

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



NOVEMBER 2023



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***

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.

SUBSTANCE ADDICTIONS:	BEHAVIOUR ADDICTIONS:
Alcohol Caffeine Injected or smoked substances such as: Crack, Crystal Meth, Heroin Marijuana Prescription Medications Sugar Tobacco	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)
SOFT ADDICTIONS:	RELATIONSHIP ADDICTIONS:
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	Abusive Relationships: Includes: Intimidation, Isolation, Domination, Blaming, Humiliation, Withholding, Forcing acts against one's will Approval dependency Attention Seeking Codependence/Rescuing Power/Control

PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

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



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How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery

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

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

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

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

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

GROWING WISE

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

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

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

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

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

Wise people who have walked with God in recovery for a time are valuable sources of wisdom and good advice. We would do well to ask for and put into practice the guidance we receive. This will prove to be wise when some of what we are hearing doesn't seem to make much sense. Sanity will always appear insane to those who are living in insanity.

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

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

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

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

NOVEMBER 2, 2023

CONFESSING THE ERROR OF OUR WAYS

It's time to confess the error of our ways when we choose to deal with life situations in the isolation of our own minds and hearts. Telling ourselves the truth about our need for relationship with God and with others brings us out of isolation and into the life of freedom and hope we desire.

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

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

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

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

Coming out of isolation and learning how to live well with other imperfect people will take flexibility and great patience on our part. Many of the problems we encounter with those around us are an expression of our own character defects rather than their attitude. We can grow in our understanding of others by putting into practice the second half of the Serenity Prayer which says, "taking this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it, trusting that

You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will."

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

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit that living in isolation while trying to find solutions to my pain and shame has made my life miserable and my problems worse. Teach me to live in peace with You and with others. Please restore me to the life You have promised. Amen

NOTES

THE GOD OF ANOTHER CHANCE

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to acknowledge my sin before You so I can be forgiven. Thank you for Jesus who went to the cross and paid the price for all sin so that I might be free from all condemnation and live my life to the full. Amen

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 guidance for us in the Bible, including principles we can learn that will strengthen our desire 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)

The old saying, "Rome wasn't built in a day" is a principle that 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. There is a lifetime of lessons to be learned. God encourages us to add new practices and invites us to focus on the next part of the journey we are learning about today. We should not give up if we haven't put into practice everything we have learned, and we should not slow down and be lazy because we have already put into practice some things we have learned.

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 and will strengthen us as we grow in our love for Him and for those around us.

We must keep wanting what God requires even while we struggle to learn and grow in His 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 Your continual guidance on my path to new life. Amen

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

WHAT IS MY HEART LONGING FOR?

As we recover, 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 He tells us that if we seek God's Kingdom first, 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)

Some of us think that if the desires of our own heart were met life would be perfect. When we longed to cover up our fear, 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 of 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.

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

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 satisfy our longings in his way but we need to know the Scriptures so that we can choose to meet our desires according to the way God has directed.

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 to practice Your principles in all my affairs. 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 wisdom to put generosity into action. This should be 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 decide 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?

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.

It is true that we, who had care givers who were inconsistent or deficient in their care and support of us, may be 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 being like those who caused us 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 repent and come to Him for cleansing.

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 and work together for our good. We can ask God to help us be willing to give up our tendency to be aloof and isolated and move into His perfect 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

TIME

At 2 a.m today in North America we changed from daylight saving time back to standard time. Most people have numerous clocks that will need adjustment. Digital clocks on stoves and microwave ovens as well as clocks in our cars etc. will need to be adjusted. Some clocks need to be manually adjusted. For those of us with smart phones it is usually an automatic change and takes care of itself.

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

Following are some encouraging reminders about the time that God gives us: -

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

Each time we are in trouble help is available. We don't need to face our problems alone. ***The righteous person faces many troubles, but the Lord comes to the rescue each time.*** (Psalm 34:19 NLT)

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

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

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

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

NOVEMBER 6, 2023

CONSEQUENCES

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

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)

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

Galatians 6:7 CEV

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 also amazing outcomes when individuals make the choice to surrender their 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 as we 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 alone know how I lived in the darkness. I now ask for Your forgiveness and Your help to live my life according to Your principles. Please give me the wisdom and strength that I need to make amends and sort things out with those I have harmed. Amen

NOVEMBER 27, 2023

DEVELOPING PATIENCE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to patiently deal with myself, others, and situations that threaten me. Come and fill me to overflowing with Your Holy Spirit and produce in me the good fruit I need to be self-controlled in all my ways. Amen

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

WEATHERING CHANGES IN THE WEATHER

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

The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.

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

Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. (Lamentations 3:22-23, James 1:17 NLT)

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

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

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

our trust in God's promises.

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

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

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 also wonder if there really is any hope that we can 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 to Jesus to receive His touch and power to do for her what she could never 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 Jesus' touch can help us stand straight with dignity and strength and purpose. 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 live successfully 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, I ask You to 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.

JUST DO THE NEXT RIGHT THING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In a moment of panic or temptation we don’t have to figure out what is really going on. We can simply tell ourselves to “do the next right thing”. God is with us to help and, as we remind ourselves of this truth, everything will get sorted.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for keeping things simple for me. Help me to stay focused on taking positive steps, one step at a time. No matter what is going on in me or around me, help me to “just do the next right thing”. Amen

GOLDEN WORDS OF WISDOM

One of the faulty measures people often 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 hopes with God, the wisdom and understanding of His written Word will show us the way to where true success in life is 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 have got it all together and 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 on a regular basis with a sponsor or mentor 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 learn from our own experience as well. If we keep watch over our daily activities by doing a Step 10 inventory each night, we will learn and experience good things from God and grow more in wisdom and understanding of His principles than we ever thought possible.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I ask You to work in my heart, so my desire is not for wealth but to live by Your principles. Please strengthen the longing within me to be guided in all my actions by Your Word and help me to live accordingly. Amen

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

TEMPTATION TO SELF-WILL

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prayer: Dear God, Help me to be aware of the promptings of your Holy Spirit as He helps me sort truth from error. Give me the strength to surrender my will and my life to Your loving care and acknowledge that You alone are God and You know what is best for me. Amen

TIMES OF TROUBLE

No one likes trouble. We all want trouble to go away as quickly as possible. Sometimes people feel they should not have trouble when they are following Jesus. They assume that God will not allow any adversity to touch their lives. The truth is, sometimes God uses trouble and hardship to accomplish His purposes in our life.

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

We may see our difficulties as setbacks to our recovery, but God may be using them to help us mature and move forward. Jesus said we will experience trouble and problems in this world. We need to know and rely on the fact that God says He will never leave us or forsake us. When we turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, we are assured that God will be our refuge and strength in times of trouble.

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

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

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

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

We are promised victory as we face trouble together with God and with people we trust to give us good advice.

A GOOD COUNSELOR – A WISE SPONSOR

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

A good sponsor listens attentively to the person they are mentoring. They provide an objective point of view on troubling issues that arise and prayerful understanding about how healing can be attained and how life works.

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

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

In early recovery a sponsor is often the first person we seek help from when we need encouragement to take new steps that are unfamiliar to us. We have feelings we don't always understand and are hearing about new ways of doing things that really don't make sense to us. A sponsor sticks with us, encouraging us as we make good decisions and challenging us when we appear to be setting ourselves up for relapse.

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

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

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

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I need wise counsel as I sort out my issues and rebuild my life. Thank You for living in me and teaching me Your ways. Help me to find and pay attention to the wisdom of a new sponsor or mentor. Help me to listen attentively and obey Your promptings in my spirit as I move forward in my life with You in recovery. Amen

NEW RELATIONSHIPS

We all long for the joy and comfort of being in a loving intimate relationship with another. 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 is best to make our mistakes and learn some lessons while keeping some time and distance from any new intimate relationship. This will ensure any long-term relationship is built on respect rather than on comfort for our wounds.

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

Let me hear of your unfailing 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 that person with whom we can have a solid 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 back to our co-dependent ways. It takes time to grow together in a healthy relationship as we offer our precious but imperfect selves to someone else who is precious, but also imperfect, and allow God to determine the relationship He has planned for us.

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 through every circumstance.
1 Corinthians 13:7 NLT

FIRING THE COMMITTEE IN MY HEAD

We have all done things we are not proud of. Some of us think we've done more harm than others, done worse things than them, or continued for longer than they did. 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 will do, with our permission, is to fire the committee in our head.

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)

***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

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 attitudes. When we turn to Him for forgiveness and saving, He will do as He has promised. He knows we have made a wreck of our lives. As the verse says, we were "dead in our transgressions" but....God's grace is greater than all our sin!

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 have been, the more brilliantly the goodness of God's love can shine through us who have been saved.

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 in the truth that "there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus". 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 many young people gather to honour the veterans of past 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 with others with whom we share the recovery 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 we share in the celebration of Communion in Christian congregations 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).

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

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 opportunities we share as we live life to the fullest 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 to remember the cost of my freedom, my time in recovery, and my new life with You through Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour. Amen

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 the awareness of 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. God will also make known to us His plan for our life. 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 have heard the truth of God's word and the witness of others who have shared their experience, strength, and hope with us, our own thinking and understanding of life has changed. Every time we give God the opportunity to heal an old wound, we get stronger and our minds get clearer. We have hope that this new way of life will work. We put God's principles into practice and experience the joy of witnessing 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 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 and to enjoy being cherished by You as I fulfill the good plan You have for my life. Amen

TEMPTATION AND DECEPTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HOW MANY LIES MAKES A LIAR?

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

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

***When I
speak,
can
others
trust that
I am
telling
the truth?***

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

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

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

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

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

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 were never meant to co-dependently rely on others to fix us, but 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 only a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. We admit our character defects and become willing to have God remove them. It is God, not us, who does the removing. We pray to know God's will and to have the power to carry it out. All these steps remind us that we need God and others if we are to go forward and be made whole. We consciously choose not to be self-reliant.

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 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 You alone can do. Amen

***"Not by
might nor
by power,
but by my
Spirit,"
says the
Lord
Almighty.***

***Zechariah 4:6
NIV***

ADDED VALUE FROM GOD

God's artistic skill in our lives did not end the day we were born. In the same way a weaver takes many threads and weaves them into intricate patterns for a wall hanging or a rug, so God continues to work all things together for our good in the details of each day of our lives.

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

In the same way a weaver takes many threads and weaves them into intricate patterns for a wall hanging or a rug, so God continues to work all things together for our good in the details of each day of our lives.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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)

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 them 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 our character defects and making amends in our relationship with Him and with others. God wants us to give our best effort in all that we choose to do. We may make mistakes here and there but God's desire is that we be truly grounded in our hope to succeed in our life with Him in recovery.

Some of the most encouraging people to listen to are those who have relapsed many times but who never gave up and have now strung together a significant number of days, weeks, or even years of sobriety. Are we willing to stand up after a fall, or do we just give up?

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, My desire is to know You and Your will for my life and to be faithful to practice Your principles in all my affairs. Please help me achieve this! Amen

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

Proverbs 15:10 ERV

NOVEMBER 18, 2023

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 be in contact with God by reading the Bible daily. 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 principles are the way to a purposeful life. We have found that being decisive about what we will do when temptation comes is vital to maintaining our sobriety. We are certain that temptation will come, and we 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 strengthened by our faith in God and His actions on our behalf is a way to prove His favour and presence ever with us. This means that God accompanies us through every life situation we encounter and will strengthen us to choose to do the next right thing. It does not mean we will never have problems. However, 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, In all my ways I want to be confidently decisive according to Your Word. Please strengthen my faith in the truth of Your Word so I can consistently be an overcomer. Amen

NOVEMBER 15, 2023

ONGOING PERSONAL INVENTORY

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

Oh, that we might know the Lord! Let us press on to know Him. He will respond to us as surely as the arrival of dawn or the coming of rains in early spring. (Hosea 6:3 NLT)

What are we doing from day to day to train ourselves to hear and respond to the voice of God? Are we challenging ourselves to pray and read and reflect on God's Word? As we choose to follow this discipline, we will discover that life as God describes it is different from what we have practiced, or what we experience in some of the actions of those around us. Comparing God's ways with our known ways forms the foundation of our ongoing daily inventory. It helps us identify how we are growing in obeying God's Word and putting into practice His principles in all our affairs.

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

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

Prayer: Loving God, I am thankful that You enrich me with Your goodness and love through each step of my journey. As my thoughts and actions are transformed by following Your principles, I am assured that I will experience more contentment and satisfaction in my daily life. I am grateful that I can trust You to help me turn from my old ways and live my life in the light of Your truth. Amen

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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 well 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 on our own, so God encourages us to not give up on others.

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**1 Corinthians
13:7a NLT**

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

RANDOM ACTS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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