

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



NOVEMBER 2020



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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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 style="text-align: center;">SUBSTANCE ADDICTIONS:</p> <p>Alcohol Caffeine Injected or smoked substances such as: Crack, Crystal Meth, Heroin Marijuana Prescription Medications Sugar Tobacco</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">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 style="text-align: center;">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 style="text-align: center;">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.

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.

WHAT KIND OF GOD DO WE COME TO?

The writer of today' Psalm is putting his trust in a faithful and righteous God and asks Him to listen to his cry for help. He acknowledges that God is a moral judge and asks for mercy, declaring that no one is innocent of sin before Him. When we came to God for help, did we know that He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love? Many of us did not know these things about God but what we did know was that we were powerless over our dependency and our lives had become unmanageable. In our despair we called out to God and asked Him to help us.

Hear my prayer, O Lord; listen to my plea! Answer me because you are faithful and righteous. Don't put your servant on trial, for no one is innocent before you. My enemy has chased me. He has knocked me to the ground and forces me to live in darkness like those in the grave. I am losing all hope; I am paralyzed with fear. I remember the days of old. I ponder all your great works and think about what you have done. I lift my hands to you in prayer. I thirst for you as parched land thirsts for rain.
(Psalm 143:1-6 NLT)

Like the writer, we were also facing an enemy who had knocked us to the ground and forced us to live in the darkness of our chaotic life. Each day was the same as the one before and all our energy was consumed by meeting the demands of our dependency. We were paralyzed by fear and losing all hope of ever having a purposeful life.

I lift my hands to you in prayer. I thirst for you as parched land thirsts for rain.

Psalm 143:6 NLT

When we cried out to God, we were unsure if He heard us. However, God is faithful to His Word and is continually searching the earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are turned toward Him. God did answer our prayer, had mercy on us, and invited us to give our will and life over to His care. Now through prayer and meditation on the Scriptures, we are understanding more about this amazing God who knew us before we were even formed in our mother's womb.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I ponder Your great works and think about all that You have done and continue to do for me. I am thankful that You are a forgiving God who is slow to anger and rich in love for me and all who call on Your name. Amen

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2020

NOTES

DON'T GIVE UP – HARD WORK PAYS OFF IN THE END

Growing and being renewed day by day is part of our physical, emotional, and spiritual life. God has provided all sorts of help for us in the Bible, including principles we can learn that will strengthen us to move forward and not give up hope.

Do all you can to add to your life these things: to your faith add goodness; to your goodness add knowledge; to your knowledge add self-control; to your self-control add patience; to your patience add devotion to God; to your devotion add kindness toward your brothers and sisters in Christ, and to this kindness add love. (2 Peter 1:5-8 ERV)

***So let's not get
tired of doing
what is good.
At just the
right time we
will reap a
harvest of
blessing if we
don't give up***

Galatians 6:9 NLT

The old saying, "Rome wasn't built in a day" is a principle that correctly applies to us in our recovery. We are healed one wound at a time. We learn one lesson at a time and while we wish we could run miles ahead in a day we only achieve an inch at a time. When it comes to the above list of ways we are meant to grow, there is a lifetime of lessons to be learned. God encourages us to add to what we practiced yesterday and invites us to focus on the part of the journey we are learning about today. We should not give up if we haven't practiced everything we have learned, and we should not slow down and be lazy because we've already learnt some things.

It's encouraging that God tells us to, "***Do all you can...***" God knows us and knows what we are capable of doing in a day. His expectations are not unrealistic. We may feel stretched, but God will never expect more of us than what we can handle. God will always be near to us and will strengthen us as we grow in our love for Him and for others.

We must keep wanting what God wants even while we struggle to learn and grow in God's ways. God knows how to get us to the finish line.

God began a good work in you. And I am sure that he will carry it on until it is completed. That will be on the day Christ Jesus returns. (Philippians 1:6 NIRV)

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for being near to me and for guiding me on the path to new life. Amen

MOVING AWAY FROM BEING ALOOF AND ISOLATED

Addiction is a disease of isolation. That's not news to those of us who have spent time there. The challenge for us is to find what is necessary to become willing to come close to others and attach emotionally in the right way. We need to leave behind the false impressions we like to give when we are aloof and pretending to be fine. When someone says, "It's all good," it seldom is. When we hear ourselves saying it, it's time to look below the surface and sort out what's really going on.

We know that those of us who had care givers who were inconsistent or deficient in their care and support of us are usually fearful of any future pain or abandonment, and this keeps us from coming close to another person. Many of us suffer from various forms of "attachment disorder." How can we begin to approach others for who they are today rather than seeing them as people we related to with pain in our past?

So also we are many persons. But in Christ we are one body. And each part of the body belongs to all the other parts.

Romans 12:5 NIRV

But if we live in the light, as God does, we share in life with each other. And the blood of his Son Jesus washes all our sins away. (1 John 1:7 CEV)

God's word promises that as we walk in the Light with our will and our life surrendered to God and practice His principles in all our affairs, we will be strengthened to share our lives with others. We don't even have to do it perfectly. God knows we will make mistakes and promises to wash away our sins as we bring them to Him.

The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:12 NLT)

God's plan for us has always been to live in relationship with Him and with others, supporting and being supported, just as the various parts of our body support each other as they work together. We can ask God to help us be willing to give up our tendency to be aloof and isolated and move into His good plan for our lives.

So you are no longer outsiders and strangers. You are citizens together with God's people. You are also members of God's family. (Ephesians 2:19 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to move away from being aloof and isolated and learn how to live in loving relationship with You and with others. Amen

TAKING THE LID OFF THE PAST

Step-5 of the 12-Step program requires that we admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. We are asked to uncover those things we have done and those humiliating things done to us that we pushed down and behaved as if they had never happened. To bare our souls and admit what took place in our lives makes us feel extremely vulnerable.

You spread out our sins before you—our secret sins—and you see them all. (Psalm 90:8 NLT)

We may be able to hide our wrongs from others, but God sees everything. He even knows the thoughts that caused us to sin. The good news is, when we give our will and life over to God's care, He forgives our sins and gives us a new nature and a desire to do what is right.

Admitting our wrongs helps us deal with those things that caused harm. It gets them into the light of God's presence and gives us the opportunity to grieve both over the harm we caused, and the harm caused to us. Telling another person makes the events more real to us so that we can begin the healing process.

Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. (Psalm 103:2-4 NLT)

Exposure of sin means it has no more power over us. We are free to enjoy a new life of joy and peace. The favour of God is upon us and through prayer and meditation we can improve our conscious contact with God and pray for knowledge of His will for our lives and the power to carry it out.

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. (2 Peter 1:3 NIV)

Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for Jesus who gives me freedom from sin and heals my wounds. I claim that through Him I have been made whole in body, mind, and spirit. Amen

We may be able to hide our wrongs from others, but God sees everything.

DIFFICULTY FOLLOWING THROUGH

Many of us have never been disciplined in the art of following through on the commitments we make. We start something and then get tired when it takes more effort than we are willing to give. Committed relationships often suffer from this type of attitude. While a relationship is contributing to our needs, we are fine but when it starts requiring effort that we are unwilling to give, then we are ready to walk away rather than work on the challenges.

If God didn't hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and exposing himself to the worst by sending his own Son, is there anything else he wouldn't gladly and freely do for us?
(Romans 8:32 MSG)

Following through requires that we be like Jesus and do the will of God no matter the cost.

Because of our Heavenly Father's love for us, Jesus was willing to die in our place for the sins which separate us from our loving God. Through forgiveness of our sins, our broken relationship with God is restored and we have life with Him forever. Jesus endured the ridicule of people around Him and the agonizing pain of dying on the cross so that He could fulfill God's perfect plan of salvation.

We despised him and rejected him—a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief...He was despised, and we didn't care. Yet it was our grief he bore, our sorrows that weighed him down. (Isaiah 53:3-4a TLB)

What is required for us to follow through and be a doer of God's will? When we repent of our sins and turn our will and life over to the care of God, we receive everything we need to live the life God has planned for us. The Scriptures teach us the ways of God and we need to follow through on what they say, regardless of our feelings. Before Jesus went to the cross, He asked, *"My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me"* but in obedience to God's will finished with, *"Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."* (Matthew 26:39b NLT)

Following through requires that we be like Jesus and do the will of God no matter the cost.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am weak but You are strong. Please strengthen me to follow through and do the right thing in all my affairs. Amen

GOD REMEMBERS US AND WILL BLESS US

The Psalms that we read and think about each Sunday are the ancient songbook of the church. Today's Psalm was written so that the people would remember and give thanks for the way God brought them out of slavery and exile. For us, this Psalm has reminders that we can't take credit for our recovery – it is a gift from God who will restore us to sanity as we turn our will and our life over to His care.

You who have respect for the Lord, trust in him. He helps you like a shield that keeps you safe. The Lord remembers us and will bless us. He will bless Israel, his people. He will bless the priests of Aaron. The Lord will bless those who have respect for him. He will bless important and unimportant people alike. (Psalm 115:11, 13 NIRV)

Everyone has a part to sing in this song of praise to God. There are worship leaders who sing about how worthy God is of our trust and respect because He has rescued us and keeps us safe. People can then sing about how God remembered them when they fell into trouble because of their own stubborn disobedience. They remember God's unfailing love for them and the blessing given to them, not because they were rich or famous or got things right, but simply because He loved them.

We often feel isolated and abandoned. The reality is that even if others fail us, God's love is unfailing. He is always attentive to our voice when we call out to Him. Even when we are depressed or struggling, God will not forget us. As we turn our minds towards Him, His blessing is available to us. When we turn our will and our lives over to His care we are assured that God will meet all our needs.

The song of praise ends with the priest/pastor singing a blessing over the people as He reminds them that God is their creator and also the creator of the heavens and the earth, and has all power to bless and keep them in perfect peace. God, our creator, is the Higher Power who alone can restore us to the sanity of right living.

May the Lord bless you. He is the Maker of heaven and earth. The highest heavens belong to the Lord. But he has given the earth to human beings. (Psalm 115:15-16 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for calling me out of the darkness of my addiction and inviting me to new life in You. Continue to work in me so I live surrendered to Your will and Your ways in every circumstance I encounter. Amen

Lord, may glory be given to you, not to us. You are loving and faithful.

Psalm 115:1 NIRV

WISDOM FOR THE JOURNEY: STOP ARGUING

Why do people argue? Apparently for lots of reasons. Sometimes we argue because we want our own way; we want to hang on to things as we've known them; we want the sense of power that comes from winning; or maybe we are simply arguing because we are tired or don't understand what the other person is trying to say. Whatever the reasons, when we find ourselves arguing, it's best to take a step back and think about what's going on.

Again I say, don't get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. (2 Timothy 2:23-24 NLT)

“Arguments drag out because one is too stubborn to forgive and the other is too proud to apologize.”

Wayne Dyer

It's one thing to respectfully debate a particular issue in a genuine search for truth. We can question one another, go back and forth with thoughts and facts that speak to both points of view on the topic in question. However, when we move into that place where all we are doing is trying to look right, get our own way, or simply win the argument, then nothing very useful is going to come out of the discussion and we would do well to step away.

The start of an argument is like a small leak in a dam. Stop it before a big fight breaks out. A troublemaker loves to start arguments. Anyone who likes to brag is asking for trouble. (Proverbs 17:14, 19 ERV)

We often say things during the heat of an argument we wish we hadn't said. We need to offer the same grace and understanding to the other party in the conversation because the same is likely true of them. Motivation speaker Wayne Dyer says it well: *“Arguments drag out because one is too stubborn to forgive and the other is too proud to apologize.”*

Forgive someone, and you will strengthen your friendship. Keep reminding them, and you will destroy it. (Proverbs 17:9 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to be a seeker of truth and reconciliation rather than simply wanting to win an argument. Give me the strength and grace to respond with kindness and respect and to do what is right when a conversation gets divisive. Amen

WHAT IS MY HEART LONGING FOR?

In the recovery process, do we ever stop to consider what the deepest longing of our heart is? Is it for accumulated clean time, money, fame, good friends, a meaningful life, a good job, a home we can call our own? Jesus said the ungodly run after these things and then Jesus tells us to seek God's Kingdom first and we will have everything we need.

These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. (Matthew 6:32-33 NLT)

Most of us think that if the desire of our heart were met life would be perfect. When we longed to cover up our fears we sought a sedative that would make us feel better. For a time it did, but then the sedative became a dependency that took over our life. Some talented athletes long to reach the top in their sport but when they succeed they discover a feeling of being let down because they still feel empty inside. Longing for the things of this world will never bring contentment.

Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. (1 Timothy 6:6-7 NKJV)

At the beginning of His ministry Jesus fasted for forty days and was very hungry. The devil arrived on the scene and tried to get Jesus to do what he said in order that Jesus' hunger could be satisfied. But Jesus was not fooled by the devil's approach and answered him with a quote from the Scriptures. The devil will try to get us to meet our longings his way, but we need to know the Scriptures so that we can choose to do what God says.

The devil came to tempt him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these rocks to become bread.” Jesus answered him, “The Scriptures say, ‘It is not just bread that keeps people alive. Their lives depend on what God says.’” (Matthew 4:3-4 ERV)

Prayer: Loving God, Let my greatest longing be to know what You say in the Scriptures and practice Your principles in all my affairs. Amen

Jesus tells us to seek God's Kingdom first and we will have everything we need.

CONSEQUENCES

Many of us know from personal experience and what we have seen and heard from others that the consequences of a lifestyle of drug or alcohol misuse can be devastating. Across North America the death toll is sky high from opioid overdose. Long term health effects include liver disease, cancer, and heart disease. We also know that others are damaged through crime, violence, and stress. Many of us have a history with our family and loved ones that we are still trying to sort out.

You cannot fool God, so don't make a fool of yourself! You will harvest what you plant.

Galatians 6:7 CEV

But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes. (1 John 2:11 ESV)

One of the consequences of living a destructive lifestyle is simply the sense of lostness we experience. We don't know where we are or where we are going. It's like being blinded by darkness. Without the turning of our will and our lives over to the care of God, that darkness will end with us dying and going out to an eternity without God.

He will guard the feet of his faithful servants, but the wicked will be silenced in the place of darkness. It is not by strength that one prevails. (1 Samuel 2:9 NIV)

As clearly as there are horrific consequences to a life of sin and destruction, we can take heart that there are amazing outcomes that follow from making a choice to surrender our lives to God and live under His care.

It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore. 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. (Isaiah 59:2, 1 John 1:9 NLT)

God is ready and willing to work with us to sort out and deal with our past brokenness. He is ready to bless us with new life, with peace, with strength, with freedom, and with life forever with Him in heaven.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You know how I lived in the darkness. I ask for Your forgiveness and Your help to live in a new way. Give me the grace and strength I need to do what it takes to sort things out with those I have harmed. Amen

PUTTING GENEROSITY INTO ACTION

If someone were to choose 3 words to describe us, would generous be one of them? We are encouraged from God's word today to develop this character strength.

I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ. (Philemon 1:6 NLT)

Many of us think we are more generous than we actually are. We give when it is convenient. We give when we are hoping to get something in return. Sometimes, we give without considering the consequences and then struggle because we haven't used well what we've been entrusted with. It's quite a different story to be generous when it is inconvenient, when we don't particularly like the person in need, or when there is no possibility of any return benefit.

But generous people plan to do what is generous, and they stand firm in their generosity. (Isaiah 32:8 NLT)

We can pray for the wisdom to put generosity into action that is rooted in our thankfulness to God for all the good things we have received from Him. When we operate out of this motivation, we are more likely to make correct and generous choices. We need to make a plan to responsibly share what has been entrusted to us. We need to stick with the plan even if it might suddenly seem inconvenient. God wants us to pray about our giving so we will be wise as well as generous.

Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything. The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed. (Proverbs 11:24-25 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, help me to plan all of my actions, including my giving, with You. I want to be wise as well as generous in sharing what You have so generously given to me. Amen

If someone were to choose 3 words to describe us, would generous be one of them?

ATTRACTION RATHER THAN PROMOTION

Who would have thought that the way we are living in our relationships, taking responsibility for our actions, and doing the work that is required of us each day, would attract others to think about getting what we have? We lived for such a long time using bullying and manipulation and lies and pleas to get what we wanted. We hurt and disappointed so many people. No one wanted to come near us let alone learn from the way we were living. What a change God has brought about in us.

Our public relations policy is based upon attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.

AA 11th Tradition

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 NIV)

When we live by God’s principles, we are blessed and goodness just naturally flows into all our activities and relationships. We are living in a world that is filled with anger and fear. When people encounter someone who has true inner peace and a simple heart to do the next right thing, they long for the same. Too many people hear negative words, listen to their negative thoughts, and live with despair rather than hope. What a gift we bring when we come alongside them with kindness, compassion, and strength that comes directly from inside us.

Let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. (Matthew 5:16 NLT)

The answers people long for are not found with the “big-name million-dollar lifestyle” people. Simple people like us who have allowed God to work in our hearts and change them from the inside out are known only to a small circle of friends and loved ones but – we hold the message!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to live today in a way that pleases You and blesses others. I want to carry the message of how You have not only given me sobriety but a whole new life in Christ. Amen

WISDOM FOR THE JOURNEY: SHOW RESPECT FOR GOD

We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity and as we moved along in our life in recovery many of us came to that place where we made a decision to turn our will and our life over to the care of God. The benefits of doing that are too numerous to list and the wisdom of making that move is evident in the new life we are living.

Anyone who shows respect for the LORD has a strong tower. It will be a safe place for his children. Respect for the LORD is like a fountain that gives life. It turns you away from the jaws of death. (Proverbs 14:26-27 NIRV)

As much as we regret the negative impact on our loved ones while we were living a destructive lifestyle, we can take heart that as we give ourselves to the task of loving God and respecting His ways, we will now be a blessing to them. We will also be witness to them of the safety and stability a person finds as they live each day in the will of God.

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. Since God is on our side, who can be against us? (Psalm 46:1 NLT; Romans 8:31 NIRV)

Just as a fountain of clear spring water is refreshing and life-giving if we drink from it, so God keeps pouring out His Spirit upon us to give us the energy and grace and wisdom that we need. The question is, how deeply are we willing to drink of the fountain of life that God provides?

During unpredictable times like this season of the pandemic, it is a great comfort to know that what we need comes from God and not from our circumstances. What a privilege to turn our hearts towards our gracious God and know He is waiting, listening, and ready to act on our behalf.

Prayer: Loving God, I want to live today to honour You. Thank You for being a safe and life-giving place for me as well as a source of blessing. I am so glad You are on my side and that I can live in Your protection. Amen

Anyone who shows respect for the LORD has a strong tower.

Proverbs 14:26
NIRV

ACQUITTED OF ALL WRONGDOING

We know that God watches over all the earth and sees the wickedness that causes His anger to burn against those who inflict pain and injustice on others. God's eyes also see those who walk in His ways administering true justice, with mercy and compassion for others. To save mankind from God's fearful justice against evil, Jesus came to earth to die in the place of all those on earth. Those of us who believe in Jesus' death in our place are made right with God and praise Him for giving us a new nature filled with love for one another.

We have been acquitted of all wrongdoing and God will bring no further condemnation against us.

From heaven you sentenced your enemies; the earth trembled and stood silent before you. You stand up to judge those who do evil, O God, and to rescue the oppressed of the earth. Human defiance only enhances your glory, for you use it as a weapon. Make vows to the Lord your God, and keep them. Let everyone bring tribute to the Awesome One. For he breaks the pride of princes, and the kings of the earth fear him. (Psalm 76:8-12 NLT)

All of us who have given our will and life over to the care of God are welcomed into the family of God. We have been acquitted of all wrongdoing and God will bring no further condemnation against us. Each of us needs to confidently uphold this truth when the evil one seeks to accuse us, to fill our hearts with guilt and shame, and hinder our relationship with God.

We need to read the Scriptures daily and allow God's principles to define the way we live our lives. Those things that we have told God we will do – we need to do. We need to pray for knowledge of God's will for our lives and ask Him to strengthen us by the power of His Holy Spirit to carry it out. As we grow in the knowledge of God – who He is and what He does – we will be more confident to carry this message to others and to practice God's principles in all our affairs.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You that the truth of Your Word will set me free from the bondage to my past. Please strengthen me to obey Your principles in all my affairs and to share this message with others. Amen

KEEP ON ASKING

When Jesus was teaching His friends about prayer He said this: ***Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.*** (Matthew 7:7-8 NLT)

God wants us to bring our lives to Him to receive the healing and resources we need to live well today. Lots of people have taken the sentence above about prayer and asked for things they thought were right for them at that time. When what they hoped for didn't come, they began to question God about His power and His ability and willingness to help them.

Every day of our lives God wants to bless us. God wants to protect us. God is willing to lead us and guide us, so we make good choices and desire what is best for us and the plan He has for our lives. The truth is, we are learning more about God and are only beginning to understand His will for us. We need to humbly admit that we have lots more to learn.

"My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the Lord. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9 NLT)

When it seems like God isn't answering our prayers it's time to go a little deeper and ask God for understanding about what's going on. Maybe the timing is not right for God to give us what we think we need. Maybe God has a better plan than what we have figured out at this point in our journey. The foundation for all our prayers is the truth that God is good, that God is listening, and that God has and will give us what He knows we need today.

Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. Ask me and I will tell you remarkable secrets you do not know about things to come. (Matthew 6:33, Jeremiah 33:3 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to seek You and Your plan for my life. When I don't see the answer to my prayer, help me to trust You and keep bringing my needs before You because I know You love and care for me. Amen

Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for.

***Matthew 7:7
NLT***

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2020

FORGIVING THE HARM OTHERS HAVE DONE TO US

In Step 8 we make a list of all persons we have harmed and become willing to make amends to them. To make a list we need to look at our past behaviour and let the harm we did to the persons come to mind. Often we will find that meeting the demands of our dependency was the root cause of the harm we inflicted on others.

Don't run up debts, except for the huge debt of love you owe each other. When you love others, you complete what the law has been after all along. (Romans 13:8 MSG)

To make a list we need to look at our past behaviour and the harm we did to the persons who come to mind.

Family and close friends may quickly come to mind as we write our list. When personalities conflict we easily react in an unloving way. Sometimes harm is caused by deep-rooted prejudice against a person's ethnic or social background. In the following prayer Moses asked God to forgive the people whom God had rescued from slavery in Egypt because God was angry with them for their continual grumbling about their circumstances in freedom.

Please forgive the wrongdoing of this people out of the extravagance of your loyal love just as all along, from the time they left Egypt, you have been forgiving this people. (Numbers 14:19 MSG)

Whatever the cause of why we harmed others, we need to deal with our amends in a way that seeks to restore the relationship between those persons and ourselves. In Step 7, we humbly asked God to remove all our shortcomings and we should be mindful that others also have shortcomings. Forgiving any harm others have caused us is a basic step to becoming willing to make amends. God's unfailing love will strengthen and stabilize us as we seek to put things right between ourselves and another person.

I tell you, love your enemies. Help and give without expecting a return. You'll never—I promise—regret it. Live out this God-created identity the way our Father lives toward us, generously and graciously, even when we're at our worst. Our Father is kind; you be kind. (Luke 6:35-36 MSG)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, As I seek to make amends for the harm I have caused others, please help me to be like You – extravagant in my love. Amen

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2020

AVAILABLE FOR HEALING

Due to the oppression of our addictive lifestyle, many of us made a move towards recovery only to struggle and relapse. We now wonder if it is possible for us to be free from our dependency and live well. We wonder if there really is any hope for us to live a purposeful life over the long haul.

For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 1:9 NLT)

One woman who came to Jesus had been physically bent over in her body for 18 years. Even though her situation may have seemed hopeless to her, when she heard about Jesus and His power to heal, she allowed hope to grow in her. She left her everyday activities and went to a place where people gathered in the name of God and where Jesus was. This woman made herself available for Jesus to touch her and receive His power to do for her what she could not do for herself.

When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Dear woman, you are healed of your sickness!" Then he touched her, and instantly she could stand straight. How she praised God! (Luke 13:12-13 NLT)

When Jesus calls out to us, are we willing to come to Him and allow Him to straighten out the crooked things of our past or do we continue to hang on to the pain, the familiar resentments, and self-pity that keep us living a bent life?

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor. (James 4:10 NLT)

Only God's touch can help us stand straight with dignity and strength and purpose today. His touch is all we need. God tells us not to rely on our own understanding, which is flawed, but to come to Him and He will make our paths straight. If we are going to successfully live in recovery, we need to wholeheartedly surrender our will and our life over to the care of God and choose to follow His ways in all our affairs.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Please touch me. Straighten out anything that is bent within me so I can live my life with dignity and purpose. Amen

Only God's touch can help us stand straight with dignity and strength and purpose today.

REMOVING DEFECTS OF CHARACTER

When we come to Step-6 of the 12-Step program, we have admitted the exact nature of our wrongs to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, and are now entirely ready to have God remove our defects of character. If we have been honest in our inventory we will feel a sense of excitement as we let go of what we don't want in our lives and look forward to what God will bring about in our lives as we walk in His ways. In the Bible story of Jesus calling Lazarus from the dead, Lazarus came out of the tomb in grave clothes and Jesus told the people around Him to free Lazarus from these clothes and let Him go.

The dead man came out. His hands and feet were wrapped with strips of linen. A cloth was around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the clothes he was buried in and let him go." (John 11:44 NIRV)

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

Lazarus is a picture of where we are at in Step-6. Our defective nature deadened us to the ways of God but now we are entirely ready to have God remove what hinders our new life with Him in recovery. Jesus called Lazarus out of the grave the people around him needed to take off the grave clothes so he could move freely. Jesus, by His redeeming work on the cross made it possible for us to be "born again" to a new life. Those around us who have been walking the recovery road are the ones who will help us get rid of those things that cause us to stumble in our newly given life.

You were taught not to live the way you used to. You must get rid of your old way of life. That's because it has been made impure by the desire for things that lead you astray. You were taught to be made new in your thinking. You were taught to start living a new life. (Ephesians 4:22-24a NIRV)

In 12-Step meetings we encounter people who are willing to share their experience, strength, and hope with us. They will inspire us to get rid of our old ways and to put on the new nature that God has given us to enable us to live the life He has called us to.

Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to remove everything that would hinder me from running the race You have set before me. Amen

NEW RELATIONSHIPS

We all long for the joy and comfort of being in a loving relationship with a significant other. When we come into recovery it's important to remind ourselves that we haven't been practicing good principles in relating to others and if we want a healthy relationship going forward it's a good idea to take some time to figure out what a healthy relationship looks like. It will take trial and error on our part to put new principles into practice, so it's best to make our mistakes and learn some lessons by keeping some distance for a time from any new relationship. This will ensure any long-term relationship is built on respect rather than on hurts not yet healed in us.

Our relationship with God must be our number one priority because God is the only one whose love is unending. The best of humans are flawed and so our first lesson needs to come from our all-loving God who will show us what is right and wrong in a truthful and balanced way.

Let me hear of your unending love each morning, for I am trusting you. Show me where to walk, for I give myself to you. (Psalm 143:8 NLT)

It's important to pray and trust God to lead us to those people with whom we can have a solid and joyful future. Just because someone is attractive and seems to be a nice person doesn't mean that they are right for us. We often have inflated views of ourselves as well as unrealistic expectations of others that are linked to co-dependency. It takes time to bring our imperfect but precious selves to someone else who is also imperfect and precious and allow God to help us get to know the real person and what kind of relationship He has in mind for us with that person.

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, It's true that I need to learn from You how to be a loving person who can have a respectful relationship. Help me to learn and grow so I can experience the joy of having a loving relationship with You and with another person. Amen

Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures

1 Corinthians 13:7 NLT

DEFEATING OUR ENEMIES

When we were living a rebellious lifestyle we gave little thought to our spiritual enemies who were working to keep us from doing what is right and good. That is because our lives were being lived in the evil way they wanted. Now that we have given our will and life over to the care of God and moved into the Kingdom of Light, they are fighting hard to reclaim us. The following Psalm tells us that it is only through God's power and His name that we can tread down our enemies.

You are my King and my God. Decree victories for your people. For it is only by your power and through your name that we tread down our enemies; I do not trust my weapons. They could never save me. Only you can give us the victory over those who hate us. My constant boast is God. I can never thank you enough! (Psalm 44:4-8 TLB)

Like the writer of the Psalm we need to put our trust in the weapons that God has given us.

Jesus won the battle over sin and death and it is our constant boast that we have the victory over those who desire to cause us harm. How can we make this claim? The Word of God is a shield for those who take refuge in Him. We cannot depend on our own thoughts but need to bring every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ. We need to put our trust in the weapons that God has given us. They are the ones that will save us from the attacks of the enemy who wants to destroy us.

Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them.

You'll need them throughout your life. God's Word is an indispensable weapon. In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. (Ephesians 6:14-18a MSG)

Tempting us to do wrong and then causing us to feel guilt and shame when we do so is how the enemy wears us down. To defeat him we need to do a daily inventory and promptly admit any wrongs to God who can be depended on to forgive us and cleanse us from every wrong. As we seek the Holy Spirit's guidance in all our ways, we will have the power to overcome temptations that come from the lusts of our flesh.

Prayer: Gracious God, I can never thank You enough for the shield You are around me and for being the One who lifts me up each time I fall down. Amen

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 to honour the veterans of many wars. 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 symbols remind us that Jesus paid the price of sin for all who come to Him. The bread and wine in the celebration of Communion in churches all around the world are symbols that remind us of Jesus' broken body and His shed blood on our behalf.

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.

LIVING THE PROMISE

As we work our program we find that life changes. Nothing happens in an instant but when we reflect on a month, or 90 days, or a year or more and compare the person we once were with the person we are now, the transformation is striking. One area where we notice this change is given to us in the eleventh AA Promise when it says, *“We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.”*

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

We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.

AA Promise 11

This change comes about as we put our will and life into God’s care and receive His healing and guidance. As we do the work of coming to truth in Steps 4 and 5 and then let go of the resentments and defects of character that have plagued us for so long, we give God a chance to introduce us to the person He created us to be and to show us what His plan for us has been all along. Whenever we live in the truth of who we really are we experience freedom and that results in us intuitively knowing how to handle situations that used to baffle us.

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will. (Romans 12:2b NIV)

As we’ve heard the truth of God’s word and the witness of those who have shared their experience, strength, and hope, our own thinking and understanding of life has changed. Every time we give God an opportunity to heal an old wound we get stronger and our minds get clearer. We repeatedly hear good news. We have hope that this new way will work. We put the principles into practice and experience the joy of witnessing for ourselves how trustworthy God is. One situation after another that used to baffle us is now an opportunity to see how good and pleasing and perfectly things will work out when we live in God’s will.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to walk in the freedom of Your truth. Thank you for the opportunity to live one more day as the person You created me to be, to enjoy Your love, and fulfill the good plan You have prepared for me. Amen

GOLDEN WORDS OF WISDOM

Too often one of the faulty measures people use for determining the success of a person is how much money they have made. Many people who have stumbled into addiction know that lots of money can be made, but also quickly lost. Too often very wealthy people have lost everything as they fell into the black hole of chasing after their next high.

Wisdom is worth much more than gold. Understanding is worth much more than silver. (Proverbs 16:16 ERV)

We can take great comfort that as we face both our hurts and our hopes with God, the wisdom and understanding of His written Word shows us where true success in life can be found.

Pride is the first step toward destruction. Proud thoughts will lead you to defeat. It is better to be a humble person living among the poor than to share the wealth among the proud. (Proverbs 16:18-19 ERV)

When we think we’ve got it all together and we know all that we need to know without consulting God or others, we are well on our way to relapse. It all begins in our thinking and that’s why it’s important to share with a sponsor or mentor on a regular basis what’s going on between our ears. The wise person is the humble person who knows they still have a lot to learn and are willing to do something about that today.

Good people try to avoid evil. They watch what they do and protect themselves. Good things happen to those who learn from their experiences, and the Lord blesses those who trust him. (Proverbs 16:17, 20 ERV)

The joy of this journey with God is that we can actually learn from our own experience as well. If we will keep watch on what we are doing (by doing a Step 10 inventory at night), we will learn and experience good things from God and grow more in wisdom and understanding than we ever thought possible.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please work in my heart so my desire to live right rather than have what I decide is enough money. Please help me see my hurts and my hope with Your eyes and respond accordingly. Amen

As we face both our hurts and our hopes with God, the wisdom and understanding of His written Word is where true success in life is found.

FIRING THE COMMITTEE IN MY HEAD

We've all done things we are not proud of. Some of us feel like we've done more or done worse or done it for longer than others. Shame is an overwhelming emotion that the evil one encourages us to wallow in. The voices of shame are relentless in their accusation. The committee in our head starts up as soon as we wake up and doesn't shut up until we manage to get to sleep again. When we put God in charge, one of the first things He's happy to do, with our permission, is fire the committee in our head.

It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God

Ephesians 2:8 NIV

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. (Ephesians 2:4 -5 NIV)

God has given us a new start in life because He loves us. He's been waiting for us to turn away from our destructive habits and rotten attitude, and when we turn to Him for forgiveness and saving, He's eager to get on with the job. He knows we've been a wreck. As the verse says, we were "dead in our transgressions." But, God's grace is greater than our sin – by far!!

I have been crucified with Christ. I don't live any longer, but Christ lives in me. Now I live my life in my body by faith in the Son of God. He loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20 NIRV)

When God says we are saved, we are saved. When God forgives, we are forgiven. When God heals, we are made completely whole. It's not something we have to produce in ourselves, it is God's gift to us. The greater the wreck we are, the more brilliantly the goodness of God's love can shine on us and through us now that He's saved us.

So, the next time the committee in our head tries to speak, we get to hold our head high and turn off the noise by saying, "Because of God's great love for me, I've been made alive in Christ. I'm washed clean. I'm a brand new person. That old me is gone and this new me is the beloved son/daughter of God."

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I am so grateful to live in Your love today and to hold my head high with the dignity that You give me. My old life is gone. Help me to live my new life with joy today. Amen

IN AND OF MYSELF

Trying to be self-reliant and seeking to sort out life on our own took many of us into lifestyles of isolation, addiction, denial, and destructive behaviour. We are not meant to co-dependently rely on others to fix us but we need to humbly admit that without God in our lives we are powerless to do anything about our situation and our lives are unmanageable.

I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. (Romans 7:18 NLT)

We were created for life in relationship with God and He has given us His Holy Spirit to empower us to overcome the many temptations that come our way. When we choose to admit our inability to be self-sufficient, we can finally relax and allow God to care for us.

The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you. (Romans 8:11 NLT)

We acknowledge that it is only a power greater than ourselves who can restore us to sanity. We admit our character defects and become willing to have God remove them, but it is God, not us, who does the removing. We pray both to know God's will and to have the power to carry it out. All of these steps remind us that we need God and others if we are to go forward and get well. We are not self-sufficient.

You are tempted in the same way that everyone else is tempted. But God can be trusted not to let you be tempted too much, and he will show you how to escape from your temptations. (1 Corinthians 10:13 CEV)

God will help us find balance today as we put our trust in Him, seek the support of others in the journey, and do the work that is ours to do.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to fully turn my will and my life over to Your care. I want to be faithful to do the work that I need to do and at the same time trust You to do in me the things that only You can do. Amen

“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the Lord Almighty.

Zechariah 4:6 NIV

WISDOM FOR THE JOURNEY: TRY TO DO GOOD

One of the central pillars of the recovery world is the sharing of our experience, strength, and hope. We're not perfect people. We don't always get it right, but we are willing to learn. We hear the following encouraging words at every AA meeting when someone reads, "How It Works."

No one among us have been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides in progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection. (pg 60 The Big Book)

Whoever stops living right will be punished. Whoever hates to be corrected will be destroyed.

*Proverbs 15:10
ERV*

The Lord hates the way evil people live, but he loves those who try to do good. (Proverbs 15:9 ERV)

God hates the way evil people live because it harms both themselves and others. He loves those of us who try to do His will in all our affairs, not because we are perfect, but because we seek to do what is right by getting rid of all our character defects, making amends in our relationship with God and others, and giving our best effort in what we do today. What are our desires for this day? We may make mistakes in what we do but are we truly hoping for our new way of life with God in recovery to succeed? Are we willing to stand up again after a fall, or do we just give up?

Some of the most encouraging people to listen to are those who have relapsed many times but who never gave up and now have strung together a significant number of days, weeks, or even years of sobriety.

The lips of the wise give good advice; the heart of a fool has none to give. (Proverbs 15:7 NLT)

God loves to increase our understanding of how life works. We affirm that in both Step 2 when we talk about God restoring us to sanity and in Step 11 when we pray for knowledge of God's will and the power to carry it out. Let's do our best today to learn from God, from others, and from our own experience.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I ask today for the desire to get to know You and Your will for my life and to be faithful to practice Your principles in all my affairs. Amen

OVERCOMING HATRED AND INJURY

Most people love the prayer of St. Francis. It's been put to music, made into wall hangings, and often prayed where people gather to seek God.

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love,
Where there is injury, pardon
Where there is doubt, faith,
Where there is despair, hope,
Where there is darkness, light,
Where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, Grant that I may not so much
Seek to be consoled as to console,
Not so much to be understood as to understand,
Not so much to be loved, as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
It is in dying that we awake to eternal life.*

**Love
your
enemies.
Pray for
those
who
hurt
you.**

*Matthew
5:44 NIRV*

The problem is that these nice words are immensely difficult to put into practice. If we are honest, how do we normally respond when we are shown hatred, are injured by someone else's choices, or hemmed in by someone living in despair and sadness? When things are not going well with another person, do we want to console that person more than we want to be consoled, to understand more than to be understood? The truth is, we may want to escape or retaliate more than anything else.

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 4:20 NLT)

We are called to love others but fortunately God doesn't leave us to do that on our own. If we are going to overcome hatred for another person we can only do so as we live in God's love. We receive love. We pray for our enemies and, in the amazing power of God's love, speak and act in loving ways no matter what.

We love each other because he loved us first. (1 John 4:19 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, as I pray the prayer of St. Francis from my heart, I ask that You help me put the words into practice in my thoughts, words, and deeds. Amen

CONFIDENTLY DECISIVE

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

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

Being confidently decisive comes from knowing what God's principles are and practicing them in all our affairs.

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

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

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

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

Prayer: Loving God, I want to be decisive in all my ways according to Your Word. Please strengthen my faith in the truth of Your Word so I can consistently be an overcomer. Amen

CONFIDENT IN GOD'S DEFENCE

How many of us have taken time through prayer and meditation on God's Word to learn about God, about His ways, and about His promises to those of us who have given our will and life into His care. The writer of the following Psalm is confident that God will defend him in all circumstances because his heart and life are true and right before God.

God is my shield; he will defend me. He saves those whose hearts and lives are true and right. God is a judge who is perfectly fair, and he is angry with the wicked every day. Unless they repent, he will sharpen his sword and slay them. He has bent and strung his bow and fitted it with deadly arrows made from shafts of fire. The wicked man conceives an evil plot, labors with its dark details, and brings to birth his treachery and lies; let him fall into his own trap. May the violence he plans for others boomerang upon himself; let him die. Oh, how grateful and thankful I am to the Lord because he is so good. I will sing praise to the name of the Lord who is above all lords. (Psalm 7:10-17 TLB)

God is not willing that any should perish but that all would repent and turn away from sin. Many of us want to linger on the fringes of our sinful ways and reserve the right to call on God when we need Him. God is a perfectly fair judge and He will warn us of the danger to ourselves when we set our minds against obeying His ways. God is patient with us and when we repent of any wrongdoing, He is faithful to forgive us. However, we cannot carry on disobeying His principles and expect the blessing of God in our lives.

Jesus willingly suffered the punishment for all the evil done in this world so that we could be made right with God. Our Heavenly Father received Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf. We can be confident that when we are walking in God's ways, but stumble into sin, if we repent and confess our sin, God is faithful and will forgive our sin and make us right with Him again. When we have the choice of making peace with God this way, why would we ever want to go back to our sinful life and fall from our secure position?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am thankful for all that Jesus has done for me. Please strengthen me to keep doing what is right in Your eyes. Amen

God will defend him in all circumstances because his heart and life are true and right before God.

HANGING ON TO HOPE

God longs for us to experience love and blessing in relationship with others. Sometimes, for various reasons, there are complications in our relationships and we are unsure how to sort things out. God wants to help us know how to live well, how to interact with one another, and when to let go and let God.

It's hard to watch a loved one suffer. It's a challenge to stick with a relationship when someone is suffering and acting out of their pain in a way that impacts us. We find it difficult to know how to handle things on a good day let alone deal with these frustrations on a bad day. Hope dwindles. We get discouraged and tempted to give up. As God never gave up on us when we were wandering around trying to find our way, so God encourages us to not give up on others.

Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. (1 Corinthians 13:7 NLT)

Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful.

1 Corinthians 13:7a NLT

We need to pray for wisdom and establish healthy boundaries in all our relationships. Setting boundaries can be a part of walking in love with a person who is struggling. We need to pray for this person trusting that as we pray, God will work on their hearts. We need to keep praying for understanding and healing for ourselves because, when those we have a relationship with struggle, we may easily get hurt.

Stay with God! Take heart. Don't quit. I'll say it again: Stay with God. There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears. (Psalm 27:14; Philippians 1:6 MSG)

God is good. God is with us. Our hope is in God alone. God is making a way where there seems to be no way. Our part is to hang on to hope.

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13 NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to look to You for guidance in all my relationships and have the wisdom to turn over to You those things that are beyond my capability to sort out. Thank You that in all things You work together for the good of those who love You. Amen

THE COST OF REMOVING MY SHORTCOMINGS

In Step-7 we humbly come before God and ask Him to remove all our shortcomings. We can do this because we have given our will and life over to the care of God. We have admitted to God, ourselves, and another human being the exact nature of the wrongs we have done. So, when we ask, we can expect God to be faithful to remove them.

How? you ask. In Christ. God put the wrong on him who never did anything wrong, so we could be put right with God. (2 Corinthians 5:21 MSG)

Why would God do that? We were the ones who messed up our lives so why would God choose not to punish us for what we have done? Those who fail to receive the gift of God through Jesus will bear the punishment for their own sin while we who come to Him with a repentant heart and ask for forgiveness will not. In God's great love for us He knew that we could not live the life He had prepared for us, so He sent Jesus into the world to live the life we could not live – a life free from sin. Jesus never did anything wrong, therefore, His sacrifice of Himself was sufficient to wipe out the sins of the whole world.

This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again. (John 3:16-17 MSG)

Jesus came so we could have meaning and purpose in our lives. When we humbly come before God and ask Him to remove our shortcomings, we can also ask Him to give us the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out. Through prayer and meditation on the Scriptures we can get to know Jesus and gain knowledge on how to live a perfect life in the Power that is greater than ourselves.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am thankful that Jesus came into the world to pay the price for my sins. Through prayer and meditation, help me to know more about Jesus and Your love for me that brought Him into the world. Amen

We were the ones who messed up our lives so why would God choose not to punish us for what we have done?