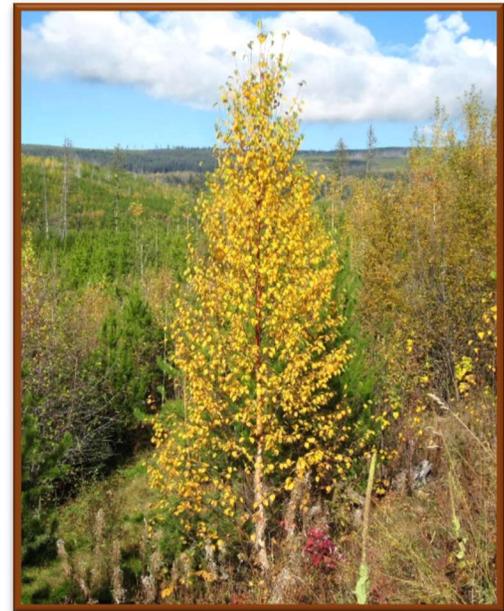


**LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY**

# **Daily Meditations**



**October 2017**

These meditations are available online  
for computer, tablets, and smart phones  
at:

[www.pihtoday.blogspot.com](http://www.pihtoday.blogspot.com)



*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.*

*Come and learn and grow with us:*

***Christian 12-Step Recovery Meeting***  
***Wednesdays, 7:00 pm***  
*325 6<sup>th</sup> Street*  
*New Westminster, BC*

***Christian 12-Step Recovery Meeting***  
***Thursdays, 7:30 pm***  
*543 Powell Street*  
*Vancouver, BC*

**We want to hear from you.**

Visit us at [www.partnersinhope.ca](http://www.partnersinhope.ca) or write to us at:

Partners in Hope Recovery Society  
1906 – 615 Belmont Street, New Westminster, BC V3M 6A1

Email: [pihrecovery@gmail.com](mailto:pihrecovery@gmail.com)  
Phone: 604-215-0335

*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



# 2017

## January

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## LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY Daily Meditations

OCTOBER 2017

### CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Evelyn Leeburn, Elsie Quick

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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VOLUME 02, NUMBER 10

## ***How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery***

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

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

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

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

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

# NOTES

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2017

## SUNDAY PSALM – DELIBERATE SINS

***How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults. Keep your servant from deliberate sins! Don't let them control me. Then I will be free of guilt and innocent of great sin. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.***  
(Psalm 19:12-14 NLT)

Sometimes we have a blind spot to our wrong doing. We have lived and relied on our own understanding for years and now it has become a way of life that we find no fault with. Our lifestyle may even be acceptable to society in general. However, when our behaviour goes against the teaching of the Bible, we need to become willing to change our ways.

We may make all kinds of excuses to continue our behaviour but the Holy Spirit will consistently make us conscious that our way is not God's way. Then we have a choice to make. If we continue in deliberate sin we will not prosper and we will forfeit our claim to the blessing of God. If we choose to surrender to God's way, His Holy Spirit will work in us to keep us from doing wrong. Because Jesus' sacrifice on the cross has paid the price for all sin, even deliberate ones, we are promised complete forgiveness when we repent.

***Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Brothers and sisters, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case.*** (Matthew 5:8; Galatians 3:15 NIV)

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***If we choose to surrender to God's way, His Holy Spirit will work in us to keep us from doing wrong. Because Jesus' sacrifice on the cross has paid the price for all sin, even deliberate ones, we are promised complete forgiveness when we repent.***

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As we turn from our stubborn ways and follow God's ways as recorded in the Bible, we start to receive the blessings God has promised.

***Dear friends.....Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.*** (Philippians 2:12-13 NLT)

***Prayer: Loving God, Keep me from deliberate sins. Give me the desire and power to honour You in all I do and say. Amen***

MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2017

## TWELVE STEPS of A.A. – STEP ONE – I CAN'T DO IT ALONE (1)

**Step One: We admitted that we were powerless over our dependencies, that our life had become unmanageable.**

Step One is an admission of our powerlessness over addictive substances, people around us, and those things we've become dependent on to sustain life as we know it. We have acknowledged that where we find ourselves today is not life giving. We can no longer cope with life as it is right now. We admit defeat and turn to God for mercy and grace. God assures us that if we get to know and trust Him, He will rescue us and help us do what we cannot do for ourselves.

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***We are suffering because we did not believe our need to have an ongoing relationship with the God who created us.***

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Jesus said: ***For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.*** (Luke 19:10; Matthew 9:13 NLT)

We are not suffering solely because we've misused chemicals or developed destructive habits and co-dependent relationships. We are not suffering because we were created as second-class human beings or because we grew up in a less than perfect environment. We are suffering because we believed the lie that we could meet our own needs and solve our own problems with a substance, a habit, or a relationship. We are suffering because we did not believe our need to have an ongoing relationship with the God who created us.

***Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*** (2 Corinthians 1:21-22 NIV)

God offers us a new way of life that begins by admitting we can't do life on our own.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit defeat. I am powerless to live life on my own. Without you, my life is truly unmanageable. I give up trying to meet my own needs. I give up covering pain and confusion with substances, destructive habits, and relationships. Heavenly Father, I turn to You. Help me find peace in my heart. Amen***

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2017

## TWELVE STEPS OF AA – STEP FIVE – COMING CLEAN ABOUT IT ALL (2)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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***It's time to admit that we cannot do life on our own and seek God's help to change our ways.***

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MONDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2017

## TWELVE STEPS OF AA – STEP FIVE – COMING CLEAN ABOUT IT ALL (I)

**Step Five: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**

All of us wrestle with our conscience in situations where we struggle. We may lie to ourselves and pretend that what we have done is not as bad as what others have done. Sometimes to offset our wrongs, we work hard to appear to be good. To be at peace with ourselves, we must stop rationalizing our past behaviour, acknowledge the hurt we have caused, and turn away from our destructive way of life.

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***To be at peace with ourselves, we must stop rationalizing our past behaviour, acknowledge the error of our ways and the hurt we have caused, and turn away from our destructive way of life.***

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

In the past, we were captive to others who treated us badly, frightened, and wounded by their wrong doing. Instead of turning to God for help, we tried to fix the problem ourselves and ended up in a worse condition than before. In certain situations, we sought to protect ourselves from further harm by using anger to establish a safe distance from others. All this produced was the loneliness that results from not having an authentic and intimate sharing relationship with anyone. Failure to reach out to God for guidance and help is the root of every other relationship problem.

***For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—That You may be found***

***just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.*** (Psalm 51:3-4 NKJV)

Sometimes, when it's time to admit these things to God, we are afraid He will condemn us for what we are telling Him. Fortunately, God already knows everything about us and the good news for us is that when we bring our problems to Him, He hears our cry for help and rescues us from all our troubles.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to see and admit my wrong doing to You. You are a God of wisdom and understanding. You know what is best for me. I choose to trust Your plan for my life because it gives me hope and a future. Amen*

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2017

## TWELVE STEPS of A.A. – STEP ONE – I CAN'T DO IT ALONE (2)

God knows we can't find our way on our own and that it's impossible for us to consistently choose to behave in healthy ways no matter how much we think we want to. In His love, God calls us to come close to Him so He can gently teach us what works and give us the strength to live in a new way.

***Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.*** (Matthew 11:28-30 NLT)

We wonder how God could value us as a person and be willing to give us another chance at life. In our addiction, we never asked for or even desired His guidance. We did not want to consider life on His terms or to learn from Him. Over and over again, we chose our own way. In spite of our persistent arrogance and disdain for God, He continues to love and care about each one of us. Jesus came to earth to redeem us, heal us, and set us free.

Jesus said, ***“The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the LORD's favor has come.”*** (Luke 4:18-19 NLT)

God calls us now to let go of all that is unmanageable in our lives and to turn to Him. When we do, God will work everything together for our ultimate good, including those things in our past that are harsh and cruel.

***And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*** (Romans 8:28 NIV)

*Prayer: Dear God, My life is unmanageable. I accept Your word as the truth which I will build my life upon. I receive hope to fill my despair. I receive truth to sort out my confusion. Amen*

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***God knows that no matter how much we think we want to we can't find our way on our own and that it's impossible for us to consistently choose to behave in healthy ways.***

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2017

## SPEAKING WITH HONOUR -- NO MORE SWEARING

What does speaking honourably have to do with recovery? So what if I swear? So what if I tell off-colour jokes? To live in recovery is to live as respectful people, honouring God and those God loves. How does my speech reflect this?

***You must not misuse the name of the Lord your God. The Lord will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name. Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored.*** (Deuteronomy 5:11, Matthew 6:9 NLT)

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***To live in recovery is to live as respectful people, honouring God and those God loves. How does my speech reflect this?***

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God's name upholds His reputation and demonstrates His character in all that He says and does. Each time we pray the Lord's Prayer we are committing ourselves to upholding God's name with reverence and using it with respect. In the same way that we would not appreciate people saying and doing things in our name, especially things we do not approve of, we should not invoke God's name in things He would not approve of. So often we hear the words, "Oh for God's sake" or "Jesus Christ" when we simply don't like what is happening around us. There really isn't anything connected to a desire for God's will when we call His name in that context, it is an unqualified misuse of His name.

***I bow before your holy Temple as I worship. I praise your name for your unfailing love and faithfulness; for your promises are backed by all the honor of your***

***name.*** (Psalm 138:2 NLT)

Many of us would rather not swear but we get careless and swear words are out of our mouth before we even think about what we are saying. It's time to think before we speak. It's also time to both think and speak with honour about the God who has rescued us in love, cared for us when we didn't even care for ourselves, and is committed to offer us salvation and eternal life in heaven.

***Prayer: Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored on our lips today and everyday. Help us to cease from careless words in all our affairs. Amen***

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2017

## SUNDAY PSALM – GOD DOES WHAT HE PROMISES

***You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book. My enemies will retreat when I call to you for help. This I know: God is on my side! I praise God for what he has promised; yes, I praise the Lord for what he has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me? I will fulfill my vows to you, O God, and will offer a sacrifice of thanks for your help. For you have rescued me from death; you have kept my feet from slipping. So now I can walk in your presence, O God, in your life-giving light.*** (Psalm 56:8-13 NLT)

When we have had a spiritual awakening while completing the 12-Step program we can look back and give thanks to God for all He has done for us. When our sorrows were overwhelming, we shed many tears. Some of us feel God would need tanks rather than bottles to contain them. We called on the Lord for help numerous times each day and the enemy of our soul had to retreat because God was on our side and gave us the victory over temptation.

At the beginning of our recovery we were unsure that God would do what He said but God has proven Himself faithful to do all that He has promised. We can now praise Him and give thanks that God is not someone who lies to us. He rescued us from the slimy pit of addiction and continues to keep our feet from slipping. What an awesome God He is!

***God is not a man, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through?*** (Numbers 23:10 NLT)

We can give thanks for ongoing spiritual revelations as we continue to walk in God's presence, in His life-giving light.

***Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You that You are faithful to perform what You have promised. Amen***

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***When we have had a spiritual awakening while completing the 12-Step program we can look back and give thanks to God for all He has done for us.***

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2017

## SERENITY SATURDAY - A REALISTIC EXPECTATION

God is aware that we cannot fix ourselves. Life is a gift. Healing is a gift. Recovery is something we can't take credit for but certainly is something that we can receive and continue to pursue together with God. Do I dare to hope that I can live the life I was created to experience and enjoy?

**God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. 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 2:8-10 NLT)

**Is it realistic to believe there is a good life for us in recovery? Jesus said if we walk with Him, His plan is for us to enjoy life to the full.**

Addiction was a time of chaos, desperation, and often hopelessness. Early days in recovery hold both the promise of change and a challenge to patience because the road ahead looks long and our strength seems limited. Is it realistic to believe there is a good life for us in recovery? Jesus said if we walk with Him, His plan is for us to enjoy life to the full.

Jesus said: **My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.** (John 10:10 NLT)

It is in God's desire and plan to rescue us from the disaster and chaos of a rebellious life. Jesus, who knew no sin, became sin for us so that we might become right with God. As a loving Father leads His children, God will lead and guide us in the way we are to go. He will also provide for all our needs. These are truly reliable and realistic expectations we can hold on to each day of our lives.

God says: **I will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.** (2 Corinthians 9:8 NLT)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Jesus and the life I have through Him. Help me to trust you for all I need so I can have plenty left to share with others. Amen*

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2017

## SPEAKING WITH HONOUR - WHAT DOES COARSE JOKES AND DIRTY LANGUAGE HAVE TO DO WITH MY RECOVERY?

Today we hear so much profanity in music, in movies, on the street, and in print that it almost seems it's the normal way to talk. A great deal of swearing includes references to bodily functions or ugly labels of body parts. These are used as a slur and are intended to hurl filth and negativity on a person. Movie producers have often rationalized the presence of profanity in movies as being a more realistic expression of what people say or do in the scenes they are portraying. Their observation of human interaction may be accurate but God's commandment is that we abstain from such talk.

**Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God.** (Ephesians 5:4 NLT)

We need to ask ourselves if we honour God with the content of our speech. Stories and jokes may celebrate and honour a person or, they may degrade a person's race or their ethnic culture. Traditional roles such as that of a mother-in-law have been the focus of many jokes which demean a beautiful family relationship. Many stories in the comedy routine of a stand-up comic have sexual undertones and are demeaning to both males and females. They may draw lots of laughter from the audience but the Bible encourages us to have no part in this kind of talk.

**But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language.** (Colossians 3:8 NLT)

Moments of anger, disappointment, and frustration are filled with the temptation to speak dishonourably. It is so easy to shame and curse a person in reaction to what they have said or done. This is not God's way of dealing with problems. God wants us to reason together, to forgive and to bless. When we speak, God wants us to encourage and uplift others. Perhaps it is time to be mindful of words that easily flow from our mouths.

**And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right!** (James 3:10 NLT)

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, Set a guard over my lips and help me be mindful of the words that come from my mouth. Amen*

**It is time to be mindful of words that easily flow from our mouths.**

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2017

## SPEAKING WITH HONOUR - NO MORE TRASH TALK

One of the best ways we can get out of the habit of voluntary or involuntary swearing and filthy talk is to keep ourselves away from situations where cursing and swearing are normal speech. While we may have to tolerate swearing in work environments, there are many other situations where we can make decisions about what we input into our brains. There's music with off-colour language that we can remove from our phone or alternative music player. TV shows, DVD's, and movies have warnings about coarse language which can help

us decide about viewing or not viewing them. There are friends and associates whom we can ask not to swear around us or we can limit the time we spend in their company.

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***God takes swearing and filthy talk seriously. Do we? What are we willing to do to help tame our tongue and help us speak with purity and respect?***

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God takes swearing and filthy talk seriously. Do we? What are we willing to do to help tame our tongue and help us speak with purity and respect?

***Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*** (Ephesians 4:29 NLT)

With our mouths, we testify that we are Christians. God's word challenges us to think about all the words that pass the door of our lips. We need to walk the walk and talk the talk so that the way we live and speak matches who we say we are.

***Those who claim they belong to the Lord must turn away from all wickedness.*** (2 Timothy 2:19 NLT)

Several scriptures in the Bible encourage us to pause and consider who we belong to when we choose to open our minds and allow our thoughts to be filled with cursing and obscene talk. We are not being "prudes" when we do this. We are acting as people of God. Are we out of step with our culture? Absolutely! As believers in Jesus we are called to challenge ourselves to a higher standard by the way we live. Do we care enough about our influence on others to do that?

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, May the words of my mouth rise before You like incense which causes blessings to flow like rain on the people in the community where I live. Amen*

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2017

## UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS LEAD TO DISAPPOINTMENT

Unrealistic expectations lead to disappointment and if we aren't careful, may also lead to relapse. Recovery is a journey not an event. It takes time to sort out the difficulties that led to our addiction and the problems we subsequently caused. We need to work hard but realize that problem areas will still be visible while we are in the process of change.

***I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.***  
(Philippians 1:6 NLT)

One unrealistic expectation we may have to deal with is the speed we want our loved ones to build their level of trust in us again. We let numerous people down many times in our addiction. We know the changes we are making but our loved ones need time to observe how we handle the challenges we face and see us remain strong. They need time to learn how to safely journey with us again. As we trust God to work in us, we can also bless our loved ones and trust that God will work in them too.

***For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.***  
(Isaiah 43:19 NLT)

It's unrealistic to think we won't feel vulnerable as we seek to maintain our sobriety and repair our relationships. God is aware of all we face. He wants to care for us and give us peace. As we bring our worries and anxiety to God in prayer we will settle down and begin to trust Him as we see Him do what He says He will.

***Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.*** (Philippians 4:6-7 NLT)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for my sobriety and the rebuilding that is taking place in many areas of my life. Help me to be patient as You continue Your work to perfect that which concerns me. Amen*

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***It's unrealistic to think we won't feel vulnerable as we seek to maintain our sobriety and repair our relationships.***

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2017

## UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS - RESPONSIBILITY

People who walk with God in recovery are meant to look to God for wisdom, direction and hope. We learn from the mistakes we make and are encouraged at meetings we attend by those who share their experience, strength, and hope with us.

***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. Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.***

(Romans 8:28, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NLT)

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***People who walk with God in recovery are meant to look to God for wisdom, direction and hope.***

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Sometimes we live with the unrealistic expectation that it's our responsibility to fix everything that has gone wrong in us or around us. Perhaps we think we need to fix the hurt we've caused in the past. Maybe we have a desire to care for and fix others who struggle and whose lives impact us. We mistakenly think we must sort out all kinds of tangled problems in order to have a secure and successful future. Too often we beat up on ourselves with thoughts that we haven't done enough.

God knows each one of us intimately and is involved in every circumstance of our lives. God is with us as we work hard, do what is appropriate, and leave the rest with Him. When we are doing the best that we can God will fill in the gaps and weave all things together for our good.

***For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent." 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.*** (Jeremiah 29:11, John 6:29, Ephesians 2:10 NLT)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, life has many complications and I often feel limited in my ability to sort them out. Help me to bring all my problems to you, do what I can, and leave the rest with you. Amen***

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2017

## SPEAKING WITH HONOUR - KEEPING MY WORD

When making promises or fulfilling commitments, Jesus spoke of the integrity of speaking simple, clear, and responsible words. However, He observed some people would supplement their promise or commitment by swearing by this or that to further the belief of others that their intention was to follow through with what they had just said. This practice of not being people of their word offended Jesus' sense of justice, particularly when people were using the name of God or the temple or some other religious item as the object of their sworn statement. Are we people of our word or do we need a court order to force us to do what we have committed to do?

***Just say a simple, 'Yes, I will,' or 'No, I won't.' Your word is enough. To strengthen your promise with a vow shows that something is wrong.*** (Matthew 5:37 NLT)

Jesus also challenged people about their dishonouring of God's name in thoughtless singing, and prayer. Do we worship God by singing praises to Him for His grace and goodness to us or, do we sing songs just because we like the tune or the beat? Are we really confessing our sins when we pray a prayer of confession in church? When we pray, "In Jesus name" are we asking for things we know Jesus would ask for? When we pray, do we mean what we say and say what we mean?

***When you pray, don't babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered only by repeating their words again and again.*** (Matthew 6:7 NLT)

Are we honouring God with our use of His name in our words and in our lives? Are we honouring one another in our conversations, our commitments, and even in our disappointments?

***Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.*** (1 Timothy 4:12 NLT)

***Prayer: Loving God, Help me to think about what I am saying and doing in all my activities. I want to be a person who acts with integrity in all my affairs. I want to worship You in spirit and in truth for that is what You desire. Amen***

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***Are we people of our word or do we need a court order to force us to do what we have promised or committed to do?***

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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2017

## SUNDAY PSALM – MAKING AMENDS

*O God, have mercy on me, for people are hounding me. My foes attack me all day long. I am constantly hounded by those who slander me, and many are boldly attacking me. But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you. I praise God for what he has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me?* (Psalm 56:1-4 NLT)

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***When we put our hand into the hand of God, He will support us with His strength as we become willing to make amends to those we have harmed.***

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The writer of the above Psalm is seeking mercy from God because he is aware that humans do not have the same love and compassion towards him that God has.

In addiction, it is likely that we offended many people - family, friends, and even strangers. We lived to meet the needs of our addiction and were concerned only with ourselves. We neglected others' needs, lied, cheated, and even stole from those around us. We made enemies by our actions and avoided people because of our behaviour.

In Step 8, when we make a list of all persons we have harmed, we may be fearful of making amends to certain individuals because of the impact our addictive behaviour has had on them. We're afraid those we've harmed are not as willing as God to forgive us for what we have done. In these challenging moments, like the writer of the Psalm, when we are afraid we can trust in God: ***"I praise God for what He has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do***

***to me?"***

When we put our hand into the hand of God, He will support us with His strength as we become willing to make amends to those we have harmed. God is always with us, we need never face our problems alone.

***See, God has come to save me. I will trust in him and not be afraid. The Lord God is my strength and my song; he has given me victory.*** (Isaiah 12:2 NLT)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your mercy and unfailing love for me. When I am afraid to complete my assigned tasks, I will trust in You to help me. Amen*

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2017

## UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS – PERSONAL FAILURE

There is a strong desire in us to succeed! To win! To excel! To be successful! Yet often we feel like a failure. Feelings of failure can terrify us and take our hope away. How do I actually fail God, myself, and others? How can I face failure in a healthy way?

***This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.*** (Lamentations 3:21-23 ESV)

There are two kinds of failure we walk with each day. The first is the failure that comes from human limitation. We set our goals too high. We compete. We compare ourselves with others. When we can't measure up to our own expectations or the expectations of others, we often end up feeling inadequate and disappointed in ourselves. It's painful and embarrassing.

It's also unrealistic to think we can sort everything out on our own and make our own way in the world. No matter how hard we may try we will fail because God created us to rely on His wisdom and power and learn how to cooperate and work together with Him and with others.

God knows our abilities and our limits. God invites us to live as the person He created us to be. His expectation of us is that we will use what we have been given and do our very best. When we try to be someone else or live according to someone else's standards we are not following God's plan for our life.

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***God invites us to live as the person He created us to be. His expectation of us is that we will use what we have been given and do our very best.***

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***There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.***

(1 Corinthians 12:4-7 NLT)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to live and thrive in the areas of ability that you've given me and accept my limitations. Strengthen me to do only those things You have prepared in advance for me to do. Amen*

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2017

## TWELVE STEPS OF AA – STEP 4: SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY (2)

The basic questions to ask when making a searching and fearless moral inventory are, "God what does my life look like to you? How have I strayed from Your directives? What needs to go? What needs to be sought after with everything I have in me so I can really live?"

***In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.*** (2 Peter 1:5-7 NLT)

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***The basic question to ask when making a searching and fearless moral inventory is, "God what does my life look like to you?"***

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Our addictive behaviour is almost certainly rooted in the problems we experienced with relationships in the past. Someone deeply wounded us and we became broken in body and spirit. Wrong beliefs and actions flowed from the pain and brokenness we experienced. When doing a Step Four inventory that is searching, fearless, and moral, we must go back to our way of thinking and ask ourselves – "What actually happened to cause me to think and behave the way I do?" The truthful answer to this question is the foundation of a searching, fearless, and moral inventory. We must look not only at what we did, but why we did it.

***No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.*** (Philippians 3:13-14 NLT)

Like a skillful surgeon God will help us identify and then remove those things that have hindered us from living a good and pleasing life. We will come to know what a purposeful life looks like when we inventory our past and current behaviour in light of God's word.

***Prayer: Loving God, The act of uncovering what I have tried to cover up and run from in the past is extremely challenging. However, in the safety of Your love and care, I am determined to make a searching, fearless, and moral inventory of myself. Amen***

MONDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2017

## THANKSGIVING DAY

Being grateful for the people around us and the things we have is of great value in leading a contented life in recovery. Acknowledging small blessings reduces stress and increases joy. No one has a perfect life with everything they want, but all of us have much to be grateful for. Thanksgiving is a great time to step back and notice the things that are truly important in life.

***Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.*** (1 Thessalonians 5:18 NLT)

This Thanksgiving holiday celebration may be stressful for some of us because our relationship with family and loved ones remains challenging. However, we can still give thanks for our family of companions on the recovery road and hold onto the hope that things will get better. We can look forward to all that we can do with God's help, to restore our family relationships. Maybe there is someone in our family we could contact and let know that we are thankful for their patience with us when we've struggled to do life.

***May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*** (Romans 15:13 NIV)

As we turn our will and our life over to His care, God is with us offering us unfailing love, forgiveness, and strength for the journey. The road of recovery is the experience of coming to accept this great love of God for us and being thankful that He reached out to us and lifted us out of the pit of sin and darkness. We will set ourselves up for confusion, darkness, and subsequent relapse if we abandon the practice of thanking God for all He has done for us.

***Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused.*** (1 Chronicles 16:34, NIV, Romans 1:21 NLT)

***Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for my life today, for hope, for family and friends, and for the opportunities that lie ahead as I daily surrender my will and life to You. Amen***

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***Being grateful for the people around us and the things we have is of great value in leading a contented life in recovery.***

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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2017

## TWELVE STEPS of A.A. - STEP TWO – POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES (I)

**Step Two: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**

Step Two is often referred to as “The Hope Step”. In Step Two, what has been impossible for us to do on our own becomes possible when we place ourselves in the presence of someone or something that surpasses our individual human ability to understand. We reach out for help to a power greater than ourselves.

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***It is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.***  
(Hebrews 11:6)

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***And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.*** (Hebrews 11:6 NLT)

The Bible tells us that the key to life is in the “higher power” we look to. The God of the Bible is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-loving. He’s the one who created the world. He’s the God who planned for each of us to have a loving and caring relationship with Him, and with others. He’s the one who planned to redeem the sins of human beings before they even committed them. Step Two invites us to get to know this powerful God who is rich in love and mercy towards us.

We will be more eager to come to God if we see Him as the one who proclaims, “**he rewards those who sincerely seek him**”. Our faith may not have matured to this point, but we can start by asking

God to help us have more faith. Belief in the God of the Bible will result in forgiveness for our sins, acceptance of who we are, and unconditional love to help us be the person He created us to be.

***“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”*** (Hebrews 11:1 NLT)

*Prayer: Dear God, I am not sure about who You are right now but I am coming to believe that there is a power greater than myself. I believe You have brought me to this point in my life. I believe that You will restore me to sanity as I trust You and follow You in all my ways. Amen*

MONDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2017

## TWELVE STEPS OF AA – STEP 4: SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY (I)

What is the challenge for us as we reflect on making a searching, fearless, and moral inventory based on God’s way of living as revealed in the Bible?

***Let’s take a good look at the way we’re living and reorder our lives under God. If we claim that we’re free of sin, we’re only fooling ourselves. A claim like that is errant nonsense. On the other hand, if we admit our sins—make a clean breast of them—he won’t let us down; he’ll be true to himself. He’ll forgive our sins and purge us of all wrongdoing.*** (Lamentations 3:40; 1 John 1:8-9 MSG)

Our life in addiction was controlled by an attachment to a destructive substance, a habit, a person, or a combination of these. At some point in our lives we began to use whatever or whoever would give us pleasure and keep our pain at a distance. We became focused on ourselves and our needs to the exclusion of every other relationship. We did not know how to love others in a healthy way and we believed, because of our feelings of self-rejection, that we were unlovable.

***‘...no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I’m bankrupt without love. Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn’t want what it doesn’t have. Love doesn’t strut, doesn’t have a swelled head, doesn’t force itself on others, isn’t always “me first,” doesn’t fly off the handle, doesn’t keep score of the sins of others, doesn’t revel when others grovel, takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, puts up with anything, trusts God always, always looks for the best, never looks back, but keeps going to the end.*** (1 Corinthians 13:4-5 MSG)

Taking inventory is an opportunity to look at our relationships from God’s perspective and make a list of the ways we’ve strayed from God’s tried and trusted principles.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit that I don’t know how to live well in relationship, either with You or with others. I want to learn to be a person who receives love and gives love. I invite you to teach me to be the person you created me to be. Amen*

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***Taking inventory is an opportunity to look at our relationships from God’s perspective and make a list of the ways we’ve strayed from God’s tried and trusted principles.***

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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2017

## SUNDAY PSALM – FAITHFUL IN TIMES OF NEED

How many times in our addictive lifestyle were people looking for us, seeking to do us harm? Perhaps we stole something from them or twisted their words so that we got something we wanted by lying about what they said. Sometimes we would lie so it would put us in a more favourable light with others. Now things have changed and they are after us. Perhaps, like the person who wrote the following Psalm, we cried out to God to save us from those who were hounding us.

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***I praise  
God for  
what he  
has  
promised.  
I trust in  
God, so  
why  
should I be  
afraid?  
(Psalm 56)***

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***O God, have mercy on me, for people are hounding me. My foes attack me all day long. I am constantly hounded by those who slander me, and many are boldly attacking me. But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you. I praise God for what he has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me? They are always twisting what I say; they spend their days plotting to harm me. They come together to spy on me— watching my every step, eager to kill me.***

(Psalm 56:1-6 NLT)

Before he became king of Israel, King David was hounded by many enemies who wanted to take his life. When he wrote the above Psalm he was in an enemy camp pretending to be insane so they would have no reason to fear him. The enemy watched his every move to assess if he was capable of causing harm.

In his circumstances David admitted to being afraid but then affirmed that when he was afraid he put his trust in God. He listed his problems and then began to praise God for what He had promised.

We may be in a place where we are calling out to God because of the troubles that surround us. Perhaps we are wondering if God will fulfill His promises to us. God fulfilled His promises to David and He will do the same for us. Let's affirm today that, in spite of our fears, we will put our trust in God and praise Him for what He has promised to do.

***Prayer: Loving God, When I lack faith, help me to believe that You will do what You have promised. Amen***

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2017

## TWELVE STEPS of A.A. - STEP TWO – POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES (2)

When we are in a recovery program we listen to, and are supported by, the experience, strength, and hope that others share at meetings we attend. The Bible also is a valued source of support for us and contains many stories about the compassion Jesus showed to those He encountered. As we turn to Jesus, we can be sure that He will generously impart that same kindness to us and give us the new life we so desperately want.

One day a man came to Jesus and asked him to help his young son. He said to Jesus, ***“Have mercy on us and help us, if you can.” “What do you mean, ‘If I can’?” Jesus asked. “Anything is possible if a person believes.” The father instantly cried out, “I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!”***

(Mark 9:22b-24 NLT)

When we face our powerlessness over addiction and the unmanageability of our lives, we can begin the process of recovery by asking Jesus to help us have more faith just like this man did. Jesus set the man's son free and restored him to his father. God awaits an invitation from us to restore the loving relationship He planned for us to have with Him from the beginning of time. Recovery and eternal life will be ours when we renounce our rebellion and believe in the one God sent to save us. The one God sent was His beloved son Jesus who for a time dwelt among humans.

***Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”***

(John 6:28-29 NIV)

Jesus is the image of the invisible God. We can know what God is like by getting to know Jesus and learn from Him and from His teachings. As we begin to trust in Jesus and His unfailing love for us, we will come to realize how God truly meant life to be lived.

***Prayer: Lord Jesus, I come to You and ask for Your help to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity and new life. Amen***

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***As we begin  
to trust in  
Jesus and His  
unfailing love  
for us, we will  
come to  
realize how  
God truly  
meant life to  
be lived.***

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2017

## STINKING THINKING (I)

One of our greatest spiritual dangers in recovery is “stinking thinking”. What we think often leads to what we do because it is based on our flawed thinking process. One incorrect assumption we make is the belief that “God cannot or will not help me”. When we think this way, we tend to allow ourselves to be dominated by fear – fear of the past, fear of guilt, fear of relapse, fear of embarrassment, fear of loneliness, fear of being hurt in relationship.

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***It's time  
to open  
our minds  
and  
hearts to  
God and  
watch  
Him act  
on our  
behalf.***

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***Jesus said, “And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.*** (Matthew 28:20, Isaiah 41:10 NLT)

When we think that God cannot or will not help us, we leave ourselves open to negative actions. We are too fearful to do what is right and good so we end up experiencing emptiness and often choose addictive habits to deal with the pain of not being who we truly are. We tell ourselves, “we have no other option but to take care of ourselves”. We allow feelings of frustration with life to build up within us until we vent our fears in an angry outburst of words or actions towards whoever is closest at that moment. Then we again experience discouragement, shame, loneliness, and increased pain from the angry conflicts. We blame God or others for where we are in life but fail to acknowledge

that our best thinking is defective and we need help.

***The Lord says, I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. Unfailing love surrounds those who trust the Lord.*** (Psalm 32:8,10 NLT)

As we choose to trust in God, He promises to surround us with His unfailing love and to give us wisdom in all our affairs. It's time to open our minds and hearts to God and watch Him act on our behalf.

*Prayer: Loving God, Help me to trust that you are good, that you are with me, and that you care about what happens in my life. Amen*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2017

## SATURDAY - EXTREME MAKEOVER

In the TV program “EXTREME HOME MAKEOVER” a team of designers and builders make it their project to replace the broken-down home of a well-deserving family with a brand-new home. Before the work begins, the designers sit down with each family member to ask them what their hobbies are and what they enjoy. Then, the whole decoration concept for the room is built according to that person's individual interests. It is personal. It is beautiful.

However, the process requires one difficult day. The family has to watch as the bulldozer and wrecking balls come and flatten what had been their home. The old must go so the new can be built.

God comes to us today with an offer to rebuild our lives – replace the wreckage with something brand-new and beautiful. God knows us and what will give us joy. Will we let our old life go and welcome God to design and build something new and wonderful in its place?

***To all who mourn... [God] will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair. In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks that the Lord has planted for his own glory. He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle's.*** (Isaiah 61:3-4a, Psalm 103:5 NLT)

When we welcome Jesus to come into our lives God fills us with His Spirit, and works in us to remove our character defects and replace them with new character qualities that are beyond all our expectations. If we allow Him, God will produce the fruit of His Holy Spirit in our lives and we will be filled with love, joy and peace.

***Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.*** (Colossians 3:12-14 NLT)

*Prayer: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Amen*

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***When we  
welcome Jesus  
to come into  
our lives God  
fills us with His  
Spirit, and  
works in us to  
remove our  
character  
defects and  
replace them  
with new  
character  
qualities that  
are beyond all  
our  
expectations.***

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2017

## RESTORING A PRECIOUS WORK OF ART

None of us likes to admit that anything is wrong in our life and our family. However, when we are alone we know something is wrong, some things aren't the way they should be. We try our best to hide the blemish or clean things up, sort out our problems and get things in order. However, with even our best efforts, things sometimes don't improve and occasionally even get worse.

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**God knows how we were made, the damage we have sustained, and what it will take to make us new.**

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Sometimes we try to fix or clean something and ruin it in the process. We try to wash a stain off a wall and the paint comes with it. We put bleach in the water to remove the dullness of a piece of clothing and the garment ends up with unsightly blotches. Unfortunately, that's what often happens when we try to fix ourselves without God's knowledge and help.

***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. I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong.*** (Romans 7:18, 21 NIV)

God wants to restore and make whole whatever is damaged or broken. God knows how we were made, the damage we have sustained, and what it will take to make us new. He has the materials, the complete understanding of all facets of the task, and the expertise to complete the job. All He requires is our permission for

Him to get started.

***In a wealthy home some utensils are made of gold and silver, and some are made of wood and clay. The expensive utensils are used for special occasions, and the cheap ones are for everyday use. If you keep yourself pure, you will be a special utensil for honorable use. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work.*** (2 Timothy 2:20-21 NLT)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Here I am. I turn my will and my life over to Your care. I admit I am powerless to fix myself. Please restore me to the person You created me to be. Amen***

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2017

## STINKING THINKING (2)

We are not shaped so much by our environment as we are by our perception of our environment. The way we think is the single most powerful motivation for how we face life each day. If we are not thinking right, it will be reflected in our emotional life

***The thought of my suffering and homelessness is bitter beyond words. I will never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss.***

(Lamentations 3:19-20 NLT)

In the Bible is the story of a man named Jeremiah. He expresses despair and bitterness as he wrongly perceives that God is against him and that God is the cause of his suffering and his difficult circumstances. Even though Jeremiah was having an awful time, God wasn't the cause of his problems. Jeremiah wasn't thinking right or truthfully assessing what was happening, so he did not respond correctly. Blaming God does not fix anything.

Then Jeremiah remembers the truth about God and his whole way of thinking changes. ***Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: The unfailing love of the LORD never ends! By his mercies we have been kept from complete destruction. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each day. I say to myself, "The LORD is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!" The LORD is wonderfully good to those who wait for him and seek him. So it is good to wait quietly for salvation from the LORD.*** (Lamentations 3:21-26 NLT)

What a turnaround! Did God change? No. Did Jeremiah's circumstances change? No. What changed? Jeremiah's perception of God changed and his emotions followed suit.

Life's events don't determine who we are. We can't control people, places, or things but we can choose how we see and respond to them. God promises to be with us through the fearful times we may face. We need to fill our minds with this truth and respond accordingly.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, When life is difficult, help me to remember that with You any difficulty can be worked out and overcome. I am forever grateful that You care for me. Amen***

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**The way we think is the single most powerful motivation for how we face life each day**

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2017

### STINKING THINKING (3)

If we grew up in a dysfunctional family or surrounded ourselves in our addictive lifestyle with individuals who were broken, we likely developed thought patterns that were incorrect and even harmful.

We may have come to believe that when we make a mistake, we are that mistake. When we feel bad, we believe that life is bad and will always be difficult for us. When our unrealistic expectations of what we, or someone else, should do and nothing gets

done, we buy into the lie that we are hopeless, that no one cares, and life is unfixable. We live in guilt and shame and the unbearable pain of it all. We are vulnerable to the urge to run away and hide in our addiction. Today, God is offering us hope as we change our way of thinking.

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***As we learn God's ways and base our reasoning on truth we will progress in thinking correctly and our emotions will follow our thoughts.***

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***Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.***

(Romans 12:2 NLT)

How can we overcome our stinking thinking? We choose to believe that as God fills us with His wisdom and strength we can succeed. We choose to fill our minds with the truth of God's word as recorded in the Bible, and keep our thoughts focused there. As we do this, we find that our emotions begin to follow the truth of God's words. Misery gives way to joy. Despair gives way to hope. God is with us. God is for us. God is making a way where we thought there was no way.

***We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.*** (2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NLT)

As we learn God's ways and base our reasoning on truth we will progress in thinking correctly and our emotions will follow our thoughts. We will treat any mistakes we make as life's lessons that will teach us what to avoid. We will embrace truth and build our lives on it.

***Prayer: Thank you God that as I turn my will and my life over to Your care, I will grow and prosper for You are faithful to do all that You have promised. Amen***

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2017

### A PRECIOUS WORK OF ART

Rembrandt and Michelangelo are just two names of famous artists whose paintings are practically priceless. They produced precious works of art through their ability to see and create something beautiful that others might enjoy.

God has done the same with you and me. With His loving creativity and His masterful ability, God has carefully created you and me with our unique personalities and placed us in this time and place for us to enjoy relationship with Him, enjoy life around us, and bring enjoyment to others.

***You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.***

(Psalm 139:13-16 NLT)

Life has made us something different from the original reflection of God that we were meant to be. Like precious paintings need to be restored from time to time, so we need to be cleaned up and restored to God's original vision for us. In His wisdom, God planned and provided for that. He sent Jesus to die on the cross for our sins and through our acceptance of His death and resurrection we are washed clean and born again to new life. In Jesus, we are restored to God's original plan for us. We are God's masterpiece.

***So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. 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.*** (Genesis 1:27, Ephesians 2:10 NLT)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to see myself as You see me, a beautiful and precious masterpiece, reflecting the image of a wonderful God. Amen***

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***Like precious paintings need to be restored from time to time, so we need to be cleaned up and restored to God's original vision for us.***

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TWELVE STEPS of AA – STEP THREE – THE CARE OF GOD

What does it mean to turn our will and our life over to the care of God? What kind of care can we expect to receive from God?

The following scripture tells us what God says He will do for us. *“I’ll pour pure water over you and scrub you clean. I’ll give you a new heart, put a new spirit in you. I’ll remove the stone heart from your body and replace it with a heart*

*that’s God-willed, not self-willed. I’ll put my Spirit in you and make it possible for you to do what I tell you and live by my commands.”* (Ezekiel 36:25-27 MSG)

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***When we begin to live yielded to God’s will and accept God’s loving care for us, it’s like a light goes on and we recognize, “This is it. This is what I’ve been looking for all my life.”***

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God is faithful and dependable. He is worthy of our trust and confidence. This God of unfailing love will never let us down. He will lead us into what He alone knows is good for us. He will also warn us about what is harmful to our well-being. God wants us to avoid the damage that deceptive teaching brings. His perspective is purely one of love and blessing. God’s desire for us is to know a satisfying way of life and to live it well.

*Oh, how great are God’s riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his ways! For who can know the Lord’s thoughts? Who knows enough to give him advice? And who has given him so much that he needs to pay it back? For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to*

*him forever! Amen.* (Romans 11:33-36 NLT)

When we begin to live yielded to God’s will and accept God’s loving care for us, it’s like a light goes on and we recognize, “This is it. This is what I’ve been looking for all my life.”

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for loving me and making a way for me to experience a satisfying life. You are an awesome God. I admit I don’t fully understand Your ways but am willing to turn my will and my life over to Your care. Amen*

SUNDAY PSALM – LIVING IN UNITY

***How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron’s beard, down on the collar of his robe. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.*** (Psalm 133:1-3 NIV)

God says it is pleasant for His people to live together in unity. How many of us make an effort to live in unity with family, friends, others around us, and people in meetings and church? Unity is the state of being in oneness -- in harmony or agreement with each other. The Bible gives us several pictures of this unity. For example, when we surrender our will and our lives to the care of God, He brings us together with others to become one body, the body of Christ. As in a physical body, each of the parts is different but each part is carefully placed by God that together they will function for the good of the whole body.

***Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*** (1 Corinthians 12:27 NIV)

If for whatever reason, a part of the physical body should decide it will not perform the function it was created for, the whole body will suffer. The whole body will also suffer if a part of the body performs in excess of what its purpose is. A physical body is healthy when each part is performing as it was created to. In the body of Christ, the blessings of God flow when each person is following the ways of God and doing what God planned in advance for that person to do.

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***Our Heavenly Father desires that His children live in harmony and function together as the many parts that make up the body of Christ.***

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Today let’s consider our part in living in unity with other parts of the body of Christ. Do we try to understand God’s purpose in placing us together with others with whom we seem to have nothing in common? Do we cause problems for the body by not doing those things we ought to do? Are we doing everything we can to function in a kind and considerate way towards those who are different from us?

*Prayer: Loving God, Help me to live in unity with others so that as many parts of the body of Christ we all may receive Your blessing. Amen*

MONDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2017

TWELVE STEPS of A.A. -STEP THREE –  
TURNED OUR WILL AND OUR LIVES OVER (1)

**Step 3: We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.**

This step requires action toward another person and that person is God. In the A.A. “12 x 12” book it says, “It is only by ACTION that we can cut away the self-will which has always blocked the entry of God into our lives.” Why would we take on this challenging action to give God entry into our lives? The truth is, we will never experience life to the full until we shape our lives by God’s principles.

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**The truth is, we will never experience life to the full until we shape our lives by God’s principles.**

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***For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.*** (John 13:15 NIV)

Only by inviting God to live in us and to direct our thinking will we ever find what we’ve been looking for in life.

***Dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind He will accept. .... Don’t copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect His will really is.***

(Romans 12:1-2 NLT)

We are created by God and He is the only one who gives fullness of life. To live to the full, we need to surrender our will and our life into God’s care. This will mean NOT always having our own way. Our happiness is NOT the result of getting what we want when we want it. In fact, true happiness will only be achieved when we repeatedly say, “NO” to ourselves and “YES” to God.

When we surrender to God’s principles for life, our lives will change and we will know peace in the deepest recesses of our being. Something will come alive in us, something that has never been alive before, and it will be truly satisfying.

***Prayer: Dear God, I surrender my will and my life into Your care and ask You to show me the way forward to a meaningful and satisfying life. Amen***

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2017

TWELVE STEPS of AA – STEP THREE –  
TURNED OUR WILL AND OUR LIVES OVER (2)

We will begin to understand the will of God for us through reading the Bible, following good counsel from pastors, sponsors and Christian friends who have faithfully walked with God for a time. As we regularly replace our will with God’s will and plan for our lives, our daily walk will take on new meaning and bring us deep satisfaction.

***For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.*** (Jeremiah 29:11; 31:3 NIV)

Turning our will and our life over to the care of God is not simply asking God to bless what we believe and determine we should do. It is actively researching the Bible for what God says brings satisfaction in life and applying what we have learned. Because of His love for us, God warns us to stay away from those things that He knows will injure us. God’s principles for living are not twisted by wounds and resentments and shame and fear but are founded on His unfailing love for us. As we build on that foundation, life will change and become more fulfilling.

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***As we regularly replace our will with God’s will and plan for our lives, our daily walk will take on new meaning and bring us deep satisfaction.***

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***Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God’s glory. We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation.*** (Romans 5:2-4 NLT)

We will grow in our faith and blessings will flow into our lives as we choose to trust in God and see how good He really is.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Sometimes I feel annoyed and stretched by the unfamiliar ways you lead me. However today I once again humbly admit, “God, You know better than I do. Even though I may not feel like doing what you say, I will trust you and make adjustments according to Your word.” Amen***