

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



November 2018



These meditations are available online
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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*

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How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery

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

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

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

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

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

NOTES

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2018

GROWING WISE

Jesus is our role model for how to live well with God in recovery. The Bible tells us that Jesus grew in wisdom as He studied the scriptures, prayed, and paid attention to what was going on in the world around Him.

Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people. (Luke 2:52 NLT)

Thank goodness we are not expected to know everything the first day we come into recovery. We get to learn as we go. We do that through studying and observing; through listening to others; through putting healthy principles into action; and even through our mistakes. So where is our starting place if we are to grow wise?

Respect and obey the Lord! This is the beginning of knowledge. Only a fool rejects wisdom and good advice.
(Proverbs 1:9 CEV)

The founders of the 12 Step program of A.A. got it right when they made Step One an admission that we are powerless on our own and without God our lives are unmanageable. As we learn to respect and obey God in all our affairs the fog starts to lift, and the things we are being taught begin to make sense.

Wise people who have walked with God in recovery for a time are valuable sources of wisdom and good advice. We do well to ask for and actually put into practice the advice we receive – especially when some of the recommendations don't seem to make much sense. Sanity will always appear insane to those who are living in insanity.

The foolish things of God are wiser than human wisdom. The weakness of God is stronger than human strength. (1 Corinthians 1:25 NIRV)

Recovery is about growing up, about growing wise, about living in peace with God and others. Am I willing to admit I don't have all the answers? Am I willing to study the scriptures in the Bible and grow in wisdom as I obey what I am learning?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You know all things and are aware of what is still confusing to me about my past, my present, and my future. Help me to be humble and learn from Your Word, Your Spirit, and from other wise people you've put in my path. Amen

***Respect
and obey
the Lord!
This is the
beginning
of
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(Proverbs 1:9)***

CONFESSING THE ERROR OF OUR WAYS

It's time to confess the error of our ways in dealing with life situations in the isolation of our own minds and hearts. Simply telling ourselves the truth of our need for relationship with God and others will help bring us out of isolation and closer to the life of freedom and hope we desire.

The exact nature of our wrongs is rooted in the lie we tell ourselves that our problems are caused by what is around us rather than what is within us.

We have a problem and it is time to take responsibility for our part in that problem. Speaking the truth helps to bring clarity, order, and peace into the situation. There is great power in truthfully acknowledging the things that have gone wrong in our life and asking for help to sort out what needs changing.

People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy.
(Proverbs 28:13 NLT)

The exact nature of our wrongs is rooted in the lie we tell ourselves that our problems are caused by what is around us rather than what is within us. Trying to sort things out and solve problems based on our own understanding creates greater problems for ourselves and for those around us.

Coming out of isolation and learning how to live well with other imperfect people requires flexibility and great patience. In early recovery, the problems we encounter with others are primarily an expression of our own character defects rather than their attitude. With God's help, we can grow with others by putting into practice the second half of the Serenity Prayer which says, "taking this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it, trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will."

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path. I've promised it once, and I'll promise it again: I will obey your righteous regulations. I have suffered much, O Lord; restore my life again as you promised. (Psalm 119:105-107 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit that living in isolation while trying to find solutions to my pain and shame has only made my life miserable and my problems worse. Teach me how to live in peace with You and others. I want recovery Your way. Amen

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2018

THE GOD OF ANOTHER CHANCE

One day when Jesus was at a dinner party given by a religious leader an uninvited woman with a bad reputation in the community entered the room. The woman stood behind Jesus weeping. Her tears wet Jesus' feet and she dried them with her hair. She then proceeded to anoint Jesus' feet with rare fragrant oil.

In those days, it was customary for a host to provide water to wash the dusty feet of guests who came into their home. This was a sign of respect and honour. Simon had neglected to do this for Jesus and the other guests. With self-righteousness, pride and arrogance, Simon judged what this woman was doing for Jesus. He also judged Jesus for allowing her to touch Him.

God is giving us another chance today to humbly acknowledge our shortcomings and ask Him to remove them.

Jesus said to Simon, *"Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little."* Then Jesus said to her, *"Your sins are forgiven."* (Luke 7:44b-48 NIV)

The woman's sins were widely known in the community. Simon's sins were hidden. One of the mistakes we often make is assuming that we are okay when we are living in a socially acceptable way. The truth is, we need to base the assessment of our recovery and our lives on what the Bible says. In recovery, as in active addiction, we need to recognize our sinful ways and acknowledge our powerlessness to fix ourselves. We need to repent of pride and arrogance in our judgment of others and turn to God for forgiveness and healing.

Jesus gave Simon another chance that day to judge correctly. God is giving us another chance today to humbly acknowledge our shortcomings and ask Him to remove them.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to see my shortcomings and acknowledge my sin before You so I might have another chance to live life to the full. Thank you for Jesus who went to the cross to make my freedom from sin possible. I am forever grateful for all that Jesus has done for me. Amen

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2018

PEACE IS POSSIBLE

When we come to that place where we live in peace with others around us, we may still encounter people who are hostile. Despite our loving comments and gestures they insult us or accuse us and just go out of their way to irritate or hurt us. How should we respond? How can we maintain peace? God knows these situations will arise and so we are given some helpful advice in the Bible about living at peace with everyone.

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. (Romans 12:18 NIV)

The first phrase in the above verse is: *"If it is possible"*. This indicates that there may be times when peace with another person is not possible. The person may not be interested in a peaceful environment, or they may even enjoy causing harm to others. What are we to do? Our responsibility is to maintain peace in our own heart. We remember and hold fast to God's kindness to us and keep our thoughts filled with kindness, goodness and forgiveness towards the other person.

But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness. (James 3:17-18 NLT)

The second phrase in the same verse is, *"as far as it depends on you"*. We are not meant to co-dependently prop up someone in their sinful or harmful behaviour or attitude. We can walk away from a person who is being belligerent, but we must be careful to do so with peace. Irritation and condemnation need to go. God's peace and healing need to be received. When we have settled our hearts, we should pray for the other person that they would grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus and receive His grace, mercy and peace.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to live at peace with those around me. Help me to resolve conflict with others when it is possible, and as far as it depends on me. My desire is always to be peace loving and gentle. Help me to behave in a gracious way with those I find hard to love and not expect anything from them in return. Amen

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.
(Romans 12:18 NIV)

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2018

SUNDAY PSALM – TIME

At 2 a.m. today, for many of us in North America, the clocks went back an hour from daylight saving time to standard time. Most of us have numerous clocks to adjust. We have to change digital clocks on stoves and microwave ovens. Wall clocks must be adjusted as well as clocks in our cars. For those of us with smart phones it is usually an automatic change and takes care of itself.

**Lord,
remind me
how brief
my time
on earth
will be.
Remind
me that
my days
are
numbered
— how
fleeting
my life is.
(Psalm 39:4
NLT)**

As we think about clocks today, let's take the opportunity to consider time. Many of us in recovery keep track of our clean time and we often hear the question, "How much clean time do you have?" We all know that every hour and every day of clean time is an amazing gift to cherish and celebrate.

Here are some encouraging reminders about time that God gives:

When we turn our will and our life over to the care of God, we can ask Him to help us defeat those enemies who seek to destroy us. **My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me.** (Psalm 31:15 NIV)

Each time we are in trouble HELP is available, we need never face our problems alone. **The righteous person faces many troubles, but the Lord comes to the rescue each time.** (Psalm 34:19 NLT)

It's always a good time to express gratitude for all that God has done for us: **I will praise the Lord at all times. I will constantly speak his praises.** (Psalm 34:1 NLT)

Living in recovery is about making healthy choices about what we allow our thoughts to focus on and about who we will spend time with each day. **For I am always aware of your unfailing love, and I have lived according to your truth. I do not spend time with liars or go along with hypocrites.** (Psalm 26:3-4 NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, I am thankful that I am alive today and, with Your love, help and guidance I can be confident of a faith-filled journey with You in recovery, one day at a time. Amen

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2018

DEVELOPING PATIENCE

Our lives in addiction were often shaped by characteristics of impatience and selfishness. We didn't take much time to think about others or be present with them. Communicating appropriately in an uplifting way never occurred to us. We used angry words to hurt and manipulate and vent our frustration. Now in recovery, we are seeking to find a way of life that reflects the kindness, goodness, and patience that God desires us to have with one another.

Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. (Ephesians 4:2 NLT)

It takes patient deliberate actions to live with integrity and consistently tell the truth. We need patience to see a job through to the end. Beginnings are easy, but "keeping on keeping on" until the job is done takes a lot of determination. **Finishing is better than starting. Patience is better than pride.** (Ecclesiastes 7:8 NLT)

We were created to live and work with each other. It may be a trying task to learn how to co-operate with another, to listen to their point of view, or give way to their ideas, and yet that's how life works. As we learn to give attention to details that never mattered to us in the past, we will need to be very patient both with ourselves and others. We will need to have consideration for the requirements of those who are working with us.

May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. (Romans 15:5 NLT)

We need to regularly ask God to fill us with the fruit of His Holy Spirit as we deal with core character defects that have been the norm for us for so many years.

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

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to patiently deal with myself, others, and the situations that confront me. Come and fill me to overflowing with Your Holy Spirit and produce in me the good fruit I require to live in harmony with everyone I meet. Amen

**We need to
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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2018

GUARDING AGAINST COMPARING

When we don't feel good about ourselves it is often the result of comparing ourselves with others. We pay attention to what others are doing, project what we think they expect of us, determine whether they are noticing and appreciating us, or not noticing us at all. We define what we think they are saying and the tone in which it is said. How confusing our thoughts become! Instead of God's standards, we measure others by our own flawed worldly standards. This enables us to quickly get into the "victim mode" and from there, how easy it is to stumble into relapse.

We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. (2 Corinthians 10:12 NIV)

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

(Galatians 6:2 NIV)

We need to be aware of thoughts that accuse and condemn others. As soon as we begin to think them, we need to do a self-check and find out what is really going on in our own hearts. If we observe negative traits in others, we should pray for them and bless them and leave their negativity with them. We should not allow their problems to become our problems. We also need to be careful of a critical spirit and not point out other people's failures or criticize their faults. Jesus gave us some good advice on this type of behaviour. We need to be forgiving towards others and help them when we see they are troubled. Accusation and condemnation will not glorify Christ. Carrying one another's burdens will.

How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye. Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Matthew 7:4-5 NLT, Galatians 6:1-2 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to see others and myself as You see us. You created each person as a unique individual, exquisitely designed for Your purpose. Thank You that I am fearfully and wonderfully made in Your image, as is each person I meet. Amen

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2018

JUST DO THE NEXT RIGHT THING

In our life in recovery daily circumstances may often feel overwhelming and confusing. One way we can overcome our anxiety is by simply telling ourselves to, "Just do the next right thing." This is one way we can keep on track while we figure out what's really going on in our lives.

O people, the Lord has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8 NLT)

How can we know what that is? If we seek God, He will give us directions as we read the scriptures. The Holy Spirit will help us understand what we read and will encourage us to apply what we are being taught to our life situations. Whenever we call out to God and ask for courage to do what is right, He is ready to help

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. (2 Timothy 3:16 NLT)

Jesus taught us to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind and to love others as ourselves. These are the two principles on which everything else is based. This is a good place to start when we begin our journey with God in recovery.

Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way. Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. (Colossians 3:17 MSG; Matthew 7:12 NLT)

In a moment of panic or temptation we don't have to figure out what is really going on. We can simply tell ourselves to do the next right thing. God is with us to help us and, as we practice this principle, everything else will be sorted out.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for keeping things simple for me. Help me to stay focused on taking positive steps, one step at a time. Regardless of what is going on in me, or around me, help me to just do the next right thing. Amen

In a moment of panic or temptation we don't have to figure out what is really going on. We can simply tell ourselves to do the next right thing.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2018

TIMES OF TROUBLE

Jesus said: **"Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."** (John 16:33b NLT)

No one likes trouble. We all want trouble to go away as quickly as possible. Sometimes people feel they should not have trouble when they are following Jesus. They assume that God will not allow any adversity to touch their lives. The truth is, sometimes God uses trouble and hardship to accomplish His purposes in our life. We may see our difficulties as setbacks to our recovery, but God may be using them to help us mature and move forward. Jesus said we will experience trouble and problems in this world. We need to know and rely on the fact that God says He will never leave or forsake us. When we turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, we are assured that God will be our refuge and strength in times of trouble.

We are promised victory as we face trouble together with God.

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea. (Psalm 46:1-2 NIV)

In our new life with God in recovery, trouble no longer needs to defeat us. We have a loving God who guides and supports us. He will empower us to face and overcome any difficulty. As we go to God first when trouble arises, we will have the benefit of His wisdom to handle the situation. Reading the Bible daily and applying God's principles to our lives will bring the swiftest and most satisfying solution to any problem we may encounter. In addition, God wants us to reach out to others for comfort, support and help. We are promised victory as we face trouble together with God and with those we trust to give us good advice.

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16 NIV)

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for always being with me. When troubles come, help me to receive Your comfort and rely on Your wisdom in my time of need. Amen

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2018

JUST FOR TODAY – I WILL ADJUST MYSELF

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.

When we pray the complete Serenity Prayer we say the words: *"Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it, trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will."* These are easy words to memorize and say, even with sincerity, but they are very difficult to put into practice. They ask us to demonstrate the character quality of flexibility.

We are used to having our own way and feel vulnerable when that is blocked. We are not yet comfortable in the new and strange world of recovery and "surrendering to God" is unfamiliar to us. Having the grace and patience to trust that God will work all things out is a very steep learning curve for us to embrace.

Be earnest and disciplined in your prayers. Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. (1 Peter 4:7-8 NLT)

To be flexible involves being open to new ideas. We need to be willing to learn new ways of looking at things and new ways of behaving in certain situations. We need to be willing to see the bigger picture of life, rather than our self-centered one.

Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make it as clear as you can to all you meet that you're on their side, working with them and not against them. (Ephesians 4:2 NLT, Philippians 4:5 MSG)

We need to look beyond our current circumstances and be willing to trust that God is at work. He hasn't forgotten us. He's not too busy to act on our behalf. He is a good God and a good Father, and He will come through for us in a way that is life-enriching if we will just give Him a chance.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit I am powerless to adjust myself to what is and not try to adjust everything else to my desires. Please work in me to adjust my attitude and my emotions, so that I can trust You are truly working all things together for good in my life. Amen

We need to be willing to see the bigger picture of life, rather than our self-centered one.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2018

PROBLEMS! PROBLEMS! PROBLEMS!

Problems! Problems! Problems! Sometimes life seems full of them. One seems to pile up on top of another until we feel like it's all too much and we don't know what to do, or where to turn. With full knowledge of all that is going on in our lives, God tells us not be afraid because He will be with us and He will take care of us.

Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you. (Deuteronomy, 31:8 NLT).

In some recovery meetings we often affirm this principle: **God is always with me. I need never face my problems alone. Together with God, any difficulty can be worked out and overcome.**

Together with God any difficulty can be worked out and overcome.

God made the universe. The sun rises in the east every morning and sets in the west every evening as God ordained. God controls the powerful ocean and protects a delicate little flower that grows up through a crack in the sidewalk. As problems arise we can bring them to God because He cares for us. ***Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.*** (1 Peter 5:7 NLT)

Challenging circumstances tend to complicate life for us. We need a new set of skills to handle the consequences of our past choices and move forward in the way God is directing us. When we are unsure about God's love and care for us, we will stagger under the weight of our own fear. Fortunately, if we bring our problems to God seeking His wisdom, together with God any difficulty can be worked out and overcome.

God says: ***"Call on me when you are in trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory."*** ***Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.*** (Psalm 50:15; Proverbs 3:6 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to see my problems in a new way – as a journey with You to learn Your ways and see Your wisdom at work in my life. Give me the will and desire to follow Your ways, trusting that You are a good Father who faithfully loves and cares for me. Amen

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2018

SOURCES OF TROUBLE

There are three main sources which bring trouble in our lives: 1) Our Fallen World: We live in a world that is broken because of sinful choices made throughout the ages. 2) Ourselves: We are drawn into evil by our own lusts and desires. 3) Satanic Attack: Satan never ceases to harass the children of God. At times, we will not have an explanation as to why things happen in our lives, but God assures us that He is working all things together for good.

Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour ... But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty ... Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. (1 Peter 5:8, 2 Peter 3:1, James 1:14 NLT)

What should we do when we find ourselves in trouble? We need to admit to, or ask for insight, into any way we might have failed to obey God's instructions. We need God's wisdom to accurately sort out recurring troubling circumstances.

When we are the primary source of our trouble we need to repent, turn from our sinful actions, receive God's forgiveness, and quickly get back on track. Refocusing our thoughts on God will silence the accusation of the evil one and allow us victory over the harassment that disobedience brings. This is what the Bible speaks about when we are encouraged to "take captive every thought."

We need God's wisdom to accurately sort out recurring troubling circumstances.

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NIV)

Victory is ours, through faith in God's power working in us to overcome any adversity.

Prayer: Loving God, when troubles come, help me to resist the devil and draw close to you. Show me a safe way through my troubles and help me do the next right thing. Help me to fully rely on Your wisdom and divine power to overcome. Amen

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2018

A GOOD COUNSELOR – A WISE SPONSOR

The founders of Alcoholics Anonymous and the 12 Steps were aware of Biblical principles and based on these, they structured the program of AA to include counselors whom we call sponsors.

A sponsor listens to the person they are mentoring. A good sponsor provides an objective point of view and prayerful understanding about how healing is attained and how life works.

A good sponsor provides an objective point of view and prayerful understanding about how healing is attained and how life works.

The Bible teaches: *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.* (James 5:16 NIV)

In early recovery a sponsor is often the first person we seek when we need encouragement in taking new steps that are unfamiliar to us. We have feelings we struggle to understand and are hearing about new ways of doing things that really don't make much sense to us. A sponsor will encourage us to make good decisions regarding recovery and life and challenge us when we appear to be setting ourselves up for relapse.

Those who listen to instruction will prosper; those who trust the Lord will be joyful. The wise are known for their understanding, and pleasant words are persuasive. (Proverbs 16:20 NLT)

There's so much to learn about the recovery process and we've only got limited time and energy each day. An essential part of God's care is providing us with wise people who will both model a healthy lifestyle

and share principles for healthy living with us. These people help us reshape our thinking and behaving.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for living in me and teaching me Your ways. Help me to pay attention to Your promptings in my spirit as I move forward in my life in recovery. I also need wise human counsel as I sort out my issues and rebuilt my life. Help me to find a Godly sponsor or mentor and pay attention to the wisdom they offer me. Amen

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2018

SUNDAY PSALM – FEARS AND FAILURES

All of us go through times in our lives when we feel lonely and inadequate to deal with the events that life has brought our way. We see the world move along on its merry way without stopping to care about our emotional struggles. Unless we share our problems, no one will understand what is going on or is able to help us. The Bible tells us in the following Psalm that God is constantly on the alert to help those who turn to Him and whose hope is in His unfailing love.

But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine. We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you. (Psalm 33:18-22 NIV)

When we call on the Lord, He has promised to answer us. Unfortunately, when we allow worry to overwhelm us, we become so focused on events that we forget God is there to help us and calm our fears. However, when we shift our focus to the one who is truly our help and shield, our emotions will calm down and our fears will subside. We will experience the unfailing love of God for us and recognize that we are not alone, God is always present with us. When we put our hope in God, He will deliver us from whatever is causing our heartache and fears.

For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. (2 Chronicles 16:9 NIV)

When we draw close to God, He will draw close to us. Let us put all our hope in Him, for God is faithful to do all that He has promised.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me when I fret about things that appear too big for me to handle. Help me to first turn to You, for You alone are an ever-present help in trouble and the source of my strength. Let me never forget that Your eyes are over every place, and You are committed to love and care for those whose hope is in Your unfailing love. Amen

When we shift our focus to the one who is truly our help and shield, our emotions will calm down and our fears will subside.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2018

WEATHERING CHANGES IN THE WEATHER

Weather changes. The days grow shorter. Many of us find it challenging to live well in the middle of these changes. Our energy levels seem to decrease with the decline in the number of hours of sunlight. It may seem more difficult to complete everyday tasks. We struggle with our emotions. Some of us work harder not to slip into depression. God who is in control of all seasons wants to reassure us of His unfailing love, particularly when we face overwhelming circumstances.

God who is in control of all seasons wants to reassure us of His unfailing love, particularly when we face overwhelming circumstances.

The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. (Lamentations 3:22-23, James 1:17 NLT)

We are loved by God through every season. God doesn't change just because the weather and our feelings change. We are precious to God. He will not leave us to walk through difficult times alone. He is close at hand and reassures us of His presence with us in uncertain times.

May the Lord lead your hearts into a full understanding and expression of the love of God and the patient endurance that comes from Christ. (2 Thessalonians 3:5 NLT)

Our challenge is to look beyond the dullness of the day and ask God to show us His plan to bring light and life into our day. We don't have to pretend that we feel strong, but we need to behave in ways that affirm our trust in God's promises.

God says: ***"My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness."*** So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. (2 Corinthians 12:9 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, Thank you that You are a steady and dependable friend during changing seasons. Help me to look to You for light in my dark moments and rely on Your power to overcome my weaknesses. Amen

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2018

WALKING SAFELY IN A NEW DIRECTION

To go forward in recovery we must find new direction for our lives, new ways of responding to issues, and new guidelines for making decisions.

Our old pattern of thinking and behaving brought us to where we are today. As we establish new and healthy principles and actions based on God's Word, God will support us through the power of His Holy Spirit. He will also put us in the way of human counselors and trustworthy people who are walking with Him.

The Bible says, ***Where there is no counsel, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.*** (Proverbs 11:14 NKJV)

Good counsel comes from many sources, the Bible, pastors, friends who know and live for God, or books and media that honour the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It may also come from a professional Christian counselor who understands addiction and recovery. Knowledgeable people we encounter on our journey may also encourage us by sharing the wisdom they received when dealing with issues similar to those we are currently experiencing.

Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down the other can help him up. But if someone is alone ... there is no one to help him ... Two men can resist an attack that would defeat one man alone. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 GNT)

We need help from everyone who can enlarge our vision and broaden our perspective. We need to share honestly about the temptations we are experiencing. We are not unique! Wise sober friends have had similar experiences and have learned lessons that can help us. We need to respond with humility to honest feedback from others. Foundational to all other counsel we need to seek the Holy Spirit who will guide us into all truth.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to welcome Your wisdom and also the help of wise counselors. Keep me honest. Help me to lay down my pride and, together with You, follow the path of recovery to new life. Amen

Where there is no counsel, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.
(Proverbs 11:14 NKJV)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2018

REMEMBRANCE DAY – LAYING POPPIES TO HONOUR THOSE WHO DIED

Recovery is a gift. Life and freedom are a gift. Many people have contributed to the new life we have today. Now that the haze of active addiction has lifted, we have a chance to come away from a place of alienation and isolation and with clear vision, see our lives in community with others.

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In the days leading up to Remembrance Day, many of us wear a poppy. After the civic ceremonies, people often take their poppy off and lay it on the cenotaph in their community. This is done to personally honour the soldiers who showed love for family and country even to the point of laying down their lives.

It is also important to remember that Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. No one took Jesus' life from Him. He offered it so we could experience forgiveness and freedom from sin and brokenness.

When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. (Romans 5:6-8 NLT)

Soldiers fought so that you and I could have peace and freedom in our country. Jesus suffered and died so that we could have peace and freedom from the power of sin. Jesus is also preparing a place for us in His Father's House in Heaven. God wants us to know the value He places on relationship with each one of us. Jesus paid the ultimate price so you and I could have a purposeful

life in the place where we live today, and eternal life with Him in the place He has gone to prepare for us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, as we go to remembrance ceremonies tomorrow and lay our poppies on the memorials, help us to remember and honour the veterans whose service has directly impacted our freedom to live in recovery today. Help us also to remember and honour You for Your love, demonstrated in Jesus, who bought us back from certain death and gave us eternal life. Amen

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2018

FINDING JOY IN OUR NEW LIFE

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (James 1:2-4 NKJV)

Life in recovery can be challenging at times. We have joy in the fact that we are no longer in the pit of our addiction. However, we are currently treading waters that are unfamiliar to us. People around us are encouraging us to stay the course but we are unsure, and even fearful, of our new environment. We were "experts" in coping with our dysfunctional lifestyle but are now "newbies" in coping with life in recovery. Thankfully, God has promised to be with us in the transition process.

Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust. You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:1; 11 NKJV)

The transition from living for self-fulfillment to living life for the glory of God is a testing of our will. Is there truly joy in walking in the ways of God? Sometimes we can say a definite "yes" as we experience joy in having made good decisions. Other times we find ourselves in a battle with our own will. God called us out of the darkness we were in and invited us to walk in the light of His presence. Like any child learning to walk we may stumble as we move forward but, like any good Father, God will hold tightly to our hand and support us. God rejoices with us when we walk steadily forward and will gently lift us up when we stumble and fall. God is calling us to fullness of joy in His presence and He is ever with us.

How happy are the people who know the sound of joy! They walk in the light of Your face, O Lord. They are full of joy in Your name all day long. And by being right with You, they are honored. (Psalm 89:15-16 NLV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for bringing joy into my life. Help me to resist the devil who wants to steal, kill, and destroy the life you have given me. Help me to hold tightly to your hand, even in challenging times, and live in the love, joy and peace that You give me. Amen

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2018

TEMPTATION OF SELF-WILL

Many people believe that freedom to act as they choose gives them the opportunity to have control over their own lives. In the Garden of Eden story in the Bible, the real reason the first man and woman were deceived into eating the fruit was that they believed the knowledge of right and wrong would make them like God with the ability to control their own destiny. How wrong they were and how vulnerable we are when we believe this lie.

The fear of the Lord (respect, awe & submission to God) ***is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*** (Proverbs 1:7 NKJV)

We will self-destruct in one way or another unless we acknowledge that God made us and knows what we need, and then choose to surrender to His ways

The devil will tempt us with something appealing to our flesh and then give us reasons why it's not so bad or why we deserve it. He may even remind us that God will forgive us for any wrong doing, so why not just go ahead and do it. The devil always twists the truth for his motive is to destroy us. He wants us to obey him, and by doing so, disobey God. He deceives us with things that are appealing in the moment but will never give us the satisfaction we desire.

Temptation isn't just offering us something that we want in the moment. The appealing core of temptation is the lie that free from God, we can figure out what is morally good for us and tell ourselves that it "doesn't hurt anyone else". Unfortunately, there is no human effort or wisdom that can keep us from harming ourselves and others when we determinedly act on self-will. We will self-destruct in one way or another unless we acknowledge that God made us and knows what is best for us, and then choose to surrender to His ways.

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. (2 Timothy 3:16 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, help me be aware of the promptings of your Holy Spirit as I sort truth from lies. Give me the strength to surrender my will and my life to Your care and acknowledge that You alone are God and know all things, including what is best for me. Amen

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2018

LEST WE FORGET

Today we remember blood that was spilled on battlefields around the world by brave men and women who gave their lives for the cause of freedom and justice. Our hearts are touched as we watch young faces on parade honouring the old veterans. We see the memories etched in the veterans' faces and can only imagine the stories they will never forget. We don't have those memories in our hearts, so we need to hear stories and look at symbols that help us pay attention and remember. Poppies, moments of silence, and ceremonies at cenotaphs around the country all help us reflect and remember.

Often in the recovery process we receive key fobs and medallions to mark milestones in our journey. These symbols are indicators of time in recovery and help us celebrate our sobriety in community with others with whom we share the journey.

As Christians we have symbols of Christ's sacrifice of His life for us. These are the bread and wine of the Lord's supper used in the celebration of Communion in churches around the world.

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:23b-26 NIV).

On Remembrance Day, we hear the phrase, "Lest we forget." As Canadians, we should never forget the sacrifice of our brave soldiers who lost their lives in battle. As people in recovery we should never forget the impact of our life in addiction and the new opportunity we have to live life to the full each day. As Christians, we should never forget the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ who gave His life for our eternal salvation.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I pause to remember and live in gratitude for all the benefits I have received. Thank you for the symbols and events that help me remember the cost of my freedom, my time in recovery, and my new life with You through Jesus my Lord and Saviour. Amen

We need to hear stories and look at symbols that help us pay attention and remember.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2018

ADDED VALUE FROM GOD

God's artistic skill in our lives did not end the day we were born. In the same way a weaver takes many threads and weaves them into intricate patterns for a wall hanging or a rug, so God continues to work for good for us in the details of each day. Recovery is a wonderful opportunity to enter more fully into the good life God has always wanted us to experience.

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. (Romans 8:28 NLT)

God who began a good work in us will continue to work in our lives to fulfill His planned purpose for us.

Which details of our life are left to chance and error? None! God who began a good work in us will continue to work in our lives to fulfill His planned purpose for us.

God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end. (Ecclesiastes 3:11 NLT)

God's plan for us is suited to our unique personality, talents and abilities. Our part is to believe what God says and turn our will and our lives over to His care. When we do, His purpose for us will gradually be revealed.

In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. (2 Timothy 2:20-21 NIV)

We often long for fulfillment and deep satisfaction. We will experience those feelings only when we live wholeheartedly surrendered to God's ways. Life truly becomes more meaningful as we seek God in all our ways. Obeying God's is the first step towards fullness of life. Joy and satisfaction result, along with a sense of well-being, as we put into practice what we are learning.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is to wholeheartedly follow You in all my ways. I am grateful that You add meaning to my life as You continue to work all things together for my good. May You be glorified in all that I do and say. Amen

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2018

TEMPTATION AND DECEPTION

Once we have cleaned up our lives from all past involvement in destructive and addictive practices we are home free for a life of joy and peace and blessing, right? Wrong! That's the very time the devil will do everything in his power to draw us back into bondage and away from the good we are experiencing in our relationship with God.

God has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves. We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. (2 Corinthians 4:6-9 NLT)

We are vulnerable to drift into relapse when we believe that we don't need to deal with the devil and his deceiving ways. When we are actively seeking to follow God's ways, the devil and his demons will aggressively pursue us and seek to make evil more attractive than the good we are experiencing. We need to be on guard. A wise phrase is "know your enemy."

Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. (1 Peter 5:8 NLT)

Only the voice of God's Spirit of Truth within us can reveal what is truth and what is deception. We need to pay attention to His voice.

Jesus said: ***"The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: He will guide you into all truth"*** (John 14:25-26; 16:8, 13 NKJV)

Prayer: Gracious God, When I am tempted, help me to recognize and act on what your Holy Spirit is saying. Remind me to guard my heart against the deceit of the evil one. Amen

We are vulnerable to drift into relapse when we believe that we don't need to deal with the devil and his deceiving ways.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2018

HOW MANY LIES MAKE A LIAR?

Life with God in recovery is structured around telling the truth in all circumstances. We've heard the slogan, "You are only as sick as your secrets" and that's a simple description of a life based on lies. Another AA slogan points us towards the new life we seek in recovery, "Trust God, clean house, help others." God's word includes this as a principle live by.

Stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. (Ephesians 4:25, 1 Peter 3:10 NLT)

The move from telling lies to telling the truth is often harder than we think. It's so easy to excuse little white lies, half-truths, exaggerations, and lies of convenience where we tell ourselves that it's mostly truth. We live in a society where lying is an accepted way of doing business or doing politics. "Fake news," "alternate facts," and "political spin" are terms that seek to condone lying. To rationalize telling lies we talk about "fudging the truth, bending the truth, being economical with the truth." How many lies does a person need to tell to be labelled a liar? Sadly, all around us we are seeing the negative impact of a society that has made lying a way of life.

**When I
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the truth?**

The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in those who tell the truth. I am writing to you not because you don't know the truth but because you know the difference between truth and lies. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. (Proverbs 12:22, 1 John 2:21, John 16:13 NLT)

The only issue that really matters when it comes to truth and lies is our answer to the following questions we can ask ourselves: What am I saying? When I speak, can others trust that I'm really telling the truth?

When we ask Him, God is ready to help us become persons of truth and integrity.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you are the way, the truth, and the life. You have filled me with the Spirit of Truth who will guide me into all truth. Help me to listen well and commit to being truthful in all my affairs. Amen

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2018

A NEW IDENTITY

When we surrender our will and our lives into God's care, we are restored to relationship with God. Our spirit comes alive as God's Spirit lives in us. God's lavish love pours into us. We begin to believe that we do belong to God and are His cherished children who bring delight to His heart. This truth grows in our spirit and nurtures stability and freedom in our soul – that part of our being where we think and feel and make choices.

Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. (1 Thessalonians 5:23 NLT)

Where we've previously felt isolated and detached we now begin to experience a sense of connectedness. As we remember that God is watching over us, fear gives way to a sense of security. God is working on our behalf. The reality that we no longer are alone begins to sink into our minds. Confusion gives way to more and more clarity. Hope grows, and despair moves away, as surely as fog is dispersed by the warm sunshine. God is making us whole, holy in every way.

Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24 NLT)

New patterns of behaviour are appearing as our spirit and soul are impacted by the truth of God's word. We begin to think more positively. Rather than reacting and running, we start to feel more secure and confident in dealing with what life brings our way. Our co-dependent need for approval from others diminishes as we learn to stand firm on the truth of God's word and acknowledge our identity as the treasured person God says we are. Lying and cheating and scamming are no longer necessary. We are living as people of integrity, and it feels good.

Prayer: Gracious God, Once again I affirm my identity in Jesus Christ and declare that I am a new person through Jesus' finished work on the cross. Thank you for my new life. Help me to live as the treasured person You say I am. Amen.

**Anyone
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(2 Corinthians
5:17 NLT)

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2018

RECOVERY TOOL: PRAYER

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

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

***What is
prayer?

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with God.***

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

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

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

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

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you that I am Your precious child and the smallest detail of my day is important to You. You are a good Father and I want to improve my conscious contact with You. Help me to seek Your counsel in every area of my life. Amen

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2018

STOP LYING

During our time in addiction, we didn't give a second thought about telling lies. It was simply a way of life, a way of survival. We lied so we would appear to be better than we were acting. We lied to try to gain advantage. We lied because we were angry with someone and wanted to get back at them. We lied to ourselves to minimize and excuse our addictive behaviour. The truth is, whenever we try to live without God we quickly descend into a habit of telling lies.

They all fool and defraud each other; no one tells the truth. With practiced tongues they tell lies; they wear themselves out with all their sinning. For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. (Jeremiah 9:5, John 8:44 NLT)

The life we are called to recover is shaped by choosing to tell the truth in all circumstances. Our character reflects God's character when we speak the truth. In contrast, it is most like that of the evil one when we are lying.

Towns and cities have regulations and practices to promote good sanitation. Why? They need to provide a clean environment for their citizens, so they can stay healthy. Similarly, God wants us to experience a rich and blessed life. Lying contaminates and destroys relationships and so life in God's world is based on His spiritual sanitation system of telling the truth.

Who may climb the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies. They will receive the Lord's blessing and have a right relationship with God their savior. (Psalm 24:3-5 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for the many times I have lied to you, to others, and to myself. Help me to always speak the truth and be transparent in all my ways. Amen

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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2018

SUNDAY PSALM – POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES

Great debate goes on between scientists and theologians regarding how the earth came into being. Moses, a friend of God, recorded an account given by the creator Himself of how the earth and human life came into existence. Some choose not to believe God's account and look for explanations elsewhere. The following Psalm written by King David, another friend of God, restates how God spoke and the heavens, the earth, and the oceans were formed at the command of His word.

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; he puts the deep into storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the people of the world revere him. For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations. (Psalm 33:6-11 NIV)

In recovery we come to believe in God, the power greater than ourselves who can restore us to sanity.

Instead of honouring God for the beautiful earth He created for mankind to live in, some people spend enormous amounts of time studying all sorts of ideas and alternate theories of how things came into being. God's plans and purposes are not changed by human theories. God is in charge and His plans stand forever. ***The highest heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth he has given to mankind.*** (Psalm 115:16 NIV)

In recovery we come to believe in God, the power greater than ourselves who can restore us to sanity. The same God who created the stars, the mountains, the oceans, the plants and flowers, and the creatures of land and sea, made us in His image and wants us to have a wonderful life with Him forever. This powerful God is with us every day and the purpose of His heart is to bless us.

Prayer: Almighty God, I want to believe in Your ways and Your power to restore me to life and sanity. I humbly ask You to renew me, Your masterpiece, so I can mirror Your original design. Amen

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2018

FINDING POWER THROUGH PRAYER

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

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

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

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

Prayer: Gracious Father, Thank You for Your forgiveness for the many times I have failed You, myself, and others. I acknowledge that You alone know the road ahead of me and Your power is greater than any challenge I will ever face. Please empower me with wisdom and strength to follow Your principles in all my affairs. I am grateful that You care for me. Amen

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

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2018

ONGOING PERSONAL INVENTORY

Our old ways of thinking and behaving are being transformed as we journey with God in our new life in recovery. New things bring new challenges as they push against our old ways. Taking regular personal inventory enables us to assess whether the challenges are just the temporary pain of new muscles being built or if there are vulnerabilities being exposed. It's important that our ongoing daily inventory starts with what is being revealed.

Oh, that we might know the Lord! Let us press on to know Him. He will respond to us as surely as the arrival of dawn or the coming of rains in early spring.

(Hosea 6:3 NLT)

New things bring new challenges as they push against our old ways.

What are we doing from day to day to train ourselves to hear and respond to the voice of God? Are we challenging ourselves to do things like pray and read and reflect on God's Word? As we choose to follow this discipline we will discover that life as God describes it is different from what we have practiced, or what we experience around us in everyday society. Comparing God's ways with our ways is foundational for our ongoing daily inventory. This helps us identify how we are maturing in our relationship with God and how we are obeying His Word in our daily life.

Trust in the Lord and do good; live in the land and be safe. Seek your happiness in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desire. Give yourself to the Lord; trust in him, and he will help you. (Psalm 37:3-5a GNT)

God has a plan for our life that gives satisfaction, meaning, and joy. As we continue to take personal inventory, and promptly adjust any shortcomings, we will achieve the desired ease of living at peace with God, with ourselves, and with our neighbor.

Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for enriching my life with Your goodness and mercy. In each step of my journey I believe that I will experience more contentment and satisfaction as my thoughts and actions are transformed by following Your ways. I am grateful that I can trust You to help me leave my old ways behind. Amen

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2018

RANDOM ACTS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Recently on the news a story was told of two women who went to a Tim Horton's coffee shop, bought many doughnuts and cups of coffee and began to give them to the people who were coming in, as a "random act of kindness." Other stories are told of people who have paid for the next person's gas at the gas pump, or of someone who picked up the dinner tab for another table at a restaurant. These are persons who are giving just to be generous. In some instances, it is in response to something lovely that has been done for them.

In the same newscast, we hear stories of people who are complaining and condemning others for what they did or didn't do. Sometimes it seems that no one can get it right. What would happen if each of us were to change our perspective, seek out the good, encourage others and start a cycle of "random acts of encouragement"? What if we were to take the ordinary circumstances of our day and let them be opportunities to encourage others with words of appreciation?

Jesus said: ***"So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important. Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.*** (John 13:34-35, Galatians 6:3, 10 NLT)

Encouragement may be offered in a variety of ways: a word, a note, a prayer, a phone call, a visit, providing meeting information, or even accompanying the person to a meeting or appointment they may have. We can be a part of a support network for others in the same way that we have been supported in our recovery. We will experience encouragement ourselves as we offer encouragement to others.

Prayer: Gracious God, Thank you for loving and encouraging me. Prompt me to be aware of the helpless and lonely people around me and to tell them how to find new life in You. Amen

What if we were to take the ordinary circumstances of our day and let them be opportunities to encourage others?