

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



October 2019



These meditations are available online
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*Partners in Hope Recovery Society
is a Christian community
outreach organization
offering hope, support, and healing
through Jesus Christ
to victims of
harmful circumstances and dependencies,
as they reclaim the gift of their life.*

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JUST FOR TODAY

Just for today I will try to live in conscious contact with God praying only for knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out.

Just for today I will strengthen my mind. I will take a few minutes to read and meditate on God's word, seeking God's perspective for my life today. I will take note of one helpful thing God is saying to me and seek to behave accordingly.

Just for today I will be joyful, optimistic, and grateful. I will take time to notice the gifts in me, in others, and in my surroundings and let the rest go.

Just for today I will adjust myself to what is and not try to adjust everything else to my desires. I will trust that God is working all things for good in my life.

Just for today I will be agreeable. I will not criticize, not find fault, and not try to improve or control anybody except myself. I will pray blessing on one person with whom I struggle to relate.

Just for today I will have a quiet half hour all by myself to relax and enjoy all that God is giving me.

Just for today I will be unafraid, believing that as I trust in God with all my heart and lean not on my own understanding, He will lead me along a good path.

Just for today I will seek to serve others with kindness, doing what is right, and walking humbly with God.

***For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus,
so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. Ephesians 2:10 NLT***

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.

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY Daily Meditations

OCTOBER 2019

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SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

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

<p style="text-align: center;">SUBSTANCE ADDICTIONS:</p> <p>Alcohol Caffeine Injected or smoked substances such as: Crack, Crystal Meth, Heroin Marijuana Prescription Medications Sugar Tobacco</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BEHAVIOUR ADDICTIONS:</p> <p>Anger/Rage/Bullying Cutting Crime Eating Disorders: Bulimia, Anorexia, Binging, Obesity Gambling Hoarding Sex/Pornography Verbal Abuse: Gossip, Lying, Accusing Blaming, Condemning Violence (physical, verbal, cyber)</p>
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PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

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

NOTES

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2019

LOVED WITHOUT CONDITION

We don't really know God until we know that God is love and that God's love for us is unfailing. We can depend on God's love. We often hear the term "unconditional love." What does that mean? Is God's love unconditional? Can we do whatever we like, and God will continue to pour out His love on us?

Often when people speak about God's unconditional love what they are really saying is that God's love is available to everyone. Thankfully, there is no special race or social class we need to belong to in order to be loved by God.

God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him would not be lost but have eternal life. (John 3:16 ERV)

We speak of God's unconditional love because He is willing to forgive all sin. There is no sin that the blood of Jesus will not wash clean. When we humbly repent of our sin and ask God to forgive us, He will cleanse us. There is no further payment required, our sin debt has been paid in full. We need no longer live in guilt and shame.

In Christ we are made free by his blood sacrifice. We have forgiveness of sins because of God's rich grace. (Ephesians 1:7 ERV)

While God is willing, His holiness prevents Him from pouring His love into our hearts when we live in pride and self-sufficiency, and refuse to admit our failings.

To live in the love of God requires our willingness to turn away from sin and follow God's way rather than our own. We can't say we are allowing God to love us and live in hatred and self-will. To receive God's love we must be willing to take these first three steps – admit we are powerless and a mess; get to know this amazing God and believe He can restore us to new life; turn our will and our life over to His care and humbly live there on a moment-by-moment basis.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I have gone my own way, made a mess of my life, and harmed others in the process. I turn away from living apart from you in self-will. I ask You to forgive me. I place my trust in the freedom from sin that Jesus provided for me when He died in my place. Help me to receive Your unfailing love and live in Your tender care. Amen

***There's
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to be
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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2019

CREATIVITY

"The Night Watch," a masterpiece by the painter Rembrandt, is being restored, and the public have been invited to view the procedure and give feedback on the restoration process. All of us in recovery are like the people depicted in that painting, we are stained by the world around us. Each one of us requires individual attention as we are being restored to the person God created.

Know that the Lord is God. He made us, and we belong to him. We are his people. We are the sheep belonging to his flock. (Psalm 100:3 NIRV)

Being creative is a God given ability because we are made in God's image.

As toddlers we likely did little things that brought delight to those around us. As the years went on, we got stained by our environment. In addiction, who we really are got taken over by the person we became. God has given each person creative ability which may have been lost behind the screen we put up to protect ourselves. Perhaps we can paint or play an instrument or sing or excel at a sport or build a house or use some other skill we have been given. God has a purpose for each of us on this earth and we can expect that the purpose will show itself during the recovery process.

The Lord has given them special skills as engravers, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple, and scarlet thread on fine linen cloth, and weavers. They excel as craftsmen and as designers. (Exodus 35:35 NLT)

The restoration of the painting above is being viewed by the public who will give input on its progress. In our recovery we have people around us who are willing to share their experience, strength and hope with us. Being creative is a

God given ability because each of us is made in God's image. God's desire is that we discover His original plan for our lives and allow Him to fully restore the person He created us to be.

The Lord will work out his plans for my life — for your faithful love, O Lord, endures forever. Don't abandon me, for you made me. (Psalm 138:8 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, When I look around, I am amazed at the work of Your hands. Please restore me to be the person You created me to be, so that I might take my rightful place in Your creative plan. Amen

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2019

HANDLING STRESS

Stress comes in many areas of life for all of us. We experience what seems like too much pressure at home or at work. Perhaps we can't sleep, or we walk around with an uncomfortable level of anxiety most of the time. For a number of us, dealing with stress was a contributing factor in our drug and alcohol use and eventually led us to addiction. The key to effectively handling stress is to lean on God's power at the initial stage of any problem.

The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. I say to myself, "The LORD is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!" (Lamentations 3:22-24 NLT)

God's strength comes as He stabilizes our emotions with His peace, infuses our hearts with His joy, and provides us with His wisdom to deal with any hardship in life. It's important to admit we're stressed, first to God, and then perhaps to someone we trust. God is with us. God cares. God has promised to act on our behalf when we give our will and life over to His care.

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. (Philippians 4:6 NLT)

When we are under stress, we need to be aware of things we tend to project into the situation, things that don't exist but are the base of our worries and fears. We need to allow past events and hurts to go, and only concentrate on what today's real challenges are. Perhaps we need to set reasonable priorities and let some things go. Many of us dislike asking for help. This may be a time to live more realistically and reach out for help.

God says: ***"Don't be afraid, I've redeemed you. I've called your name. You're mine. When you're in over your head, I'll be there with you. When you're in rough waters, you will not go down. When you're between a rock and a hard place, it won't be a dead end—Because I am God, your personal God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior.*** (Isaiah 43:1-3 MSG)

Prayer: Loving God, you know me and the pressures and stresses I face. Help me to trust You and let go of these stresses. Help me to be realistic on what I can achieve. Strengthen me in my resolve to develop wisdom in the handling of all my affairs. Amen

The key to effectively handling stress is to lean on God's power at the initial stage of any problem.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2019

LIVING BEYOND INTOLERANCE

An important character strength to develop is tolerance – being patient, understanding, and accepting of something different. We live in a world where there is a mixture of many cultures and behaviours, traditions and beliefs. The things one family values will be quite different than those of another. For many of us, part of the challenge to be tolerant is learning how to be around others who are at a different place in recovery than we are.

Too often we expect others to take our weaknesses into account no matter the impact, or we expect others to find a clean and sober life in exactly the same way we did. Truth is, we all come into this new life with God in recovery from different places on the path. God loves all of us. God invites all of us. Jesus paid the price for the wrong of all of us.

**Be
tolerant
with one
another
and
forgive
one
another**

Jesus confronted a group of people, who themselves weren't perfect, yet who were condemning a woman for her wrongs, wanting to stone her to death. His advice to them was:

So he [Jesus] stood up and said to them, "Has any one of you not sinned? Then you be the first to throw a stone at her." ...Those who heard what he had said began to go away. They left one at a time, the older ones first ... Jesus stood up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Hasn't anyone found you guilty?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then I don't find you guilty either," Jesus said. "Go now and leave your life of sin." (John 8:7-11 NIRV)

**Colossians 3:13
GNB**

Jesus calls all of us to stop sinning and receive forgiveness. To show respect and tolerance doesn't hide the need for change but it does help all of us to remember that we are all on equal ground. We would do well to focus on making an inventory of our own character defects and simply focus on loving others, blessing them and praying that they will find the forgiveness and healing Jesus is offering them.

Be tolerant with one another and forgive one another whenever any of you has a complaint against someone else. You must forgive one another just as the Lord has forgiven you. (Colossians 3:13 GNT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, at my worst You treated me with compassion and mercy. Help me to walk with respect and humility among others who live and act differently from what I value. Help us all to come to You for forgiveness and new life. Amen

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2019

GIVING UP THE LIE

Addicts tell lies. We tell ourselves we need our substance of choice in order to deal with the day. We believe the truth about our lives is too painful to face, that we're different, and that our circumstances are too traumatic to overcome. We lie because we are embarrassed and ashamed. We lie because we are in denial about where our addiction has taken us. The bottom line is, we lie because it helps us remain in the familiar place where we are.

Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. (Colossians 3:9 NLT)

One of the greatest challenges we face in recovery is giving up the lie we tell ourselves, that we need to lie. We have not changed much if we lie to get money from the government or lie because we're ashamed of what we are now remembering and tell only part of the truth about our past.

Honest people can always feel secure but lying cheaters will be caught. Kind words are like a life-giving tree but lying words will crush your spirit. (Proverbs 10:9, 15:4 ERV)

Lies keep us hidden in isolation and shame. They cloud our ability to seek solutions that bring us real freedom. It's time to choose truth and work hard on changing the environment of lying we've created. One truth at a time – even an acknowledgement that we just lied – will bring freedom and relief. Nothing brings peace and a sense of wellbeing more than living in the truth. Our recovery is a journey of developing trust in the truth that God's principles are reliable, and that God is trustworthy. Each time we tell the truth, regardless of the inconvenience, we will deepen our experience of true freedom and become more stable because God is faithful to His word and will bless us.

But you must do this: Tell the truth to your neighbors. When you make decisions in your cities, be fair and do what is right. Do what brings peace. (Zechariah 8:16 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit that lying often seems much easier than telling the truth. I want the life of freedom and peace You promise to those who live in the truth. Help me to notice today when I lie and give me courage to deal with it immediately. Amen

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2019

CONFRONTING MY POWERLESSNESS

For all of us there came a time when we could no longer avoid the realization that our lives were a mess. When we came to this place of brokenness and powerlessness, we knew we needed to make a choice where our life would go from here. We had to admit that our addictive habits and unhealthy relationships were causing us harm and not giving us the relief we were seeking. We had to admit defeat. We had to admit we couldn't do things on our own and came to the point where we knew we needed help.

Have compassion on me, Lord, for I am weak. Heal me, Lord, for my bones are in agony. I am sick at heart. How long, O Lord, until you restore me? Return, O Lord, and rescue me. Save me because of your unfailing love. (Psalm 6:2-4 NLT)

When we wake up to our helpless state and surrender ourselves to God, He stands ready to help us find a new life.

It is human to want to control our own life and circumstances. We want to feel good, be happy, and live free from pain at all times. However, there comes a time when we must realize that this is not real life. Pain is a part of life. Problems are a regular occurrence. We are powerless to avoid them. When we come to this realization, what are we to do? We can wallow in frustration and self-pity or, this can be a moment where we look for a road which will take us forward to a life that may not be perfect but is truly meaningful and satisfying.

In my distress I cried out to the Lord; yes, I prayed to my God for help. He heard me from his sanctuary; my cry to him reached his ears. (Psalm 18:6 NLT)

Our helpless condition is no surprise to God. He already knows we will not succeed when we try to do things on our own. When we waken up to our helpless state and surrender ourselves to God, He stands ready to help us find a new life. God cares for us more than we care for ourselves. He knows a sure way forward, is willing to guide us, and has the power to get us safely there. To get the help we need, God tells us to call out to Him and He will supply it.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit defeat. I am powerless to live on my own without you. I want relationship with you as the new way of life for me. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit who will be with me and give me the peace, power, and truth I need to move forward. Amen

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2019

JUSTICE, JEALOUSY, AND DAY LABOUR

Jesus told a story of a man who was hiring day laborers. He hired some at 9am and agreed to pay them a fair day's wage. Others were brought in to work around noon, with the promise of being paid whatever was right. As the afternoon wore on and others were still without work, the man hired them as well. At the end of the day when the wages were being handed out, those who were hired first thing in the morning expected much more pay than those hired late in the day. They were quite upset when the employer paid each person the same wage regardless of the length of time worked. (Read: Matthew 20:1-16)

Any of us who have gone to a day labour office know that whether we are the first to get work or we have to sit in the office for a few hours, we all need to eat and pay for shelter. No landlord reduces the rent because we've found it difficult to get enough hours of work. We are all in desperate need.

The same is true for us as we come into life with God in recovery. Whether we sober up and turn our will and our lives over to God's care at age 18 or 81, God promises us His forgiveness and life with Him forever. All are desperately in need of God's saving and transformation of our lives. God's generosity is not based on what we can do, it is based on what Jesus did for us on the cross and offered equally to all.

All have sinned and are not good enough to share God's divine greatness. When people sin, they earn what sin pays—death. But God gives his people a free gift—eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 3:23, 6:23 ERV)

It wouldn't matter when we started, we never could do enough to turn our lives around by our own efforts. We are powerless and our lives are unmanageable. But our generous God, if we are willing to respond to his offer, chooses to be generous to all of us and provide exactly what each person needs. This is justice on God's terms. There's no place for jealousy that someone got the message earlier or only received God's kindness minutes before they died. We just need to rejoice that God offered it and we got it when we did.

Prayer: Loving God, You know what we need and regardless of our age or our past, You offer us grace and forgiveness today. As I have been treated by You, help me to treat others in the same way. Help me always to be generous and forgiving. Amen

We never could do enough to turn our lives around by our own efforts.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2019

RAIN

Many ordinary everyday things can help us remember God's goodness and bring us encouragement in our life's journey with God in recovery. Today we consider rain. The rain is meant to be a sign to us of God's goodness and generosity.

May the clouds in the skies above pour goodness on the earth like rain. May the earth open up to let salvation grow and may goodness grow with that salvation, which I, the Lord, created. (Isaiah 45:8 ERV)

The Bible uses the rain that comes in each season as an example of how God will keep His promises and always do what is right, at just the right time. When the rain comes everything gets watered and washed. God's washing and forgiving is available to everyone no matter what the sin is or for how long it's been going on.

May the clouds in the skies above pour goodness on the earth like rain.

Isaiah 45:8 ERV

Be joyful because of what the Lord your God has done. He has given you the right amount of rain in the fall. That's because he is faithful. He has sent you plenty of showers. He has sent fall and spring rains alike, just as he did before. (Joel 2:23 NIRV)

Rain is often seen as a blessing because it softens the ground and provides the environment that is necessary for plants to grow. God wants us to flourish in our recovery. As we read His words and allow them to soak into our thoughts and soften our hearts, our broken lives will be transformed, and we will become fruitful in the ways of God.

The rain and the snow come down from the sky. They do not return to it without watering the earth. They make plants come up and grow. The plants produce seeds for farmers. They also produce food for people to eat. The words I speak are like that. They will not return to me without producing results. They will accomplish what I want them to. They will do exactly what I sent them to do. (Isaiah 55:10-11 NIRV)

Rain or shine today, let's receive all the good things God is showering down on us to enjoy.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for rain that waters the earth and refreshes it. Help me to receive the washing that comes from reading Your Word and allow my thoughts and behaviour to be changed. Amen

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2019

FEEL YOUR FEELINGS

One of the things which many of us experienced while growing up, and which probably had something to do with our journey into an addictive and destructive lifestyle, was the lack of attention paid to us as children. We got used to being side-tracked in favour of other agendas which silenced our feelings and expectations. We gave up on going to anyone with our needs because we felt that no one knew us or even cared about who we were.

Don't turn away from me. Don't be angry with your servant. You are the only one who can help me. My God, don't leave me all alone. You are my Savior. Even if my mother and father leave me, the Lord will take me in. (Psalm 27:9-10 ERV)

What a relief it is to find out that we matter to God. We can call out to God whenever we need to because He is always listening. We can speak to God as often as we like. God is interested in all the things that concern us. In His love and tenderness God is reaching out to us and inviting us to come close to His heart. Our feelings, however, may not be receptive to this unfamiliar love and care. We are so used to muzzling our negative feelings that positive feelings are abnormal to us and it may take some time to adjust.

I was patient while I waited for the Lord. He turned to me and heard my cry for help. I was sliding down into the pit of death, and he pulled me out. He brought me up out of the mud and dirt. He set my feet on a rock. He gave me a firm place to stand on. (Psalm 40:1-2 NIRV)

The Lord is a good Father and knows His children well. God is patient, compassionate and loving and will bring us to that place of trust where we will be willing to feel our feelings. Resentment against others, which is evident in our not being willing to feel, will be replaced with love, joy and peace as we are healed and restored by the love and power of our ever-patient God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to walk from the darkness within me into the light of Your loving presence ever with me. Amen

God is patient, compassionate and loving and will bring us to that place of trust where we will be willing to feel our feelings.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2019

SUNDAY PSALM – RESPECT FOR GOD

The following words were written thousands of years ago and yet they are an accurate description of many of us before we came into recovery.

Deep in the hearts of the wicked a voice tells them to do wrong. They have no respect for God. They lie to themselves. They don't see their own faults, so they are not sorry for what they do. Their words are wicked lies. They have stopped doing anything wise or good. They make wicked plans in bed at night. They choose a way of life that does no good. And they never say no to anything evil. (Psalm 36:1-4 ERV)

***Lord,
your
faithful
love
reaches
to the
sky.
Psalm 36:5
ERV***

In our past, we had no respect for the ways of God and were content to follow our own self-centered ways, doing nothing that was wise or good. By the grace of God, we eventually realized that we were powerless over our dependencies, and our lives had become unmanageable.

When we first came to hear about a power greater than ourselves who could restore us to sanity, we were unsure of who or what this power was. Those who had some experience of God told us that He knew us before we were born and loved us so much that He sent His son Jesus into the world to save us from the penalty of sin and an eternity without love. They also told us that when we repent of our sin and believe in the finished work of Jesus to restore us to a relationship with our Heavenly Father, we are adopted into God's family. They also told us of God's loving kindness and His protection over us when we become His children. The person who wrote this Psalm came to know this amazing God and continued to write:

Lord, your faithful love reaches to the sky. Your faithfulness is as high as the clouds. Your goodness is higher than the highest mountains. Your fairness is deeper than the deepest ocean. Lord, you protect people and animals. Nothing is more precious than your loving kindness. All people can find protection close to you. (Psalm 36:5-7 ERV)

Are we truly seeking to know more about this faithful God and His love for us? If not, why not?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You know all my ways, please help me to know Yours and to follow Your principles in everything I do and say. Amen

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2019

SUNDAY PSALM – WILL GOD ACCEPT MY PRAYER?

Our Psalm today tells of one who is in agony and deep sorrow over what he has done. How often have we called out to the Lord in our distress and struggled to put our thoughts together before Him?

I cry out to God for help. I cry out to you, God; listen to me! My Lord, in my time of trouble I came to you. I reached out for you all night long. My soul refused to be comforted. I thought about you, God, and tried to tell you how I felt, but I could not. You would not let me sleep. I tried to say something, but I was too upset. I kept thinking about the past, about things that happened long ago. During the night, I thought about my songs. I talked to myself, trying to understand what is happening. I wondered, "Has our Lord rejected us forever? Will he ever accept us again?" (Psalm 77:1-7 ERV)

The person who wrote this Psalm is praying with great intensity that God would hear and listen to him. He is unable to put into words what he has done and how he feels about it. He keeps thinking about the past and perhaps God's goodness to him. Because of what He has done, He wonders if God has rejected him forever.

Sometimes we make bad decisions that negatively impact our recovery and shame us before our loving God. Knowing that God is a Holy God we may feel that repentance is not enough, and we choose to beat up on ourselves. We may judge that we fully deserve that God withdraw His love and favour from us. God, however, has made provision for our forgiveness of sin through the blood of Jesus. Jesus was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. In God's eyes the high price paid by Jesus is more than enough to forgive His children when they slip and fall into sin. Do we dare say that it is not enough?

Prayer: Gracious God, I am forever grateful to Jesus for coming into this world to pay the high price of sin. May my life always exhibit my gratitude. It is enough that He died for me. Amen

***In God's
eyes the
high price
paid by
Jesus is
more than
enough to
forgive His
children
when they
slip and fall
into sin.***

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2019

FINDING THE PERSON GOD CREATED ME TO BE

Many of us lost our true identity because we grew up in dysfunctional families and were forced to assume survival roles. God invites us to the truth that we are loved and that living now in the embrace of His love, we can become the complete person He created us to be. Our life with God in recovery is about finding both character strengths to build on and character defects that hinder us from becoming loving fulfilled individuals.

Our life with God in recovery is about finding both character strengths to build on and character defects that hinder us from becoming loving fulfilled individuals.

The God who created us knows what living in love looks like. He is more than willing to teach us about that. However, we must give up control of what we think works because our best efforts led us to lives of addiction and pain. God wants to show us a new way of achieving the life of love we desire.

We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister. (1 John 4:19-21 NIV)

How often have we felt we were doing pretty well, only to be confronted with a situation that showed us another character defect in need of attention. We cannot excuse one area of defect by simply pointing to all the things we are doing well. While we need to see growth and build on that, we also need to remain humble and recognize that there are still things to learn and put into practice.

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

As we walk with God, consult wise people, and make an ongoing inventory of our lives, God will show us the adjustments we need to make and give us the desire to do so.

Prayer: Loving God, help me to reclaim the life You planned for me when You created me in love. Give me the humility to see my lingering defects and the willingness to change. I desire to embrace Your way of living and loving in all my ways. Amen

MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2019

LIVING BEYOND VIOLENCE

God hates violence and His heart is grieved by the things that humans do to one another. God's desire is that we live our lives without violence and do all we can to limit the spread of it.

The Lord examines those who are good and those who are wicked; he hates those who enjoy hurting others. (Psalm 11:5 ERV)

Most of us who have come out of a destructive lifestyle have needed (or still need) forgiveness for the way we acted abusively or violently towards others, their property, and their person. The list of ways we were violent with our words or our actions brings remorse as we make our inventories and realize how much harm we have caused. God is able and willing to forgive us and one of the best ways to stop ongoing violence is to let God heal our woundedness so we live in His peace rather than in the darkness of our own heart.

Jesus said, ***"The things that make people wrong are the things that come from the inside. All these bad things begin inside a person, in the mind: bad thoughts, sexual sins, stealing, murder, adultery, greed, doing bad things to people, lying, doing things that are morally wrong, jealousy, insulting people, proud talking, and foolish living."*** (Mark 7:20-22 ERV)

We are wounded people mingling with other wounded people. The result is spiteful attitudes, words, and actions. While we don't want to condone violence in any way and need to set whatever healthy boundaries are necessary, we also need to humble ourselves and let God teach us about overcoming evil with good, rather than letting other's evil and violence draw similar responses from us.

Don't pay back evil with evil. Don't pay back unkind words with unkind words. Instead, pay back evil with kind words. This is what you have been chosen to do. You will receive a blessing by doing this. (1 Peter 3:9 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You have shown me Your way of love and blessing in the face of violence. Help me to receive Your forgiveness for my own failings and live in the power of Your Spirit so I can bless others rather than respond to their evil with further evil. Amen

God's desire is that we live our lives without violence and do all we can to limit the spread of it.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2019

SURRENDER TO YOUR WILL

As we begin to follow God's principles in all affairs, we may have questions about the future and how God is going to work everything together for our good and His glory. God has infinite power to help us leave behind the things we are in bondage to and which hinder our life and relationship with Him. Our part is to trust God and persevere through the obstacles we may encounter on our new path.

Commit your life to the Lord. Here is what he will do if you trust in him. He will make the reward for your godly life shine like the dawn. He will make the proof of your honest life shine like the sun at noon. (Psalm 37:5-6 NIRV)

Getting to know the richness of God's love for us will help us trust Him and surrender to His will.

Will God make all things right if we surrender to Him? Are we willing to trust God with our future? Asking questions like these is part of our decision making. In order to trust God, we need to know Him and know that He is trustworthy. Reading the Bible will give us knowledge of the character of God and how He acts on behalf of those who trust in Him. If we have made a decision to trust Him, are we committed to obeying the guidance that God gives us through His word and in answer to our prayers?

God is not a man; he will not lie. God is not a human being; his decisions will not change. If he says he will do something, then he will do it. If he makes a promise, then he will do what he promised. (Numbers 23:19 ERV)

Getting to know the richness of God's love for us will help us trust Him and surrender to His will. Jesus knew of the love our Heavenly Father has for us and because of this great love He was willing to come to earth to die for our sins. Jesus did not come to judge us but to save us. Are we willing trust and surrender our will to this God of infinite love and mercy?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to improve my conscious contact with You and get to know You and Your will for my life. Help me to rely on You for the power to change and bring my thoughts and actions into obedience to Your word. Amen

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2019

DON'T JUST TALK THE TALK BUT WALK THE WALK

When we were trapped in our own personal hell and in bondage to the substance that medicated us, we called out to God. He heard us and set us free. We were grateful to receive forgiveness for our sin and the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to live the life we always wanted. We were excited to set out on our new journey.

We never stop thanking God for the way you received his word. You heard it from us. But you didn't accept it as a human word. You accepted it for what it really is. It is God's word. It is really at work in you who believe. (1 Thessalonians 2:13 NIRV)

The joy of meeting Jesus, our new friend who desires the very best for us, was like having our cake and eating it too. However, as the days and weeks went by, we began to miss the old familiar lifestyle. We started to grumble like the children of Israel whom God had released from slavery in Egypt. On their journey to freedom they missed some things that were available in Egypt and began to see slavery with their wants met as better than freedom. If we are to walk the walk of life with God in recovery, we need to be willing to persevere through the rough country of learning to do things God's way rather than doing things our way. God is with us and will see us through every pothole we encounter, but we need to determine to stay the course even when the going gets tough.

Whoever hears these teachings of mine and obeys them is like a wise man who built his house on rock. It rained hard, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house. But it did not fall because it was built on rock. (Matthew 7:24-25 ERV)

Talking about building a house is easy, taking the action to build one requires patience, know-how and strength. In recovery, we can't just talk the talk, we need to have patience and the know-how to walk the walk. God will strengthen us to make the journey, but we need to be willing to surrender to His ways.

Heavenly Father, I don't just want to talk the talk of recovery, I want to walk the walk. With Your help and guidance, I can sustain the life I want to live without looking back. Please help me! Amen

We can't just talk the talk; we need to have patience and the know-how to walk the walk.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2019

CONFRONTING SELF-PITY

One of our natural responses to pressure and challenge is to indulge in self-pity. Things aren't going our way, in our time. A misunderstanding occurs and maybe harsh words are spoken. Someone else seems to be having it easier than us. In these, and many other situations, we are quick to feel sorry for ourselves and sink into the mud of "poor me."

The question is not, "How do we avoid feeling self-pity?" because all of us will have these feelings at times. What would be more helpful is to ask ourselves, "What can I do to overcome self-pity and quickly get back on track?"

Don't think of yourself more highly than you should. Be reasonable when you think about yourself. Keep in mind the faith God has given to each of you. (Romans 12:3b NIRV)

What can I do to overcome self-pity and quickly get back on track?"

God wants us to live in the truth about Him, about ourselves, and about our circumstances. When self-pity arises our first response should be to bring ourselves to God and let Him comfort and care for us. Then, in the security of God's love, we can sort out if this is super-sensitivity within us that needs to settle down, or a misunderstanding that needs to be respectfully talked about, or a problem that we need God and others to help us deal with.

My God will use his glorious riches to give you everything you need. He will do this through Christ Jesus. The Lord defends his people; he is kind to his servants. (Philippians 4:19, Psalm 135:14 ERV)

Self-pity is never helpful. We need to seek God to defend us. Our part is to stand in the truth and not get dragged down by the discouraging lies that foster self-pity. When it does appear, we can use it as a signal to reach out to God for help. We are assured that when we seek God, He will make all things right as we surrender to His will.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, When I face a problem or hear criticism, help me to take a broader view of the situation and not allow myself to fall into self-pity. Help me to stand on the truth of who You say I am and seek a solution which will bring peace and joy to all concerned. Amen

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2019

SETTING THE RIGHT GOALS

Many who struggle with addictive behaviours are not happy because their lives are unfulfilled, and they are not achieving what they really want in life. Happiness and satisfaction are measures of reasonable success in the goals and plans one is working towards achieving.

Living effectively with goals requires planning, working, and being accountable for how one is progressing according to the plan. Some goals include short-term activities, like what we will accomplish today or this week. Others are long-term, so we require plans for a number of years to work towards our intended goal. These are all important components of a satisfying and successful life. However, our plans must include working towards character goals that are God's principles for successful living – not just for today but for the rest of our lives.

Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. (2 Peter 1:5-7 NIV)

What would character development look like in my life if I applied common "goal setting strategies" and identified a few things that are important to me and I am willing to work on? What would be required in the short term to work towards these goals? Am I willing to get specific about the steps to be taken and the time frame required to accomplish them? Am I willing to note my progress and see any stumble in the light of the overall progress I am making?

I cry out to God Most High, to God who will fulfill his purpose for me. (Psalm 57:2 NLT)

The first task we should engage in is to agree with God's plan for character development. Character goals include: goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. Focusing on God's plan will lead to ultimate success, success as defined in God's Word. We are promised that as these qualities are practiced in our life, we will be useful and fruitful and will not stumble. Sounds like a great relapse prevention plan.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to give You the opportunity to grow my character. Show me the goals I should set that will fulfill Your plan for my life. Amen

Focusing on God's plan will lead to ultimate success: success as defined in God's Word.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2019

FINDING RELIEF FROM LONELINESS

God made us for relationship with Him and with each other. Sharing life with friends is a natural yearning of the human heart. Often we have tried to cover our loneliness with substances, destructive habits, and unhealthy relationships. Living in recovery, without whatever we used to overcome our loneliness in the past, is a challenge. God wants to give us relief from our loneliness and welcome us into His family today.

Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. Relieve the troubles of my heart and free me from my anguish. He [God] heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. (Psalm 25:16-17, 147:3 NIV)

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We are learning to put more accurate names to our emotions and loneliness has several different expressions. Grief and loss can trigger intense loneliness. Sometimes it's simply feeling ignored or left out. Being misunderstood and feeling uncared for is high on the list of loneliness indicators. Feeling drained or empty is also labelled as being lonely. We can feel lonely on our own or when surrounded by lots of people. It's all about feeling disconnected and adrift.

God, who lives in his holy palace, is a father to orphans, and he takes care of widows. God provides homes for those who are lonely. He frees people from prison and makes them happy. (Psalm 68:5-6a ERV)

As we identify what's going on in us we can begin to sort out an appropriate solution. Are we reaching out to spend time with God and others? Are we hiding behind walls of self-protection or are we being real with others so connections can be made? When we are feeling worthless and lonely, what positive truths are we choosing to affirm? When we seek Him, God promises to strengthen and comfort us with His unfailing love.

Be strong and be brave. Don't be afraid of those people because the Lord your God is with you. He will not fail you or leave you. Even if my mother and father leave me, the Lord will take me in. (Deuteronomy 31:6, Psalm 27:10 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for your unfailing love for me. When I feel disconnected, help me to affirm that I am your child and you will never leave me nor forsake me. Help me to experience healthy relationships built on the foundation of your word. Amen

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2019

CONTINUING TO HOLD A GRUDGE

Unresolved grudges from offences committed against us in childhood, usually show up in adulthood as deeply rooted bitterness. Some of us have carried the grief of these offenses for decades and have tried to relieve the pain and hopelessness we feel with addictive substances or co-dependent relationships. Over the years, by not dealing with our grudges, we have only added to our pain.

See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. (Hebrews 12:15 NIV)

Forgiveness is the only way to stop the ongoing pain from buried grudges. For some of us who have been victimized, forgiveness is unthinkable. The pain of the offence remains and forgiveness rips at our sense of justice. We want the offender to suffer for what they inflicted on us. However, until we forgive the offender, the offence he or she committed against us will continue to harm us. The occurrence will fester with resentment in our souls, and the link between us and the perpetrator we despise will remain.

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. (Colossians 3:12-13 NLT)

We can't change other people, but we can ask God for the courage to change ourselves. Hanging on to a bitter grudge and seeking revenge only sickens our soul and results in damage to those we are close to.

Jesus died for every wrong done to us or done by us. Why not choose to forgive others their sins as God has forgiven ours? Why not take the lingering pain and resentment of offences against us to the cross where they have been atoned for? Why not be guided in all our ways by the love of God?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me forgive others as You have forgiven me. I bring all grudges and bitterness that I hold against others to You, and ask You to free me from the bondage I have molded for myself. Please heal and restore those dark damaged places within me and help me to walk in the light and peace of Your presence ever with me. Amen

**Forgiveness
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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2019

DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU – REALLY?

Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Ask God to bless the people who ask for bad things to happen to you. Pray for the people who are mean to you. If you do this, you will have a great reward. You will be children of the Most High God. God is good even to the people who are full of sin and not thankful. Give love and mercy the same as your Father gives love and mercy. (Luke 6:27b-28, 35b-36 ERV)

We begin today's meditation with Jesus' words – perhaps some of the most challenging ever. It takes great courage and endurance to love anyone who is a hard-to-love person with character defects that irritate us. It seems almost impossible to love them when their shortcomings have injured us and perhaps continue to inflict harm on us when we are around them. We don't want to be co-dependent and allow those who harm us to continue to do so. Neither do we want to be people who are filled with resentment and hate because we know that is poison for us. So, how are we to respond today to what Jesus is saying?

**Ask God to
bless the
people
who ask
for bad
things to
happen to
you.**

Luke 6:28 ERV

As is true in every situation, if we seek God first, all the rest will find its way. God loved us when we were full of sin. He sorted out who we were from what we did. He never condoned our bad behaviour, He simply showed grace to us and invited us to accept His love. God sent Jesus to pay the price for our sins and restore our relationship with Him.

And then He waited – waited for us to realize the error of our ways and repent and turn to Him. He was ready and waiting for relationship with us when we were ready. In the same way, while we are right to establish healthy boundaries from people who harm us, we must deal with our own hearts towards them. We must forgive, receive healing, and develop a sincere desire for something good to happen in their lives. The most effective way to deal with the situation is to pray a blessing on them so they become conscious of God's invitation to new life and more readily be able to respond. As we seek God for the right response, He may suggest ways for us to be kind and bless the person in some tangible way. Remember hatred stirs up strife but love will cover a multitude of sins.

Prayer: Loving God, while I was still your enemy, You invited me to come to You and receive Your love and forgiveness. Thank You for teaching me Your ways through both Your life and Your written word. Please fill my heart with Your love so I may find a way to bless others as You have blessed me. Amen

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2019

DON'T EVEN KNOW I AM LYING

Too often dealing with denial is incorrectly focused on the circumstances surrounding the use of our substance of choice or other destructive habits for which we are now seeking treatment and God's help to overcome. Our default position when facing problems in the past was to live in denial that they existed. It's only natural to assume that as we face problems in our recovery, we will be prone to denial once again. Dealing with anger, shame, and hurtful relationships can make us vulnerable to our continued use of denial.

The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? But I, the Lord, search all hearts and examine secret motives. (Jeremiah 17:9-10a NLT)

It's so easy to blame others for problems we currently experience. We are accustomed to minimizing our issues and find it difficult to be vulnerable and honest in admitting what's truly going on. In recovery we now find ourselves doing the same when faced with frustration and failure. Angry reactions and heated arguments indicate that denial is still fueling our thinking. We make excuses for our behaviour, hoping these reasons will be enough to avoid taking necessary action.

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24 NIV)

Today is another opportunity to deepen our awareness of how denial continues to afflict us and to invite God to bring about positive change. A simple inventory might include questions like: What denial techniques do I use to maintain the lie that I don't have a problem? In what way do I allow God to search me and name any thoughts, motives, or behaviours that are offensive to Him? What do I do with what God reveals? What action do I need to take so I can live in the freedom that God promises?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that my heart is deceitful. Forgive me for the times I have sought to escape responsibility for my actions through denial. Fill me with the courage and strength I need to do what is necessary to live honestly and deal with what is true. Amen

***Dealing with
anger,
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hurtful
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our
continued
use of
denial.***

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2019

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

None of us like criticism but all of us should take time to hear what is being said and deal with it.

Better to be criticized by a wise person than to be praised by a fool.
(Ecclesiastes 7:5 NLT)

We are not referring to the negative talk that doesn't seek to understand where we are coming from or what we are trying to do. The kind of criticism we do need is what comes from an honest caring person who points out where our character defects are coming into play, or someone who recognizes that we don't know all there is to know in a situation and, with that in mind, helps us see that we need to make a change. This kind of honest feedback that has a healthy goal is something we can benefit from rather than something we need to run from.

None of us like criticism but all of us should take time to hear what is being said and deal with it.

If you listen to constructive criticism, you will be at home among the wise. If you reject discipline, you only harm yourself; but if you listen to correction, you grow in understanding. Fear of the Lord teaches wisdom; humility precedes honor. (Proverbs 15:31-33 NLT)

Too often we hear helpful input as an attack on our character and our identity. God wants to help us grow in appreciation of the wonderful person He created us to be, with a unique set of strengths and weaknesses. He also wants us to learn and grow and develop skills and not just settle for what we can do today. Constructive criticism points out the good as well as what needs to be changed.

If we trust someone and they bring criticism in a kind way, we may be able to accept it, but the struggle comes when someone criticizes us harshly. It's hard then not to reject everything they said and react in anger. God's way for us is to grow in grace and learn even from mixed input. Honest feedback is necessary for this to take place. We learn to keep the fish and throw away the bones.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to grow in grace and knowledge and become all you created me to be. Help me to welcome the input of wise and caring people in my life and learn from constructive criticism. Continue to heal me from the wounds that make it difficult for me to separate my self-worth from my need to grow and change. Amen

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2019

KNOWING GOD'S WILL

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.

So don't be foolish with your lives, but learn what the Lord wants you to do.
(Ephesians 5:17 ERV)

The founders of AA were clear that we needed to both get to know God's will and receive the power to carry it out. The first principle we should acknowledge is that we need help in order to do God's will. We need to ask for the gift of understanding and for God to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. God is more than willing to give us gifts, but we need to be humble and admit that we need to open our hearts and minds to receive what God has to offer.

We keep asking God to fill you with the knowledge of what he wants. We pray he will give you the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives. (Colossians 1:9b NIRV)

We need to lay down our own perspective on what is needed in any given situation in our day and be willing to see things from God's perspective. Our old ways of understanding are flawed. They may be familiar, but they took us to dark and destructive places. We need what is new, even though that often means embracing something different and unknown.

We can be encouraged and overcome our vulnerability as we hear the testimony of others and how doing God's will made a positive difference in their lives. Each time we stretch ourselves to follow God's will as laid out in the Bible, we increase our own deposit of peace and trust as we discover that God is true to all His promises.

Walk in obedience to all that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days. (Deuteronomy 5:33 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to humble myself and let go of my own perspective of life. I desire to know Your will for my life and put it into practice in all my affairs. Please give me the gift of understanding how to do this. Amen

The founders of AA were clear that we needed to both get to know God's will and receive the power to carry it out.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2019

SUNDAY PSALM – WHO GETS THE PRAISE?

God raises up people and puts them down. He alone is the righteous judge of all. From the following Psalm we learn it is better to be humble than to risk the judgment of God and have Him deal with our pride.

We praise you, God! We praise you because you are near to us. We tell about the amazing things you have done. God says, "I have chosen a time for judgment, and I will judge fairly. The earth and all its people may shake, but I am the one who keeps it steady. "To those who are proud I say, 'Stop your boasting.' I warn the wicked, 'Don't brag about how strong you are. Don't be so sure that you will win. Don't boast that victory is yours!'" There is no power on earth that can make a person important. God is the judge. He decides who will be important. He lifts one person up and brings another down. (Psalm 75:1-7 ERV)

***It is better
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Today's Psalm tells us that the earth and all its people may shake but God is the one who keeps everything steady. Some people will mock us when they hear us talk about God and praise Him for His goodness. Others may gossip and say unkind things about us and the God we love. We need to be careful that we are not guilty of gossip and of saying unkind things about even those who hurt us. All of us should be aware that on the day of judgment, we will give account for every idle word we say.

Some of our problems with others could be avoided if we were to stop bragging and boasting about ourselves. God knows the qualities and skills He has given each of us and desires that we use them for the good of others. If these qualities and skills come from Him, should He not be the one who is thanked and praised when we do well?

In thanksgiving for our life with God in recovery, let's make a point of daily telling others about the amazing things God has done for us, and ensure that He gets all the praise.

Prayer: Almighty God, Forgive me when I put others down either by gossiping or bragging. I acknowledge that You alone are all powerful and give You praise for all You have done for me. You truly are an amazing God. Amen

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2019

SUNDAY PSALM – LOOKING FOR SAFETY

How can we remain at peace in a world full of troublesome circumstances? The first line of the following Psalm tells us what to do.

I run to the Lord for safety. So how can you say to me, "Fly away like a bird to your mountain. Look! Evil people are bending their bows. They are placing their arrows against the strings. They are planning to shoot from the shadows at those who have honest hearts. When law and order are being destroyed, what can godly people do?" The Lord is in his holy temple. The Lord is on his throne in heaven. He watches everyone on earth. His eyes study them. The Lord watches over those who do what is right. But he really hates sinful people and those who love to hurt others. (Psalm 11:1-5 NIRV)

Those of us who have lived with addiction never had peace of mind. We were always anxiously looking around for something to quiet our mind and body. Because of our dependencies, some of us lost our homes and jobs and existed on the streets for a time. Law and order were not high on our list of things to comply with. Our lives had become totally unmanageable and we needed help. We would love to have flown away like a bird to the mountain but knew that was never an answer to our problems.

When we came to our senses, we ran to the Lord for safety and asked Him for help. Perhaps in our hearts we were always aware that this amazing God was close. We somehow knew in the deepest recesses of our souls that God was on His throne in heaven. Though we may not have been able to express it, we knew God was watching over everyone on earth and that included us. God saw that we wanted to do what was right. We called on Him, and He answered us.

Through the Scriptures we are being taught God's ways and are learning not to fear, for He is always with us.

Your word is like a lamp that guides my steps, a light that shows the path I should take. (Psalm 119:105 ERV)

Prayer: Loving God, My desire is to know You more and in all my ways allow You to direct my path. Thank You that when fear surfaces, I can run to You for safety. Amen

***When we
came to our
senses, we
ran to the
Lord for
safety and
asked Him
for help.***

MONDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2019

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)

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

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 friends that are around us in recovery and know that with God's help things will get better. Perhaps 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. We can also pray and look forward with hope that family relationships will be restored.

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 daily turn our will and life over to God's care, His unending love and forgiveness will give us the strength we need for the journey ahead. The road to recovery is one of experiencing the great love of God for us and being thankful that He lifted us out of the pit of sin and brought us into the light of His presence. We will set ourselves up for confusion, darkness, and relapse if we abandon the practice of humbly 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, for hope, for family and friends. Thank You also for the opportunities that lie ahead as I surrender my will and life to Your care. Amen

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2019

WILLING TO ACCEPT GOD AS HE IS

Since God has always loved us and consistently called us to Himself it makes sense that in recovery, we can expect God's grace and love to take us forward. Why then do we find it difficult to follow His will and put our lives into His care?

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you." (1 Peter 5:7, Hebrews 13:5b NLT)

Turning our will over to the care of God involves becoming willing to accept God as He is, rather than insisting on creating Him in our image, based on our own foolish ideas. We will never experience real satisfaction until we shape our lives by what is real. Only God knows what that looks like for each of us. The God who created us draws us into what He alone knows is good for us and He warns us away from those things that would be harmful. God's thinking is not twisted by wounds and resentments and shame and fear. His perspective is solely that of love and blessing. His desire is for us to know Him and the satisfying way of life He provides.

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So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?" (Hebrews 13:6 NLT)

Who is this God to whom we should surrender our will and our lives? We may not fully know Him or how good He is, but if we choose to begin this journey with even the little understanding we have, we will discover that His promises are trustworthy and He's better than we could even hope for or imagine.

Surely your goodness and unending love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalm 23:6 NLT)

Prayer: Dearest Jesus, I repent of my sin and ask for the clean heart and the gift of your Holy Spirit that You promise me. I trust you to do in me more than I can even ask or imagine. I pray Your will, not mine, be done. Help me to choose for Your way every time. Amen

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2019

COURAGE TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP

How do we find the courage to try something new or go after what we really want? Fear can feel overwhelming and too often we let it interfere with the next step we need to take to build a solid foundation in recovery.

Courage isn't the absence of fear. Courage means that we take advantage of the little strength we find within ourselves and stubbornly stick with God who will provide all the strength we need. Having the courage to change does not mean we will never experience fear. It simply means we trust God to support us as we take the next step.

In the Bible when Jesus walks on the water, the disciples are terrified when they see him. *"Lord, is it you?" Peter asked. "If it is, tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," Jesus said. So Peter got out of the boat. He walked on the water toward Jesus. But when Peter saw the wind, he was afraid. He began to sink. He cried out, "Lord! Save me!" Right away Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "Your faith is so small!" he said. "Why did you doubt me?"* (Matthew 14:28-31 NIRV).

All we need is just the courage to take the next step.

Peter was a "crazy man" but he also was someone who accomplished so much that we are still talking about him and learning from him 2000 years later. Just like us, Peter made a number of bad choices when he was afraid. However, Peter also learned from the things Jesus taught him in those moments. In the story quoted above Peter was bold enough to climb out of a boat in a storm and walk toward Jesus. Peter gathered up enough courage to take one step. He ventured out into a new experience. When he looked at the

circumstances around him, he suddenly got scared and started to sink. At that moment Peter made a good choice. He called out to Jesus and found the help he needed. Jesus then simply said to Peter as He would say to us, "Why did you doubt me?"

As we move forward in recovery, all we need is the courage to take the next step. This doesn't mean that we won't be afraid or won't need help. It means that we will summon the faith and courage to take one more step. As we do, God will support us with the necessary strength to continue our journey.

Prayer: Loving God, help me to find the courage to take the next right step. Remind me that you are always with me and I can call to You for help in every situation. Amen

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2019

DO I BELIEVE GOD LOVES ME?

Often the root of our problems is what we choose to believe. In our hearts we tell ourselves that if God truly loved us, He would have spared us from the troubles that harmed us, and He didn't. How could He love us and let us experience such pain and injustice? How could a loving God have our best interests in mind when He asks us to walk a difficult and challenging way of confronting the pain and brokenness in our lives? Wouldn't a loving God give something softer and easier after all the hardship we've experienced?

When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. (Romans 5:6-8 NLT)

The truth is that God has done more than we realize to make our lives better. Jesus suffered on the cross so we could be set free from our sin and healed from our brokenness. We were helpless to do anything about either of those conditions, so God stepped in and provided exactly what we needed. Will we accept what He's done? Will we turn over our sin and suffering and accept His saving and life-giving sacrifice on our behalf?

No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:39 NLT)

It is God's desire to restore us to a relationship with Him that is life giving and satisfying. Sanity will return when we actively live according to God's word as recorded in the Bible. As we purposefully work to free those sections of our heart that are locked in hatred and victimization, healing will come. We will also more easily enter into a loving relationship with God, and healthy relationships with others. God's love for us is unchanging. His mighty power helps us do what He says, even when it makes no sense to us at all.

Prayer: Loving God, I admit that I'm helpless and that my thinking and believing about You have been twisted and confused. I turn away from looking for any other power to sort out my pain and confusion. I turn to You. Forgive me. Heal me. Come and live in me and show me what my life is truly all about. Amen

Sanity will return when we actively live according to God's word as recorded in the Bible.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2019

BROKEN PROMISES

A dollar bill is only as good as the government or bank that has promised to give value to the holder of the bill. The piece of paper itself is of little value but the issuer or backer of the bill is what makes it valuable. Even if a dollar bill is worn, dirty and crumpled, it still has the same value as that of a new note. Some countries have had their currency devalued because of being unable to fulfill the promises written on their monetary bills. When it comes to God's promises as recorded in the Bible, we can rest assured that they will be fulfilled through all generations.

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)

Our value is backed by God's promise that whoever believes in Jesus will have everlasting life.

In our self-obsessed lifestyle we devalued ourselves in many ways. We made promises to family members and friends which we never intended to keep. Our promises to those to whom we truly mattered were of no value, and we didn't care about the harm we caused. We were captive to our addiction and our lives were unmanageable. Even in our confused state, God continued to pursue us with His love, and we responded.

God, you're my last chance of the day. I spend the night on my knees before you. Put me on your salvation agenda; take notes on the trouble I'm in. (Psalm 88:1-2 MSG)

In recovery, we have grieved over our broken promises. We desired to make amends for the harm we caused and some that we hurt have been willing to accept and forgive us, while others have doubted that we were genuine.

God knows our hearts and our value rests on who He says we are. Our value for eternity is backed by God's promise that whoever believes in Jesus will have everlasting life. If we wholeheartedly give our will and life over to the care of God, that's a promise that will be fulfilled!

Prayer: Gracious Father, I repent of the times I made promises without any intention of fulfillment. I ask Your forgiveness for all my rebellious ways and choose to give my will and life over to Your care. I am grateful for the value You see in me. Amen

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2019

BEING GRACIOUS TO ALL

God created us in love and desires that we love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength and with all our mind and that we love our neighbour as ourselves. A man who was a religious scholar in the Jewish faith asked Jesus to define who was his neighbour while believing that only a fellow Israelite was truly his neighbour. Jesus, however, gave a different interpretation of who our neighbour is.

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies. Pray for those who treat you badly. (Matthew 5:43-44 ERV)

To illustrate who His neighbour was Jesus told a story about a man who was travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho. He was beaten up by a gang of robbers who left him half dead. Two people saw the man lying on side of the road and did not stop to help him. The third person who came along was a Samaritan. The Jews despised the Samaritans. However, the Samaritan stopped and helped the injured man. He cleansed the man's wounds with oil and wine and bound them up, set the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn. He paid the inn keeper to take care of him until his return and was willing to pay any extra costs incurred. When Jesus asked the religious scholar which one was a neighbour to the man, he replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

***How do we treat others?
Are we gracious to our neighbours?***

"What do you think? Which of the three became a neighbor to the man attacked by robbers?" "The one who treated him kindly," the religion scholar responded. Jesus said, "Go and do the same." (Luke 10:36-37 MSG)

How do we treat others? Are we gracious to our neighbours? Do we take the time to listen or help someone who is in need or are we just too busy to help? What about those who haven't treated us well? From the overflow of God's generosity to us, are we willing to help others – even our enemies?

Do to others as you would like them to do to you. (Luke 6:31 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, In Your amazing love and grace You have brought me to new life in You. Help me to be alert to my neighbour's needs and to take the time to stop and listen and help when I can. Help me to be more like Jesus. Amen