

**LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY**

# **Daily Meditations**



**MAY 2024**



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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><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>

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**MAY 2024**

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**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.*

## CHARACTER STRENGTH – CONFIDENTLY DECISIVE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

***Being confidently decisive comes from knowing God's principles and putting them into effect in all our affairs.***

## HOW FAR IS THE EAST FROM THE WEST?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## I WILL NOT CRITICIZE, NOT FIND FAULT

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

It is so easy to find fault with what others are doing and to criticize them. The truth is, it doesn't help to focus on anyone's flaws and failures, and it distracts from the time and energy we give to God's transforming work in our own lives. While we may think that we are controlling and changing other people by criticizing them, it rarely has that effect. God has a better option for us today.

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

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

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

***Prayer: Loving God, it is easy for me to find fault and criticize others. Forgive me for thinking I'm any less flawed than someone else. Thank You for Your grace that is available to transform my thinking and deal with my character defects. Make me more like Jesus. Help me to choose to bless others today. Amen***

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

## WHAT TO DO ABOUT SUFFERING

None of us will get through life without suffering. What are we to do about it? Many of us, while experiencing suffering, thought a substance or an addictive habit would bring us the relief we needed. Sadly, not only was the comfort temporary, but the associated problems with our self-medication increased our suffering.

**Christ suffered here on earth. Now you must be ready to suffer as he did, because suffering shows that you have stopped sinning. It means you have turned from your own desires and want to obey God for the rest of your life. You have already lived long enough like people who don't know God. You were immoral and followed your evil desires. You went around drinking and partying and carrying on. In fact, you even worshiped disgusting idols. Now your former friends wonder why you have stopped running around with them, and they curse you for it. But they will have to answer to God, who judges the living and the dead.** (1 Peter 4:1-5 CEV)

**One of the biggest challenges in sustaining our sobriety is trusting God to help us when trouble and sorrow come our way.**

One of the biggest challenges in sustaining our sobriety is trusting God to help us when trouble and sorrow come our way. We may be unable to see an immediate solution to the problems we face and become fearful that the pain may overwhelm us. It really feels like suffering to have to go without what we think we need. Because we don't have experience in allowing God to meet our needs, we struggle to trust Him. There may be short-term pain in saying "No" to the obsession to use but God is faithful, and He will do what He promises. The solution we need will come at just the right time.

Jesus set us an example by the suffering He went through on our behalf. He trusted that God knew what He was doing and was prepared to follow God's will for His life. God knows where we are at in life and He will provide what is needed to see us through any circumstance that presents itself. Our part is simply to trust Him.

*Prayer: Loving God, help me to trust you in everything, even the painful challenges of daily life. Help me to trust You to work all things together for good, even though that may mean temporary suffering for me. Amen*

## LIVING HOLY LIVES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## A LIFE OF INFINITE VALUE

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

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

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

***When we turned our will and life over to Him, God adopted us as His precious children.***

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

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

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

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

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

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

## DAILY INVENTORY

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

***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 follow God's ways.

***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)

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



## 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 the crowds 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)

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

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*

## TELLING SOMEONE ELSE

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

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

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

*Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.* (Galatians 6:1-2 NLT)

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

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

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

**Admitting  
our  
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helps us  
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self-  
deception.**

## ACTIONS THAT STRENGTHEN HOPE

Most of us think that had we never known adversity and heartache, we would be living happy and contented lives today. We believe that what we endured impacted our well-being and brought us to that place where we were powerless over our dependency and our lives were unmanageable. In recovery, we are learning that it was the actions that 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)

***May the God who gives hope fill you with great joy.***

**Romans 15:13**

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 through Your Word in the Bible, that together with You, I can live a life of integrity and share this hope with others. Amen***

## WE WILL KNOW PEACE

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 active 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.

***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.***

## 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 settled 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 need  
to allow  
God to  
work in us  
to  
complete  
the work  
He has  
begun.**

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 any darkness and choose to 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*

## 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 hear 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 will and 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)

When others remind us of the exact nature of our wrongs, the guilt we feel flares up and we experience 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*

**We need to  
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wrongs we did.**

## LIVING IN SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Even though we usually associate individuals living in addiction as “party people” the truth is that using substances generally takes away one’s ability to relate to other people, to form friendships, and to do meaningful things with them. For a time, we think that drugs or alcohol will help lower our inhibitions and help us be the “life of the party.” The truth is reliance on drugs or alcohol to help us cope with life will take us to a place of guilt, shame, and isolation. As we live with God in recovery, He will show us how to truly be part of a group and have mutually enjoyable relationships.

**As we live with God in recovery, He will show us how to truly be part of a group and have mutually enjoyable relationships.**

*But God chose you to be his people. You are royal priests. You are a holy nation. You are God’s special treasure. You are all these things so that you can give him praise. God brought you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people. But now you are the people of God. Once you had not received mercy. But now you have received mercy.* (1 Peter 2:9-10 NIRV)

We find our self-worth and our identity in the love and care of God – the God who names us as His special treasure. We belong to the family of God together with everyone else who belongs to God. God fills our hearts with His love. We need no longer seek affirmation from others in unhealthy ways. We are taken care of by God and therefore can be of help to others. We will find our circle of friends growing as we gain respect as one of the people of God.

This transformation doesn’t happen overnight, but it does increase every day that we walk with God and with others who are seeking recovery. As each person shares their experience, strength, and hope, we will find common experiences of vulnerability and joy that bind our hearts together as a group, a family, a people.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for inviting me into relationship with You and placing me in a family with others. I now recognize that living in isolation is dark and depressing and, even though forming relationships may have its challenges, I know that You will help me make good choices when in community with others. Thank You for caring for me. Amen*

## KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE ROAD

Too many of us drive while distracted by our cell phones and other activities like 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.

***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 focus on doing the next right thing as I journey on the road to recovery. Amen*

**We need to stay focused on what’s important and put away anything that distracts us.**

## 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.

***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.***

*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*

## SEEKING APPROVAL

Deep within each person is the desire for approval from others – particularly from those we consider significant in our lives. This need goes deep for those who have been misunderstood, hurt, or rejected by a parent or caregiver. It produces a drivenness in them for approval from others so that they may feel good about themselves. They co-dependently try to care for the needs of others and do things others desire, even though it may not be good for them.

God wants to help us find a new way forward. It begins with knowing that our deepest need for approval is met by God and not by others who may be fickle or uncaring.

*God was pleased to trust us with his message. We didn't speak to please people, but to please God who knows our motives.* (1 Thessalonians 2:4, CEV)

God has chosen us, given us life, and called us back from dark and unhealthy places. God has given us a story to tell others that reflects what a powerful God He is and what dramatic changes He makes in the lives of those He has rescued. We share our stories, not because we are perfect, but because we are loved by the God who created us and made us feel more secure than we ever thought possible. God has work for each of us to do today that will bless others and give us deep satisfaction. God created us for this. God wants us to share with others the love and grace we have found in Him.

*Do your best to win God's approval as a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed and who teaches only the true message. When you do good deeds, don't try to show off. If you do, you won't get a reward from your Father in heaven.* (2 Timothy 2:15, Matthew 6:1 CEV)

As we serve God according to His plan and purpose, He will affirm us in what we are doing, regardless of whether others notice or not, or how they may respond.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to come close to You and experience the satisfaction of belonging to You. You love me. You accept me. I have nothing to prove in order to receive from You. Help me to become more conscious of Your love and affirmation and look only to You for approval. Amen*

***As we serve God according to His plan and purpose, He will affirm us in what we are doing, regardless of whether others notice or not, or how they may respond.***

## 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 wandered 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.

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

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*

## 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.

This is not the life in recovery that God wants for us. If sought, God will give 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 are 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*

***He [God] gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.***  
*Isaiah 40:29 NLT*

## 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)

***God calls us to love our neighbour as ourselves.***

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 to us. Complaining when our expectations are not met is evidence of our self-centered attitude. Do we ever stop and think about the well-being of another 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 myself and instead look out for the interest of others. Please forgive me for my selfishness and help me to change my ways. Amen***

## 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 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 retain enough seed to plant 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 has given 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 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.*** (Luke 6:38 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***

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

## 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)

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

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 should. Regardless of our family experiences, God insists that we never offend either of our parents.

We may have to sort out healthy boundaries against any destructive behaviour our parents exhibit or are involved in. However, there are many ways we can still honour and bless them. Watching children and grandchildren in the family grow up 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 way 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*

## 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 our hurt or fear, we allow our minds to dwell on the event until our thinking and behaviour become 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)

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 self-willed rebellious ways 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*

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



## CELEBRATING ON VICTORIA DAY

The British Commonwealth is made up of 56 countries with a combined population of about 2.4 billion people, almost a third of the world's population. Their head of state is King Charles. In Canada and around the world, on the Monday before May 25, we have a holiday that is called Victoria Day. It was set in place in 1845 to give people an opportunity to celebrate the birthday of Victoria who was the reigning queen at that time. It is the day now appointed to recognize the birthday of whoever wears the crown and sits on the throne.

***Jesus set aside the glory and honour of heaven to come to earth and die for our sins and restore us to His eternal Kingdom.***

The Bible teaches us that Jesus is the King of Kings and he has power and authority above and beyond any earthly king or queen. While many rulers down through time have ruled for their personal gain rather than for the good of their citizens, Jesus demonstrated that He has our best interests at heart and has done everything necessary to bring life and peace for us today, and in our ongoing recovery.

***But we do see Jesus already given a crown of glory and honor. He was made lower than the angels for a little while. He suffered death. By the grace of God, he tasted death for everyone. That is why he was given his crown.*** (Hebrews 2:9 NIRV)

Jesus set aside the glory and honour of heaven to come to earth, die for our sins, and restore us to His eternal Kingdom. Jesus cares for each of us and He can be trusted to walk the path of recovery with us if we invite Him to do so. He truly is a King worth celebrating on this holiday Monday.

***May grace and peace come to you from Jesus Christ. He is the faithful witness, so what he has shown can be trusted. He was the first to rise from the dead. He rules over the kings of the earth. Glory and power belong to Jesus Christ who loves us! He has set us free from our sins by pouring out his blood for us.*** (Revelation 1:5 NIRV)

***Prayer: Lord Jesus, I praise You for who You are, King over all kings and Lord over all lords. Thank you for your willingness to come to earth to die for my sins. I choose to go forward with You in my life in recovery. Please help me to follow Your ways in all my affairs. All power and glory belong to You and You are truly worth celebrating today. Amen***

## 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 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)

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 we do whatever we have decided to do 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 have failed You. Help me to forgive those who have harmed me and also do what is necessary to take responsibility, and make amends, for the harm I have caused others. Help me to live today in ways that lift others up and lighten the load they carry. Amen***

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

## RELAPSE – OBSESSION TO USE

We may not see what goes on inside us, but the Bible tells us there is a battle going on for control of our minds. When we first came into recovery, we likely found it hard not to obsess on the substance, person, or thing that we were addicted to. Evil powers had control of our thinking and actions, and they were determined to remain in control. The good news is that when we invite Jesus into our lives, the Holy Spirit comes to live in us and one of His tasks is to set us free from the power of sin.

**To have victory over obsessive thoughts we need to stand firm in the power of the Holy Spirit and use the words of scripture against the enemy who is seeking to destroy us.**

***Deep inside me I find joy in God's law. But I see another law working in me. It fights against the law of my mind. It makes me a prisoner of the law of sin. That law controls me.*** (Romans 7:22-23 NIRV)

We do not visibly see the devil as he begins to oppose our new way of life, but we are certainly aware of his presence. In an unguarded moment He will fill our minds with obsessive thoughts about our drug of choice. At other times a wrong done by someone against us will swirl around in our head and will not go away. The devil will do everything within his power to keep us in bondage to whatever He can. The unseen powers of darkness are no match against the power of the Holy Spirit, but their voices are louder, and initially more familiar to us, than God's voice.

To have victory over obsessive thoughts we need to stand firm in the power of the Holy Spirit and use the words of scripture against the enemy who is seeking to destroy us.

***Put on all of God's armor. Then you can remain strong against the devil's evil plans. Our fight is not against human beings. It is against the rulers, the authorities and the powers of this dark world. It is against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly world.*** (Ephesians 6:11-12 NIRV)

***Prayer: Gracious God, I desire to be free from every obsession that holds me captive. Please help me stand firm on the truth of Your word and declare that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 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 who are 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 own well-being is threatened and so they attempt to control their environment by rigid rules. There are many expressions of how one person attempts to control another 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. Help me to obey Your Word and experience the blessed life You have planned for me. Amen***

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

## THE SUN COMES UP

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

**Our lives truly change 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 each day, even when we cannot see it, the sun faithfully comes up to announce the beginning of a new day. The sun not only gives us light but it also gives us warmth. It enhances the beauty that is all around us.

When we gave our will and life over to the care of God light came into our darkness bringing with it the ability to see and enjoy the beauty of our natural surroundings. 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 will change as we begin to 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 for the beauty of the earth and for the sun, the moon, and the stars in the sky and that You are truly my glory and the lifter of my head. Amen*

## ENTIRELY READY FOR CHANGE

Relationship difficulties may have impacted our lives from the time we were very young children. In our addiction, these difficulties may have resulted in our tendency to criticize family members or friends, manipulate others to get what we wanted, repeatedly break any promises we made, and fail to consider anyone else's needs but our own. Our default position was lying, cheating, stealing and other expressions of self-interest. When we didn't like how a relationship was going, we easily said angry words, made sarcastic comments, told the other person what a jerk they were, and blamed them for our offensive behaviour. Now we need to ask ourselves, are we willing to challenge any harmful behaviour or negative words that we might say to, think about, or do to someone in a difficult situation?

*Teach me your ways, O LORD, that I may live according to your truth! Grant me purity of heart, so that I may honor you. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.* (Psalm 14:2-3, Philippians 2:13 NLT)

To live well we need to establish new behaviours of integrity, kindness, and respect towards others. It seems an impossible task, a high standard that we are unable to attain. On our own it is! But God is willing to give us the desire and the power to do so if we will turn our will and our life over to His care.

*Don't reject the Lord's discipline, and don't be upset when he corrects you. For the Lord corrects those he loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights.* (Proverbs 3:11-12 NLT)

Character defects will slip away one at a time as we consistently surrender ourselves to God. Each time we notice one of our former defects in operation, we should bring it to God and invite Him to work powerfully in us so He can work powerfully through us, as He helps us think and behave in new ways.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for enabling me to enjoy life in a meaningful relationship with You and with others. Please remove my character defects and give me the desire and the strength to let go of all that hinders my life's purpose with You. Amen*

**Are we willing to challenge any harmful behaviour or negative words that we might say or do to someone in a difficult situation?**

## IF GOD SEEMS FAR AWAY WHO MOVED?

Feelings cannot always be trusted. They often point us to an incorrect perception of who we are, who God is, and what is happening in our circumstances. God has promised that He will never leave us and that nothing can separate us from His love.

*The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. I keep my eyes always on the Lord. He is at my right hand. So I will always be secure.* (Psalm 145:18 NIV, Psalm 16:8 NIV)

**God has promised that He will never leave us and that nothing can separate us from His love.**

God's word gives us principles around which we can do an inventory to see if we have drifted from the closeness God is longing for us to experience with Him today. Perhaps we've been busy or distracted and it's been a while since we took time to sit down with God and focus on what He wants to say to us. Have we taken time to just be with God as a friend or do we simply reach out to Him in an emergency? Have we strayed into self-will and sinful attitudes or actions and not asked God for forgiveness? Have we been more focused on getting God's help for our agenda rather than taking time to consult God on what His agenda for our day or a particular situation might be? If we are running away from God's will then we will feel more distant from Him.

*If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. Before I confessed my sins, my bones felt limp, and I groaned all day long. Then I admitted my sin to you. I didn't cover up the wrong I had done. ... and you forgave the guilt of my sin.* (John 15:10 NIV; Psalm 32:3,5 NIV)

Sometimes we may be doing things right and actively seeking to know and follow God. In that case the next avenue to consider is whether the evil one is lying to us through our feelings about God's caring attention in all aspects of our affairs. This calls for us to affirm in our own hearts what God's word says. Our feelings will catch up with these truths.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for ever being close to me. You never stop watching out for me and are ready now, and throughout this day, to lift me up and show me the path You have chosen for me. Help me to remove any obstacles that I may have allowed in our relationship. Help me to take time to rest and find comfort in You. Amen*

## FOCUSED AND EFFICIENT

Years of aimless living in addiction kept us from becoming focused, well-organized, and productive. As we move forward we need to be humble enough to admit that we have efficiency gaps in our current way of living and allow God and others to teach us new skills.

*Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.* (Ephesians 5:15-16 NIV)

Our attention runs in many directions. We've lived with distractions for many years and now it takes effort to choose our priorities for each day and then focus on them one at a time until they are completed. We need to pay less attention to our phones, let others take care of what they are responsible for, and keep our attention focused on the task at hand. In the same way we push ourselves in the gym to build stronger muscles by pushing through pain and sweat, so we will have to "push through" and keep working on important things when we are tired and don't really feel like continuing. When we pray, God will help us with these practical things.

Our priority each morning should be to give focused time to God so we can communicate with Him and allow Him to encourage and guide us in prioritizing our plans for that day. Spending time with God, reading the Bible and praying, may seem challenging at first but starting the day with God is the best thing we can do. What we have planned to do will then be guided by God's wisdom and the outcome is that we will become more efficient in completing our agenda.

Jesus kept a focused agenda, even when He was heading to painful suffering and death on the cross and we are encouraged to follow His example.

*... fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* (Hebrews 12:2 NIV)

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, You had many distractions to deal with each day but You stayed focused on what Your Heavenly Father had in mind for You to do. Help me to seek God's will and stay focused on the plans He has for me. Amen*

**Jesus kept a focused agenda ... we are encouraged today to follow His example.**