

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



MAY 2021



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

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JUST FOR TODAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

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



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

PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

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

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How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery

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

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

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

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

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

ACTIONS THAT STRENGTHEN HOPE

Most of us think that if we had never known adversity and heartache in our lives, we would be living happy and contented lives today. We may believe that what we endured brought us to that place where we were powerless over our dependency and our life was unmanageable. In recovery, we are learning that it was the actions we took to compensate for whatever caused us pain that resulted in us living in that hopeless place. We are also learning that trusting God and having hope in His promises will help us endure whatever happens in the future.

We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next. In alert expectancy such as this, we're never left feeling shortchanged. Quite the contrary—we can't round up enough containers to hold everything God generously pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit!
(Romans 5:3b-5 MSG)

God will steady us in the hard times of life if we have patience and trust Him to act on our behalf. We get into trouble when we are impatient and start to look for our own solutions to life's situations. When we begin to trust God and wait and have hope that He will act, we can leave everything in His care and anticipate the good He will bring to each situation we have entrusted to Him. In His time, we will see the result of our hope being fulfilled.

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

As we follow God's ways, we will become aware of problems we didn't know existed. For example, we may discover that an attitude we are exhibiting towards someone is not in keeping with our new life in Christ. We should not be discouraged even if this seems to be a persistent problem. We have hope that, together with God, this and any other problem can be worked out and overcome.

Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for the confidence You give me that, together with You, I can live a life of integrity and share this hope with others. Amen

***May the
God who
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fill you
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joy.***

Romans 15:13

CAN I EVER ESCAPE THE PAIN OF THE PAST?

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

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

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

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

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

In a song entitled "To God Be The Glory", there is a line that is forever true regardless of what we have done.

"The vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus a pardon receives." To persevere in our life with God in recovery, we need to ask God for His strength to practice His principles in all our affairs. When we obey His word, He will surely be our comfort, help, and guide, in times of need.

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

LOOK AT THE BIRDS

We seldom have a day when we are not worried about something. We may have health issues that concern us, financial challenges that seem impossible, relationships that aren't yet sorted out, or just worries about how to find our way in our life with God in recovery.

In His kindness, God offers us comfort and peace of mind no matter what we are facing.

So I tell you, don't worry about the things you need to live—what you will eat, drink, or wear. Life is more important than food, and the body is more important than what you put on it. Look at the birds. They don't plant, harvest, or save food in barns, but your heavenly Father feeds them. Don't you know you are worth much more than they are? You cannot add any time to your life by worrying about it. (Matthew 6:25-27 ERV)

We are loved and cared for by God. He promises to provide everything we need as we turn our will and our life over to His care. The birds all around us remind us of God's attention to our daily needs. God is watching us. God knows what we have today and what we will need tomorrow, and He promises to make that available to us each day. It may not be name brand jeans or Starbucks coffee, but our daily needs will be provided for.

God invites us to bring our requests to Him. When Jesus' friends wondered what they should say to God when they prayed, one of the things Jesus told them to say was, "***Give us this day our daily bread.***" Elsewhere in the Bible we are encouraged to "***Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.***" (1 Peter 5:7 NIV)

Let's take a moment today and look at the birds and let them lift our hearts in gratitude to the God who cares for their needs, and for us and our every need as well. Let's tell God what we need today and trust Him to supply it.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, it's hard to trust You when my experience has been one of poverty and lack. Increase my faith to believe that You are a generous God who takes care of His children. Help me to bring my needs to You and have faith that You will provide for me as You do for even the littlest of birds. Amen

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:19 NIV

SUNDAY PSALM – THE HIDDEN KINDNESS OF GOD

God is aware of every difficult moment we have experienced and the pain we have endured for every wrong done to us or by us. He hasn't looked away. He hasn't been busy elsewhere. He has watched and cared and acted on our behalf. It's a good day to give thanks for our experience of the kindness of God

I celebrate and shout because you are kind. You saw all my suffering, and you cared for me. You kept me from the hands of my enemies, and you set me free. Protect me from hidden traps and keep me safe. My life is in your hands. Save me from enemies who hunt me down. Smile on me, your servant. Have pity and rescue me.
(Psalm 31:7-8, 4, 15-16 CEV)

There are so many things we don't see - so many traps that could trip us up. God is on the watch for those and ready to offer protection. God will act on our behalf when we welcome His intervention. All we need to do is request His help.

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The more we progress in recovery and practice following the ways of God, the more the enemy of our souls will try to harm us. Each day of our recovery requires that we put our life in God's hands and rely on Him to save us from the hidden dangers we may encounter.

You are wonderful, and while everyone watches, you store up blessings for all who honor and trust you. I will praise you, Lord, for showing great kindness when I was like a city under attack. I was terrified and thought, "They've chased me far away from you!" But you

answered my prayer when I shouted for help. (Psalm 31:19, 21-22 CEV)

God is not passively watching us as we wander through our day. Others may watch and say nothing, but God pours out blessing and help as we open our hearts to His truth. We never live with a complete picture of what is happening in our life. Only God knows that. God promises to work on our behalf whether we can see what He is doing or not. God is always with us even though we may not be aware of His presence. Sometimes the most we can do in our weakness is just keep thanking God that He has promised to never leave us alone.

Prayer: Loving God, Whether I can see what You are doing in my life today or not, help me to trust that as I surrender my will and my life into Your care, You will help and protect me, and strengthen and comfort me, in my time of need. Amen

JUST FOR TODAY – ENJOY

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

We are not the only people who failed to trust God and wander into a destructive lifestyle. In the Bible we read stories of human beings to whom God showed amazing grace and patience. Though they struggled and often failed, God was gracious to forgive and restore their relationship with Him.

Like us, when these persons realized what a mess they had made, they felt sad and guilty about their past behaviour and received God's forgiveness. They were then restored to have a joyful relationship with God and with one another. This was the case for the people we find in the book of Nehemiah. For many years the people wandered in ungodly lifestyles of self-centeredness and sin. This resulted in a complete breakdown of community life and a time of captivity and exile in another land. However, God did not write the people off. Instead He raised up a person who called them to turn away from their sin and come back to Him.

God helped the people rebuild their lives in an amazing way. At one point during a community gathering the priest, a man named Ezra, stood up and read from God's word to the people. As they heard God's word, the people wept and mourned over how far they had wandered from the ways of God. But the leaders said something amazing to them that can serve as an encouragement to us today.

Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.
(Nehemiah 8:10 NIV)

We need to take time to read God's word and see all the promises God has made to us. Perhaps it is time to repent, turn back to God, let guilt go, and welcome forgiveness. God has given us today; why not rejoice and be glad in it?

Prayer: Gracious God, Forgive me for the many times I look past Your gifts and fail to enjoy all that You are giving me. Help me to pause and notice and give thanks for what You bring to this day. Thank You for filling my life with good things. Amen

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CHARACTER STRENGTH – BEING GENEROUS

God wants us to be responsible and generous with all He has given us – time, abilities, money, possessions. God does not want us to carelessly spend the money and resources we have as soon as we get them. He wants us to give some thought to what we may need in the future. He also wants us to help others even though we might feel our resources are limited. God wants us to ask Him for wisdom in how we are to use the resources we have been given. He promises to bless us when we do.

Remember this: The one who plants few seeds will have a small harvest. But the one who plants a lot will have a big harvest. Each one of you should give what you

As we give to God and to others as God directs, He promises that we will receive back what we have given abundantly multiplied.

have decided in your heart to give. You should not give if it makes you unhappy or if you feel forced to give. God loves those who are happy to give. And God can give you more blessings than you need, and you will always have plenty of everything. You will have enough to give to every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:6-8 ERV)

Farmers know they need to provide for their families from the crops they grow. They also need to maintain enough seed in order to plant for a new harvest. God wants us to be responsible and generous and promises to give us all we need, so we can share with others from the abundance He gives us.

God expects us to do some planning around what we have and not just do whatever we suddenly feel like doing in the moment. When we become aware of a need, we should ask God what our part might be in meeting that need, and then obey what God says. As we give to God and to others as God directs, He promises that we will receive back what we have given, abundantly multiplied.

Give to others, and you will receive. You will be given much. It will be poured into your hands—more than you can hold. You will be given so much that it will spill into your lap. The way you give to others is the way God will give to you. The Lord All-Powerful says, “Try this test. Bring one-tenth of your things to me. Put them in the treasury. Bring food to my house. Test me! If you do these things, I will surely bless you. Good things will come to you like rain falling from the sky. You will have more than enough of everything. (Luke 6:38, Malachi 3:10 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for your promise to provide what I need each day. Please help me to prayerfully use and share with others what You have given me. Amen

A SEASON OF REFRESHING

This life we have been given, this new season that is before us, begins with each new day. Yesterday’s mistakes, blunders, worries and pains are behind us. We are unable to change what has been said and done. We need to admit our faults, and repent and turn away from the evil things we have done. We need to turn to God who promises us a season of refreshing.

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord (Acts 3:19 NIV)

Living as if God did not exist is the first thing we need to repent of. That is why the first steps of the 12-Step program deal with this issue. We admit we are powerless. We come to believe God can restore us. We turn our life, including our rebellious self-will over to God, and receive salvation and a new way of living through Jesus Christ. We learn to recognize the voice of God’s Holy Spirit in us. He shows us behaviours and thoughts that are stirred by the insanity of our thinking, the brokenness of harm done to us, and character defects that need to be removed.

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (Psalm 51:4, 1 John 1:9 NLT)

If we reach out and embrace it, refreshing new life is available to us. Whether we are brand new in recovery or returning after many stumbles, God is with us, and when we call on Him, He will answer us and give us love and mercy each morning for a fresh new start. As our will is surrendered to His, God will give us everything we need to live life with a new sense of joy.

Sprinkled with the blood of Christ, our hearts have been made free from a guilty conscience, and our bodies have been washed with pure water. So come near to God with a sincere heart, full of confidence because of our faith in Christ. (Hebrews 10:22 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for each day You have planned for me. I repent of my rebellious ways and seek from this day forward to walk in the truth of Your word. Lord, please strengthen me to practice Your principles in all my affairs. Amen

We are still alive because the Lord’s faithful love never ends. Every morning he shows it in new ways!

Lamentations 3:22-23a ERV

WHEN TO SPEAK AND WHEN TO BE SILENT

How many times did people try to help us see the truth about our problem when we were in active addiction? How many times did we ignore what they said and just continued in our rebellious ways? As we share the message of life with God in recovery with others, we need to pray for wisdom to know when to speak and when to simply pray and leave people until they are ready.

Never correct conceited people; they will hate you for it. But if you correct the wise, they will respect you. Anything you say to the wise will make them wiser. Whatever you tell the righteous will add to their knowledge. (Proverbs 9:8-9 GNT)

We are to be those with stories of hope and comfort.

It's a good idea to share in a measured way and watch for a reaction from those we are speaking with. This is particularly true with those who may see us living in recovery but are not yet able or willing to admit their own difficulties and need for change. We may not agree with everything someone says but we do not always need to confront it. Silence has its place. Every conversation with others can lead us to a conversation with God and He will show us when and what we are to say.

The right word at the right time is like precious gold set in silver. It makes a lot of sense to be a person of few words and to stay calm. (Proverbs 25:11, 17:27 CEV)

On the flip side, when we are with people who are longing to have hope, we need to honour God by telling the story of His work in us that has given us life in recovery and hope. We need to simply share what effect responding to God's word, or rejecting it, had in our own lives. We are a witness, not a judge. We are to be those with stories of hope and comfort. God's Holy Spirit will do the rest.

To be wise you must first have reverence for the Lord. If you know the Holy One, you have understanding. Wisdom will add years to your life. You are the one who will profit if you have wisdom, and if you reject it, you are the one who will suffer. (Proverbs 9:10-12 GNT)

Prayer: Loving God, You made so many wonderful changes in my life that I'm eager to share my experience, strength, and hope with others. Help me to be wise and know when to speak and when to listen with respectful silence. Please open up opportunities for me to share Your Good News and, as I open my mouth, fill it with Your words of hope. Amen

SELF-CENTEREDNESS

A character defect that most of us have is self-centeredness. Sometimes we are not aware of it, but it is evident in how we behave and in what we say. Our communication with others is mainly about ourselves and what we think or do. We often brag about how we outwitted someone to get what we wanted. We boast about our activities. It seems we just want others to know how clever we really are. Some of us are so concerned about promoting ourselves that we seldom stop to think of how we are relating to others.

In whatever you do, don't let selfishness or pride be your guide. Be humble, and honor others more than yourselves. Don't be interested only in your own life, but care about the lives of others too. (Philippians 2:3-4 ERV)

Impatience with a person or an event is another way we show our self-centeredness. We often get upset when the check-out person at the store is too slow; the doctor has too many patients; someone forces their way ahead of us in a line-up; our counsellor doesn't seem to understand, or we think they are not listening. Complaining when our expectations are not met is evidence of our self-centered attitude. How often do we stop and think about the well-being of the other person in the situations we complain about?

An unfriendly person pursues selfish ends and against all sound judgment starts quarrels. (Proverbs 18:1 NIV)

In our new life with God in recovery we are learning new ways of thinking and behaving. When we take daily inventory, perhaps we need to inventory around how we helped someone in need, prayed for a person who was showing signs of stress, or noticed a person in a lineup that needed to be attended to before us. God calls us to love our neighbour as ourselves. Our neighbours shouldn't suffer because all our love is centered on ourselves.

I am afraid that when I come, we won't be pleased with each other. I fear that some of you may be arguing or jealous or angry or selfish or gossiping or insulting each other. (2 Corinthians 12:20 CEV)

Prayer: Gracious God, I find it hard to take my eyes off my own agenda and look out for the interest of others. Please forgive me for my selfishness and help me to do so. Amen

God calls us to love our neighbour as ourselves.

STEP NINE – MAKING THINGS RIGHT

Making amends is a responsibility we must take seriously if we want to protect our sobriety. It is not simply offering an apology for bad behaviour and making restitution wherever possible. Making amends is about doing all we can to set things right and perhaps making it possible for the ones we have injured to receive healing.

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

Making amends is about doing all we can to set things right and perhaps making it possible for the ones we have injured to receive healing.

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

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

To make amends requires that whatever we do, we must do it for the good of the person we have harmed.

This is not intended to be a one-time event. It is meant to be our pattern for living each day. Our goal is not just to feel better about ourselves but to lift others up and lighten the load they carry.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank you for forgiving me for all the times I've failed. Help me to forgive others who have harmed me and do what is necessary to take responsibility and make amends for my harmful behaviour towards others. Help me to live today in ways that lift others up and lighten their load. Amen

THE PRAYER THAT MAKES IT ALL RIGHT

Jesus told the story of two men who went to church to pray. One stood proud and named all his accomplishments. He compared himself to the other person who was also praying and gave thanks that he was much better than that man since the man was known in the community to be guilty of all sorts of wrongdoing. The other person, who admitted he was guilty of wrongdoing, hung his head in shame, opened his heart to God and confessed His sin asking God for mercy and forgiveness. Jesus said it was the person who knew He had sinned and asked for forgiveness that went home in right relationship with God. (see Luke 18:9-14 for the story)

As we work our 12-step program we are asked to do things like: make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves; become willing to have God remove our defects of character; make a list of all persons we have harmed and become willing to make amends to them all. In many places along the way it is easier to make a list of what others did to us and much more difficult to take responsibility and seek forgiveness for our part in the actions that caused harm. Comparing our actions with another's actions to minimize our destructive behaviour will never heal our hearts nor restore our relationship with God.

Be humble in front of the Lord and he will lift you up. Pride brings a person low. But those whose spirits are low will be honored. The Lord is honest and good. He teaches sinners to walk in his ways. He shows those who aren't proud how to do what is right. He teaches them his ways. (James 4:10, Proverbs 29:23, Psalm 25:8-9 NIRV)

Only a humble acknowledgement of our own shortcomings before God and seeking His help in removing them will get us to the place of peace we long to experience.

Prayer: Loving God, be merciful to me a sinner and forgive my lawless deeds. With Your precious blood, wash me clean from every evil thing I have done. Make me pure as the driven snow. Bring me joy and gladness as I stand on the truth of Your word that says my sins and my lawless deeds You will remember no more. Amen

Get down on your knees before the Master; it's the only way you'll get on your feet.

(James 4:10 MSG)

ANGER

Anger in our society is rampant. Most of us have a hard time dealing with anger. Some of us may have a history of rage. Others of us learned early in life to smother our feelings to help control anger. Anger will harm our relationships whether we explode or clam up, hold a grudge, or simply let bitterness take root in us and fill us with self-pity.

The Bible has much to say about an out of control angry person. Not much of it is good.

What is the real root of my anger? Do I want to get rid of my stored anger? What am I willing to do to be free from destructive anger?

Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools. If you stay calm, you are wise, but if you have a hot temper, you only show how stupid you are. (Ecclesiastes 7:9, NIV, Proverbs 14:29 GNB)

For most of us the question is not “Do I get angry?” We know we do. Some questions we need to ask ourselves about anger include: “What is the real root of my anger?” “Do I want to get rid of my stored anger?” “What am I willing to do to be free from destructive anger?”

Anger can only be dealt with by receiving love and forgiveness from God and, in turn, choosing to love and forgive others. The foundation for anger management is having an active loving relationship with God and choosing to surrender all our interactions with others to His wisdom and guidance. Anything less will result in fear or frustration and we will find ourselves back in the anger cycle.

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God

forgave you. (Ephesians 4:31-32 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me identify and deal with the root of my anger. You know the situations in my life where I have felt helpless and just stuffed my feelings. Help me to grieve, in a healthy way, all the events that contributed to my dysfunctional way of thinking and behaving. Help me to forgive and grace others in the same way You have forgiven and graced me. I choose to let go of my old way of handling troublesome events with anger. I choose to live with self-control by the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen

CONTROL ISSUES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A POWERFUL SIGN OF MATURITY

Learning to control our tongue is a sign that we are becoming mature in our thinking process. In the past we let angry words express our opinion about something that was said or done without giving too much thought to what we were saying. Our reactions may have been caused by pain of a past hurt being exposed through the behaviour of another or trauma over something that is presently causing us to fear. Instead of seeking help to deal with the hurt or fear, we allowed our minds to dwell on the event until our thinking and behaviour became irrational.

All of us do many wrong things. But if you can control your tongue, you are mature and able to control your whole body. (James 3:2 CEV)

Learning to control our tongue is a sign that we are becoming mature in our thinking process.

When a plant or tree is transplanted, its ability to mature is totally reliant on it being rooted in the new soil it is planted in. When we come into recovery we need to be completely removed from our old way of life. Our new life with God in recovery requires that we leave behind everything that would hinder us from becoming the mature person God created us to be. Our old ways of coping with troubling situations need to be totally uprooted and transplanted into the new ways we are learning.

Each of you is now a new person. You are becoming more and more like your Creator, and you will understand him better. (Colossians 3:10 CEV)

Our growth into maturity was stunted by our old ways of thinking and behaving. If we allow our old ways to influence the new growth, our ability to grow and mature will be obstructed. We were living in rebellion against God but now we have been uprooted and transplanted into a new life with God as our Father. These old ways of thinking and behaving must be left behind so we can grow and mature in all our ways.

Don't be like the people of this world, but let God change the way you think. Then you will know how to do everything that is good and pleasing to him. (Romans 12:2 CEV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me leave behind my old ways of thinking and behaving so I can be renewed in my mind by obeying Your principles in all my affairs. Amen

CHARACTER DEFECT: FEAR

Fear is a disturbing emotion which is triggered by the expectation that something unpleasant is about to happen. The threat may be real or imagined. We often cover up our fears because we do not want others to know what is going on in our lives. We put on a happy face or act with bravado to appear fearless and to cover up the fear that is stirring within us.

Covering up our fears may have led some of us along the path to a dysfunctional lifestyle and into addiction. God wants us to bring all our anxieties and fears to Him, so that we can be set free to live life to the full.

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. (1 Peter 5:7 NLT)

Fear keeps us from being fully honest about our feelings and prompts us to project false or only partially true images of who we really are. Fear makes us deny – consciously or unconsciously – that anything is wrong. “It’s all good” is a sure sign that it is not. As we choose to believe that we are loved and treasured by God we will come to know by experience that God works all things together for our good. Then we can overcome fear, even when life is not perfect.

There is no fear in love. Instead, perfect love drives away fear. That's because fear has to do with being punished. The one who fears does not have perfect love. (1 John 4:18 NIRV)

We know we are moving forward in recovery when we focus on God’s love and kindness and reject any pessimism we are feeling about life in the future. We just need to see ourselves in God’s care and, from that viewpoint, have faith in the future He has prepared for us.

As we experience the unfailing love and care that God has for us, we will put our trust in His goodness and not fear anything.

Prayer: Gracious God, I confess that my fears have kept me in bondage to negativity. Please help me to daily affirm, I will not fear the future because God's goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. Amen

As we experience the unfailing love and care that God has for us, we will put our trust in His goodness and not fear anything.

THERE BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD GO I

While watching the evening news, we often hear about a disaster caused by someone driving while drunk or high on drugs, or learn of the next grim statistic of the opioid crisis around the world. For many of us alive and breathing and sober the following slogan is meaningful, "There but for the grace of God go I." At meeting after meeting, we hear these words read from "How It Works": *Remember that we deal with alcohol - cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power - that One is God. May you find Him now!*" Yes, there are things we can and should do to maintain sobriety like rigorous honesty and working the steps. But these alone, aren't enough. We need the help of God that comes in the form of His amazing grace.

We need the help of God that comes in the form of His amazing grace.

By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved. (1 Corinthians 15:10, Ephesians 2:4-5 ESV)

Grace is something freely given. We can't earn it and don't deserve it. Many of us are alive simply by the grace of God. Some of us are finally walking in the light after being lifted out of the misery of delusions and despair caused by poor choices and painful traumas. Living in freedom comes directly from the grace of God.

We can hardly imagine a God who is so good, so kind, and so generous that He would reach out to us in our brokenness and offer to make something beautiful of our lives. Yet God is doing that all the time and we are living clean and sober today as examples of His grace. Jesus took the penalty for sin and brokenness on Himself and died on the cross so we could have forgiveness and healing. That is the grace exchange. That is God's generosity to all of us and it is totally undeserved, but generously given.

Prayer: God of love and grace, thank you for caring for me when my life was a wreck. I know I need Your wisdom each day to make the choices that take me forward in recovery. Help me to make "grace exchanges" where appropriate, so that my brokenness and sin go, and Your grace fills me up. I want to effectively live the life You created for me. Amen

SUNDAY PSALM – HONOURING MOTHERS

Happy Mother's Day to those who are mothers and to those who have mothers! An important part of our life in recovery is living in new ways with members of our family of origin. Through the Scriptures, God helps us understand that the way we walk in this life with our mother will influence the quality of life we personally achieve.

Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God is giving you. My child, listen when your father corrects you. Don't neglect your mother's instruction. If you insult your father or mother, your light will be snuffed out in total darkness. (Exodus 20:12, Proverbs 1:18, 20:20, NLT)

We would do well to pay attention to our life experiences that involved our parents. Their responsibility was to shape us into loving, caring individuals. However, just like we have made mistakes, many of them have also made mistakes. God does not exempt us from honouring our mothers today just because they might not have treated us the way we thought they ought to. Regardless of our family experiences, God insists that we never insult either of our parents.

We may have to sort out healthy boundaries against any destructive behaviour our parents exhibit or have been involved in. However, there are many ways we can still honour and bless them. Watching our own children and grandchildren grow and do well is certainly an area of joy that we can share with our parents. If it is possible, spending some time with our mother, not seeking anything from her, but simply enjoying her company is another way to honour her today.

"Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise. (Ephesians 6:2 NLT)

Through Jesus, God has made a way for us and our parents to have new life in Him. He desires a life that is full and rewarding for all of us. Giving thanks to God for the ways our mother helped us, rather than focusing on anything she did that may have harmed us, will encourage her and will aid our own healing from childhood trauma.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for my mother. I pray blessings and encouragement for her as I choose to honour her on this Mothers' Day. Amen

God will help us understand that the way we walk in this life with our mother will influence the quality of life we personally achieve.

WHITE KNUCKLING

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

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

Isaiah 40:29 NLT

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

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

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

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

We can’t “fight our demons” alone. We need our all-powerful God with us giving us the strength to persevere and the power to do so.

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

SUNDAY PSALM – BEAUTY FOR ASHES

When we unreservedly give our will and life over to the care of God, our lives are positively changed. God raises us up to new heights that we never thought possible. As we spend time with Jesus, the Prince of Peace, we acquire qualities that make us more like Him.

He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes, with the princes of his people. He settles the childless woman in her home as a happy mother of children. Praise the Lord. (Psalm 113:7-9 NIV)

Addiction brought us to a low, needy place where our lives were totally unmanageable. We were existing in what we could only describe as an ash heap and were like the dust that could be blown away at any time. But God, who is rich in mercy, lifted us out of that place and set us among those who live in the care of our Heavenly Father who is always with us. We have been given beauty in place of ashes and are now living in the inheritance of the goodness of God, instead of living in despair.

It’s a wonder God didn’t lose his temper and do away with the whole lot of us. Instead, immense in mercy and with an incredible love, he embraced us. He took our sin-dead lives and made us alive in Christ. He did all this on his own, with no help from us! Then he picked us up and set us down in highest heaven in company with Jesus, our Messiah. (Ephesians 2:3-5 MSG)

As we continue to trust God’s Word and follow His path for our lives, we will not only experience great blessing but will be able to bless others as well.

Our former life may have been unproductive, but now we can blossom in the environment of God’s love and protective care.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for bringing me out of the ash heap and setting my feet on solid ground. I ask that You give me the strength to follow Your principles in all my affairs. I am forever thankful and praise You for Your love and care for me. Amen

As we spend time with Jesus, the Prince of Peace, we acquire qualities that make us more like Him.

HOW MUCH DO I WANT TO BE HEALED?

When we first come into recovery, we may not be aware of the importance of making a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves as Step 4 of the 12-Step program requires. Most of us are apt to think of the glaring things we did in our addiction but are reluctant to uncover those harmful events that contributed to us going down that road. The sickness of sin invaded our lives when we allowed those incidents that caused us pain to fester in our minds and hearts.

Make this your common practice: Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you can live together whole and healed. (James 4:16a MSG)

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you can live together whole and healed.

James 4:16

How can we live together whole and healed if we are unwilling to admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of what has caused humiliation or heartache in our past? We may try to behave as if healing has taken place, but our actions will betray us and convey to others that something is not right. Jesus once asked a man if he **wanted** to be healed and this may be something that we should ask ourselves.

If you had done the right thing, you would be smiling. But you did the wrong thing, and now sin is waiting to attack you like a lion. Sin wants to destroy you, but don't let it! (Genesis 4:7 CEV)

Living with pain and unforgiveness and wanting revenge for something done to us does not open the door to healing. When all of us were still in our sin, Jesus died in our place so that we could be forgiven and restored to new life. Pride says, "Why should I forgive?" God says, "So I can forgive and heal you." We want God and those we have harmed to forgive us so why not extend the same forgiveness to others so we can all be forgiven and healed for what we have done?

The prayer of a person living right with God is something powerful to be reckoned with. If I had been cozy with evil, the Lord would never have listened. (James 4:16b; Psalm 66:18 MSG)

Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to forgive as I have been forgiven so that I can be set free from sin and restored to new life. Amen

CONFRONTING WITH LOVE

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prayer: Heavenly Father, It is hard to confront others with truth and even harder to know how to do so in a loving and encouraging way. Please help me to communicate clearly and effectively, and to do so with kindness. When confrontation is stirred up, help me to attentively listen for Your guidance and remember that a quiet word can turn away anger. Amen

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

ACCEPTING HARDSHIP AS THE PATHWAY TO PEACE

Everyone faces unwanted hardship and troubles. Often hardship comes because we act in ways that are unwise and end up in circumstances we did not anticipate. Other hardship comes because we live in a broken world with people who are struggling and making mistakes just as we are. During those times it's important to face the questions: Does God know what is going on? Does God care? Is God making a way for me through these problems or do I just have to sort things out on my own?

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. The Lord hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles. (Psalm 46:1; 34:17 NLT)

It's not easy, but "accepting hardship as the pathway to peace" can be life changing.

As those who are seeking to live with God in recovery, we have an enormous advantage over many others. We can turn to God in our moments of frustration and uncertainty and find His help in our time of need. Instead of being frustrated and overwhelmed by a problem, we can focus our attention on our caring God who promises stability, peace, and a way forward.

You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you! Trust in the Lord always, for the Lord God is the eternal Rock. (Isaiah 26:3-4 NLT)

Panic blocks many helpful thoughts and solutions to problems. When we face hardship with peace, it's amazing how much clearer the guidance of God's Holy Spirit is heard. That is why, in every circumstance, it is wise to turn our will and our life over to the care of God.

Obstacles and problems, even failures, can be opportunities for learning and growth as we experience God's faithfulness. It's not easy, but "accepting hardship as the pathway to peace" can be life changing as our faith and trust grow in the knowledge of God as our eternal Rock.

Prayer: God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference, living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time, accepting hardship as the pathway to peace trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will. Amen

GOD IN MY PAIN

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3 NIV)

How many of us are poor in spirit? If being poor in spirit is similar to being financially poor where we do not have enough money to meet all our needs, how can Jesus encourage us to become that way and promise us that "the kingdom of heaven is ours?" If we are blessed because we are "poor in spirit" it must be something good that we should desire.

To be "poor in spirit" means we have come to an honest understanding of who we are when we invite God into our lives. We recognize that we are powerless to do life on our own. We no longer deny what we have done in the past but humbly admit the exact nature of our wrongs and ask God for His forgiveness. We choose to turn our will and life over to the care of God and wholeheartedly follow Him, trusting that He will provide the strength we need to seek Him in all our ways.

Don't love the world's ways. Don't love the world's goods. Love of the world squeezes out love for the Father. Practically everything that goes on in the world—wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important—has nothing to do with the Father. It just isolates you from him. The world and all its wanting, wanting, wanting is on the way out—but whoever does what God wants is set for eternity. (1 John 2:15-17 MSG)

When we are "poor in spirit" we will humbly live in the grace and favour of God. We will be thankful for all that God has done for us. When we fail, we will not be fearful, but will come to Him, knowing that God is slow to anger and rich in love. If we are truly sorry for the wrongs we have done and confess our sin, we will receive forgiveness not condemnation. We are truly "poor in spirit" when we admit that if any weakness existed in God it would still be stronger than our human strength. We are "poor in spirit" when we remember that every breath comes from our awesome God and choose to live gratefully in each moment. We know we are "poor in spirit" when every moment of every day we rely on the goodness of God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I acknowledge that without You I can do nothing. I desire to be poor in spirit so that I can be rich in Your unfailing love and care for me. May my life represent my birthright as a child of the Kingdom of Heaven. Amen

When we are "poor in spirit" we will humbly live in the grace and favour of God.

STEP TEN – DAILY INVENTORY

Some time may have passed since we completed Step Ten and we may feel we have learned a lot and are well on our way in recovery. Alternatively, we may be so early in recovery that we still feel a bit dazed and confused about what life in recovery looks like on an ongoing basis. Regardless of where we are in our journey, making a regular daily inventory by measuring ourselves against God's tried and true principles will help us monitor our progress.

Prayerfully making a daily inventory with God will help us maintain our sobriety and support our ongoing spiritual growth.

Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak. I listen carefully to what God the Lord is saying, for he speaks peace to his faithful people. But let them not return to their foolish ways. (Mark 14:38, Psalm 85:8 NLT)

God has given us principles by which we learn to think, speak, and act. As we begin each day, it's good to ask God to help us live according to His ways. At the end of each day, an inventory will help us recognize and give thanks for successes. It will also help us identify any shortcomings and seek forgiveness for any failure to walk in God's way.

The fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself. Always think about what is true. Think about what is noble, right and pure. Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect. If anything is excellent or worthy of praise, think about those kinds of things. (Galatians 5:22-23, Philippians 4:8 NIRV)

God is interested in our thoughts and feelings because He knows they motivate our behaviour. Prayerfully making a daily inventory with God will help us maintain our sobriety and support our ongoing spiritual growth. More and more we will discover a life that is meaningful, purposeful, and joyful.

Prayer: Gracious God, May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. Amen (Psalm 19:14, Psalm 139:23-24 NLT)

LOVED THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES

When problems arise it's easy to forget that God cares. We often feel alone and helpless. Daily life continues regardless of the heartache we are feeling and somehow, we have to cope. We feel like struggling orphans with no one to care for us. We forget God's instruction to call on Him for help and assume He also has abandoned us. However, God does not forget His beloved. We just need to call on Him and He will answer us.

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. (Psalm 91:14-15 NLT)

In difficult times, rather than running from God, we need to draw closer to Him and let His unfailing love ease the pain we are feeling. We live in a broken world where sin and sorrow abound, and no person will escape its ravages. Perhaps we've wondered where God was when bad things happened to us. Perhaps we were unaware that God was nearby, ready to provide comfort and help.

Jesus took upon himself all sin, suffering, and sorrow when He died in our place on the cross. When we believe this, God offers us forgiveness, healing, and comfort as we put our trust in His unfailing love for us. Regardless of our circumstances, God promises that He will never leave us and will hold us steady until we can effectively stand strong in the power of His love.

The eternal God is your refuge, and his everlasting arms are under you. Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down, and we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. (Deuteronomy 33:27, Isaiah 53:4-5 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I don't understand suffering, but I know that You do, and because of Your love for me, You offer me forgiveness, healing, and comfort. Hold me close today. Steady me with Your everlasting arms until I can stand strong in Your power. Amen

In difficult times, rather than running from God, we need to draw closer to Him and let His unfailing love ease the pain we are feeling.

WISDOM FOR THE JOURNEY: KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE ROAD

Too many of us drive while distracted by our cell phones and other activities such as changing stations on the radio or eating. Statistics show that distracted driving accounts for approximately 80% of all motor vehicle collisions. Distractions take our minds off what we should be focusing on, and the road ahead can change very quickly. In our life with God in recovery, we also need to stay focused on what is important and put away anything that distracts us.

In our life with God in recovery, we need to stay focused on what's important and put away anything that distracts us.

Keep your eyes on the path and look straight ahead. Make sure you are going the right way, and nothing will make you fall. Don't go to the right or to the left, and you will stay away from evil. The path of those who live right is like the early morning light. It gets brighter and brighter until the full light of day. But the path of the wicked is like a dark night. They trip and fall over what they cannot see. (Proverbs 4: 25-27, 18-19 ERV)

So much of life in recovery is new to us. We don't know the road ahead and must trust God to get us to the right destination. The scripture verses above remind us that if we will simply do what is right, our path will become brighter and brighter. The slogan, "Just do the next right thing" reminds us to focus on what is most important. Encouraging ourselves to do what is right will help us take one step forward at a time, even though we are unable to see what lies ahead.

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

Reading and meditating on God's word each day, and then putting what we read into practice, is the light that gives us dependable direction in recovery. Getting distracted by our fears, our frustrations, or our obsessions, is as deadly to our life with God in recovery as texting is while driving a motor vehicle.

What distraction do I need to let go of in order to stay focused on what matters?

Heavenly Father, Thank you for Your daily guidance. Help me to let go of things that distract me from what is important. Please help me to continually do the next right thing. Amen

GIVING THANKS IN IMPOSSIBLE SITUATIONS

One day Jesus and His friends faced a huge problem. Thousands of people were before him and they were tired and hungry. The only resources available were five small loaves (probably bun sized pita bread) and a couple of small fish. Jesus' friends did not see a way to provide for the crowd and thought the way to deal with the problem was to send them away, so they could meet their own needs. What was Jesus response to this impossible situation?

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. (Luke 9:16-17 NIV)

Why give thanks when facing needs that seem impossible to fill? God knows who we are, the resources that are available, and the true nature of the need before us. God has promised to supply all our needs, so we can share generously with others.

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

Giving thanks is one way to acknowledge the truth about God's presence with us and His promise to provide for us. Remembering how God took care of us in the past is an important way to build our trust in His care for us today. As we focus on our gracious God and how He works on our behalf, we will experience more joy and satisfaction in life than we ever thought possible. Giving thanks opens the generous hand of God.

Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:18 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for Your promise to provide for my needs. Help me to continue to trust You when circumstances seem to block my vision of what You can do. Help me to see You as the awesome God You are. Amen

Giving thanks is one way to acknowledge the truth about God's presence with us and His promise to provide for us.

FACING TODAY WITH COURAGE

It takes courage to live in recovery. It took great courage to admit that our lives were unmanageable, and we were powerless to sort ourselves out. Asking for help also took an enormous amount of courage as we turned our will and life over to the care of God.

Be strong! Be fearless! Don't be afraid and don't be scared by your enemies, because the Lord your God is the one who marches with you. He won't let you down, and he won't abandon you. (Deuteronomy 31:6 CEB)

***Knowing
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moments.***

When we know that our will and our lives are secure in God's care, we no longer need to fear confronting our problems. Since we are never alone, we can cope with whatever happens in this day without mood altering substances or harmful habits. We can look at what it means to take responsibility for ourselves and stop blaming others for where we find ourselves today. We can face feelings of weakness and insecurity in sorting out our hearts and our circumstances, no matter how many challenges are involved. Do we feel like we can do this today? Probably not!

Feeling strong is not essential to action. Knowing God is with us and promises us victory steadies us and gives us the courage to do the next right thing, even in our weakest moments. If we are feeling fear, or guilt, or shame, we can immediately hand those reactions over to God who promises us forgiveness and healing for all our wounds. We can face and overcome anything, not on our own, but when God lives in us. The Big Book of AA reminds us: *We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.*

Through you [God] we push down our foes; through your name we tread down those who rise up against us. (Psalm 44:5 ESV)

Prayer: Loving God, Live in me today. Remind me in my weakest moments that You are with me and that You will never leave me. You are so much stronger than anything that comes against me. I stand with You today and trust that You stand with me. Amen

WELCOMING GOD TO COMPLETE HIS WORK IN US

When we look at people who appear to have it all together, we envy them, especially when our life is not harmonious or as complete as we would like it to be. That is not to say that those we think have a perfect life really do, for Jesus said that in this world we will have trouble, and that is true for everyone. What we should consider is that discontent might actually be a sign that God is working in us to move us forward from where we are at, to a place where we will have new wisdom and understanding of His plan for our lives.

We have not stopped praying for you since the first day we heard about you. In fact, we always pray that God will show you everything he wants you to do and that you may have all the wisdom and understanding that his Spirit gives. Then you will live a life that honors the Lord, and you will always please him by doing good deeds. You will come to know God even better. (Colossians 1:9-10 CEV)

We know from the Scriptures that God has a plan for us, and He says that what He starts He will complete. We will have good days and bad days but, in each day, God has a purpose for us. We need to persevere through the tough days and pursue God, accepting the fact that He will make known to us the mystery of His will which He planned for us before we were even born.

God is the one who began this good work in you, and I am certain that he won't stop before it is complete on the day that Christ Jesus returns. (Philippians 1:6 CEV)

When the spirit of heaviness surrounds us, we need to proclaim the truth that God is with us and for us. We need to shake off the darkness and live in the light as God is in the light. We need to allow God to work in us to complete the work He has begun.

His glorious power will make you patient and strong enough to endure anything, and you will be truly happy. (Colossians 1:11 CEV)

Prayer: Gracious Father, Help me to live in the light as You are in the light. My desire is to endure and persevere through anything I encounter believing that You will make all things right as I surrender to Your will. Amen

***We need
to allow
God to
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SUNDAY PSALM – THE SUN COMES UP

WE WILL KNOW PEACE

For some of us, coming into recovery has opened our eyes to the beauty of creation. In our former lifestyle, we lived in a darkness of soul where our mind was in bondage to the addiction that controlled us. The spectacular beauty of the sky never entered our thinking. Now we are coming to a new place where we can appreciate the beauty around us, and above us.

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

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

Our lives truly have changed when we can appreciate and give thanks for the endurance and beauty of God’s creation.

The heavens keep telling the wonders of God, and the skies declare what he has done. Each day informs the following day; each night announces to the next. They don’t speak a word, and there is never the sound of a voice. Yet their message reaches all the earth, and it travels around the world. In the heavens a tent is set up for the sun. It rises like a bridegroom and gets ready like a hero eager to run a race. It travels all the way across the sky. Nothing hides from its heat. (Psalm 19:1-6 CEV)

Nothing is said to it, but every day the sun faithfully comes up to announce a new day. The sun not only gives us light but also gives warmth. It enhances the beauty all around us and makes us feel better about the day ahead.

When we gave our will and life over to the care of God, light came into our darkness bringing with it the ability to notice beauty in the simple things of life and enjoyment in what we are seeing and hearing around us. What a wonderful gift from God.

As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease. (Genesis 8:22 NIV)

Our lives truly have changed when we can appreciate and give thanks for the endurance and beauty of God’s creation.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I praise You for Your awesome creation. You are a wise and wonderful God who loves and cares for all You have made, including me. Thank You that You truly are my glory and the lifter of my head. Amen

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

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

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

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

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

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