

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY



Daily Meditations



October 2018

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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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OCTOBER 2018

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MONDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2018

LIVING RIGHT

A lifestyle of loving God and loving our neighbour is the foundation of our new life with God in recovery. When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour we are assured that we are adopted into the family of God and that He will care for us. As we follow our Heavenly Father's guidance and live by His principles He gives us the desire and power to do what pleases Him, and the outcome for us is a satisfying and good life.

Be careful to obey all my commands, so that all will go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is good and pleasing to the LORD your God. (Deuteronomy 12:28 NLT)

When we follow God's ways, we are instructed to consider how our actions might impact the lives of others. Forgiving, and giving up our right to revenge for the harm others have caused us, sets us free to relate to the other person in a safe way. Humbly asking for forgiveness for the harm we have caused others will free us from the shame we have been carrying and allow us to live with self-respect. Praying for those who are causing trouble and giving us a hard time will bring peaceful solutions to complex problems.

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. (Luke 6:36-37 NIV)

To live right we need to make every effort to have the same attitude as Jesus. When He was beaten and nailed to the cross Jesus prayed for the people who crucified Him to be forgiven. Jesus never sinned yet He humbled Himself and went to the cross to pay the penalty for all sin, so that we who believe can be set free from our sin, past, present and future. Jesus commands us to love our neighbours in the same way He has loved us.

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had. (Romans 15:5 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to live with love and kindness in all my relationships. Help me to humbly seek forgiveness from those I have harmed. Help me to forgive and pray for those who have harmed me. Help me to have the same attitude that Jesus had in all my interaction with others. Help me to love as You love me. Amen

To live right we need to make every effort to have the same attitude as Jesus.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2018

THE SLAVERY OF ADDICTION

Anyone who has lived in addiction knows that life's entire focus is on the thing we seek to satisfy our cravings. We were slaves, bound to obey our compulsions. Even though we did what we wanted, when we wanted, life was still painful. The thing we once sought for pleasure, ultimately enslaved us. Darkness and chaos that we never could have imagined became our reality.

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (Galatians 5:1 NIV)

In our despair we admitted that we were powerless over our dependency and began to look around for freedom from the ugliness of daily life. In our quest for freedom we came to believe that there must be a power greater than ourselves that could restore us to sanity. Jesus said He was sent to earth for that very reason.

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:18-19 NIV)

When a person is free they can come and go as they please. A slave can't. A slave must be obedient to his or her master, otherwise the slave lives in fear of what the master might do to them. In the same way, persons living in addiction are bound by the desperation of what they are craving. Thankfully, Jesus came to bestow God's favour on everyone who believes in Him, and to set slaves free.

We have hope and freedom today as we turn from addiction and surrender our lives, including our cravings, to God. All power in heaven and earth has been given to Jesus. He is the One who has purchased our freedom from every shackle that seeks to keep us in bondage.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank You for coming to earth to purchase my freedom from sin. Help me to stand firm in Your truth and no longer allow the bondage of sin to make me a slave. Amen

We have hope and freedom today as we turn from addiction and surrender ourselves, including our cravings, to God.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2018

TOGETHER WITH GOD ANY DIFFICULTY CAN BE WORKED OUT

If we really want to get well we need to stop using our problems as a means of getting attention, sympathy or pity.

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. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. (Jeremiah 29:11-12 NIV)

The past cannot be changed. In our grief over some past events we have allowed the pain to be the foundation for our future. We must stop using our problems as an excuse to sit on the sidelines of life. We need to stop wasting time having pity parties for ourselves. We need to examine and accept the truth about the life situations that have caused us pain and ask God to heal our wounds and make us whole. With God all things are possible and He gives us hope and a future. When we pray and look around for opportunities that God is presenting we can get excited about our day and where it will lead us.

For since the world began, no ear has heard and no eye has seen a God like you, who works for those who wait for him! (Isaiah 64:4 NLT)

If trouble should arise God will help us face each situation calmly and with courage. As we apply God's principles in the circumstance we can confidently leave the outcome with Him. We often don't know the way through our problems, but God does. The challenge is to follow His direction when we don't fully understand the way He is taking us. Our part is to simply be obedient and allow Him to lead us one step at a time.

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. Rescue me from my enemies, Lord; I run to you to hide me. (Psalm 143:8-9 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I believe that You have prepared a wonderful day and a good future for me. Together with You, any difficulty I might face can be worked out and overcome. Amen

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2018

EVERYDAY WISDOM

Every time we pray the serenity prayer we are asking God for wisdom. What is wisdom? Why should we want it? What do we do with it once we get it? Wisdom is the ability to think and act wisely based on information, experience, and common sense.

The book of Proverbs in the Bible has 31 chapters of short sayings which express useful truths for everyday life. Some folks find it helpful to read one section each day – usually the section that corresponds to the day of the month. So, on this 4th day of the month, what can we learn from Proverbs 4 to help us think and act wisely?

Carefully guard your thoughts because they are the source of true life. Never tell lies or be deceitful in what you say. Keep looking straight ahead, without turning aside. Know where you are headed, and you will stay on solid ground. Don't make a mistake by turning to the right or the left. (Proverbs 4:23-27 CEV)

Someone has echoed these thoughts in a well-known poem: *Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habits. Watch your habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.* (Author Unknown)

Wanting to be wise is not enough. We need God's Holy Spirit living in us to help us recognize what wisdom looks like. When we consult with and obey the Holy Spirit in the situations we face each day, we will gain wisdom and power to live life in a new way.

We have received God's Spirit (not the world's spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us. We speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths. But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means. (1 Corinthians 2:12-14 NLT)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, come and live in me today and help me to be a wise person. Help me to understand what is right and good in every situation I face. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit and strengthen me to obey Your principles in all I do and say. Amen

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2018

LONGING FOR SECURITY

I cling to you; your strong right hand holds me securely. (Psalm 63:8 NLT)

As humans we have a need for security in many forms, security within our own family, security about who we are inside our own heads, security of our position within a group, security in having a place to call home, security from any type of threat to our physical body, and any other thing we may see as a threat to our well-being. Lack of anything we consider essential, makes us feel insecure. Many of us use drugs and alcohol to cover up or compensate for feelings of insecurity.

What a great relief it is to learn in recovery circles that security is not provided by our circumstances, but by God alone. With this understanding we can learn how to live in the security of God's care.

Wealth and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and at your discretion people are made great and given strength. (1 Chronicles 29:12 NLT)

When we put our faith in Jesus and His saving work through the cross and resurrection, we become children of God. As children of God, we can live confidently each day and sleep peacefully each night in the certain knowledge that we are safe and secure in the care of our Heavenly Father.

I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. for he views the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. (Psalm 121:1-4; Job 28:24 NIV)

Perhaps it's time to stop trying to find security in our addictive substances and relationships and choose to find the security we long for in the one true source – God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, As I journey with You in recovery, help me to keep my eyes firmly fixed on You, for You alone are the source of my security. Amen

Security is not provided by our circumstances, but by God alone.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2018

SECURE IN GOD'S CARE

In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For You alone, O Lord, make me to dwell in safety. (Psalm 4:8 NASB)

When we watch the news at night we know from various reports that we live in a dangerous and harmful world with many threats to our personal security. Family members, friends, and others die from drug and alcohol related problems. Violence is on the rise. Robberies are numerous. Random shootings in various cities threaten daily life. Earthquakes, tornados, fire, and damaging floods in multiple locations remind us of how vulnerable we are and how fragile life is.

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So we will not fear when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea. (Psalm 46:1-2 NLT)

God is greater than any problem we may face, and we can truly be secure in the fact that God will take care of us.

We need a safe place to run to when disaster, pain, or loss seeks to overwhelm us. At times like these we often seek people or physical things to give us comfort rather than seeking God. Perhaps we hesitate to seek God because we do not feel secure in the truth that, through Jesus, we are legitimate children of God. We assume that if we were, we would not be having trouble.

The good news is that when we put our faith in Jesus, our Heavenly Father will act on our behalf. We don't have to face trouble alone. When our lives are touched by trouble we can call out to God and He will help us. God will fill us with His wisdom and strength. God is greater than any problem we may face, and we can truly be secure in the fact that God will take care of us.

I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world....and call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me. (John 16:33; Psalm 50:15 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, When troubles abound in my life I know You could, and would help, if You were sought. Help me to seek You first in any trouble that comes my way and have faith in Your power to do more than I could ask for or even imagine. Amen

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2018

SUNDAY PSALM – GIVING THANKS FOR GOD'S FAITHFUL LOVE

On this "Thanksgiving" weekend, what are we thankful for?

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever. Give thanks to him who alone does mighty miracles. His faithful love endures forever. He remembered us in our weakness. His faithful love endures forever. He saved us from our enemies. His faithful love endures forever. He gives food to every living thing. His faithful love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of heaven. His faithful love endures forever. (Psalm 136:1, 4, 24-26 NLT)

Twenty-six times in 26 verses in Psalm 136, the ancient church sang to God with the words, "His faithful love endures forever." We've noted just a few of them in the quotation above. These people were doing something that people in recovery have discovered is uplifting – making a gratitude list. Being thankful is a practical and reliable way to retrain our thoughts and encourage our hearts.

We don't just give thanks for things we have, although that's a good place to start. We can look at our natural environment and give thanks for the new things we see each day. We can give thanks for the ability to see and hear and feel and taste. How many people around us lack the ability to do one or more of these things? Our family of origin may be challenging, but we can give thanks for the lessons we are learning that help us navigate those relationships better. We may not have much money, or any money at all, but we have clothes on our back and know places to find food today. How many refugees and others in war zones have neither security nor daily necessities? We are truly blessed.

In life, each of us has our own set of difficulties and circumstances to face. It's easy to fix our focus on what we don't have and what isn't right in our world. This holiday weekend, along with the ancient church and so many others who have walked with God in recovery, let's compile a gratitude list and see how many blessings we can list and be thankful for.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You are good and give good gifts all the time. Help me to rely solely on You and become more conscious of Your goodness and blessings in my life. Amen

***Give
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MONDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2018

THANKSGIVING – A WAY OF LIFE

When thanksgiving becomes a way of life rather than a day of celebration on the calendar, life will change for us. This involves seeing all that "is" rather than all that "isn't." As we do this, we become more aware of God's presence and care in our lives and the result is peace and contentment in our hearts.

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)

***When
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The truth is, God loves and cares for us and promises to meet all our needs. However, our day to day lives still have problems and challenges, some of which may seem overwhelming. How can we give thanks when the world around us seems to be falling apart? There are pressures in relationships, worries about finances, and anxious thoughts about whether we will have enough money for food and rent tomorrow. Life sometimes isn't what we thought it would be. The furniture is breaking apart. The kitchen is cluttered. The kids are acting up. The laundry is piling up. How are we to give thanks in the middle of all that? What is there to be grateful for?

I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:12-13 NLT)

If we will pray and seek His help, God will work for good in amazing ways in all our difficulties. Now that is something to be thankful for!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you that I don't have to face tough times alone. Thank You for Your unfailing love and care for me. I am grateful that You promise to help me and work all things together for my good. You are a good, good Father. Help me to accept and truly know how much I am loved by You. Amen

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2018

THE DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING

What difference does it make if we are grateful or not? Good things happen around people who work for and expect good things to happen.

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

When we are grateful we find new strength to enjoy the day and new courage to build something better in our future. When we give thanks, we fill our lives with joy and the atmosphere around us becomes more pleasant and attractive to others. A positive outlook begins to grow in us and we become more confident. People tend to hang around positive people and our circle of friends grows as we reach out to others.

But I will give repeated thanks to the Lord, praising him to everyone. (Psalm 109:30 NLT)

When we give thanks, we remember that God is working for good on our behalf. Our faith and trust grow as we accept this assurance. We begin to look beyond ourselves and to live for the good of our family and our community. We become those who support and encourage others and find that the whole focus of our lives has changed.

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)

Let's look for the goodness of God in all our circumstances today. Our gracious and generous God has promised to meet all our needs. Let's tell Him all about our concerns and watch how He responds with help and blessing. In the middle of the circumstances we are currently dealing with, let's receive the peace and joy that God is offering us. Let's continue to give thanks and glorify God for all He has done and continues to do.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is to have an attitude of gratitude regardless of my circumstances. I am grateful that when I call on You, You will answer me. Amen

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2018

COMING OUT OF THE SHADOWS

We often describe life in active addiction as darkness and life in recovery as light. We are grateful to God for pursuing us with His love and bringing us out of the darkness. God called us again and again until, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we were able to respond and move towards the light. Sometimes it seems that people hear the call, move away from the darkness towards the light, but then get caught somewhere in between, "in the shadows."

What is life like in the shadows? Difficult things that have happened to us are said to "cast a shadow" on our lives. Many people feel they are living in the shadows when they experience deep grief and pain. However, when we move towards the light, we will experience God's comforting presence and help as we face the shadows of grief, pain, and injustice.

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Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. Poor people have come to you for safety. You have kept needy people safe when they were in trouble. You have been a place to hide when storms came. You have been a shade from the heat of the sun. (Psalm 23:4; 91:1 NLT, Isaiah 25:4 NIRV)

We can be assured that God is close to us during shadowy times. As the shade of a tree is comforting and refreshing on a hot sunny day, so the Lord provides a shelter and cares for us in our time of need. His healing presence calms and restores our soul in safe, shady places.

To come out of the shadows and live in the light, we must be willing to shift our focus from our grief and woundedness to God's comfort and care. Even though we may feel vulnerable doing it, we must open our hearts to God and make our pain available to His healing touch.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to walk further out of the shadows and into the light of Your love. Even though the way is unknown and a bit scary for me, help me to remember you are near and will comfort and keep me safe as I bring my wounded heart to You for healing. Amen

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2018

SHADY LIVING

Yesterday we reflected on one area of our past that keeps us living in the shadows. There is also another area of shady living that we need to recognize and deal with. A famous psychiatrist, Carl Jung, has called it the dark side of our personality. These personality traits, which form a shadow of our flawed self, are defects we would prefer to hide.

When we stop using an addictive substance or try to quit an unhealthy habit, before we know it, out from the shadows bursts anger, frustration, resentment, or fear. These traits have been hiding under the cover of mood-altering elements. Those of us who have relapsed a few times recognize a dark urge within us that seems uncontrollable. We wonder, with varying degrees of unease, if we can live beyond its power. This shadow self has been described as a force within us that causes us to do things that hurt ourselves and others. These actions cause us grief, guilt, and shame. Jesus is the light of life and if we walk in His light He will reveal the dark things hidden deep within us, and by the power of the Holy Spirit they will be revealed and eliminated.

Jesus said: **I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.**" (John 8:12 NLT)

God provides the help and power we need to leave the darkness behind. When we turn our lives over to the care of God and follow His guidance, He promises to lead us safely forward.

You will open eyes that can't see. You will set prisoners free. Those who sit in darkness will come out of their cells. I will lead them along paths they had not known before. I will guide them on roads they are not familiar with. I will turn the darkness into light as they travel. I will make the rough places smooth. Those are the things I will do. I will not desert my people. (Isaiah 42:7, 16 NIRV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I want to come out of the shadows and live totally in the light. Open my eyes to recognize those things that hinder me. Be my light as I leave behind the dark things that keep me in bondage to the past. I trust You to guide me safely forward, even when I do not know the way. I am thankful that You are always with me, and will never leave or forsake me. Amen

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2018

JUST FOR TODAY – I WILL BE UNAFRAID

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.

We were created to live securely by living in the care of God – the God who loves us perfectly, weaknesses and all. We are also called to live confidently in the knowledge that God will never leave us nor forsake us. He will walk beside us directing our way in every circumstance we encounter.

Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9 NLT)

**To live
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Actions or reactions based on our false belief system are something we now need to accept responsibility for and fearlessly record in our inventory. Instead of living life based on "I think" we need to risk believing what God says in His word. We need to come honestly before God and place ourselves in His care. When we experience God's love we won't want to lash out at others or allow our lives to be controlled by fear.

Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in you. (Psalm 56:3 NKJV).

To live without fear we must intentionally choose to believe God and receive the kindness and tenderness He offers us. We must bring every thought captive to Him and allow Him to renew our minds. We must affirm God's forgiveness for our wrongs and His acceptance of us as His precious children. We must look to Him to give us peace of mind and heart. We must ask Him to give us the will and the power to forgive others and ourselves. We must affirm the truth that God does not condemn those who are in Christ Jesus.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I choose not to lean on my own understanding. When I feel afraid, I will trust in You. I believe that You are good and will lead me along a good path. I will trust that Your Word is true and ask You to give me the will and the power to do those things that please You. I accept that through Jesus I have become Your precious child. Thank You for promising to meet all my needs. Amen

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2018

AVOIDING INJURY AS WE MAKE AMENDS

When we're making amends, we need to be wise in the way we go about it, being careful not to cause others further injury. The pressure of guilt and our fear of exposure may cause us to rush ahead and make mistakes we can't erase. We may be so anxious to get things off our chest that we blurt out our amends without fully considering what is currently going on in the other person's life. We need to consider how our actions might injure them.

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. (Philippians 2:3-4 NLT)

Since we are not always the best judge of what needs to be disclosed, or when, we need to seek help and guidance in these decisions, first from God, then our sponsor, and perhaps other trusted friends in recovery. Reviewing our amends with others helps us consider our motivation and the consequences of our intended actions. Sometimes an indirect amends is the most appropriate choice (i.e. amends through changed behaviour).

It is essential that we become willing to make amends to people we have harmed. We need to do so with the motive of taking responsibility for the harm we have caused. When the time is right, and with a prayerful attitude of seeking God's healing for the people we have harmed, God will guide each of us to the pathway of peace.

Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace. (Luke 1:78-79 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for caring for me and for teaching me the truth about my life, past, present, and future. Help me to walk in humility as I clean my side of the street. Give me the desire and the will to forgive others and to work for reconciliation in all my relationships. Amen

When the time is right, and with a prayerful attitude of seeking God's healing for the people we have harmed, God will guide each of us to the pathway of peace.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2018

SUNDAY PSALM – A SOLID PLACE TO STAND

After years of uncertainty and upheaval at every turn, it's wonderful to recover a life that has some stability. It's delightful to wake up in the morning without wondering what happened the night before or to fret about how we are going to get what we need to see us through the next few hours. The heavy burden of wrecked relationships and burned bridges with those we cared about is in the process of healing. How many times in the past did we wonder if we would ever find a way out of the horrible mess we were trapped in.

In our brokenness and chaos, we cried out to God, even though we weren't sure He was there, cared about us, or could do anything for us. We simply longed for someone somewhere to do something to improve our lot in life.

After years of uncertainty and upheaval at every turn, it's wonderful to recover a life that has some stability.

I waited patiently for the Lord to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along. He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what he has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the Lord. (Psalm 40:1-3 NLT)

God patiently waited for us to come to Him for help. Until we exhausted our own resources and knew we were powerless, we kept trying to make life work. From the weak cry of our hearts, God heard us and responded with His love for us. When we turned our will and our lives over to His care, we became God's beloved children. Now we can rejoice that God is our loving Heavenly Father and we are being taught about who we are in Christ and are being equipped to do those things God has prepared in advance for us to do. We are truly standing in a solid place!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, My life is not perfect and I still have a journey ahead of me. Nevertheless, I am truly amazed by what you have already done in me and for me. What once seemed impossible to me is now a living reality. One by one I see your promises fulfilled as I put my trust in Your word. Thank you for loving and caring for me. I am forever grateful that I can stand on solid ground and know for certain that You are always with me. Amen.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2018

PRIORITY ONE FOR SUCCESSFUL RECOVERY: SHARE EVERYTHING WITH GOD

To be “relapse proof” is to be surrendered to a life that prioritizes God’s will in everything we think, say, and do. When we accept Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross for forgiveness of our sin, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us. The Holy Spirit helps us know and follow the ways of God, not only on a day to day basis, but also moment by moment.

So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. (Romans 12:1-2 MSG)

Making an unwavering decision to live according to the life God affirms and resolving to stay away from those practices that God condemns, is a strong declaration for life versus relapse. God will honour our choice for what is right and will change us from the inside out. More and more, as we pray and seek God’s direction, we will quickly respond to the principles of God’s word as recorded in the Bible.

Priority One for a successful life in recovery is sharing everything with God and consciously choosing His will. When we do this we can confidently leave all the consequences with Him.

Have we invited God to help us today? Are we intentionally and persistently sharing with God our hidden thoughts, desires, and reactions as well as what’s going on in our visible world? Are we fully surrendered to God, choosing to prioritize His will for our lives, and holding nothing back?

Prayer: Loving God, Search my heart and keep it free from all evil. Help me to fix my eyes on You and hold fast to Your will in everything I do. Keep me as the apple of Your eye. Amen

**Priority One
for a
successful
life in
recovery is
sharing
everything
with God
and
consciously
choosing His
will.**

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2018

KNOWING I AM VALUED AND BELONG

How do we feel when people who should recognize us don’t? Jesus understands our sadness and wants to heal our hearts from disappointing relationships. Jesus wants us to experience the joy of knowing that we are valued and we belong.

He came into the very world he created, but the world didn’t recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:10-12 NLT)

Sir Christopher Wren was the architect of St. Paul’s Cathedral and many other buildings in London, England. It almost seems unthinkable that people of Christopher Wren’s time would not have recognized him. He designed some of the most beautiful buildings in London and was given much prestige for doing so. Jesus, who was both the architect and creator of this world came into it, and those who should have recognized Him did not, so they rejected him.

**Jesus wants
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He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?” (Isaiah 53:3 NLT; Hebrews 13:5b-6 NIV)

When we feel lonely and don’t think that we belong, Jesus is very close. He offers us a relationship that will fill our hearts with love, joy and peace. Jesus was despised and rejected in this world so that we could experience acceptance. He was acquainted with deepest grief so that He could comfort and support us in our times of sorrow. If we open our hearts to Jesus, He will help us learn how to have a deep and abiding relationship with Him and with others.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Come into my heart and give me the courage to love and value others as You love and value me. You created me to belong to You and experience the joy of being part of Your family. My desire is to have a strong relationship with You so that I can be a caring friend to others. Please help me recognize those around me as persons made in Your image and for whom You care. Amen

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2018

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY – WHO'S TO BLAME

Accepting responsibility for our behaviour is difficult for most of us even in recovery. It seems that when we have sustained past hurts, we tend to use the pain suffered to excuse our current bad behaviour. Because of the injustice that life brought our way, we expect our loved ones and others to tolerate our anger and mood swings. Often, by the time we become adults, the victim role is well established. We are comfortable to continue in the same manner until we are challenged by emotional upheaval or a deteriorating life style. Peace and freedom will be found when we take responsibility for the choices we have made and deal with the consequences that have resulted from our self-will.

God says to each one of us, ***“Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live! You can make this choice by loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. This is the key to your life.”*** (Deuteronomy 30:19-20 NLT)

In the Bible we read about King David who, after committing the sins of adultery and murder, took responsibility for his actions and said to the prophet Nathan, ***“I have sinned against the Lord.”*** Nathan replied, ***“Yes, but the Lord has forgiven you.”*** (2 Samuel 12:13 NLT)

Understanding, as King David did, that the sins we personally have committed, and the ones that have been committed against us, are offences against God will help us come to God and ask for forgiveness and healing. As we humbly accept forgiveness from our Heavenly Father for our own sins, we can then choose to forgive those who have sinned against us. We purposely turn the offences others have committed against us over to the Lord who is the righteous judge. When we do this, we free ourselves from the destructive power of bitterness. This will be the start of a new life of taking responsibility for our own wellbeing and, in so doing, we will find the peace of mind and heart we seek.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I repent of my unwillingness to forgive. Today I choose to forgive those who have harmed me and accept that You are the righteous judge of all things and I am not. Please come and heal me in the depths of my being and restore me to new life. Amen

Peace and freedom will be found when we take responsibility for the choices we have made and deal with the consequences.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2018

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY – OWNING MY BEHAVIOUR

Taking responsibility for our lives means owning our behaviour, confessing our sin, and turning away from destructive actions. As we choose to give up our old ways of thinking and behaving and learn God's ways and principles, we will experience healing that becomes evident in our responsible dealings with others.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do. (James 1:22-25 NIV)

As we draw closer to God and embrace His will for our lives we will find that we are being changed from the inside out.

When we turn our will and our life over to Jesus we change from being controlled by our own feelings to being people who find freedom. We learn the ways of the Lord by reading and obeying the scriptures as written in the Bible. God shows us how to apply His principles to our individual circumstances as we take time to seek and listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit in each situation. Freedom grows as we surrender to this guidance. Our commitment to taking responsibility for our new life in Christ will be tested and we will need to persevere in choosing God's ways because they are often different from popular thinking in our culture.

No one can know a person's thoughts except that person's own spirit, and no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit. And we have received God's Spirit (not the world's spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us. (1 Corinthians 2:11-12 NLT)

As we draw closer to God and embrace His will for our lives we will find that we are being changed from the inside out. Old ways and habits give way to responsible action as the Holy Spirit guides us into all truth.

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to surrender to Your guidance as I accept responsibility for my life. My desire is to wholeheartedly follow Your ways and Your principles in all my affairs. Amen

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2018

LIVING GOD'S WILL IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS – IS IT POSSIBLE?

Even though we may desire to walk with God and follow His ways, we will still need God's help to accomplish that goal. King David, who was named, "a man after God's own heart" repeatedly called out to God for help.

Be good to your servant, that I may live and obey your word. Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions. I am only a foreigner in the land. Don't hide your commands from me! I am always overwhelmed with a desire for your regulations. You rebuke the arrogant; those who wander from your commands are cursed. Don't let them scorn and insult me, for I have obeyed your laws. Even princes sit and speak against me, but I will meditate on your decrees. Your laws please me; they give me wise advice. (Psalm 119:17-24 NLT)

God gives us His Holy Spirit to live in us and guide us so we know what's right and true. As we turn our will and our lives over to His care, God works in us to give us the desire and strength to follow His ways.

For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. (Philippians 2:13 NLT)

We live in a world where people are arrogant and don't seek God. They rebel against God's principles and choose to do what is right in their own eyes. If we are to remain steady and strong in the plan that God has for our lives, we will need to seek Him in all our affairs and rely on His strength to support us as we choose to do what is right. We need to daily read and meditate on God's word and surrender our self-will to the Holy Spirit's power and guidance. As we do, God works in us, and around us, to achieve His good plan for our lives.

It truly is possible to live a purposeful life of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit when we seek God's direction in all our affairs.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Turn my eyes away from worthless things and lead me in the way I should go. Let me rest in Your unfailing love for me as I grow in the knowledge of Your word. Give me sound judgment in all my affairs. Amen

It truly is possible to live a purposeful life of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit when we seek God's direction in all our affairs.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2018

HONOURING GOD WITH MY BODY

God made our bodies to be a home for His Holy Spirit. It goes against the "wisdom of the world" to acknowledge the truth that our bodies are not our own but belong to God. Life with God in recovery gives us the opportunity to explore and live in this truth.

Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NLT)

Our bodies are not our own but belong to God. Life with God in recovery gives us the opportunity to explore and live in this truth.

It's important that we keep a healthy balance in all our activities, not just in those related to our addictive habits. Anything can become a demanding passion when we allow it to become the primary focus of our life. Exercise, food, healthy socializing and sleep, are all important components of a recovered life but they, in themselves, don't give us life. Even healthy activities can become addictive if they are foremost in our thoughts and consume most of our time. As His beloved children we are to honour God in all we do and say.

God's word tells us: ***Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.*** (Ephesians 4:29 NLT)

Attitudes and words are important indicators of whether our bodies are being used as a home for God's Holy Spirit. We need to deal with complaining, fault finding, persistent arguing, blaming etc. The poison of bitter resentment and grudges needs to be cleansed from our system. Are we spending more time talking about our problems than seeking possible solutions?

Does our attitude and speech encourage others?

Let's make every effort to cleanse God's Holy Temple and live a life that is pure and holy in His sight.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I acknowledge that my body is not my own. I belong to You. Cleanse me from secret sins and make me a person useful for Your service. Amen

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2018

SUNDAY PSALM – POWER TO SAVE

Many of us come to recovery and seek help when the suffering in our life in addiction is too much to bear. We hear from others that God could and would help us if He were sought. Early in our journey we're not sure about God and His desire to help. We're just broken and desperate and know we can't manage life anymore on our own. The steps tell us that we can come to believe in a Higher Power who will restore us to sanity. We know we don't have any power, so we are sincerely searching for something that really works.

Even though God created us in love and watched as we turned our backs on His kindness, He still pursues us with His love. When we call out to God, He is willing to show us the way we should go. As we begin to walk with God in recovery we find peace that brings contentment in what were previously troubled areas of our thinking and feeling. We learn to find serenity in accepting the things we cannot change and receive courage from God to change the things we can.

I take joy in doing your will, my God, for your instructions are written on my heart. I have told all your people about your justice. I have not been afraid to speak out, as you, O Lord, well know. I have not kept the good news of your justice hidden in my heart; I have talked about your faithfulness and saving power. (Psalm 40:8-10 NLT)

In the beginning, we may be afraid to allow joy into our hearts because we are fearful that things will once again fall apart. As we learn about the love of our Heavenly Father and His desire to fill our lives with good things, almost without realizing it, joy begins to grow in our hearts like spring flowers bursting through the earth. When we choose to live wholeheartedly for God, we will be surprised by how God works all things together for our good. God's word is right and true, and He is faithful in all He says and does. His saving power can never be extinguished!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for the joy You bring as I put my trust in You. I am grateful for Your encouragement, forgiveness, and help in sorting out what is right and true in all my circumstances. My desire is to speak about Your faithfulness and saving power in my life. As I open my mouth, please fill it. Amen

**When we
call out
to God,
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MONDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2018

THE TRIGGER TO OUR RATIONALIZING

Rationalizing endorses the internal belief that we are victims of circumstances beyond our control. We have lived for so long not taking responsibility for our actions and being unwilling to work through our problems, that it seems overwhelming for us to come to terms with our part in the circumstances we are faced with today. We make excuses for our actions based on the hurt we have sustained. We reason that our wrong choices are justified because of what we have experienced.

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. (2 Corinthians 9:8; Philippians 2:13; 4:13 NLT)

**Continuing to
choose our
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recovery.**

There may be traumatic events in our past to which we still have emotional links and the resulting fear translates into rationalizing. God wants to heal our wounds and set us free from the false belief the evil one attached to those memories. Are we willing to be healed, or will we continue to let the devil "kick us while we are down?"

The trigger to our rationalizing may be a bitter root of unforgiveness against someone who harmed us or didn't help us when we thought they should have. Our way is to hold on to the hate and rationalize why we have a right to it. God's way is restoration through forgiveness, both given and received. Continuing to choose our own way through rationalizing, rather than God's way of forgiving, will have a damaging effect on our recovery.

We need to ask the God who loves us unconditionally to show us the root cause of those behaviours that continue to damage our lives. As we seek God in all our ways, we can be sure He will give us the power and guidance to make good choices that will set us free from our bondage to the past.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to forgive those hurtful things that set me on a wrong course in life. Today, I choose to surrender my will and life over to your care. I trust You to give me the desire and power to do what pleases You. Amen

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2018

RATIONALIZING EXCUSES FOR POOR CHOICES

Today we are continuing to look at the excuses and reasons we give for making poor choices and our tendency to want to justify our actions.

We don't always make the right choices, certainly not in active addiction, and even now in recovery it is a learning process. God has provided a way for us to learn and grow. That way is to first receive the forgiveness God is offering us because Jesus died on the cross to pay for the damage of all our wrong choices. We need to stand in the truth of who God says we are – flawed human beings but precious and valued sons and daughters of God who are washed and cleansed from all our sins.

There is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. (Romans 8:1-2 NLT)

Without accepting forgiveness and a right relationship with God, we will continue to rationalize because we are afraid of the shame, the pain, the embarrassment, or the disappointment that has resulted from our previous poor choices. It seems easier to make excuses for our behaviour or to blame someone else, so the burden is “off our shoulders.” As long as rationalizing makes us feel better, we deceive ourselves into thinking that the situation has improved. To be honest and confess that we have made poor choices may, in the short term, threaten our comfort zone, be inconvenient in the moment, or even cause us embarrassment. However, regardless of these feelings, we need to come clean and admit to our wrongs.

Sometimes we've rationalized our behaviour for so long that it has become an unconscious process rather than an attempt to deliberately deceive. We need to seek God to awaken us to the harmful choices we are making. He knows the poison stored in the roots of our destructive actions and reactions. He knows and understands the actual impact of all the events that make up our lives – both good and bad.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to give up excusing and rationalizing my behaviour and take responsibility for my actions. Help me to accept the truth of Your word and live in the grace and freedom that is mine through the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Amen

***We need
to seek
God to
awaken us
to the
harmful
choices we
are
making.***

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2018

NO GREATER LOVE

God's great love for women and men sent Jesus to the world to pay the price for our freedom from sin.

Jesus said, ***“No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded.”*** (John 10:18 NLT)

All of our sin – from the beginning of time to the end of time – was laid on Jesus at the cross and not even the weight of that could hold him down. Jesus died to free us from the power of sin and was resurrected from the dead. Jesus' resurrection demonstrates that no darkness or evil, no pain or brokenness can overcome the power and love of God.

***Jesus'
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I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 1:19-20 NLT)

No matter how destructive our lives have been, not even the weight of that can hold us down when we are in Christ. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is in all who completely surrender their will and their lives to God. Are we willing to push back doubt and unbelief and turn our will and our lives over to the care of God?

The Bible says, ***God works for good in all things for those who love Him, those who are called according to His purpose.*** (Romans 8:28 NIV)

What seems impossible for us to believe is only impossible when God is not involved. When we seek God, things will happen that are beyond all that we could ask for or imagine. God's power will help us stand when we feel like we are about to fall. He will shelter us from the destroyer and keep us in perfect peace even when the storms of life are raging.

Prayer: Gracious God, Who am I, a mere human, that You would do so much for me. My heart is overwhelmed by Your compassion and tenderness. Forgive me when I forget that You truly are an awesome God who works all things together for good in my life. Amen

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2018

DETERMINED DECISIONS

God is willing to support and strengthen us as we lay down our own self-directed ways and invite Him to lead us along the path He has chosen for us. Perhaps this is the time to take inventory of our lives and determine the changes we want to see, and what decisions we need to make to get us to where we want to be.

For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. (2 Chronicles 16:9 NKJV)

What has God already said in the Scriptures that we can act on? Have we resolved to surrender our self-will to God and ask for His will to be done in our lives? Are we prepared to be patient while working through the variety of circumstances that are part of our life today, allowing God to show us a new way forward?

For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory. The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control." Many sorrows come to the wicked, but unfailing love surrounds those who trust the Lord. (Psalm 32:7-10 NLT)

If we decide to proceed with what God tells us to do, no matter how incredible it might seem, we will experience the joy of seeing God work in ways we never thought possible. God is always with us. That is a fact. We don't have to face any difficulty alone. That is a fact. Together with God any difficulty can be worked out and overcome. That is a fact. The question is, will we determine to live in a way that gives God an opportunity to demonstrate these facts?

Show me the right path, O Lord; point out the road for me to follow. Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you. (Psalm 25:4-5 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, Create in me a clean heart that is devoted to You. I am ready to surrender my self-will and ask that You instruct me in Your way of wisdom. Please lead me along a straight path for I choose to put my hope in You. Amen

If we decide to proceed with what God tells us to do, no matter how incredible it might seem, we will experience the joy of seeing God work in ways we never thought possible.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2018

WHAT'S RIGHT

The choices we make today matter to God. God created men and women in His own image and brought them together in a loving relationship with Himself and with each other. This beautiful Earth was created as a home for humans to enjoy and live in God's companionship and care. Even when the rebellious actions of humans cut off their relationship with Him, God put a plan in place for restoration of that relationship through His son Jesus.

Jesus says, "Love the Lord God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and energy and Love others as well as you love yourself. There is no other commandment that ranks with these." (Mark 12:30-31 MSG)

God never intended us to know evil let alone experience it done to us or done by us. He knew how evil would impact relationships and so God desired to protect humans from its devastating power. However, in making Adam and Eve in His image, He gave them the freedom to choose whether they would love and obey Him. This is still our choice today.

God never intended us to know evil let alone experience it done to us or done by us.

God set a tree in the middle of the garden where Adam and Eve resided. This tree bore the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. He asked them not to eat from the fruit of the tree and warned them, if they did they would die. Unfortunately, the woman and man disobeyed God's instructions and ate from the tree. This caused humans to enter a new dimension of knowing and interacting with the power of evil, a power greater than themselves. As they chose to live in self-will rather than God's love and power, they fell captive to the powerful forces of evil. We will do the same if we follow their ways.

All the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes ... There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death. (Judges 17:6 NLT, Proverbs 14:12 NIV)

We have a choice today, will we choose to love and trust God's ways, or choose to do whatever seems right in our own eyes?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, come and live in me and work in me, so I choose to surrender to your will and follow Your ways. My desire is to do what is right and fulfill Your purpose for my life. Amen

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2018

MIXING LIGHT AND DARKNESS

Light and darkness just don't mix. A safe and stable life in recovery requires us to leave behind shady living and enter fully into the life of goodness which God desires for us.

God is light. There is no darkness in him at all. Suppose we say that we share life with God but still walk in the darkness. Then we are lying. We are not living by the truth. (1 John 1:5-6 NIRV)

What lures us to live in the shadows rather than living fully in the light? How can we avoid these dangerous temptations that keep us there?

Are we spending time with uplifting people or with gossipers, complainers and fault-finders? Are we talking problems and war stories or speaking truth and encouragement? What about the content of what we're watching or reading? What do the lyrics of the music on our phones say? God calls us away from people, places, and even media that glorify sin. We need to find new activities, new places to gather, a new circle of friends, and new sources of nourishment for our heart and soul. Mixing darkness with light is a recipe for living in the shadows of discontent which eventually will lead to relapse.

Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. (Ephesians 5:11 NLT).

What are we thinking about? Are we thinking about engaging in any behaviour that the Bible says is harmful? We need to come into the light and discipline ourselves to refocus our minds in the light of God's truth. We can't just ignore those parts of the Bible that are inconvenient to our lifestyle. In fact, ignoring the truth of God's word drives us further into the shadows.

For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! (Ephesians 5:8 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I repent of dark thoughts and behaviour. Help me to come out of darkness and walk with You in the light, upholding Your word and ways in everything I do. Amen

We need to come into the light and discipline ourselves to refocus our minds in the light of God's truth.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2018

SUNDAY PSALM – GOD HELPS ME

God knows that it is easy for us to let fear take control of our lives. When circumstances are overwhelming we may feel helpless and uncertain of our ability to handle the events that are facing us. We are afraid of the pain that results when a possibility of being pushed to the side and forgotten exists. We feel insignificant and abandoned, with no one to help us.

The good news for us is that when we call on God in our day of trouble, He promises to help us. When we give our will and our life over to God's care, we become His beloved children. God wants us to walk in the confidence of His ever-present help in trouble. King David knew something about all this when He wrote this famous poem.

God wants us to walk in the confidence of His ever-present help in trouble.

The Lord is my light and my salvation—so why should I be afraid? The Lord is my fortress, protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble? He will conceal me there when troubles come; he will hide me in his sanctuary. He will place me out of reach on a high rock. Even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will hold me close. Teach me how to live, O Lord. Lead me along the right path, for my enemies are waiting for me. Yet I am confident I will see the Lord's goodness while I am here in the land of the living. (Psalm 27:1, 5, 10-11, 13 NLT)

On days when the news is full of violent neighbourhood attacks, God invites us to be at peace because His presence accompanies us wherever we go. When we feel abandoned and let down, God reminds us that strength and comfort are as near as calling out to Him. When we are not sure how to navigate life, God responds to our cry for help as we ask Him to lead us on the right path. We can choose to live confidently each day knowing that we will experience the goodness of God as we dwell in His care and faithfully follow His directions.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You are my light and my salvation and with confidence I move forward in Your care. Thank you that in times of trouble I can take shelter under Your shadow for Your presence is ever with me wherever I go. Amen

MONDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2018

WISDOM IN THE STORM

If we follow God's plan on our journey of life in recovery, we need not be fearful when we encounter the storms of life. God's instructions are reliable. His unfailing love keeps us at peace on our journey and His wisdom guides us to a safe and successful destination.

Jesus said: ***"Anyone who listens to My teaching and obeys Me is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against the house, it won't collapse, because it is built on rock"***. (Matthew 7:24-25 NLT)

To live wisely, when recovering from the storms of years in addiction, we need to develop a spirit of humility which says to God, "I don't know what is best for me today but I'm willing to learn. I'm willing to change my thinking process and practice new behaviours which You are teaching me."

Self-help books can provide some benefit in understanding ourselves, our family of origin, and some natural tendencies that go along with our personality. However, it's important to remember that through His word in the Bible, God reveals the way to the best life possible. Anything that contradicts principles written in the Bible is nothing more than "limited worldly wisdom". It would be gainful for us to lay aside worldly wisdom in the same way we have set aside the lies and misconceptions of our addictive and obsessive thinking.

Perhaps this is a day for learning about the difference between what we think, what society thinks, and what is true because God said it. Basing our lives on God's truth is the sure foundation for success and peace in recovery no matter what storms we may encounter.

Prayer: Gracious God, I don't know what is best for me today but I'm willing to learn. I'm willing to think new thoughts and practice new behaviours which You are teaching me. Help me to listen intently to what You are saying and obey what I learn. Amen

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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2018

HIDING BEHIND A MASK

Tomorrow night many children put on costumes and go door-to-door "trick-or-treating." Some of them wear masks to complete their costume. Many adults also dress in costumes at their workplace and later in the evening may attend parties where a mask is used to disguise who they really are. Everyone wants to have a good time as they pretend to be someone they are not for a few hours.

Truth is, many of us don't just don masks at Hallowe'en. Sometimes we have worn masks for so long that we forget who we really are. A mask, of course, covers the truth of who we are with a lie. When we live behind a mask we are denying our true self and rejecting the person God created us to be.

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. (Psalm 139:13-14 NLT)

God created us in love with a purpose for our lives. God invites us to let our unique personality complement each of our relationships, and all we undertake to do. This is what life with God in recovery is all about, becoming the person God created us to be and following the plan He has for our lives. When we dare to take off the mask and let our true self be known, we often experience freedom from the burden our false persona burdened us with. The question for each of us is, do we want to tell the truth, remove the mask, and find out who we truly are, or do we want to continue telling lies and hiding behind the mask of a false persona?

What this adds up to, then, is this: no more lies, no more pretense. Tell your neighbor the truth. In Christ's body we're all connected to each other, after all. When you lie to others, you end up lying to yourself. (Ephesians 4:25 MSG)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, from this day forward I commit to letting go of everything that hinders me from becoming the person You created me to be. Help me to tell the truth in every circumstance and leave the outcome with You. Amen

WHICH MASK DO I CHOOSE?

As we noted yesterday, many of us don't just wear a mask at Hallowe'en. We put on masks as regularly as some students put on school uniforms.

Here are some masks that people choose to wear:

- A "clown" mask, when we are afraid of looking at the deeper places of our hearts.
- An "I'm OK" mask, when we don't want anyone to know we are feeling vulnerable.
- A "stone-face" mask, when we refuse to live in God's tenderness as we deal with the issues of our heart, so we think we have to appear "tough".
- An "angry" mask, when we are feeling hurt but want to appear strong rather than weak.
- An "I'm too busy" mask, when we take ourselves so seriously that we think the whole world revolves around us and we've forgotten how to play.
- A "rattling-on-mask", when we are afraid of silence or when we are trying to cover up our insecurities.
- A "poor me" mask, when we want to be rescued by others, rather than acting responsibly and dealing with what we are encountering today.

***With God
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Which of the above masks are we more likely to put on in a moment of insecurity or fear? God tells us He is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help when we are in trouble. Therefore, with God we can face whatever comes along without needing to hide behind a mask. As we follow God's principles for our lives, not forgetting to do what we have been taught, we will know great freedom and will be blessed in all we do.

O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. 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 139:1, 5, 16 NLT)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I confess that often when I feel vulnerable I allow myself to be burdened by putting on a mask. Help me to stand firm on the truth of who You say I am. You made me, and I am precious in Your sight. Though I may feel helpless in a given moment, I can rely on You to be my support for You delight in me and will shield me from all harm. Amen

How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery

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

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

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

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

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

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