

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY



Daily Meditations

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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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NOVEMBER 2019



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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2019

BLESSING OTHERS BRINGS DEEP SATISFACTION

Sometimes we choose not to bless someone because we judge them as unworthy. They may be in a lifestyle which does not meet with our approval or may have different opinions than us on religion, politics, cultural matters, or whatever we see as not meeting the criteria that we want to bless. Instead of judging others, blessings should flow from hearts that have been changed by the generous love of God for all people, including us.

Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud, or rude. Love isn't selfish or quick tempered. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do. Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil. Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7 CEV)

Accepting and receiving the love that God has for us will help us overcome our reluctance to be a blessing to others. If we feel we are lacking in love, we need to ask God to teach us how to love like He does. Blessings flow automatically from a heart that is filled with the love and kindness of God. Blessing others will bring peace and deep satisfaction to our own souls.

By everything I did, I showed how you should work to help everyone who is weak. Remember that our Lord Jesus said, "More blessings come from giving than from receiving." (Acts 20:35 CEV)

The Lord is well pleased with us when we seek to help others who are less fortunate than ourselves. When we lived a dysfunctional lifestyle of addiction we were blessed when others supplied us with food and shelter. These people did not know us, but they cared about our needs. Now it is our turn to bless others. A gentle smile can lift someone's spirit. An encouraging word may make someone's day. Helping someone with what they are doing may lessen their load. Praying for someone's concerns will show we care. There are so many ways we can bless others. Today, let's look around and notice a person we can bless. As we lay on our beds this evening we can then reflect on and perhaps pray for those we have blessed and allow deep satisfaction to fill our souls.

Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to be less concerned with my own needs and agenda. Teach me how to love and bless others as You have greatly loved and blessed me. Amen

Blessings flow automatically from a heart that is filled with the love and kindness of God.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2019

SHOWING RESPECT

Showing respect and being worthy of respect matters to God. All persons have value as human beings, regardless of their status or behaviour. We show respect by treating others as we want them to treat us. The "Ten Commandments", (Exodus 20:3-17) given by God to His people, were instructions which empower God's people to honour God and live respectfully with each other. The first four commandments were given to help people know how to respect and honour God, their creator. The following six were given to help them show respect to their parents and to live morally in peaceful harmony with their neighbours.

Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12 NLT)

Showing respect and being worthy of respect matters to God.

It is God's will that we be respectful of our parents, of people in authority, of people around us, and of their property. This is particularly difficult when we face those who have harmed us. No matter how badly others have treated us, God's command does not change about the attitude we are to have towards them. It is God's standard that as we forgive those who have been disrespectful towards us, God will forgive us for the disrespectful ways we have spoken and acted towards them. Forgiveness eliminates our bondage to the events that caused us to stray from being the person God created us to be. God is a righteous judge and He can be trusted to judge another person's harmful actions. Each person is accountable to God for their actions.

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. People who despise advice are asking for trouble; those who respect a command will succeed. (Luke 6:27 NIV, Proverbs 13:13 NLT)

As people of God we should be committed to showing respect to everyone. May we seek God each day for the grace to do that.

Prayer: Gracious God, I am thankful that You love and care for me. Help me to honour and respect You in my thoughts, motivation, and desires and in all I do and say. Strengthen and help me to show respect to each person I meet, even when I disagree with their ways. Help me to leave all judgment of others with You. Amen

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2019

HELP ME LORD

When we are in a place of despair, we often cry out to God for help but wonder if He is really listening. We feel unsettled and insecure. We wonder if God has turned away from us, but in hope, we cry out to Him for protection. The writer of the following Psalm called out to God for help when he was in similar circumstances.

Defend me, God. Argue my case against those people who don't know you. Protect me from those evil liars. God, you are my place of safety. Why have you turned me away? Why must I suffer this sadness that my enemies have brought me? Send your light and your truth to guide me, to lead me to your holy mountain, to your home. I want to go to God's altar, to the God who makes me so very happy. God, my God, I want to play my harp and sing praises to you! Why am I so sad? Why am I so upset? I tell myself, "Wait for God's help! You will again have a chance to praise him, your God, the one who will save you." (Psalm 43:1-5 ERV)

When we read this Psalm, we see how the writer is honest about the trauma he is experiencing. He recognizes that God is his place of safety but asks God why He has turned him away. He questions God about the reason he must suffer this sadness. Each of us has been in a similar situation at one time or another. Though Jesus told us we would have trouble in this life, we tend to think that suffering is for those who do not know God or are living in self-will rather than God's will. We believe that God judges just like us. God, however, is much more gracious in His judgment than we are.

In the words that follow the writer's plea for the Lord to help him, we see his attitude change as he asks God to send His light and truth to guide him. He also tells himself to wait for God's help. When we find ourselves in trouble it would be good to follow the example set in this Psalm. Let's tell God all about our troubles and then wait for Him to sort out all our concerns.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, When my circumstances cause me to be fearful, help me to trust that You are near and ready to help. Amen

Let's tell God all about our troubles and then wait for Him to act in that which we are concerned about.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2019

EXCELLENCE VERSUS PERFECTIONISM

All of us want to be successful and to be able to do things well. We accept the affirmation we receive for a job well done or a goal achieved, and so we should. Unfortunately for some of us, we set goals that are unreasonable and then find it impossible to celebrate progress rather than perfection.

While it's important that we do our best within the limits we have of time, talent, and resources, we need to recognize that perfectionism is something quite different, and is much more sinister. Excellence is the noble effort any of us make to "*live one day at a time, one moment at a time, accepting hardship as a pathway to peace.*" Perfectionism is that fear-driven approval-seeking obsessive pressure that threatens to overwhelm us until we are defeated.

We find our perfection by trusting in the finished work of the only person who was perfect.

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him. (Hebrews 12:1b-2a; 5:8-9, NIV)

What comfort these words from the Bible give us. Only Jesus is perfect and we're not Jesus. We find our perfection by trusting in the finished work of the only person who was perfect. Jesus is the "perfecter of our faith." The Bible is full of imperfect characters like us who were loved and redeemed by the one true God.

God is not looking for perfection in us but rather that we have faith in the perfect work of His beloved Son. God desires obedience to His word as our focus. He wants us to acknowledge our failures and have an open heart to His forgiveness and cleansing and restoration. That is life at its best for whoever chooses it.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to live well, but I know that I can't do life perfectly. You know that too and so You sent Jesus to suffer and die for my sins so I could receive forgiveness and healing for the failures You knew I would experience. I put my trust once more in You, for only in Your power can I live a life of excellence and joy. Amen

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2019

COMING CLEAN ABOUT IT ALL

The exact nature of our wrongs is rooted in the lie that our problems are caused by what is around us rather than what is within us. It's time that we admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being that our way of dealing with problems does not solve them. Doing things our way actually creates greater problems for us and for those around us. It's time to admit that we cannot do life on our own and need to seek God's help.

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)

God's direction needs to be our first choice rather than our "choice of last resort." We need to learn from God's word and listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit within us. We need to heed the advice of mentors and others who have faithfully walked with God for a time. With God's help, we need to put into practice all that we have learned.

It's time to agree with God about the exact nature of our wrongs. It's time to admit that wrong is wrong and that we are guilty of wrong thinking and wrong behaving. When we finally face the reality of our sins, it is helpful to recall God's kind and merciful nature. No sin is too great to be forgiven because Jesus paid the high cost of sin with his death on the cross.

If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. (1 John 1:8-9 NLT).

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit that I cannot do life on my own and that I need Your help. I repent and turn away from my independent, self-centered way of living and choose to trust You. Please help me find the path to a meaningful, purposeful life. Amen

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

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2019

MARKING MILESTONES

Recognizing and marking milestones (clean time in recovery) is a way to celebrate our sobriety and give hope to those in our daily lives as well as to those who attend recovery meetings with us. Milestone celebrations help us remember the impact on our lives when we first turned away from our destructive lifestyle and sought God, finding in Him the new life we couldn't find elsewhere.

The Lord is my strength and shield. I trusted him with all my heart. He helped me, so I am happy. I sing songs of praise to him. (Psalm 28:7 ERV)

Recognizing and marking milestones (clean time in recovery) is a way to celebrate sobriety and give hope to others.

We celebrate belly-button birthdays because we are thankful for another year of shared life with family and friends. We celebrate sobriety milestones to give thanks for God's lavish love and grace poured out on us when we turned our will and life over to His care. God enabled us to see life with meaning and purpose. How else could we remain sober for even one day, let alone months or years?

He remembered us when we were defeated. His faithful love will last forever. He saved us from our enemies. His faithful love will last forever. (Psalm 136:23-24 ERV)

Every day of sobriety is worth celebrating, which is why we celebrate many different time periods, from one day to multiple years, with chips, key fobs, medallions, and cakes.

This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be happy today! (Psalm 118:24 ERV)

Registering our clean date and preparing to mark the milestones as they come along is one helpful tool in keeping us sober. Remembering our journey of one day at a time with God and celebrating how one day became one week, one month, one year, is a helpful deterrent when we struggle to stay clean.

Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible." (Matthew 19:26 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, I thank You for this day of sobriety and each day linked to it. You've been with me through thick and thin and You will never leave me nor forsake me. I truly face each day with confidence because of Your unfailing love and care for me. Amen

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2019

INFIDELITY

For many of us infidelity in a relationship has harmed us. It doesn't matter if we are the unfaithful partner, the uninvolved partner, a child of parents experiencing infidelity, or even an extended family member, infidelity harms all of us in ways that we never anticipated. Even after a divorce agreement between two partners has been agreed, in many instances the hurt continues. What would God say to any one of us who have suffered the pain of infidelity?

I have swept away your sins like a cloud. I have scattered your offenses like the morning mist. Oh, return to me, for I have paid the price to set you free. (Isaiah 44:22 NLT)

Often our emotional response to infidelity will cause us to further add to the harm we have sustained. Hate rises in our hearts and we determine never to forgive the unfaithful person. Resentment and malice disturb our sleep. Our thoughts are obsessed with the situation and we are filled with resentment and bitterness. Previously we might have tried to cover up the pain and trauma with our medication of choice. How can we get relief from this situation and remain faithful to life with God in recovery?

Don't let me do what I know is wrong. Don't let sin control me. If you help me, I can be pure and free from sin. (Psalm 19:13 ERV)

Our God is a redeeming God and whatever painful circumstances we may endure, His love and comfort will sustain us. Infidelity in a relationship will harm many people and we will need to make amends if we have been an unfaithful partner. If we are a victim of infidelity, we need to bring our hurts before God, repent of our unforgiveness, and seek His healing for all our woundedness.

Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight. (Romans 4:7 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for loving and caring for me. I repent of any harm I have caused others due to infidelity. Help me to live in the joy that my sin record has been cleared by the blood of Jesus. Amen

What would God say to any one of us who have suffered the pain of infidelity?

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2019

SURRENDERED TO YOUR WILL

When you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. I will be found by you," says the Lord. "I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. (Jeremiah 29:12-14a NLT)

Living with God in recovery and following the twelve steps is a spiritual journey that requires spiritual commitment. Surrendering our will to God is not simply a one-time decision, it is an on-going process of continuous surrender. Life practices we've known in addiction will be challenged by the word of God. We may think they are unconnected to our recovery because they are not specifically drug or alcohol related. However, they may have directly contributed to the problems that led us into addictive behaviour. As we daily choose to follow God's principles in all our affairs, our thinking and behaving will change and life will improve.

When we face conflict between God's way of life and life as we've known it, we will need to abandon our flawed thinking and allow God to teach us new ways.

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT)

We need help in understanding how to be in healthy relationship with God and others. Particularly in the early years of recovery when we face conflict between God's way of life and life as we've known it, we will need to abandon our flawed thinking and allow God to teach us new ways. We will need to stand firm against our desires and feelings in any given moment and persevere through to victory over our familiar ways of handling situations as they arise. God is aware of what we are going through and, if we call on Him for help, He will strengthen us to do what is right. God knows the path to real life for us. Our own way is truly harmful and deadly. How many times have we proven that?

Even though it is inconvenient, and perhaps momentarily uncomfortable, today is another opportunity for us to consider surrendering our will and life to the care of God and allowing Him to lead us on a new path.

Throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. (Ephesians 4:22-23 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please give me the will and desire to do what pleases You. Amen

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2019

IT'S IN THE BOOK

Members of Alcoholics Anonymous are encouraged to regularly read "The Big Book" which gives a helpful foundation for living sober. Some have suggested that the book got its name because of its size and content (over 400 pages long). It is a bestselling book and has had a powerful influence on many who have taken the time to read it and apply its principles in their daily living. Its content is based on the bestselling book of all time – another big book, The Holy Bible.

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. (Matthew 4:4; Psalm 119:9, 11 NIV)

Even more than Bill and Dr. Bob wanted to help individuals recover from the chaos of their alcoholism, God desires for us to have a life of purpose and live well with Him and with others. We do well when we consult God's book, the ultimate Big Book, get to know what is in it, and follow what God says works.

...When you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever. (1 Thessalonians 2:13, Isaiah 40:8 NIV)

The Big Book of AA shares stories of alcoholics and their recovery as well as teaching principles for us to put into practice in our daily lives. The Bible tells the story of God's creation and His plan for restoration of our relationship with Him after things went wrong. It tells of Jesus coming to earth to show the extravagant love of God for us. It tells of how Jesus, who knew no sin, humbled Himself to die on a cross for our sins so we could be right with God regardless of how long we have stumbled in addiction and brokenness. Let's take time today to read and learn and put the truth of God's word into practice.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the truth contained in The Bible and its application in The Big Book of AA. Help me to read and learn and put Your principles for life into practice in all my affairs today and every day. Amen

We do well when we consult God's book, the ultimate Big Book, get to know what is in it, and follow what God says works.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2019

PRAISE THE LORD

Reading the following Psalm is a great way to start the day. The people of every nation on earth are encouraged to praise God for His kindness and great love towards them.

Praise the Lord, all you nations. Praise him, all you people of the earth. For his unfailing love for us is powerful; the Lord's faithfulness endures forever. Praise the Lord! (Psalm 117:1-2 NLT)

The people of every nation on earth are encouraged to praise God for His kindness and great love towards them.

Those of us who have given our will and life over to the care of God know we no longer carry the baggage of our past sin and the accompanying guilt and shame. We have been forgiven and declared blameless by the kindness of God in sending Jesus into the world to set us free from the power of sin. We are no longer guilty. We, who once lived in rebellion against the things of God, are now reconciled to our Heavenly Father who lavishes His love on us. We are His cherished children. If that's not something to praise God for, what is?

How priceless your faithful love is! People find safety in the shadow of your wings. They eat well because there is more than enough in your house. You let them drink from your river that flows with good things. (Psalm 36:7-8 NIRV)

At times we may feel undeserving of the goodness of God. The truth is, when we believe in the finished work of Jesus to wash away our sins, we receive an eternal inheritance from God that Jesus purchased for us with His life. We don't deserve it, but God declares the price of sin is "paid in full" by Jesus.

Great blessings belong to those who live pure lives! They follow the Lord's teachings. Great blessings belong to those who follow his rules! They seek him with all their heart. (Psalm 119:1-2 ERV)

Let's improve our conscious contact with God and praise Him for the reason we have goodness and mercy following us all the days of our life.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Let me not be silent. I am grateful for all that Jesus has done for me. I ask You to give me the will and desire to live my life in praise and thanksgiving for my inheritance through Jesus. Amen

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2019

REMEMBER GOD'S HELP IN TIME OF TROUBLE

As we remember service men and women who served our nation in times of war and trouble, it's good also to be mindful of words from the Bible that describe God's help in our time of need. Many veterans in fox holes on the frontlines came to know how important it was that God was with them in ways that never would have been evident had they been safe at home.

The Lord is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. (Exodus 15:2 NIV)

In the Bible we read of people who experienced hurtful circumstances and trauma but remained faithful to God. They brought their circumstances before God and trusted Him to help them. When they were afraid, they chose to find comfort and strength in the truth that God is faithful and will do what He has promised. They were willing to follow God and leave the outcome with Him.

In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling. (Exodus 15:13 NIV)

Many of us, in the chaos of addiction and now in recovery, recognize that we need a power greater than ourselves to help us through each day. On our own, we know we are powerless. We know the problems we face are greater than the strength we have. Our hope is in God alone for victory over our dependencies.

As people gather across our nation on this Remembrance Day, let's give thanks for the military men and woman who serve our country, and ultimately for freedom from those who would seek to oppress our nation. Let's also give thanks for God's strength and goodness which brings peace to our body, soul, and spirit.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I give thanks for Your help in war time and in challenging times. As I learn to trust you for victory over the oppression of my addiction, keep me aware of Your presence ever with me. I pray for lasting peace in both my country and in my soul. Amen

We know the problems we face are greater than the strength we have. Our hope is in God alone for victory over our dependencies.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2019

FRIENDS IN TIME OF NEED

Currently, residents of some countries are fearful about the test missiles that are flying in their air space. In an expected time of need the leadership of these countries are looking for solidarity, friendship, and military support from other nations. Yesterday men and women who fought in past wars paraded to cenotaphs around our country and we were reminded once again that in war we need friends who will stand shoulder to shoulder with us and fight for freedom from oppression.

One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (Proverbs 18:24, Hebrews 13:5b NIV)

We need to encourage each other by sharing our experience, strength, and hope on the journey to freedom.

In the fight to overcome our addiction we too need friends. Our recovery will not come easily. It's important not to be arrogant and think we are stronger or less vulnerable than others. We need friends to come alongside us, and we need to come alongside others who are challenged and need support as they face their struggles. We need to encourage each other by sharing our experience, strength, and hope on the journey to freedom.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Romans 8:35, 37 NIV)

All of us need the friendship of God who promises to never leave us nor forsake us. We need God's Holy Spirit living in us to provide the strength we need to resist temptation. With God's power at work within us, we have the assurance that even though we face strong enemies of our soul, we will ultimately win the war.

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to live in healthy committed friendships as I move forward in my recovery. Give me the wisdom to listen to, and apply as appropriate, the experience, strength and hope that others share. Thank you for your love that holds me close and shelters me in times of trouble. Amen

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2019

REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

Ten times in just a few verses from the Bible we are told by a wise king that we should remember our creator. While we are young, through all the different seasons and troubles of life, all the way to the vulnerability of life when the "silver cord is cut" and our bodies return to the dust from which we came and our spirit goes back to God who gave us life, we are to remember God.

Remember your Creator. Remember him while you are still young. Think about him before your times of trouble come... Remember your Creator before those who guard the house tremble with old age... Remember your Creator before the front doors are closed... Remember your Creator before you become afraid of places that are too high... Remember your Creator before the almond trees have buds on them... Remember your Creator before the silver cord is cut. Remember him before the golden bowl is broken... Remember your Creator before you return to the dust you came from. Remember him before your spirit goes back to God who gave it. (Ecclesiastes 12:1, 3-7 NIRV)

If we remember our creator, we know for sure that our life is not our own and we will humble ourselves before God and seek to know His ways. If we remember our creator, we will be aware that life and health come from God alone and we will come before Him daily to receive His blessing and provision. If we remember our creator, then no matter what circumstances we face we will know we are safe, and that God will get us to the other side. We will never get lost in pride when things are going well for us, and we won't live in despair or addiction when we face problems. We will remember that God is on our side, God is working out His plans for us, and nothing can stand in His way. If we remember our creator when we are faced with illness or death, we will have great peace knowing that the loving hands of God are holding us. When our days on earth are complete, God will welcome us into His eternal presence.

Prayer: Creator God, it's so easy to get lost in the details of my own plans and daily living. Help me to remember that it is from You I received the gift of life and to You I will return. Help me to live in honour of Your name so that the inheritance I have received from You is evident to all who know me. Amen

***Remember
your
Creator.
Remember
him while
you are still
young***

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2019

FACING FAILURE

There is a desire in each one of us to succeed, to win, to excel, yet often when we have been asked to do something, we allow thoughts of failure to overcome us before we even start. The fear of failure terrifies us and takes away our hope.

We risk failure when we set our goals too high. A sense of inadequacy follows, and we find ourselves filled with shame and embarrassment because we failed to accomplish the impossible goal we set. God created us and knows each of our limitations. His expectation is that we use the gifts we have been given and, with His help and guidance, do the best that we can in each circumstance we encounter. Trying to be what God never intended us to be is a sure recipe for failure.

This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every Morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:21-23 NIV)

***Trying to
be what
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Another kind of failure we face is the failure that comes from sin. We settle for less than we could be or have. We wallow in resentments. We hold grudges. We cling to unhealthy ways of living. We live according to our own human plans instead of God's good, pleasing and perfect plan. We often embrace violence instead of peace, self-centeredness instead of caring, hatred instead of love, despair instead of hope.

The power of the Holy Spirit has made me free from the power of sin and death. This power is mine because I belong to Christ Jesus. We thank God for the power Christ has given us. He leads us and makes us win in everything. (Romans 8:2,

2 Corinthians 2:14a NLV)

When we choose to live God's way rather than our own way, we will no longer set ourselves up for failure. We will have the satisfying experience of peace in our hearts. As we submit to God, He will direct us in the way we are to go, and we will accomplish those things He has planned in advance for us to do.

Prayer: Loving God, Forgive me for the times my sin has caused me to live in failure. Help me to live in Your plan for my life, doing just those things You have planned for me. Help me to commit myself to instruction and to listen carefully to Your words of knowledge. Help me to choose those things You have given me to do. Amen

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2019

ENTIRELY READY FOR DEFECTS TO BE REMOVED

Requesting that God remove all our defects of character is asking Him to rid us of everything within that hinders our ability to live life to the full. By reading God's Word we have come to know that God loves us and is committed to taking care of us. We are precious in God's sight. Focusing on this enduring relationship of unending love and care will enable us to obey His commands and walk in His ways.

The Lord is good and does what is right; he shows the proper path to those who go astray. He leads the humble in doing right, teaching them his way. The Lord leads with unending love and faithfulness all who keep his covenant and obey his demands. (Psalm 25:8-10 NLT)

To experience life to the full we must choose for God's way each time His direction conflicts with what we believe is a better way. Character defects are removed as we become willing to follow God's principles instead of our own way.

"Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10 NIV)

Any other conversation with God is our way of defending, rebelling, bargaining, or engaging in a useless exercise of trying to manipulate the God of heaven and earth to consent to what we want.

Becoming willing to have God remove all our defects of character is a bit like dealing with dirty clothes. We don't put clean clothes on top of dirty clothes. That would give the appearance of change while we are just covering up what is dirty and needs to be removed. When sinful habits and defects of character are revealed, we need to give God permission to remove these, cleanse us fully, and then put on our new self which has been renewed in the knowledge of God our creator.

Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me—now let me rejoice. (Psalm 51:7-8 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to be willing to have all my defects of character removed. Help me to live each day as a new creation, entirely surrendered to your will and your ways. Amen

Character defects are removed as we become willing to follow God's principles instead of our own way.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2019

SUPPORTIVE

When we are not feeling good about ourselves or our performance and someone takes the time to encourage us with kind words, we immediately start to feel better. Kind words are like scaffolding that helps support our confidence as we move forward. Early recovery is not easy and requires patience amid the chaos. If we have been in recovery for a time, we need to continue to be patient with ourselves and supportive of those who are just newbies on the path. "Rome was not built in a day" is a true saying.

Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones. (Proverbs 16:24 NKJV)

Attending recovery meetings is a way to be supported and give support to others. Being truthful about where we are at or what we have learned, may help another person. Honouring each person's role is important as well as following the principle of "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Doing our best to not provoke anger in another is another way to be supportive. We need to bless and pray for each other. God said people were to support and bless others with the following words:

May the Lord bless you and take good care of you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26 NIRV)

When we pray for discernment in how to bless a person, God will give us the appropriate words to say. If we follow this path of seeking God's input, all our words will be supportive and an encouragement to those who hear them.

Let us stop judging one another. Instead, decide not to put anything in the way of a brother or sister. Don't put anything in their way that would make them trip and fall. (Romans 14:13 NIRV)

Prayer: Loving God, Please keep me from causing a person to stumble by the words I speak. Set a watch over my mouth so that my words are always sweet to another's soul and health to their whole body. Help me to be like scaffolding, supportive in all my ways. Amen

Kind words are like scaffolding that helps support our confidence as we keep moving forward.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2019

WHY CAN'T GOD "GET WITH THE PROGRAM"

A deer longs for streams of water. God, I long for you in the same way. I am thirsty for God. I am thirsty for the living God. When can I go and meet with him? My tears have been my food day and night. All day long people say to me, "Where is your God?" When I remember what has happened, I tell God all my troubles. I remember how I used to walk to the house of God. The Mighty One guarded my steps. We shouted with joy and praised God as we went along with the joyful crowd. My spirit, why are you so sad? Why are you so upset deep down inside me? Put your hope in God. Once again I will have reason to praise him. He is my Savior and my God. (Psalm 42:1-5 NIRV)

The problems experienced by the writer of this Psalm are similar to the difficulties some of us are facing. We cry out to God night and day hoping he hears us and acts on our behalf. The people around the writer of the Psalm know he has put his hope in God but when they see no response, they ask him "Where is your God?" Has this ever happened to you? Does God seem deaf or asleep?

The Lord is far away from the wicked, but he always hears the prayers of those who do what is right. (Proverbs 15:29 ERV)

When we give our will and life over to the care of God, we become His precious children. He then begins to work all things together for our good. This includes our past as well as our future. Like any loving parent, God listens to our requests. Sometimes we want him to immediately remove all the consequences of our past wrongdoing. However, the answer to our prayer may be, "Yes," "No," or "Later." Like any good parent, God decides the answer to our prayer and the time to act for our good.

In the end, the writer of the Psalm tells himself to put his hope in God knowing that he will have reason again to praise Him. If we persevere through trying circumstances, the same will be true of us. We will praise our wise God for His understanding and wisdom in all our affairs.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, As Your child I never have to fear the future on my own. You know my past, present and future and will guide me in all the right ways. Thank You for caring for me. Amen

***Like any
good
parent
treats their
child, God
decides the
answer to
our prayer
and the
time to act.***

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2019

FLEXIBILITY

To be flexible means that we are adaptable and willing to yield when circumstances require short or long-term change. When we first come into a recovery program, people and our surroundings are often not what we are used to. In our addiction we usually did what we wanted, when we wanted. Now we are asked to follow a fixed schedule. People don't do things the way we would. If we really desire to turn our lives around, we will need to persevere and be flexible.

So prepare your minds for service. With complete self-control put all your hope in the grace that will be yours when Jesus Christ comes. In the past you did not have the understanding you have now, so you did the evil things you wanted to do. But now you are children of God, so you should obey him and not live the way you did before. (1 Peter 1:13-14 ERV)

***When
we are
flexible,
we can
learn
new
things.***

In sobriety our flawed opinions and views on life may be quite different than those held by the people around us. Being powerless over our dependency may not be something we are willing to admit. Accepting that there is a power greater than ourselves who can restore us to sanity may be something that we are not sure we agree with. We need to be flexible as we listen to those who have been in the program for a while. They were probably like us when they came in, but were willing to learn from their mentors, counsellors, peers, and others.

Show me your paths and teach me to follow; guide me by your truth and instruct me. (Psalm 25:4-5a CEV)

When we are flexible, we can learn new things. We do not reject what others are saying just because it is something we haven't heard before. We can test the truth of what we are hearing against God's word, recorded in the Bible. If we ask Him, God will bring clarity and understanding.

Jesus said: ***I will not judge those who hear me but don't obey me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it.*** (John 12:47 NLT)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Teach me to listen and be flexible so I can learn about Your ways and benefit from the wisdom of others around me. Amen

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2019

AM I LIVING WITH PEACE AND CONTENTMENT TODAY?

There are many items we can think about when we are compiling a daily inventory of how we are doing in life and recovery. One of them could well be, "Am I living with peace and contentment today or with fear, irritation, and worry?" Each day we pray to become more conscious of God's will and have the power to carry it out. It is God's will for us to be content no matter what our circumstances are. That's not easy but God will show us how to improve our perspective as we go forward with Him.

Having respect for the Lord leads to life. Then you will be content and free from trouble. (Proverbs 19:23 NIRV)

The foundation of contentment comes from knowing that God is the one who gives us life and the one who promises to meet our needs each day. A lovely picture from the Psalms is that of a baby lying quiet and contented safe in its mother's arms after being fully provided for. This is how we need to see ourselves when our lives are in God's care.

Lord, my heart isn't proud. My eyes aren't proud either. I don't concern myself with important matters. I don't concern myself with things that are too wonderful for me. I have made myself calm and content like a young child in its mother's arms. Deep down inside me, I am as content as a young child. (Psalm 131:1-2 NIRV)

To live contented is not to pretend that circumstances are perfect when they are not. Rather we find contentment in the knowledge that God loves and cares for us. Living contented doesn't mean that we have everything we want but rather that we are thankful for what we have and confident in God that all our needs will be met.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me to affirm with confidence, "I have learned the secret of being content no matter what happens. I am content whether I am well fed or hungry. I am content whether I have more than enough or not enough. I can do all this by the power of Christ. He gives me strength." (Philippians 4:12-13 NIRV) *Where these words may differ from my experience, help me to trust You and develop the character strength of contentment. Amen*

We find contentment in the knowledge that God loves and cares for us.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2019

HUMILITY

A humble life is grounded in a realistic view of ourselves. A humble person is not someone who feels inferior but someone who is overwhelmed by the undeserved goodness of God. We believe that God cares, therefore we no longer need to hide behind too much self-confidence or the burden of self-doubt. Our security is in the safety of God's acceptance and unfailing love for us.

Investigate my life, O God, find out everything about me; Cross-examine and test me, get a clear picture of what I'm about; See for yourself whether I've done anything wrong— then guide me on the road to eternal life. (Psalm 139:23-24 MSG)

Humility comes quietly to those who draw close to the Lord, trust in His goodness, and express that in their obedient behaviour.

An attitude of humility allows us to accept our dependence on God and follow His direction. With humility of heart, we listen to God's warning signals and turn away from any familiar path that is harmful. Humility permits us to follow an unfamiliar path with our hand in the hand of God. Humility allows us to lay down everything that hinders our way forward. We embrace God's principles because we believe that they will ultimately produce fullness of life.

My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body. Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. (Proverbs 4:20-23 NLT)

Humility comes quietly to those who draw close to the Lord, trust in His goodness, and express that in their obedient behaviour. The God of time and eternity who created us in love is always close to us and invites us to rest close to His heart. With confidence, we can say, "God, here I am, I humbly ask you to remove all my shortcomings so I can relax in your presence now and always." There, with Him, we can finally live as people of integrity and peace.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for being with me when I grieve over the occurrences in my past. I am thankful that I do not have to face this sorrow alone. Today, I humbly ask you to remove all my shortcomings. Please hold me close to Your heart. Amen

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2019

JUST FOR TODAY – LEARNING TO LET GO

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.

Holding on to anger and pain doesn't fix anything. Burying a grudge deep within and putting layers of blame on top of the hurt doesn't bring healing. Whether the irritation or the wound is recent or something we've held for a long time, perhaps today is the day to finally let go, so we can be joyful, optimistic and grateful.

For everything there is a season ... A time to search and a time to quit searching. A time to keep and a time to throw away. (Ecclesiastes 3:1a, 6 NLT)

Our own shame is often one of the greatest barriers to living joyfully today. God promises us forgiveness. Jesus paid with His life so we could have eternal life and freedom from sin today. The devil seeks to keep us hiding our pain in the darkness of unforgiveness so we will feel like damaged goods. It's time to let the past go into the cleansing river of God's unlimited forgiveness.

Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Proverbs 28:13 NIV)

Admittedly, life isn't perfect and we may face circumstances and challenges that seem bigger than we can handle. Thankfully we can let our feelings of worry and fear point us to our need for God's help, which will surely be available when we ask for it. As many others have done in the past, let's get rid of everything that slows us down and causes us to fall. Let's notice the gifts we have in this day and let the rest go.

We have all these great people around us as examples. Their lives tell us what faith means. So we, too, should run the race that is before us and never quit. We should remove from our lives anything that would slow us down and the sin that so often makes us fall. (Hebrews 12:1 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You know me and You know everything about my heart and my circumstances. I bring it all to You and choose to let it go into Your cleansing river of forgiveness so I can live in Your joy and peace today. Amen

It's time to let the past go into the cleansing river of God's unlimited forgiveness.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2019

WHAT DO I DO WITH THIS SADNESS?

When many of us waken up from the haze of our addiction and reflect on the harm we have caused in our relationships, or when we begin to make an inventory of our character defects, a well of deep sorrow may overwhelm us. The question to ask ourselves in this moment is, "Am I saddened enough by the painful mess I am in to be willing to come before God and admit that I am powerless over my self-willed ways?" God will forgive us and lead us forward to a new life with Him in recovery if we are willing to follow Him in all our ways.

Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. (Luke 6:21b, 2 Corinthians 7:9b-10 NIV)

Let's allow our sorrow to move us closer to God and, with His help, live a life of doing what is right and good.

God intended us to feel sorrow about what's gone wrong in our lives, but He wants us to use that sorrow as motivation to turn our hearts towards Him. Wrong is wrong. Harm is harm. We can't escape the reality of the harm we have caused but we can offer it, together with ourselves and our future, to the God who created us and who will bring new life out of the ashes of our past.

It's not enough to regret the past. Godly sorrow that the Bible speaks of is the kind that brings us to our knees in repentance before God. We own up to having lived a self-obsessed life with no consideration of the impact it had on others. Godly sorrow also realizes that Jesus came to earth to suffer and die so that we could be free from the penalty of our sins. It's the type of sorrow that fills our hearts with gratitude as we realize how much Jesus has done for us. Let's not wallow in regret and shame. Let's allow our sorrow to move us closer to God and, with His help, live a life of doing what is right and good.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for my attitude and actions that brought hurt into my life and into the lives of others who cared for me. Without You, I know I am powerless to live a satisfying life. Help me not to wallow in regret and despair over my past life but to live according to Your principles and share Your goodness with others going forward. Amen

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2019

DEALING WITH ANXIETY

Every one of us deals with anxiety at some point in our lives. Many circumstances can cause us to feel anxious such as: a deadline to find housing and nothing affordable is on the horizon; bills are overdue for payment and there is no money in the bank; being caught in a traffic jam and the time for an important appointment is creeping ever closer, etc. etc. When the mind and body come under stress, adrenaline is released into the bloodstream. We feel jumpy, our hearts beat faster, our breathing becomes irregular, we feel nervous. Often, our sleep is affected. While it's normal to feel some anxiety in certain situations, for some persons this becomes a condition they experience too often, or maybe even all the time.

The Bible tells us: ***Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*** (Philippians 4:6 NIV)

How can we hope to achieve such a condition where we are not anxious about anything? Isn't that an unrealistic expectation? Aren't we just setting ourselves up for failure? God says the way to deal with anxiety is to deal with its root cause. If it's anxiety over past mistakes, then God invites us to confess them and receive forgiveness. If we're worried about a current condition or circumstance and we don't know what to do about it, God's solution is to bring it before Him in prayer, obey whatever He tells us to do, and trust Him to work out the rest.

I confess my sins; they fill me with anxiety. I am filled with trouble and anxiety, but your commandments bring me joy. (Psalm 38:18, 119:143 GNT)

If we're anxious and nervous and not even sure why, we can ask God to help us sort out what's going on in our minds. He'll not only show us what's going on but will comfort us in the middle of our troubled thinking and calm our anxious thoughts.

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. Whenever I am anxious and worried, you comfort me and make me glad. (Psalm 139:23-24 NIV, 94:19 GNT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your desire is that I live in peace and feel secure in Your care. Help me to understand my heart and bring all my anxious thoughts to You for You are my refuge and my deliverer. You will guide me in the way I should go. Amen

***God says
the way
to deal
with
anxiety
is to deal
with its
root
cause.***

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2019

CITIZENS IN A NEW KINGDOM

Your kingdom will never end, and you will rule forever. The Lord can be trusted in all that he says. He is loyal in all that he does. The Lord lifts up people who have fallen. He helps those who are in trouble. All living things look to you for their food, and you give them their food at the right time. You open your hands and give every living thing all that it needs. Everything the Lord does is good. Everything he does shows how loyal he is. The Lord is near to everyone who sincerely calls to him for help. He listens to his followers and does what they want. He answers their prayers and saves them. (Psalm 145:13-19 ERV)

***The
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The kingdom of God is an everlasting kingdom in which we, who have given our will and lives over to the care of God, are citizens. Through Jesus we have been reconciled to God, our Heavenly Father. While on earth we are to live as representatives of Christ's heavenly kingdom. God wants to work in us and through us to help us become the persons He created us to be and to be a blessing to others. That means allowing the Holy Spirit to teach us and guide us in the ways of God. It also means getting rid of the self-centered desires of our earthly flesh.

The above Psalm lists human needs for things like food, shelter, comfort, and protection that we experience, and that God provides for at just the right time. He is a faithful loving God who is near to those who call on Him for help. Jesus, God's only begotten son, humbled Himself and came to earth in the likeness of a man. Jesus said that those who have seen Him have seen His Father.

In the Bible, when we read about the life of Jesus, we can only imagine what joy awaits us when we finally reach our heavenly home. The Bible tells us it has not even entered the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love Him. Do we have our passport from the Kingdom of Heaven? Are we experiencing the joy and satisfaction of serving the King of Kings in our life and recovery today?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for loving us enough to send Jesus into the world to restore our relationship with You. We are blessed to know that as Your beloved children we have the deposit of the Holy Spirit living in us, guaranteeing what is to come. Amen

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2019

STUBBORN PRIDE

Pride is a very destructive character defect. It is evident in our lives when we think negative, angry, or victimized thoughts. When we have been harmed or offended by someone, pride tells us that we know best how to deal with it. We decide to use our own ideas, which are actually fatally flawed, and the result is that instead of solving problems, we become slaves to destructive life practices that fill our lives with increased suffering.

Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice. A fool's mouth lashes out with pride, but the lips of the wise protect them. Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Pride brings a person low, but the lowly in spirit gain honor. (Proverbs 13:10; 14:3; 16:18; 29:23 NIV)

Pride is destructive because it removes God's presence and God's will from any thoughts about how to deal with a situation. Pride says "I will do it MY way" regardless of the consequences.

Though the Lord is great, he cares for the humble, but he keeps his distance from the proud. Though I am surrounded by troubles, you will protect me from the anger of my enemies. You reach out your hand, and the power of your right hand saves me. The Lord will work out his plans for my life—for your faithful love, O Lord, endures forever. (Psalm 138:6-8a NLT)

Humility, on the other hand, enables us to stand with God, face hurt and injustice, and invite Him to show us a secure way forward. God promises to work out His good plan for our lives in a way that demonstrates His faithful love for us.

If we truly want to build a secure life it is necessary to come to God with a humble heart and willingly follow the directions given in His Word.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I repent of the pride and arrogance that led me to act on faulty solutions. Forgive me for the times I have thought that Your principles for living in recovery were not working because I wanted healing in my own way. Help me to trust Your ways and lean not on my own prideful understanding. Amen

Pride is destructive because it removes God's presence and God's will from any thoughts about how to deal with a situation.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2019

GUILT – THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

The slogan "Guilt – the gift that keeps on giving" is often mentioned in recovery circles. Guilt reminds us of our wrongful actions and thoughts. The Bible teaches us how to recognize guilt in various forms and gives us God's instructions on how to deal properly with all guilt.

God made us with a conscience where guilt reveals to us our wrongdoing. The Bible records that the first humans knew they had done wrong when they disobeyed God's instructions. Because of their guilt, they hid from God and tried to cover themselves. We, at times, continue to act just like the first humans. Neither of them accepted the blame for what they had done but tried to shift the blame to someone else.

The Lord God called to the man and said, "Where are you?" The man said, "I heard you walking in the garden, and I was afraid. I was naked, so I hid." (Genesis 3:9-10 ERV)

God made us with a conscience where guilt reveals to us our wrongdoing.

Guilt can become a true gift to us when it reminds us to deal with our wrongdoing so that we can be at peace with God, ourselves, and others. If we do not deal with our wrongdoing, guilt will fester and turn to shame. It's this shame that causes us so many problems. Sometimes we try to overcome the shame we feel by justifying an offence, or by using our substance of choice to help us feel better. Neither of these options work. The truth is that when we confess to God what we have done, He will forgive us and we will be freed

from harmful shame. Then we will have the right heart to go to those we have harmed to seek reconciliation.

Our God, you bless everyone whose sins you forgive and wipe away. You bless them by saying, "You told me your sins, without trying to hide them, and now I forgive you." (Psalm 32:1-2 CEV)

Guilt is a blessing that keeps on giving when we allow it to become a reminder to us to seek forgiveness for any wrongs we have done and to ask God to remove all our shortcomings.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to quickly deal with guilt when I have done wrong. Also, help me to forgive others for their wrongful acts just like you have forgiven me. Amen

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2019

ACKNOWLEDGING BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

God's heart is for us to enjoy loving and caring relationships with others. We have much to learn in this area. For a long time we've blamed others for the way they treated us. However, we have not been mindful of how our behaviour harmed others. Transformation in our lives only comes when our words and actions conform to the principles contained in God's word.

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23-24 NIV)

It's challenging to write down the name of each person with whom we have had a painful relationship and seek to know and own our part in whatever happened. To become truly willing to make amends for any harm we've caused in the relationship, we must look for God in the middle of each circumstance or memory. We must intentionally connect with God who knows, who cares, who heals, and who can even make something good out of the hurtful events of our past. We must receive love and comfort and healing from God, or we'll never feel secure enough to forgive others or ourselves for failure to act in a loving way.

Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? (1 John 4:7-8, 20 NLT)

It's time to turn from the wounding and the blaming and look to God for His guidance in rebuilding healthy relationships.

Prayer: Loving God, I humbly acknowledge my inability to give and receive love. I believe you care for me and have pursued me with Your unfailing love. Show me the changes I need to make in order that I may become willing to make amends. As I go forward, help me to build my relationships on the firm foundation of love. Amen

We must receive love and comfort and healing from God, or we'll never feel secure enough to forgive others or ourselves for failure to act in a loving way.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2019

AMAZING HANDS

Recently on social media a text went around with a picture of two old and gnarled hands. In the text we read how a grandfather explained to his grandchild some of the many things those hands had done through the years. It was an explanation of the value of those hands even though they looked so old and frail.

All through the Bible we read of hands used in blessing, in work, in protection, in creating, in liberating, in feeding, in prayer and praise, and so many other functions. Hands are so important and so precious.

The hand of God is used to help us think about God's power and protection in our world and our lives. God created everything, including us, and to God we will return. In the years between our birth and our death, God is with us and wants to help us in whatever situations we find ourselves, even when the situation we find ourselves in is the result of our own mistakes.

The hand of God is used to help us think about God's power and protection in our world and our lives.

You made human beings rule over everything your hands created. You put everything under their control. Save us. Help us with your powerful right hand, so that those you love may be saved. Even if that person trips, he won't fall. The Lord's hand takes good care of him. Into your hands I commit my very life. Lord, set me free. You are my faithful God. (Psalm 8:6, 108:6, 37:24, 31:5 NIRV)

No hands are more beautiful, even though they are forever scarred, than the hands of Jesus who was nailed to the cross so we could be forgiven and brought to new life. When no one else cared about the mess we got ourselves into, God cared, and provided a way out for us. The depth of God's love for us is clearly seen in the hands of Jesus.

The Lord answers, "Can a mother forget the baby who is nursing at her breast? Can she stop having tender love for the child who was born to her? She might forget her child. But I will not forget you. I have written your name on the palms of my hands. (Isaiah 49:15-16a NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for all You have done for me which is represented in Your word as Your hands reaching out and holding up. I want to lift my hands in prayer and thanksgiving to You and then use them to serve others in the purpose You have for me. Amen

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2019

HUNGER AND THIRST

Those of us who are recovering from the mess of our lives know there is a hunger and thirst within us for something more than what life has offered us so far. We acknowledge that on our own we are powerless to change our situation and need to reach out to God for help to move forward in life and recovery.

You gave them bread from heaven when they were hungry and water from the rock when they were thirsty. You commanded them to go and take possession of the land you had sworn to give them. (Nehemiah 9:15 NLT)

We call out to God because we've been unable to find anything in this world that gives us lasting satisfaction. We tried alcohol, drugs, sex, pornography, even our best efforts to be good, but nothing gave us lasting contentment. There truly is only one thing that satisfies our souls and that is a relationship with the God who created us. Without God in our lives, our inner being will never be at peace.

Lord, I want you to save me. Your teachings make me happy. Let me live to praise you. Let me find the help I need in your laws. I have wandered away like a lost sheep. Come and find me. I am your servant, and I have not forgotten your commands. (Psalm 119:174-176 ERV)

Just as our bodies hunger and thirst after food and water, so our spirit hungers and thirsts to be filled with the living God. When our relationship with God is restored through belief in the finished work of Jesus on the cross, we begin to get to know God and His ways. The more time we spend with God, the more our hearts will be filled with His love, joy and peace. As we make a habit of obeying God's principles we experience contentment and satisfaction.

Seven times a day I praise You, Because of Your righteous judgments. Great peace have those who love Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble. (Psalm 119:164-165 NKJV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is for peace to reign in the deepest recesses of my soul. Give me a hunger and thirst for Your word. I know that if I obey Your laws, the longings of my soul will be satisfied. Please help me! Amen

Just as our bodies hunger and thirst after food and water, so our spirit hungers and thirsts to be filled with the living God.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2019

ESCAPING GREED'S TRAP

Greed is that intense need inside us that has us always "grasping for more." It is just one item on a long list of things that make us foolish before God and vulnerable to trouble in this life.

Adultery, greed, hate and cheating come from a person's heart too. So do desires that are not pure, and wanting what belongs to others. And so do telling lies about others and being proud and being foolish. (Mark 7:22 NIRV)

In some places in the Far East those who want to trap monkeys set a trap. They prepare a small box with a tasty nut inside it and carve an opening just large enough for the monkey to put its hand inside but too small for the monkey to get its hand out if it's clenched into a fist. The monkey won't let go of the nut in its clenched fist and so is easily captured. Too often we are greedy for something that is actually leading us to captivity and our unwillingness to let it go keeps us from being free.

God promises to provide all we need so we can live well and do wonderful things.

We are greedy when we want more than what we really need, whether it is power or money or toys or even everyday things like food. It's the character defect behind the feeling we give credibility to when we say, "It's never enough." We don't have to be trying to earn our second billion dollars to be greedy. Too often we are just living with a misplaced focus on how to live securely.

They have lost all feeling for what is right. So they have given themselves over to all kinds of evil pleasures. They take part in every kind of unclean act. And they are full of greed. This is what happens to those who are greedy. Whatever they get destroys them. Doing right sets honest people free, but people who can't be trusted are trapped by their greed. (Ephesians 4:19 NIRV, Proverbs 1:19, 11:6 ERV)

God promises to provide all we need so we can live well and do wonderful things.

Some people are greedy and never have enough. Good people are generous and have plenty. (Proverbs 21:26 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, forgive me for the times I so easily slip into greed. Help me to live life based on Your principles rather than on what I hear and see around me. You promise to supply all my needs and I place my trust in You to do that today, and every day. Amen

NOTES

NOTES

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.

SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

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

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

PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

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

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***