get into God's kingdom, you must be born not only by water, but by the Spirit. Humans give life to their children. Yet only God's Spirit can change you into a child of God.*** (John 3:5-6 CEV)

As new-born babies in our human family we were helpless to do anything for ourselves. We relied on our parents or caregivers and teachers to help us grow and mature so we could live effectively in this world. It's much the same when we are born again into the Kingdom of God. We are helpless on our own and need to rely on our gracious God to help us grow and mature so we can live effectively in the Kingdom of God.

***I am writing this to you, my children, so that you will not sin; but if anyone does sin, we have someone who pleads with the Father on our behalf—Jesus Christ, the righteous one.*** (1 John 2:1 GNT)

While living according to what was right in our own eyes we ended up in an unmanageable existence which we were powerless to change. As we seek God and practice His principles in all our affairs, the strength and guidance we need to move forward into a life of moral excellence is there for us. Moral excellence may not happen overnight but, as we persevere, we will be active and effective for the Kingdom of God.

***Do your best to improve your faith. You can do this by adding goodness, understanding, self-control, patience, devotion to God, concern for others, and love.*** (2 Peter 1:5-7 CEV)

***Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank You for all You have done, and continue to do for me. Help me to live a life of moral excellence and to carry the message to everyone I meet. Amen***

***We were born again from above into the family of God and given the will and desire to live a life of moral excellence.***

SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2020

## PRACTICAL WISDOM - DEALING WITH CLUTTER

We are often reluctant to admit problems and deal with painful events as they occur. We push them down into the deep recesses of our souls and put our best face on. This is like shoving clutter into a closet and tightly closing the door before guests arrive. This works for a while but, like opening the closet door and having the inside clutter fall at our feet, at some point, the events we have suppressed will cause us to explode with anger and bitterness towards those around us who may have had nothing at all to do with the original events.

***The human spirit can endure a sick body, but who can bear a crushed spirit?*** (Proverbs 18:14 NLT)

We clean up the clutter in our homes by taking things from where they have been stashed away and stacked up and dealing with them in an orderly manner. Some things get thrown out. Others get mended, washed, or ironed and become usable again. We need to do the same with the hidden events of our lives.

***It is not right to acquit the guilty or deny justice to the innocent. The name of the Lord is a strong fortress; the godly run to him and are safe.*** (Proverbs 18:5, 10 NLT)

We will never feel acceptable to God or to others while we allow who we truly are to be determined by our past. Unforgiveness towards others or ourselves needs to be carefully exposed, and then disposed of. The pain and brokenness we feel in our hearts will need to be lovingly cared for and mended. Our hidden talents will need some encouragement, so they become usable again.

God is a master restorer, and as we improve our conscious contact with Him, He will provide all that we need to make us complete in Him.

***Prayer: Gracious God, Please help me face and let go of those hurtful events I have buried deep in my soul. My desire is to have a fulfilling life with You and others. Please give me the desire and wisdom to follow Your principles in all my affairs. Amen***

***We will never feel acceptable to God or to others while we allow who we truly are to be determined by our past.***

SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2020

## SUNDAY PSALM – CRYING OUT TO GOD FOR HELP

Before we were willing to admit that we were powerless over our dependencies and our lives were unmanageable, there may have been a time when we really wanted to do good but were unable to do so. Many of us cried out to God, even though we were unsure that He existed, and asked Him for help. Did He hear us? Was He on our side? If the Lord had not been on our side, we would have remained under the power of our enemy who was seeking to destroy us.

***If the Lord had not been on our side (let all Israel admit it), if the Lord had not been on our side, we would have been swallowed alive by our enemies, destroyed by their anger. We would have drowned beneath the flood of these men's fury and pride. Blessed be Jehovah who has not let them devour us. We have escaped with our lives as a bird from a hunter's snare. The snare is broken and we are free! Our help is from the Lord who made heaven and earth.*** (Psalm 124:1-8 TLB)

When our life focus was driven by our own selfish desires, we were unable to see the dangers that lay ahead. We sought to get the most pleasure out of life with the least pain. However, the pleasure we sought after did not fulfill its promise to keep us happy, so we needed more of whatever gave us some enjoyment. This became a downward slope that threatened our very existence. At some point we recognized the danger and cried out to God because somewhere in the depths of our soul we knew there was a God who cared about us.

***God cares for you, so turn all your worries over to him. Be on your guard and stay awake. Your enemy, the devil, is like a roaring lion, sneaking around to find someone to attack.*** (1 Peter 5:7-8 CEV)

Today, let's reaffirm our trust in the Lord who made heaven and earth and rely on Him to lead us on the right path.

***Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for being on my side. If You are for me, I need fear no one who is against me. Please help me to focus on Your truth in every situation. Amen***

MONDAY, MAY 4, 2020

## CHARACTER DEFECT OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

In our life in addiction we became self-centered and uncaring in our attitude towards life and everyone around us. We had no regard for our employer or the requirements of our job. We mismanaged our money, and our family responsibilities were of no consequence to us. Compassion and respect for others were non-existent and we made rude and thoughtless remarks about people, even those who were trying to help us. Our disregard for the safety of other was also shown in activities such as walking or driving against light signals or driving a vehicle while under the influence of drugs and alcohol. We were acting in very irresponsible ways.

***You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes— for as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the Lord your God is giving you.*** (Deuteronomy 12:8-9 NKJV)

***God wants to teach us not only to look out for our own interests, but also for the interests of others.***

While we were still acting in irresponsible ways God was watching out for us. God prepared a life of rest and an inheritance for each of us so we could love and care for our neighbours. He invites each of us to receive the gift of this new life with Him. How can we fulfill God's command to love others if we have never received His love and care for us? It's like trying to turn on the light when the lamp has not been plugged into the power. Perhaps as children we never learned how to be responsible for our own actions. God is ready and willing now to teach us how to not only look out for our own interests, but also for the interests of others.

***And so I am giving a new commandment to you now—love each other just as much as I love you. Your strong love for each other will prove to the world that you are my disciples.*** (John 13:34-35 TLB)

When we humbly acknowledge the exact nature of our wrongs, we can ask God to remove the character defect of irresponsibility and ask Him to teach us how to love and care for others as He loves and cares for us.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that I have been very irresponsible and thoughtless in my dealings with others. Please help me to be accountable to You as I amend my ways. Amen***

TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2020

## WHY DO WE NEED TO ADMIT THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR WRONGS?

Step 5 of the 12-Step program of AA asks that we admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. It assumes that we have looked at our past behaviour and made a moral inventory of the exact nature of our wrongs. The details of that list clearly show how our daily lives were full of every kind of wickedness and lived for self-gratification. Thankfully, when we gave our will and life over to the care of God, He forgave all our sins and gave us a new nature.

***For he has rescued us out of the darkness and gloom of Satan's kingdom and brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who bought our freedom with his blood and forgave us all our sins.***

(Colossians 1:13-14 TLB)

Why then do we need to admit the exact nature of our wrongs to God, ourselves, and another human being? Confession of our sins gives us protection from the power of the evil one. Many of us are aware that Satan uses what we have done to fill us with guilt and shame and fear of being found out. When we admit the exact nature of our wrongs as directed by Step 5, we disarm Satan and ruin his strategy against us. Our pride may be deflated by admission of what we have been about for many years, but the truth will set us free from the bondage of the sin we might still be wrestling with.

***In this way God took away Satan's power to accuse you of sin, and God openly displayed to the whole world Christ's triumph at the cross where your sins were all taken away.*** (Colossians 2:15 TLB)

It is wise to ask God to show us to whom we might confess the exact nature of our wrongs. Perhaps we know of a person who has demonstrated compassion and understanding of our condition and has been willing to pray for us and others in the past. As we move forward in our recovery, we may also want to arrange accountability for our future actions to that person.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am forever grateful that all my sins are forgiven. I now ask You to help me be truthful as I do a Step-5, so that Satan ceases to have any power over me. Amen***

***Confession  
of our sins  
gives us  
protection  
from the  
power of  
the evil  
one.***

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2020

## KEEPING JOY ALIVE

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous discusses rebuilding relationships and how joy will impact our ability to do so. *"We aren't a glum lot. If newcomers could see no joy or fun in our existence, they wouldn't want it. We absolutely insist on enjoying life."*

The founders of AA linked misery to self-will and addictive habits and joy to an open loving relationship with God. They followed God's ways and recognized how it brought joy in their relationship with God and others. Joy is a quality we surely need as we move forward in our life with God in recovery.

***Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.*** (James 1:2-4 NLT)

***How happy  
are the  
people who  
know the  
sound of joy!  
They walk in  
the light of  
Your face, O  
Lord.***

Psalm 89:15 NLV

What steals our joy? It very often is pride. We begin to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to. We start to find fault in our recovery program, in the people around us, and in our leaders and mentors. We blame others and our environment for our discontent.

***You have felt secure in your evil ways. You have said, "No one sees what I'm doing." Your wisdom and knowledge lead you down the wrong path. You say to yourself, "I am like a god. No one is greater than I am."*** (Isaiah 47:10 NIRV)

If we desire to be joyful in our recovery, we will need to be mindful of our thoughts and actions. We need to find out what God's principles are for successful living and reshape our behaviour around them. We need to surrender pride every time it raises its ugly head, remembering that the Holy Spirit is always with us to give us wisdom and guidance as we submit to His ways.

***Prayer: Forgive me for being prideful and believing that I could live a joyful life in recovery without You and without those who counsel and mentor me. I am forever grateful that You, the God of hope, will fill me with all joy and peace as I trust Your ways to take me forward in my recovery. Amen***

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2020

## MAKING RESTITUTION

To make restitution is to restore something that was stolen or lost. When we have harmed someone, we take responsibility for the harm done and do all in our power to make it right. That might mean repaying money for things stolen, clearing up an attack on a person's reputation, or owning up to the truth for some action we previously blamed on them. The list of wrongs needing to be righted is endless and is unique to each of our life experiences.

True restitution to others is challenging to make if we haven't first seen our own behaviour in the light of God's love. We broke God's laws. We harmed this person God created, others, and God's beautiful created world. We owed God a debt we could never repay. God recognized the need for restitution to be made if relationships were to be healed and go forward in a positive way. What was God's response? Through Jesus, He chose to pay the debt on our behalf and make restitution for all our wrongs.

***Christ carried our sins in his body on the cross. He did this so that we would stop living for sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you were healed. God paid a very high price to make you his. So honor God with your body. Live like free people, but don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. Live as those who are serving God.*** (1 Peter 2:24; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Peter 2:16 ERV)

Ellis Crum wrote a song about this. *"He paid a debt He did not owe. I owed a debt I could not pay. I needed someone to wash my sins away. And now I sing a brand new song, Amazing Grace. Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could never pay."*

As we recognize all that God has done for us in forgiving our sins and restoring us to a loving relationship with Him, we will find ourselves operating more and more in gratitude and generosity towards others. Although it's never easy to make restitution, we will be so much more motivated to take the necessary steps when we reflect on God's work of restitution in our own lives.

***Prayer: Thank you for Jesus who died on the cross for my sins so that I could be reconciled to You. I ask for wisdom and courage to humbly approach family members and friends and to make restitution to them with a heart and mind that honours you. Amen***

***Christ had  
no sin, but  
God made  
him  
become  
sin so that  
in Christ  
we could  
be right  
with God.***

***2 Corinthians  
5:21 ERV***

FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2020

## FINDING ENTHUSIASM AGAIN

Recovery is hard work. Sometimes we feel joy in the journey and other times we don't seem to feel anything at all. We spend a lot of time looking at our feelings as we remember our past with its many difficulties and challenges. Our self-esteem suffers and we feel uncomfortable, maybe even distressed. If we're honest, sometimes we just get tired of dealing with it all. How can we find the strength we need to feel joy and enthusiasm for this journey of growth again?

***Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people. Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth.*** (Colossians 3:23 GNT, 2 Timothy 2:15 NLT)

***Work hard  
and do not  
be lazy.  
Serve the  
Lord with  
a heart full  
of  
devotion.***

Romans 12:11  
GNT

Particularly when our emotions are a challenge it's helpful to be able to lean back on God's promise to be with us and get us through what we are facing. If we will ask God for help and do what we can with as much enthusiasm as we can, we can expect God to help us through one more day. We may not see the finish line, but we can have the satisfaction of living well one more day.

***The Lord your God will fight alongside you and help you win the battle.***" (Deuteronomy 20:4 CEV)

Part of finding enthusiasm again comes from seeing the progress made on a long and sometimes difficult journey. We need to set goals for one hour or one day or one activity and give thanks as we accomplish them. Some of our discouragement may come from only having long-term goals that take time to reach. It's why the "progress not perfection" principle is so powerful. Some other small but effective tools include practicing gratitude, taking time to find beauty in nature, listening to praise music, or trying something new and intentionally speak with sincerity and genuineness about it. If we do these things, joy and enthusiasm will catch up to us again.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to find rest and joy as I go through this tough part of my journey. Help me to lean on You and remember that You are always with me. Thank You for supporting me through one more successful day in recovery. Amen***

SATURDAY, MAY 9, 2020

## EVERYDAY WISDOM – WORK FROM THE HEART

Many years ago a list was prepared of seven things that are death to living a good life. First on the list is lust – not surprising because we know the harm unfaithfulness brings to healthy relationships. Right in the middle of the list is laziness, or in the language used in those days, being slothful.

A lazy person is simply someone who is unwilling to work or use energy to get something done. There's a lack of energy and activity given to a task because the person really doesn't care about doing it. The Bible uses a stark picture to help us understand laziness.

***Some people are too lazy to take care of themselves. They will not even lift the food from their plate to their mouth.*** (Proverbs 19:24 ERV)

Each of us was created to do good work and an honest effort will bring us satisfaction. When we are too lazy to bother, our world becomes confusing, we feel less and less able to cope, and our ability to do so declines.

***The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.*** (Genesis 2:15 NIV)

We are instructed to do the best we can with what we have. We don't have to be more than we are, but we are responsible to give a task all that we've got. God's promise to us is, when we serve others in the best way we can, we will find ourselves receiving back much more than we ever gave out. This isn't just limited to doing jobs but has to do with making space for others in our lives, even when they are strugglers and have attitudes and practices that irritate us.

***Don't just do the minimum that will get you by. Do your best. Work from the heart for your real Master, for God, confident that you'll get paid in full when you come into your inheritance.*** (Colossians 3:23 MSG)

*Prayer: Loving God, You created me to bless and take care of Your creation. Forgive me for the many times it seemed too much for me to bother with what needed doing. Help me to mature and become a person useful in Your service and to work from a heart of gratitude for all You've done for me. Amen*

SUNDAY, MAY 10, 2020

## SUNDAY PSALM – MY HELPER, MY DEFENDER

We say it over and over again because it is true every day of our life: We are powerless on our own. Our lives are unmanageable; our problems are too great; our issues are too confusing; our emotional challenges are too overwhelming unless God comes and helps us.

***Save me by your power, O God; set me free by your might! Hear my prayer, O God; listen to my words! Proud people are coming to attack me; cruel people are trying to kill me—those who do not care about God. But God is my helper. The Lord is my defender.*** (Psalm 54:1-4 GNT)

Along with the writer of this Psalm we can confidently come to God today and ask for His help. Too many people think it's "self-centered" to ask God for help and to bring our concerns to Him. The opposite is true. God is waiting for us to invite Him into our circumstances so He can provide the help we need.

Whether it is harsh words from others, misunderstandings that are beyond our control to fix, or just people acting thoughtlessly in ways that cause harm, God wants to come alongside us, care for us, and help resolve our problems. If we think we have to do it on our own, then we are not allowing God to be our helper and our defender and we are missing out on the goodness that God wants to pour into our lives.

***So, all you people in faraway places, turn to me and be saved, because I am God, and there is no other. When I make a promise, that promise is true. It will happen.*** (Isaiah 45:22-23a ERV)

Even though we may be new to trusting God and our ability to believe that God can work effectively is not solid, if we will just turn our will and our life over to God's care, He will keep His promise. He will work on our behalf. He will rescue us and settle those things that we have turned over to His care.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, You have made many amazing promises and I want to trust You to give me wisdom and the courage to face those things that concern me today. I trust You to do what You promise to be my helper and my defender. Amen*

***Lazy people  
want much  
but get  
little, but  
those who  
work hard  
will  
prosper.***

***Proverbs 13:4  
NIRV***

***It is the  
Lord who  
helps me,  
and I will  
see my  
enemies  
defeated.***

***Psalm 118:7 GNT***

MONDAY, MAY 11, 2020

## OBSTACLES

We all want progress in our life in recovery but what are the actual goals we want to achieve? Perhaps we want to get training for an employment position, improve our relationships with family or friends, or increase our conscious contact with God. Whatever the goal, the way to success is to plan how we will work to achieve it.

***In everything you do, put God first, and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success.*** (Proverbs 3:6 TLB)

The greatest obstacle to meeting any goal is failing to seek God's guidance. The next obstacle is not scheduling time each day to work towards our goal. Our natural tendency is to do what we like to do, and before we know it, hours have gone by and we've wasted our day on things that are not contributing to our objective.

***A man who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful. But if he confesses and forsakes them, he gets another chance.*** (Proverbs 28:13 TLB)

All of us have 24 hours in a day. If we want to achieve the goals we set, we need to admit that we are allowing obstacles to get in the way of our plans. Each day we need to schedule our time and make a commitment to stay with the plan. We need to plan time for conscious contact with God, for working if we have a scheduled job, for activities related to our goal, and for necessary activities like eating and sleeping, not forgetting to plan time to relax and play.

**Refuse good advice and watch your plans fail; take good counsel and watch them succeed** (Proverbs 15:22 MSG)

Finally, many obstacles can be overcome through wise counsel. Seeking advice from others and paying attention to what they have to say can be humbling at times, but can turn out to be worthwhile as we find help to achieve our goals.

*Prayer: Gracious God, I admit to spending precious time on unproductive activities. Please help me to wisely consider the obstacles I allow to get in the way of my goals and adjust my time accordingly. Please give me wisdom and guidance in the plans I make and let them be in accordance with Your will for my life. Amen*

***Whatever the goal, the way to success is to plan how we will work to achieve it.***

TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020

## HOW CAN CHARACTER DEFECTS BE REMOVED?

As we plan a time and place to draw near to God and bring our inventory of character defects before Him, we can ask God to do what is necessary in us so that they can be removed. When we ask with sincerity, God will do as we ask.

***He has not punished us as we deserve for all our sins, for his mercy toward those who fear and honor him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our sins as far away from us as the east is from the west.*** (Psalm 103:10-12 TLB)

***We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.***

***Step 6 of AA Big Book***

Unfortunately for us the evil one, who has been our master for years, wants to remain in that position. He will challenge us about who we are in Christ Jesus, just like he challenged Jesus about being the Son of God. The truth is that on our own we are vulnerable, but God has given us a Power greater than ourselves to enable us to stop chasing after our evil desires and instead do what pleases Him. God faithfully does His part. He gives us the desire to let go of practices that are harmful to us and empowers us to walk in a new way. Our part is to trust and obey God's principles as recorded in the Bible, and live our lives doing those things that please God.

***Never give up. Eagerly follow the Holy Spirit and serve the Lord. Let your hope make you glad. Be patient in time of trouble and never stop praying.*** (Romans 12:11-12 CEV)

Victory over Satan will be achieved as we put on the armor of God and stand firm on God's word. From the scriptures we will learn new ways of doing things. Our character defects will be replaced by honorable living and our faith will increase as we recognize God's Power to change us.

***So stand strong with the belt of truth tied around your waist, and on your chest wear the protection of right living. On your feet wear the Good News of peace to help you stand strong. And also use the shield of faith with which you can stop all the burning arrows that come from the Evil One. Accept God's salvation as your helmet. And take the sword of the Spirit—that sword is the teaching of God.*** (Ephesians 6:14-17 ERV)

*Prayer: Loving God, Thank you that You are willing and have the Power to remove all my character defects. Please increase my hope in Your Power to change me for I know my spirit is willing, but my flesh is weak, Amen*

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2020

## SELF-DECEPTION

Self-deception is really another way of explaining a lifestyle of denial. The more we argue, rationalize, minimize, excuse, blame, bargain, and engage in the many forms of denial we know, the harder it is for us to recognize what a true assessment of our situation really is. There comes a time when our ability to know and respond truthfully is compromised.

***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 17:9-10a NLT)

One of the reasons we surround ourselves with healthy people and good sponsors is that we need help to recognize the unconscious lies we continue to tell ourselves. We conveniently forget truthful facts that go against what we are choosing to believe. In this process of letting go of self-deception we need to read God's word and adjust our thoughts and desires to obey what we learn

***For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.*** (Hebrews 4:12 NLT)

Procrastination and perfectionism are two enemies of an honest self-perception. We easily tell ourselves that we will do what we know we need to do but not just yet. Perfectionism keeps us focused on one aspect of a situation in a way that means we must neglect a balanced approach to life and recovery. It also leads to disappointment and discouragement and fuels the emotions which lead to relapse. If either of these two aren't deceiving us, then simple busyness can be an obstacle to an accurate assessment of where things are at and any action that might be required. We need to review what we should be doing, what we need to be learning, what part of recovery we need to be focusing on and give priority time to those things.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that many times I have sought to escape responsibility for my actions through denial and other ways of deceiving myself. Please give me the courage and strength to do whatever is necessary so that I may live with a clear and honest perception of the reality of life and who I am. I want to turn my will and life over to Your care. Amen***

***If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.***

***1 John 1:8 NIV***

THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2020

## THE BENEFIT OF EXPERIENCE

One of the promises given to us as we grow in our recovery is: *No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.* (Big Book pages 83-84) Who of us would deny the benefit found in sharing one's experience, strength, and hope with others and being given the same gift in return. We all are excited to share what is working for us. This promise reminds us that it is in being vulnerable and willing to share even the lessons from our weakest times and darkest days that benefits others. Are we willing to give that gift today?

***Each time he [God] 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.*** (2 Corinthians 12:9 NLT)

***No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.***

There's no benefit in sharing "war stories" or wallowing in self-pity about how bad things were. None of us needs the triggering reminders that come from too many details of our experience in the dark days of active addiction. However, what we all need is hope, no matter how far we have fallen. A brief description of our circumstances and the amazing joy of being uplifted by a loving God from there to this day of life in sobriety – now that's a story sure to bring hope to someone else.

***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)

We were hopeless and powerless until God stepped in to rescue us. The grateful sharing of our getting on board with God and the stability He brought to our lives is a message other strugglers are longing to hear to spark hope in the darkness of their own struggle.

***Prayer: Loving God, I am thankful for where I am today because You rescued and steadied me. Please give me the willingness, humility, and focus to share how You found me on my darkest days and gave me new life so others can be truly amazed at the awesome power You have to help a hopeless addict. Amen***

FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2020

## LOVE IS NOT RUDE

Rudeness shows itself in our speech and actions towards others. It consists of inappropriate words spoken or disrespectful behavior. Rudeness may show itself in an unwillingness to accept tradition or dress when we are invited to an event, not caring if we offend others or not. It also shows itself in selfish ambition and a disinterest in helping others. Some of us, when we are not at ease in a situation, may unintentionally be rude or even deliberately offensive.

***Be sincere in your love for others. Hate everything that is evil and hold tight to everything that is good. Love each other as brothers and sisters and honor others more than you do yourself.*** (Romans 12:9-10 CEV)

In recovery we attempt to focus our minds to those things that will help us develop healthy relationships with one another. Rather than isolating ourselves from people or events where we feel awkward, we seek to learn what is expected in certain situations and become cooperative. We need to let go of offhand remarks and gossip about those who follow traditions we are not familiar with. Consideration and kindness in all our words and actions will go a long way to helping us establish lasting friendships.

***Don't mistreat someone who has mistreated you. But try to earn the respect of others, and do your best to live at peace with everyone.*** (Romans 12:17-18 CEV)

Love is never rude. The Bible tells us that we will reap what we sow. Who among us wants to reap disrespect or humiliation? Let's make it a point to take personal inventory each day and choose to change the things we can, especially if we tend to be uncaringly rude.

***My prayer for you is that you will overflow more and more with love for others, and at the same time keep on growing in spiritual knowledge and insight.*** (Philippians 1:9 TLB)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to let go of those things that are part of my corrupt nature, especially rudeness. Help me to treat my friends and neighbours with respect and compassion and truly love and care for them as You love and care for me. Amen***

***Consideration and kindness in all our words and actions will go a long way to helping us establish lasting friendships.***

SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2020

## WONDERFULLY COMPLEX OR COMPLICATED

We were created as wonderfully complex human beings. That doesn't mean we are complicated but rather that there are layers of individual ways of experiencing life that makes us the amazing people we are, able to bring joy and interest to our relationships. The problem is, life feels complicated sometimes and we don't always know how to sort ourselves out. The program tells us to get a sponsor. Hands go up in every meeting so the newcomer can immediately connect with someone who has insight to help them take their first steps. Like the newcomer, we have to humbly admit that we need help and take steps to seek it out.

***A person's thoughts are like water in a deep well, but someone with insight can draw them out. Can anyone really say that his conscience is clear, that he has gotten rid of his sin?*** (Proverbs 20:5, 9 GNB)

***A person's steps are directed by the Lord. How then can anyone understand their own way?***

***Proverbs 20:24 NIV***

We face challenges and frustrations almost every day. We don't want to be a victim and just let fate take its course, nor do we want to be someone who intimidates and forces their way in just to get ahead. Neither of these extremes is healthy and neither will bring us the future we long to have. We need to listen to good advice as to when we should battle, and when we should let things go.

***Get good advice and you will succeed; don't go charging into battle without a plan. Young people take pride in their strength, but the gray hairs of wisdom are even more beautiful.*** (Proverbs 20:18 GNT, Proverbs 20:29 CEV)

When was the last time any of us sat down and chatted over coffee with an old timer? The Bible reminds us that there is great beauty in their "gray hairs of wisdom." Maybe today is the time to have a conversation and really listen to what someone with 20, 30, or 40 years of experience has to share with us.

The best place to find wise counsel is in God's Word written in the Bible. No other person in any other place has wisdom as reliable and sure as what we will find when we listen to what God says as we read His word. Let's make time to do that today.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for the wisdom You impart to me through your Word and from the experience of others around me. Help me to humbly seek out that wisdom and intentionally allow it to influence my life with You and others in recovery. Amen***

SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2020

## WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND

A saying we often hear is: “What goes around comes around.” It is usually said in reference to how a person treats others. The interpretation being, “How a person is treating others today is what they can expect to experience from others in the future.” God’s word brings a positive spin on this saying. His promise is, that as we bless others, we can expect God to bless us.

***Happy are those who are concerned for the poor; the Lord will help them when they are in trouble. The Lord will protect them and preserve their lives; he will make them happy in the land; he will not abandon them to the power of their enemies.*** (Psalm 41:1-2 GNT)

God loves to pour goodness into our lives and one of the ways we open the door to that is by being kind and helpful to others. This is different from the co-dependent way we often have of trying to do something nice for someone so they will do something nice for us in return. We need to be attentive to what is going on in the lives of others, and like God, respond with compassion as needed. It may be convenient. It may not. It may be a person we genuinely care about, or someone that easily gets under our skin. Whatever the case, we can be assured that as we bless others, God will bless us.

***Give to others, and God will give to you. Indeed, you will receive a full measure, a generous helping, poured into your hands—all that you can hold. The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you.*** (Luke 6:38 GNT)

God’s antidote to co-dependence in these situations is to turn the focus from the “You scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours” way of operating, to acting from a higher standard – the standard of love and compassion. God is love. God loves us. God cares for those who suffer. I will also care for those who suffer. We can reach out and support others without needing anything in return because God provides for us. He may use that person to bless us in the future, or He may bless us by some other means. The choice is up to Him. We just know that when we serve God by loving others, He will be there for us in our time of need. God’s Word is our guarantee.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I love how You love and care for me and others. I want to live motivated by love rather than co-dependency and selfish motives. Open my eyes to see people in need today, and help me to care for them as You direct. Amen*

***But those who trust in the Lord will be blessed. They know that the Lord will do what he says.***

*Jeremiah 17:7  
ERV*

MONDAY, MAY 18, 2020

## TRANSPLANTING AND GROWING

In some locations, May is the month for transplanting vegetable seedlings from small containers into outdoor gardens or raised beds. We know it’s important to have moist soil around the seedling, to gently remove it from its container, separate its roots, plant it in ground that is warm enough with lots of sunlight, and then nourish with compost. When we take the right steps at this point, even though the plants are tiny and seem vulnerable, we can expect strong plants to grow and gain a rich harvest of vegetables later in the season.

***As time moves on, we need to work the transplanting process, so words and ideas become trustworthy beliefs and practices.***

Through prayer and meditation, we seek to improve our conscious contact with God. Reading and thinking about God’s principles for daily living is a bit like planting seed in a small container, protected for a while in a warm place but needing to be transplanted in order to grow. We need to work the transplanting process with words and ideas so they become trustworthy beliefs and practices.

***Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.*** (Psalm 1:1-3 NLT)

To discern good advice, we have to filter it out from all the sounds that surround us each day and then make choices to focus on what is right and good. When we do, we will grow to be like strong trees who can thrive in every season and set of circumstances.

***Let the wonderful kindness and the understanding that come from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ help you to keep on growing.*** (2 Peter 3:18 CEV)

A gardener will not forget a plant once it is transplanted into the garden. There’s watering and weeding to be done all during the growing season. In the same way we must look repeatedly into God’s Word and let it come alive in us as we consciously put it into practice.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to take care of the seed of Your word planted in my heart. Help me to think about and choose to apply Your principles in everything I do, so I may have a harvest of joy and peace and blessings, as You promise. Amen*

TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2020

## HABITS

It's not surprising that living in active addiction was for years often described as having a habit. A habit is a particular practice that we do over and over again, and which is often hard to give up. It can be a practice that we've done so often that we may do it unconsciously. An addiction is a habit that is negative and one of the tools we have to help us overcome addiction is the ability to form new habits – only this time ones that are positive and life giving.

**I will always obey your law, forever and ever. Each morning you listen to my prayer, as I bring my requests to you and wait for your reply.** (Psalm 119:44 GNT, Psalm 5:3 CEV)

The Twelve Steps speak of habits we can build into our new life. They include continually taking personal inventory, being involved in prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, repeatedly turning our will and our life over to the care of God, carrying the message to others, and practicing these principles in all our affairs.

On average it takes about two months of regular practice before a new behaviour becomes an automatic response, so we need to be aware of this, and be ready to reward progress rather than perfection. Experts will tell us to focus on one new thing at a time. Perhaps that is the wisdom behind the Serenity Prayer principle “*living one day at a time and enjoying one moment at a time.*” Now there's a positive habit we all can grow!

**Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness** (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Titus 2:7 NIV)

Choosing to be joyful, praying continually, and practicing gratitude are important habits that will help us with every other good practice we develop. Practicing integrity and setting a good example are habits God says will not only help us, but will set an example for others to follow.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to live well with You today and develop life-giving habits that honour You and bless others. Help me to focus on what's most important today. Amen*

***But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.***

*Hebrews 5:14 NIV*

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2020

## BECOMING NEW

In Step-7 we come to God and humbly ask Him to remove our shortcomings. All of us were born into a sinful world with a fallen nature opposed to the ways of God. Each of us needs to be taught how to be kind and compassionate towards others, otherwise our selfish nature will cause us to act out of self-interest rather than being loving and caring. Some of us grew up in an environment where selfishness was exhibited more than love and caring. Those of us who were deprived of love and caring as children sometimes developed character defects and an inability to get along with others.

***Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.*** (Proverbs 22:6 NLT)

***Jesus died so we could throw off our old evil nature and clothe ourselves with a new nature of honesty and purity.***

In Step 3 we gave both our will and life over to the care of God and were born-again into a new life. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves and identified those things in our old nature that were not in keeping with the new nature God had given us. Now our desire is to be free of these shortcomings. If we are sincere, God promises to remove them from us.

***You were told that your foolish desires will destroy you and that you must give up your old way of life with all its bad habits. Let the Spirit change your way of thinking and make you into a new person. You were created to be like God, and so you must please him and be truly holy.*** (Ephesians 4:22-24 CEV)

As we journey with God in recovery, we need to be well instructed in the truth of what Jesus accomplished for us by His death and resurrection. Jesus died so we could throw off our old evil nature and clothe ourselves with a new nature of honesty and purity. Through prayer and conscious contact with God the Holy Spirit who lives within us, we will understand His will for us and find the power to carry it out.

***For God is at work within you, helping you want to obey him, and then helping you do what he wants.*** (Philippians 2:13 TLB)

*Prayer: Loving God, I humbly ask you to remove all my shortcomings and help me to be made new in the attitude of my mind, so I may practice Your principles in all my affairs. Amen*

THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2020

## DEALING WITH PRESSURE

Who of us hasn't felt pressured recently – maybe even today? There are so many demands on our time and attention, so many uncertainties in our world, and so much we don't know about what we need to do to be safe and successful. Sometimes the pressure comes from having all kinds of opportunities and feeling overwhelmed by the decisions we need to make. We want what is best. We want what will work. While it's important to not passively let life just happen, it's also important to find a secure place each day where we can deal with whatever we need to face today and wisely let the rest go.

**Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.** (James 1:2-4 MSG)

God has a good plan for us and is willing to help us find and work at it successfully. God knows there will be pressures we face every day but He promises that He will be with us and that the lessons we learn, even in times of challenge and pressure, will help us develop confidence and faith in God's goodness and His constant support in all we do.

**Happy are those who remain faithful under trials, because when they succeed in passing such a test, they will receive as their reward the life which God has promised to those who love him.** (James 1:12 GNT)

One of the greatest pressures we put on ourselves is the fear of making a mistake when part of the learning process is doing exactly that. No one is perfect. Everyone is learning. Those who learn the most are those who are willing to stay focused on what they can do today, build one step at a time, celebrate progress, and find all the good they can in each situation.

Feeling pressure is a great signal to remind us to talk to God about what's going on and remember His promise to never leave us to face anything alone.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, when I feel pressured and overwhelmed, help me to remember that You are with me, you will show me a way forward, and You will give me what I need to do what I need to do. Help me to trust You with all my heart and let go of stress. Amen*

**In my  
distress I  
prayed to  
the Lord,  
and the  
Lord  
answered  
me and set  
me free.**

*Psalm 118:5 NLT*

FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2020

## LISTEN TO ME AND BE SECURE

In times of trouble, and when facing an unknown and uncertain future, it's easy to feel unsafe and fearful. God promise us that, as we listen to Him, we will be safe and secure.

**But if you listen to me, you will be safe and secure without fear of disaster.** (Proverbs 1:33 CEV)

It would be very easy to miss the first word in the sentence that contains the promise, "but." This word indicates that there are some things we need to avoid in order to experience the life of security and blessing that God is promising us. If we read the preceding verses in Proverbs 1 we will be reminded of the trouble that comes when we are enticed into harmful practices such as; when we mock those who live a simple life program; when we stay so busy and distracted that we don't hear God's warnings or bother to obey His principles when it is inconvenient to do so; when we slide along not being alert to potential trouble and thinking, "I've got this in the bag."

The word "listen" has two parts: to hear what is being said and to obey what we hear. This is the recipe for successful living that God is promising us and makes available to us. He knows what is best for us. We need to seek Him and find that out what that looks like. God will guide us around things that would otherwise cause us to stumble because He knows better than we do how weak we are, and how powerful the triggers in certain situations are. As we give our full attention to God and obey what he says, we will experience the life of security God promises us. We will then be free from the fear of disaster that is so harmful to our well-being.

**Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track. Submit yourselves to God. Resist the Devil, and he will run away from you.** (Proverbs 3:6 MSG, James 4:7 GNT)

*Prayer: Loving God, it's so easy to be flooded with fearful thoughts and act in panic. Help me to follow Your way in every situation I encounter, so I can experience the safety and security that You have promised. When I am fearful, help me to check where I failed to listen or failed to follow Your ways, and help me take the necessary action required to correct my disobedience. Please help me to stay on track and listen well. Amen*

*Luke 11:28 GNT*

SATURDAY, MAY 23, 2020

## GETTING IT RIGHT

God wants us to “get it right.” If we will pay attention and obey what we learn from God’s Word, God’s Spirit will lead us on the right path every time.

***We may think we are doing the right thing, but the Lord always knows what is in our hearts. Doing what is right and fair pleases the Lord more than an offering.*** (Proverbs 21:2-3 CEV)

Too many of us prefer to figure things out on our own, give it our best shot, and then we wonder what went wrong when things don’t work out. We bring our failure to God and remind Him how hard we worked in our effort to get it right. We often think we know what the right thing is without checking with God, the One who has wisdom beyond all that we could ever know or imagine. He knows our motives, our abilities, our limitations, and even factors beyond our ability to even grasp. It’s always the wisest move to include God in our plans. Not only will God share with us what we need to know but we give Him pleasure when we ask for His guidance.

***If you try to be kind and good, you will be blessed with life and goodness and honor.*** (Proverbs 21:21 CEV)

How reassuring it is to know that we don’t always have to get it right in order to be blessed. God’s word reminds us that it is the person who tries who is blessed with goodness and honour. There are many things going on in other people’s hearts and in their circumstances that are impossible for us to know and plan for. Our responsibility is to make our best effort and be honest about what we know and don’t know. Unexpected things will take place. We will become aware of more details as we proceed and may even need to change course. However, if we are sincerely seeking to know and follow God’s plan, we will find ourselves on the winning side.

***Wicked people bluff their way, but God’s people think before they take a step. No matter how much you know or what plans you make, you can’t defeat the Lord.*** (Proverbs 21:29-30 CEV)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to take time to plan my day with You. I admit that I don’t know everything I will need to know, but You do. Help me to humbly surrender my will along with my thinking and plans into your care for You alone know everything. Amen***

***It’s  
always  
the  
wisest  
move  
to  
include  
God in  
our  
plans.***

SUNDAY, MAY 24, 2020

## WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT

When troubles show up in our lives, we are right to call out quickly to God and trust that He will hear us and will help us. The problem is, we often wait until the challenges are way too much for us to handle and then we come to God in a panic. We expect God’s help in an instant. When that doesn’t happen, we complain that God doesn’t care about us.

***I pray to you, Lord. So when the time is right, answer me and help me with your wonderful love. Don’t let me sink in the mud, but save me from my enemies and from the deep water. Don’t let me be swept away by a flood or drowned in the ocean or swallowed by death. Answer me, Lord! You are kind and good. Pay attention to me! You are truly merciful. Don’t turn away from me. I am your servant, and I am in trouble. Please hurry and help! Come and save me from my enemies.*** (Psalm 69:13-18 CEV)

***The Lord  
isn’t really  
being slow  
about his  
promise,  
as some  
people  
think. No,  
he is being  
patient for  
your sake.***

***2 Peter 3:9a NLT***

We are encouraged by our reading from the Bible today to remember that God is kind and good, and His love has no limit. God pays attention to us when we are in trouble and He promises to rescue us. The great faith that we need to develop is to trust that “***when the time is right***” God’s help will be there for us.

While God truly is kind and quickly responds to many of our requests, only God knows all that needs to be in place before the perfect solution is applied. We often assume that God’s help should come in the particular way we think we need it, and at the moment we think need to have it. It doesn’t always work that way. God helps us in different ways and at different times than we might desire but, His help is always effective and right on time.

***The Lord is good to those who put their hope in him. He is good to those who look to him. It is good when people wait quietly for the Lord to save them.*** (Lamentation 3:25-26 NIRV)

***Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for loving me, hearing my prayers and answering them. Help me to have faith and continue to put my hope in You while I wait for some answers to come. To know You is to know that You are never slow as some people might think, but are patient to fulfill Your plan for me as You bring the perfect solution at just the right time. Amen***

MONDAY, MAY 25, 2020

## SARCASM – HUMOUR OR HOSTILITY?

One of the ways many of us try to hide our hurt and anger is through sarcasm. We say something nasty about someone which makes them feel or look stupid before others, and then try to get away with it by saying “I was just joking.” If someone is hurt by what we say, we need to consider what we have said and expose the motive behind it.

***Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing.***  
(Proverbs 12:18 NLT)

Why do we feel we need to make spiteful comments about others? Do we think it makes us look smarter or better than the other person? Are we hoping that people will find us witty and appealing by speaking this way? Do we care about how someone might feel about what we say or are we just interested in being entertaining?

Much of the so called humour we see on TV talk shows or comedy sit-coms is filled with sarcasm and everyday relationships are damaged by its cunning use. Professionals describe sarcasm as “hostility disguised as humour.” When we speak sarcastically about others, some of the things going on in our own hearts are: feelings of inferiority; a desire for something to happen, but we are too afraid to ask directly for it; fear of being not good enough; passive-aggressive anger; and attention seeking.

***Enemies disguise themselves with their lips, but in their hearts they harbor deceit. Though their speech is charming, do not believe them.*** (Proverbs 26:24-25a NIV)

To encourage one another, we always need to speak in a way that uplifts rather than tears down. As followers of Jesus we represent God in all our interactions. How would Jesus speak or behave towards another person? That answer should be our guide.

***If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God.***  
(1 Peter 4:11a NIV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for the times I've hidden my anger and hurt behind sarcasm. Help me to speak as You would speak and build up others with my words. Amen*

***Set a  
guard  
over my  
mouth,  
Lord;  
keep  
watch  
over the  
door of my  
lips.***

*Psalm 141:3 NIV*

TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2020

## WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS

Making a list of persons we have harmed is intimidating but becoming willing to make amends to all of them seems too much to ask. This step is challenging because we must look at the harm we have caused, and it generally involves family members and others who have been close to us. Without God in our lives, we will struggle to be willing to complete this step, but with God all things are possible.

***So, if you are about to place your gift on the altar and remember that someone is angry with you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. Make peace with that person, then come back and offer your gift to God.*** (Matthew 5:23-24 CEV)

Jesus taught the above principle long before the 12-Step program was founded. He knew that to be completely free of our past we needed to make amends to those we had harmed. When Jesus went to the house of Zacchaeus the tax collector, many people who had been harmed by Zacchaeus murmured against Jesus because they said He had gone to be the guest of a sinner. Zacchaeus, however, was a changed man when He met Jesus and he volunteered to make amends to those he had harmed.

***Later that day Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “I will give half of my property to the poor. And I will now pay back four times as much to everyone I have ever cheated”.*** (Luke 19:8 CEV)

There is no doubt that when we have given our will and life over to the care of God and accepted Jesus as our Saviour, all our sins are forgiven. Now we have freedom from the control of the evil one. As children of God, strengthened by the Power of the Holy Spirit, we need to humbly allow others to see how we regretfully view our past actions towards them and want to make amends.

***Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.*** (Philippians 2:12b-13 NLT)

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, Please give me the desire and power to complete this Step and, according to Your word, help me make peace with those I have harmed. Amen*

WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2020

## JESUS TEACHES US HOW TO PRAY

When Jesus was on earth, He often went off on His own to pray. Jesus knew the value of seeking His Father's direction for the daily events in His earthly life. With His divinity set aside, Jesus was truly a son of man operating in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray and He gave them a prayer that is 65 words long and yet offers wisdom and insight into the most important issues of life.

***Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.*** (Matthew 6:9b-13 NKJV)

When we pray, have we considered who God is and the issues we are bringing before Him? Are we inviting His will, not ours, to be done here on earth? Do we believe as we ask Him, that He will truly meet our needs? Are we willing to forgive those who have wronged us, as He has forgiven our wrongs? Do we sincerely desire to overcome temptation and be delivered from the evil one? Do we identify as children of God and recognize that we have transferred into His Kingdom where all power and glory exist forever?

***For he has rescued us out of the darkness and gloom of Satan's kingdom and brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who bought our freedom with his blood and forgave us all our sins.*** (Colossians 1:13-14 TLB)

When we give our will and life over to the care of God, we move from Satan's kingdom to the Kingdom of God. We must stand firmly on this truth. Through prayer and meditation on God's word, we increase our conscious contact with God and experience His help in every area of life.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to stand firm on the truth of Your word and to pray continually for Your guidance in all my affairs. May my words and actions reflect Your Kingdom here on earth. Amen***

***I am praying  
to you  
because I  
know you  
will answer,  
O God.  
Bend  
down and  
listen as I  
pray.***

*Psalms 17:6 NLT*

THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2020

## RECEIVING MORE BY GIVING UP MORE

One day Jesus and his followers were having a discussion about the challenges that people experience when they choose to give up self-will and follow God's will. In this world we are told to pursue things like pleasure, popularity, power, and money. These are held out as necessary to have if we are to experience satisfaction and happiness. Too many of us have gone down those routes and found addiction and suffering at the end of the road. Jesus reminds His followers that even if we give up some things in the short term in order to follow Him, we will receive far more in return than we could ever imagine.

***Who then  
can be  
saved?"  
Jesus  
looked at  
them and  
said, "With  
man this is  
impossible  
but with  
God all  
things are  
possible.***

*Matthew 19:25b-26 NIV*

***Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" Jesus said to them, "Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first."*** (Matthew 19:23, 27, 29-30 NIV)

These are big promises from God that we can hang onto as we let go of some things. We feel the challenge when we need to enter treatment and must step away from people, places, and things that are familiar. The pull comes when the busyness of a job and making money doesn't leave time for God or meetings. Too many of us have watched sobriety slip away with every paycheck as we drifted further and further away from fellowship with God and others. The desire for sex and companionship also takes many of us away from God's plan for our lives.

We each need to ask ourselves if there is anything we need to leave behind in order to follow God with all our heart.

We are assured that when we choose to put God first in our lives, we will experience His promise of great blessings in return.

***Prayer: Loving God, my heart can so easily be pulled in different directions. Help me to honour You with my time and to give priority to those things that keep me alive to Your presence in my life. Give me the courage to leave behind anything that hinders Your will for my life. Amen***

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2020

## OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE – CARRY THE MESSAGE

We are reminded over and over again in the AA Traditions, Twelve Steps, and the experience of so many that it is the simplicity and focus of sticking with one primary purpose that helps us help one another. *Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.* (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions page 150) This is the focus we need as we gather to support one another in sobriety and in the new life God is giving us.

***What you should want most is God's kingdom and doing what he wants you to do. Then he will give you all these other things you need.***  
(Matthew 6:33 ERV)

The foundational principles for our new life are: admitting our powerlessness without God; coming to believe in a Power greater than ourselves; and turning our will and our life over to the care of God.

God's word also encourages us to have a single-minded focus on what matters. When Jesus was asked what the most important focus of life was, this is what He said: ***Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and most important command. And the second command is like the first: 'Love your neighbor the same as you love yourself'.***  
(Matthew 22:37-39 ERV)

Drinking and drugging are responses to deeper issues of the heart to which God alone has the solutions. As those who shared with us when they have found the key to living free from the effects of a deadly disease, we now need to be sharing this message of freedom with others. We know that as we share the message, the gift of this rich new life comes more and more alive in us as well.

***God did not keep back his own Son, but he gave him for us. If God did this, won't he freely give us everything else? Give freely, and you will profit. Help others, and you will gain more for yourself.*** (Romans 8:32 CEV, Proverbs 11:25 ERV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for Jesus who brought the message of Your love for me to earth, even to the cross where He died for my sins. Help me to be focused on what matters today and carry the message of redemption with love and clarity to those I meet. Amen*

***Our focus  
on day-to-  
day living  
has to be  
God's  
agenda and  
giving Him  
opportunity  
to work  
that out in  
our lives.***

SATURDAY, MAY 30, 2020

## DOING A GOOD JOB

There's nothing more satisfying than finishing a job and having someone say, "What a good job!" Regardless of the area, whether in the trades or the arts, when someone performs well it brings joy to more than just themselves.

***Show me someone who does a good job, and I will show you someone who is better than most and worthy of the company of kings.*** (Proverbs 22:29 GNT)

As we walk with God and follow His will for our lives, He promises to give us everything we need so this experience can be ours. It doesn't matter if the task is something done behind the scenes, hardly noticed by anyone at all, or something that gains the attention of many. If we do our best in every situation, God is pleased and we experience the satisfaction of a job well done.

***Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth.*** (2 Timothy 2:15 NLT)

***God is able to  
shower all kinds  
of blessings on  
you. So in all  
things and at all  
times you will  
have everything  
you need. You  
will do more  
and more good  
works.***

(2 Corinthians 9:8 NIRV)

God has given each one of us gifts and talents that we can use to bless others and demonstrate God's love and creativity. As we get training, work hard, learn from the experience of others, and just keep practicing our trade, we will find we have more talent, and wider knowledge of what works and what doesn't. The challenge for most of us is being willing to develop our talents and to keep working hard. We don't rise to the top of our trade in the first week or month. We shouldn't expect to receive top wages at the beginning of the job but be willing to prove ourselves – our ability and our work ethic – before demanding higher wages. We don't have to have the talents of someone else but simply do the best with what we have been given.

***Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else.***  
(Galatians 6:4 NLT)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to give each responsibility and task my best effort today, trusting that when I do, You will help me do a good job. Amen*

SUNDAY, MAY 31, 2020

# NOTES

## WE ARE TRULY BLESSED

As we come before the Lord either alone or together with others, is our mind focused on praising God for all He has done in our lives? God sought us when we were in the pit of our existence and brought us to a place where we could receive new life through Jesus and live out the plan He had in mind for us from long ago. God knew us before we were even born and watched us make the mistake of trying to live life on our own terms. What a blessing when we could finally say to God, "Take my will and my life and make them conform to the plans You have for me." Now we have a Heavenly Father who cares for us and an inheritance in Heaven that is beyond the reach of change or decay.

*Praise the Lord and pray in his name! Tell everyone what he has done. Sing praises to the Lord! Tell about his miracles. Celebrate and worship his holy name with all your heart. Trust the Lord and his mighty power. Remember his miracles and all his wonders and his fair decisions. The Lord is our God, bringing justice everywhere on earth. He will never forget his agreement or his promises, not in thousands of years.* (Psalm 105:1-5, 7-8 CEV)

Previously we lived a life that brought us to a place where we were powerless over our dependencies and our life was completely unmanageable. Now we can celebrate the gift of eternal life because Jesus rose from the dead and God has given those who believe in His name this priceless gift of a life with Him forever. Even in this world God works on our behalf working all things together for our good and fulfilling His great and precious promises to us. With God in our lives, we are truly blessed.

*God is so good, and by raising Jesus from death, he has given us new life and a hope that lives on. God has something stored up for you in heaven, where it will never decay or be ruined or disappear.* (1 Peter 1:3b-4 CEV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Today on this blessed Sunday, I want to give thanks to You for all You have done and continue to do for me. I am forever thankful that Your Word brings me life and with You I am truly blessed. Amen*

***What a blessing when we could finally say to God, "Take my will and my life and make them conform to the plans You have for me."***

## SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

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

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

## PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

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

## How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery

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

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

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

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

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

## **JUST FOR TODAY**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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