

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



OCTOBER 2022



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

www.pihtoday.blogspot.com

View our daily video blog at:

www.pihprayer.blogspot.com

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

For your personal print copy send your request to:

Visit us at www.partnersinhope.ca or write to us at:

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

Email: pihrecovery@gmail.com

Phone or text: 604-215-0335

JUST FOR TODAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

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



<p>SUBSTANCE ADDICTIONS:</p> <p>Alcohol Caffeine Injected or smoked substances such as: Crack, Crystal Meth, Heroin Marijuana Prescription Medications Sugar Tobacco</p>	<p>BEHAVIOUR ADDICTIONS:</p> <p>Anger/Rage/Bullying Cutting Crime Eating Disorders: Bulimia, Anorexia, Binging, Obesity Gambling Hoarding Sex/Pornography Verbal Abuse: Gossip, Lying, Accusing Blaming, Condemning Violence (physical, verbal, cyber)</p>
<p>SOFT ADDICTIONS:</p> <p>Digital Use: (Time or Content) TV/Phone/Tablet; video games, Social Networking; Cyber-bullying; Online shopping; Gambling, Pornography Exercise Food (See Eating Disorders) Isolating/Sleep Money: Debt/Fraud Religion Shopping Sports Work/Achievement</p>	<p>RELATIONSHIP ADDICTIONS:</p> <p>Abusive Relationships: Includes: Intimidation, Isolation, Domination, Blaming, Humiliation, Withholding, Forcing acts against one's will Approval dependency Attention Seeking Codependence/Rescuing Power/Control</p>

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY Daily Meditations

OCTOBER 2022

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Evelyn Leeburn, Elsie Quick

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Scriptures taken from:

Holy Bible, Contemporary English Version (CEV), Copyright © 1995 by American Bible Society
 Holy Bible, Easy-to-Read Version (ERV), Copyright © 2006 by Bible League International
 Good News Translation (GNT), Copyright © 1992 by American Bible Society
 The Living Bible copyright © 1971 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.
 New American Standard Bible (NASB), Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation
 New King James Version® (NKJV), Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
 Holy Bible, New International Version® (NIV), Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.
 New International Reader's Version (NIRV), Copyright © 1995, 1996, 1998, 2014 by Biblica, Inc.®. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.
 Holy Bible. New Living Translation (NLT) copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.
 New Life Version (NLV), Copyright © 1969, 2003 by Barbour Publishing, Inc.
 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
 The Message (MSG), Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002 by Eugene H. Peterson

PHOTOS

Cathie Bolan © 2022 Cathie Bolan
 Elsie Quick, Evelyn Leeburn, Linnea Groom © 2022 Partners in Hope Recovery Society

© 2022 Partners in Hope Recovery Society. All rights reserved. Printed in Canada.

VOLUME 07, NUMBER 10

PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

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

How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery

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

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

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

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

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

GOD GIVES PEACE

Many of us who experience discontentment with life are unable to settle ourselves and be at peace. It appears we don't enjoy life as it is because our minds are focused on how we would like it to be. Perhaps, as children, we suffered anxiety due to unmet needs or for various other reasons were traumatized or mistreated. This contributed to worry and dread, and we controlled how we were feeling by becoming compliant and not dealing with life. In this way we lost touch with our true self and the person God created us to be.

I give you peace, the kind of peace only I can give. It isn't like the peace this world can give. So don't be worried or afraid. But godliness actually is a source of great gain when accompanied by contentment [that contentment which comes from a sense of inner confidence based on the sufficiency of God]. (John 14:27 CEV; 1 Timothy 6:6 AMP)

As we grew older, we found life to be overwhelming and used alcohol or drugs or unhealthy relationships to help us cope. Some of us became people pleasers to make ourselves more acceptable to others. The truth is, we were wandering further away from the God who created us. God saw us in our unmanageable state and pursued us with His love. As a result of His grace, we made a decision to give our will and life over to His care.

God's love and kindness will shine upon us like the sun that rises in the sky. On us who live in the dark shadow of death this light will shine to guide us into a life of peace. (Luke 1:78-79 CEV)

As we walk with God, rooted and grounded in His unfailing love and acceptance of us, we will feel secure and at peace with the world. Jesus is our Saviour who represents us before God, and God has promised to meet all of our needs and He will not fail us.

Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save those who come to God through him. He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf. (Hebrews 7:25 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for Your promise of peace in my life. Help me to be content with who I am and enjoy my life in recovery, one day at a time. Amen

***I give you
peace, the kind
of peace only I
can give. It
isn't like the
peace this
world can give.
So don't be
worried or
afraid.***

John 14:27 CEV

AVAILABLE

What came first the chicken or the egg? When we called out to God in our powerlessness, did we suddenly show up on His 'locating system' or was He already waiting and available when we called for help? From before we were conceived in our mother's womb God knew us and was available to help us when we chose to call out to Him.

I reached out day after day to a people who turned their backs on me, People who make wrong turns, who insist on doing things their own way. (Isaiah 65:2 MSG)

From before we were conceived in our mother's womb God knew us and was available to help us when we chose to call out to Him.

God knew about the virgin Mary long before she knew that she had found favour with Him. It was quite a surprise for Mary to be told she was to conceive a child by the power of the Holy Spirit, and this was God's plan for her life. Mary was available to God to follow the direction He had chosen for her life, even in unexplainable circumstances. Are we available to God to follow the direction He has for our lives, even when the timing is inconvenient?

..the angel assured her, "Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call his name Jesus. And Mary said, Yes, I see it all now: I'm the Lord's maid, ready to serve. Let it be with me just as you say. (Luke 1:30-31, 38 MSG)

To know God's will for our lives, we need to be available to Him to teach us. Through prayer and meditation on His word, we build our relationship with God and He will show us His plan. As we become willing to do what He says, He will give us the desire and the will to bring it to pass.

Because we know that this extraordinary day is just ahead, we pray for you all the time—pray that our God will make you fit for what he's called you to be, pray that he'll fill your good ideas and acts of faith with his own energy so that it all amounts to something. (2 Thessalonians 1:11 MSG)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is to know Your will for my life and, even when it may seem overwhelming or inconvenient, be willing and available to do what You say. Amen

SECURITY OR CHANCE

Often in recovery we are not sure where the future is going to take us, and it makes us fearful. In the past we used our addiction to help boost our confidence or blot out reality so we could survive. In sobriety, blurred images of ourselves come to life and we suffer the shame of the path we previously chose to follow. Thoughts of defeat tell us we will never be able to live securely in the new life God is offering us. The alternative, however, is going back to a life guided by our own self-will and living in constant insecurity and chance. We are at a crossroad, which path will we choose?

So if you find life difficult because you're doing what God said, take it in stride. Trust him. He knows what he's doing, and he'll keep on doing it. (1 Peter 4:19 MSG)

If we choose the path that God has planned for us, we are assured that God knows the way and He will guide us. If we choose the path of chance, we will struggle to find our way and we will be alone as we walk in it. The unknown is not unknown to God, and He will make our way safer than any other way that may seem familiar at present but is masked in darkness ahead.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (Psalm 119:105 NKJV)

If we are looking to people, money, or any other thing for our security, we need to change our focus and look to the Lord of heaven and earth. God will be our security. God is faithful and has the power to do everything He has promised us.

God guards you from every evil, he guards your very life. He guards you when you leave and when you return, he guards you now, he guards you always. (Psalm 121:7-8 MSG)

Prayer: Loving God, I confess that my own way does not work, and I am fearful of what the future holds for me. Please strengthen me to believe and trust in Your word and follow You in all my ways. Amen

God will make our way safer than any other way that may seem familiar at present but is masked in darkness ahead.

RECONCILIATION

To be reconciled with someone who has wronged us is difficult. It's hard to get beyond our hurt and find the compassion we need to forgive and then find a way forward with them. God is more than able to help us do this.

Don't be angry with each other but forgive each other. If you feel someone has wronged you, forgive them. Forgive others because the Lord forgave you. (Colossians 3:13 ERV)

We are all flawed individuals. When we make amends for our mistakes, our desire is that those persons we have harmed will forgive us and that we will be reconciled with them. Despite our imperfections, we long for them to see the good in us and find a way to move forward. Where possible we should also seek restoration of our relationships with those we need to forgive and offer acceptance to them.

Try to live in peace with everyone. And try to keep your lives free from sin. Anyone whose life is not holy will never see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14 ERV)

Forgiveness is the choice of a moment, but reconciliation is a journey.

Forgiveness is the choice of a moment, but reconciliation is a journey. We must give others time to see how genuine and consistent our changes are and allow them to rebuild their trust in us. Similarly, we need to learn healthy boundaries with others while keeping our hearts open to whatever time they need to change so the relationships we build are on a solid foundation. We need to take responsibility for our actions and, where appropriate, leave another's responsibility with them. We make amends

where we can and learn to lovingly let go of those folks who are not willing or able to build relationship with us in this new way.

For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:19 NLT)

Jesus provided a way of reconciliation for us and put His Spirit in our hearts, so we could have all we need to live reconciled to God and others. We are invited to carry this message of reconciliation to others as a sign of God's heart for all of us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Jesus who made a way for me to have peace with You and with others. Help me to want and pursue reconciliation with others. Amen

STEP ONE – 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 that 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)

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 recognize 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 that seem right in our own eyes. 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 be there for us.

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

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

SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Many of us have watched movies with men or woman dueling with swords. Some of us may have an interest in sword fighting but, in recovery, most of us operate in the advance/retreat movements of dueling when we are learning to navigate life without our dependency. We take the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God and advance in our new way of life. Then someone or something comes along and blocks our forward thrust and we retreat. In these circumstances what are we to do? The Scriptures are the only Sword by which we can fight our opponent.

Accept God's salvation as your helmet. And take the sword of the Spirit—that sword is the teaching of God. (Ephesians 6:17 ERV)

Accept God's salvation as your helmet. And take the sword of the Spirit—that sword is the teaching of God.

(Ephesians 6:17 ERV)

A parry is a fencing bladework maneuver intended to deflect or block an incoming attack. A parry can be classed as any deflection of the blade that prevents the opponent's attack from landing. To prevent the tempter's attack from landing us in relapse, we need to commit to memory and speak out the Scriptures which best deflect the temptation we are dealing with. This method of defence will give us the strength to move forward again.

Because he himself (Jesus) ***suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*** (Hebrews 2:18 NIV)

The evil one tempts with lies that we should familiarize ourselves with. He makes his way seem appealing while his desire is to trap us into bondage. Jesus said there is no truth in him. Whom will we choose to believe?

He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks what is natural to him, for he is a liar and the father of lies and half-truths. (John 8:44b AMP)

Swordsmen carefully learn strategies to fight their opponents and they keep their bodies fighting fit. Are we willing to learn strategies that will help us defend ourselves against the enticements of the evil one and are we keeping spiritually fit in the Word?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to thrive in my recovery. Help me to learn and proclaim Your words of truth from the Bible, so I may defeat my opponent's enticements which are intended to harness me to the slavery of my old ways. Amen

FURY OR FAITH WHEN FACING FRUSTRATION

Four friends loved a paralyzed man and wanted him to be healed. They heard about Jesus healing the sick and the lame and knew that the only hope their friend had was to get to Jesus. They worked hard to get their friend to where Jesus was but, when they got there, they were blocked by the crowds.

While he [Jesus] was preaching God's word to them, four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat. They couldn't bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above his head. Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "My child, your sins are forgiven." (Mark 2:3-5 NLT)

These four men and their paralyzed friend were so close to Jesus and yet so frustratingly far off. However, because they trusted completely in Jesus' ability to heal their friend, they were willing to do the extraordinary. They tore up the roof and let their friend down in front of where Jesus was standing.

How many times have we been angry because we've gotten SO close to what we needed, only to bump into some obstacle or wall? Jesus is a kind and loving Saviour and a powerful healer. He knows us. He cares for us. He has the solution for every problem we face. Most of us agree with these statements but when troubles come, when sickness shows up, when loneliness brings tears to our eyes, our faith fails us, and we feel abandoned and alone. Today we are invited to press on and not give up.

If we trust who Jesus is and what He has said and act accordingly, God will do amazing things for us, far beyond all we could ask or imagine. God rewards our faith when we walk in difficult circumstances and persevere to trust Him.

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to trust You today no matter what challenges I face. You are there for me and You will meet my deepest needs. Help me not to give up when the going gets tough but to continue to trust You. Amen

Jesus rewards our faith when we walk in difficult circumstances and continue to trust Him.

IMPULSIVE

Many of us, especially early in recovery, find it difficult to control impulsive behaviour. Our history of relapses is a stark reminder of this fact. Sometimes we get caught out while doing well in controlling use of our substance of choice, but we find ourselves acting out in areas such as gambling, sex, rage, over-eating etc. To be successful in recovery we need to change how we manage the thoughts and emotions that lead to impulsive behaviour.

**When anyone
is in Christ, it is
a whole new
world. The old
things are
gone;
suddenly,
everything is
new!**

*(2 Corinthians 5:17
ERV)*

In the past you were slaves to sin—sin controlled you. But thank God, you fully obeyed what you were taught. You were made free from sin, and now you are slaves to what is right. (Romans 6:17-18 ERV)

Due to our previous lifestyle our brains may have suffered change or even damage that led to an imbalance in our impulse control. In Step Two, as we pray for God to restore us to sanity, this is one area where we can expect to see God help us. It is not easy to learn how to live in our new life in recovery, but God has promised to help us find and maintain a life of doing what is right and to enjoy the peace that goes with it.

Be alert and think straight. Put all your hope in how kind God will be to you when Jesus Christ appears. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. (1 Peter 1:13 CEV, Hebrews 12:11 NIV)

One of the areas we will first become aware of our impulsive behaviour is in our emotions and reactions to what others say or do. With God's help and power to control ourselves, we can stop, step away from the situation, and give God a chance to show us a better way to respond.

If we are to learn about controlling our impulses, the experience, strength, and hope of those who have walked this journey before us is important to seek out and put into practice. Their months and years in recovery are a testament to what God can do and will give us hope in learning to control our impulsive behaviour.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to grow in grace towards others and be consistent in making choices for good reasons rather than acting impulsively on my emotions. Amen

LOVE YOUR ENEMY

Jesus gave us very clear instructions about loving our enemies and doing good to those who spitefully use us. Many of us got caught up in addiction because we didn't know how to handle the harm inflicted on us by people who did not treat us as they should have. To recover life as God intended, we need to learn how to deal with these relationships.

Jesus was despised, physically abused, and rejected more than any other human and yet from the cross He asked His Father to forgive those who had acted unjustly towards Him. The challenge for us in our life with God in recovery is to be like Jesus and offer forgiveness to our enemies and those who have mistreated us.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:43-48 NIV)

As followers of Jesus, regardless of the injustice done to us, we are instructed to love our enemies. We are reluctant to do this and ask, “why should we forgive them?” We do so because unforgiveness is like a cancer that eats away at our soul. Those who have harmed us will account to God for what they have done. It's time for us to forgive, and by doing so, turn them over to God's righteous judgment.

I also noticed that under the sun there is evil in the courtroom. Yes, even the courts of law are corrupt! I said to myself, “In due season God will judge everyone, both good and bad, for all their deeds.” (Ecclesiastes 3:16-17 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, it is hard for me to love those who hurt me. Please work in my heart so that I can forgive and release those who have harmed me to You. Amen

**As
followers of
Jesus,
regardless
of the
injustice
done to us,
we are
instructed
to love our
enemies.**

ABBA FATHER

Many of us have struggled with believing our Heavenly Father would treat us compassionately. The way we were treated by our biological Father or other care givers will have had a major impact on our life and may influence our believing in God as He truly is, and how much He cares for us. Before Jesus went to the cross to pay the debt for our sins, He prayed for us who would believe in Him through the message of the Gospel.

“Father, you are the one who always does what is right. The world does not know you, but I know you, and these followers of mine know that you sent me. I showed them what you are like, and I will show them again. Then they will have the same love that you have for me, and I will live in them.” (John 17:25-26 ERV)

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son,

Jesus told of the love of His Father for us, and because of Jesus’ love for His Father, He was willing to come to earth to make a way for us to be forgiven for our sin and reconciled with His Father. Some of us never heard of the God who loves us and desires to be our Abba Father. Jesus was the one who demonstrated God’s love for us. On His way to the cross, knowing of His Father’s plan of redemption, Jesus spoke tenderly to His Father addressing Him with words that are equivalent to ‘Daddy’.

John 3:16 NASB

And He said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.” (Mark 14:36 NKJV)

Jesus knew of the mercy and compassion and love God had towards the people of this world and, because of Jesus’ love for His Abba Father, He was willing to die in our place so that our relationship with His Father could be restored. Who else could pay the price of our sin?

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16 NASB)

Prayer: Abba Father, Thank you for sending Jesus into the world to reveal Your extravagant love for me. Help me to be like Jesus in my heart and desire only Your will my life. Amen

MORAL EXCELLENCE

When we repented of our sin and believed in the death and resurrection of Jesus to set us free from the power of sin, we were reconciled to our Heavenly Father. We were born again from above into the family of God and given the will and desire to live a life of moral excellence that is pleasing to God. We inherited a divine nature. We became children of God who belong in His kingdom.

Jesus answered: I tell you for certain that before you can get into God’s kingdom, you must be born not only by water, but by the Spirit. Humans give life to their children. Yet only God’s Spirit can change you into a child of God. (John 3:5-6 CEV)

As new-born babies in our human family, we were helpless to do anything for ourselves. We relied on our parents or caregivers and teachers to help us grow and mature so we could live effectively in this world. It’s much the same when we are born again into the Kingdom of God. We are helpless on our own and need to rely on our gracious God to help us grow and mature so we can live effectively in the Kingdom of God.

I am writing this to you, my children, so that you will not sin; but if anyone does sin, we have someone who pleads with the Father on our behalf—Jesus Christ, the righteous one. (1 John 2:1 GNT)

While living according to what was right in our own eyes we ended up in an unmanageable existence which we were powerless to change. As we seek God and practice His principles in all our affairs, the strength and guidance we need to move forward into a life of moral excellence is there for us. Moral excellence may not happen overnight but, as we persevere, we will be active and effective for the Kingdom of God.

Do your best to improve your faith. You can do this by adding goodness, understanding, self-control, patience, devotion to God, concern for others, and love. (2 Peter 1:5-7 CEV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank You for all You have done, and continue to do for me. Help me to live a life of moral excellence and to carry the message to everyone I meet. Amen

We were born again from above into the family of God and given the will and desire to live a life of moral excellence.

OPINIONS

So many people think they know so much and over time most of us in some of these areas are proved wrong. How wise of the founders of AA to take the position that AA would have no opinion on outside issues so the AA name would not be drawn into public controversy. God's word also encourages us to think twice about sharing our opinions.

Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions.
(Proverb 18:2 NIV)

Accept the person whose faith is weak. Don't argue with them where you have differences of opinion.

(Romans 14:1 NIRV)

It's not wrong to have an opinion. We all need to think and wonder about things and form our thoughts around God's truth, but we all need to remember that we are on a journey in our minds as well as in every other area of our life. We are being transformed and that means that some of the opinions we hold today may not be those we hold at a later date.

Don't live the way this world lives. Let your way of thinking be completely changed. Then you will be able to test what God wants for you and you will agree that what he wants is right. His plan is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:2 NIRV)

The core of our thinking should be solidly based on God's word but, as in many areas of life, it takes time for differences to be explained as we respond to issues raised in groups. Where God's word is clear we need to be clear and change our minds if we have previously held other opinions. At the same time, we need to respect others

wherever they are at on their journey and who might differ from us at this point.

Let us stop judging one another. Instead, decide not to put anything in the way of a brother or sister. Don't put anything in their way that would make them trip and fall. (Romans 14:13 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I welcome You to show me Your will today. Help me to test what is right in Your eyes and make any necessary changes in my thinking. Give me grace to live with respect for others who may differ with me in their ideas and opinions. Amen

GRACE – NECESSARY INGREDIENT FOR CHANGE

Over the long haul, how do we prevent relapse into addictive behaviour and maintain our choice to live in the love and grace of God? Strangely, we have to stop focusing on "not picking up" and focus instead on God's goodness to us, God's strength in us, God's blessings around us, and God's principles for our daily living. It's time to stop recalling what happened 5 minutes or 5 years ago and instead focus on the good news that our past sins have been forgiven and that comfort and healing for every hurt are available today.

God pursued us with His love even while we were running away. He did so, not to accuse or condemn us, but to heal and restore us. To live in grace rather than in addiction is to rely on the truth that God's power is sufficient to help us stand firm in Christ.

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

Our behaviour usually reflects what we believe about God. God is love and God created us in love. Do we believe that? To live abundantly in recovery we must believe that in each moment of each day, and in every set of circumstances, our lives are supported and shaped by the love and amazing grace of God. The principle is simple, if we want to love others, we need to know that we ourselves are truly loved.

Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:7-8 NLT)

God invites us to a satisfying, meaningful, joyful and purposeful life. Are we willing to leave our addiction behind, come close to God, and accept His invitation to live in His wonderful grace?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for helping me see and acknowledge that You created me for the joy of having a loving relationship with You. Today, I choose You. I choose grace. Help me to fully live in Your amazing grace so I may get to know You and grow strong in Your care. Amen

Are we willing to leave our addiction behind, come close to God, and accept His invitation to live in His wonderful grace?

PRAYING FOR HOPE TO BELIEVE

When we come to believe that God forgives and saves us through Jesus and choose to turn our will and our life over to His care, God makes us His own. We belong. We become those who can identify ourselves as “His people.”

Look at my Servant, whom I have chosen. He is my Beloved, who pleases me. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations ... his name will be the hope of all the world. (Matthew 12:18, 21 NLT)

God also promises that when we ask Him to remove our sin and character defects, and pray with humility for His help and guidance, He will hear us. He will forgive us. He will make our lives prosper again.

God knows us well and invites us to pray for the hope to believe in a better future and His ability to guide us into it.

If my people who are called by my name become humble and pray, and look for me, and turn away from their evil ways, then I will hear them from heaven. I will forgive their sin and heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:14 ERV)

After living so long under the cloud of attacks and slurs on our reputation and other’s negative labels about who we are because of what we have done, it’s hard to hear the possibility of something wonderful coming alive in us and being lived out in new habits in recovery. One part of what God is restoring in us is a true perspective of our current and future life. We may struggle to come out from under the burden of failure and inferiority, but God knows us well and invites us to pray for the hope to believe in a better future and His ability to guide us into it.

I pray that God will open your minds to see his truth. Then you will know the hope that he has chosen us to have. You will know that the blessings God has promised his holy people are rich and glorious. (Ephesians 1:18 ERV)

We were created to know joy and satisfaction and to be part of God’s beautiful plan of blessing others. Our future is assured when we hope in God and put our trust in His ability to transform our wrecked lives into lives that benefit both ourselves and others.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You have been so kind to lift me out of the despair and darkness of my past life. Help me to believe that Your power working in me can bring about this wonderful future that You promise me. Open my mind to the truth and help me experience this hope both today and in the future. Amen

BLESSINGS WORTH SINGING ABOUT

How do we respond to the blessings God freely gives when we come to accept all Jesus has done for us and turn our will and life over to His care? Our sins are forgiven. We are washed clean. The Holy Spirit comes to live in us and restores us to sanity. We are adopted as God’s sons and daughters. We are given an awesome eternal inheritance in a place Jesus is preparing for us. Wow!!! Those are certainly blessings worth singing about.

Sing a new song to the Lord! He has worked miracles, and with his own powerful arm, he has won the victory. The Lord has shown the nations that he has the power to save and to bring justice. God has been faithful in his love for Israel, and his saving power is seen everywhere on earth. Tell everyone on this earth to sing happy songs in praise of the Lord. (Psalm 98:1-4 CEV)

The Bible tells us that we, who once were powerless over our dependency, are now more than conquerors over the world, the flesh, and the devil. By standing firm and proclaiming God’s word, we have the Power to overcome all temptation and accusation of the enemy. Should we slip and fall into sin, we are told to quickly repent and move on. God is faithful to forgive, cleanse and restore us, so we need not listen to the enemy’s accusations or wallow in our regrets.

God’s mercy and justice is beyond our understanding. When we turn our back on a corrupt world and choose to follow the ways of God, we are assured that absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God that is ours through Jesus. Having this confidence, and knowing that we lack nothing to achieve a life submitted to God, let’s carry this message to others, so that they too can sing happy songs of praise to our amazing God.

Everything that goes into a life of pleasing God has been miraculously given to us by getting to know, personally and intimately, the One who invited us to God. (2 Peter 1:3 MSG)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank You for coming to earth and helping me understand the goodness of my Heavenly Father. You inspire me to sing happy songs of praise. Amen

How do we respond to the blessings God freely gives when we come to accept all that Jesus has done for us and turn our will and life over to His care?

STEP FOUR – WHAT’S IN AN INVENTORY?

God created man and woman in His own image and together they lived in loving relationship with Him and with each other. This was the foundation that God established for a solid and satisfying life here on earth.

Jesus said: ***Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.*** (Mark 12:30-31 NIV)

The way we take an inventory of our life starts with identifying those attitudes and actions that either help or hinder us from loving God, others, and ourselves.

The way we take an inventory of our life starts with identifying those attitudes and actions that either help or hinder us from loving God, others, and ourselves. This applies to reflection on our daily living as well as a formal inventory when working the steps.

Put on your new nature and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him. (1 Corinthians 2:9; Colossians 3:10 NLT)

To live life in God’s way rather than in our own self-willed way we need to: 1) Be convinced that God knows everything about the good and evil in us but still loves us. 2) Let go of our flawed understanding of how life works and become willing to learn about new ways from God. 3) Retrain our minds in the principles found in God’s word and ask the Holy Spirit to instruct us in how to apply them in each situation that arises. 4) Ask God to show us how to love with a pure heart and to help us be obedient to Him in all our thoughts and actions.

As our relationship with God is restored, we will be renewed and strengthened to restore or build healthy human relationships.

Prayer: Search me, O 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) Amen

WONDERFULLY COMPLEX OR COMPLICATED

We were created as wonderfully complex human beings. That doesn’t mean we are complicated but rather that there are numerous ways of experiencing life that will make us remarkable people who are able to bring joy and interest to our relationships. The problem is, sometimes life itself gets complicated and we don’t always know how to sort ourselves out. The program tells us to get a sponsor. Hands go up in every meeting so the newcomer can immediately connect with someone who has insight that will help them take their first steps. Like the newcomer, each of us need to humbly admit that at times we need help, and take steps to seek it out.

A person's thoughts are like water in a deep well, but someone with insight can draw them out. Can anyone really say that his conscience is clear, that he has gotten rid of his sin? (Proverbs 20:5, 9 GNB)

We face challenges and frustrations almost every day. We don’t want to be a victim and just let fate take its course, nor do we want to be someone who intimidates and forces their way in just to get ahead. Neither of these extremes is healthy and neither will bring us the future we long to have. We need to listen to good advice about when we should battle, and when we should let things go.

Get good advice and you will succeed; don't go charging into battle without a plan. Young people take pride in their strength, but the gray hairs of wisdom are even more beautiful. (Proverbs 20:18 GNT, Proverbs 20:29 CEV)

When was the last time any of us sat down and chatted over coffee with an old timer? The Bible reminds us that there is great beauty in their “gray hairs of wisdom.” Maybe today is the time to have a conversation and really listen to what someone with 20, 30, or 40 years of experience may have to share with us.

The best place to find wise counsel is in God’s Word written in the Bible. No person has wisdom as reliable and sure as the insight we will find when we pay attention to what God says in the Scriptures. Let’s take time each day to search that out.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for the wisdom You impart to me through your Word and from the experience of others around me. Help me to humbly seek out that wisdom and intentionally allow it to influence my life with You and others in recovery. Amen

A person's steps are directed by the Lord. How then can anyone understand their own way?

Proverbs 20:24 NIV

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 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 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 unfailing 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 for friends. Thank You also for the opportunities that lie ahead as I surrender my will and life to Your care. Amen

MONEY IS NEVER ENOUGH

There is a saying that "money makes the world go around." What does this mean? We could interpret it to mean that without money everything comes to a standstill. If having money is important to make things happen what if the supply dries up? Does life come to a halt? Jesus told us not to worry about money and yet, when we do not have enough money, we worry.

So I tell you, don't worry about the things you need to live—what you will eat, drink, or wear. Life is more important than food, and the body is more important than what you put on it. Look at the birds. They don't plant, harvest, or save food in barns, but your heavenly Father feeds them. Don't you know you are worth much more than they are? (Matthew 6:25-26 ERV)

Only humans worry about money and their future well-being. The birds and animals don't worry about money or their future. They don't have sleepless nights thinking about how they will provide for their needs. How much does our worrying contribute to what we need?

Those who work hard all day come home and sleep in peace. It is not important if they have little or much to eat. But the rich worry about their wealth and are not able to sleep. (Ecclesiastes 5:15 ERV)

When we lived without the help of God, we managed either legally or illegally to fulfill the demands of our dependencies. Now that we have given our will and life over to the care of God, the great provider, will we continue to worry about what we need? God has promised to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. What we can do for ourselves, He will help us do. Money is not what makes things happen in this world, God is! Let's choose today to trust God and stop our worrying about money.

People come into the world with nothing. And when they die, they leave with nothing. They might work hard to get things, but they cannot take anything with them when they die. (Ecclesiastes 5:15 ERV)

Prayer: Loving God, You alone are the great provider. Help me to trust You to meet all my needs. Amen

Jesus told us not to worry about money and yet, when we do not have enough money, we worry.

PAYING IT FORWARD

Living a life of goodness, peace, and joy reflects the Kingdom of God within us. As God pours out His blessings upon us, we need to let those blessings overflow to others. For example, when we encounter someone who is troubled and in need of compassion and encouragement, we are to comfort them with the same comfort we have received. God promises that as we give to others He will pour even more back into our lives.

Give away your life; you'll find life given back, but not merely given back—given back with bonus and blessing. Giving, not getting, is the way. Generosity begets generosity. (Luke 6:38 MSG)

God promises that as we give to others, He will pour even more back into our lives.

A person with goodness in their heart will naturally share that goodness with others. Blessings and curses cannot come from the same heart. When we pray, we often ask God to forgive us our sins as we forgive the sins of others. Whether we choose to forgive others, or not, will have a major impact on our lives. Holding on to grudges is the soil that allows bitterness to grow in our hearts. When we choose to let go of bitterness and resolve to keep ourselves free from this controlling weed, we will be surprised by joy.

Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:31-32 NLT)

As we accept God's amazing grace, and then grace others, we will experience the joy and security of the generous life God always intended us to have.

Make sure no one gets left out of God's generosity. Keep a sharp eye out for weeds of bitter discontent. A thistle or two gone to seed can ruin a whole garden in no time. (Hebrews 12:14 MSG)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You are a God of unfailing love and faithfulness. Help me to follow Your principles in all my affairs and to bless others as I have been blessed by You. Amen

SUNDAY PSALM – MY HIDING PLACE

In our addiction the substance or habit we used to help us numb the fear and shame we were feeling, became our hiding place. We wanted to block out the memory of distressing events that caused us to feel helpless or afraid.

At various times we mistakenly felt that we were in control and could handle whatever circumstances came our way. We looked to ourselves, someone else, or some agency to solve our difficulties. We neglected to look to God, the only one who could actually help us.

O Lord, I have come to you for protection; don't let me be disgraced. Save me and rescue me, for you do what is right. Turn your ear to listen to me and set me free. Be my rock of safety where I can always hide. Give the order to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress. (Psalm 71:1-3 NLT)

The writer of the above Psalm prayed and sought protection and practical help from the Living God. He also asked that He would not be disgraced. He requested freedom and stability, realizing that only God could provide the help he needed when life was unmanageable.

We can also come before God and ask Him to help us when we are feeling vulnerable and life's circumstances are beyond our ability to handle them. When we seek God, He will listen to our prayers, and He will be our safe place to rest for a while. No situation or person is equal to God and the power He exhibits on our behalf. We can cast all our anxiety on Him for He cares for us.

You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book. My enemies will retreat when I call to you for help. This I know: God is on my side! (Psalm 56:8-9 NLT)

The Lord has invited us to call on Him when we are in trouble, and He will show us what to do. Let's draw near to God today and allow Him to care for us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for not coming to You when I need comfort and protection. Help me to trust that You are my fortress of strength and that You alone will free me from all my fears. Amen

When we seek God, He will listen to our prayers and He will be our safe place to rest for a while.

**STEP TWO – WHAT IS THIS
POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES?**

When we came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity, what did we understand about that Power? As human beings we all have some power. Some of us have the power to run for miles. Others can hardly walk across the street. Policemen have the power to stop us if we make a driving error. Others who don't have authority still try to display power as they shout and accuse when they think we have done wrong. What then is this Power greater than ourselves that we can believe in and be restored to sanity?

I want you to know about the great and mighty power that God has for us followers. It is the same wonderful power he used when he raised Christ from death and let him sit at his right side in heaven. (Ephesians 1:19-20 CEV)

**What then
is this
Power
greater
than
ourselves
that we
can
believe in
and be
restored to
sanity?**

What power does it take to raise a dead man to life? When Jesus gave His life to pay the price for the sins of the world, including ours, the mighty power of God was at work. We know that, because Jesus was raised from the dead. We have been living in darkness, dead to the ways of God, but He has called us to new life. Now, by believing in Jesus, we receive that new life by the same Power who raised Jesus from the dead, the Holy Spirit. Can you imagine? We who were once powerless over our dependencies can now live free from them because God's Power restores us to sanity.

But God has given us his Spirit. That's why we don't think the same way that the people of this world think. That's also why we can recognize the blessings that God has given us. The Spirit is the one who gives life! Human strength can do nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are from that life-giving Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:12; John 6:63 CEV)

By our human strength we were unable to overcome the power of our dependencies but now we are no longer slaves to sin. We have become children of God in whom the Holy Spirit lives.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for calling me out of darkness and filling me with a Power greater than myself. I am no longer a slave to sin; I am a child of God. Amen

ADDICTION AND THE WHOLE PERSON

We are spiritual beings who have a soul and live in a body. God created us to work perfectly only when we are filled with His Spirit. We can't think and choose correctly unless we have the life of God in us. On our own we live stressed and obsessed while trying to experience pleasure or fix something that has gone wrong. Over and over again our efforts end in disaster. Without God, we just don't know how life works.

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 2:14 NLT)

Many automobiles need a clear fluid (gasoline) in their engines in order to move and transport people from place to place. Water (a clear fluid) is much cheaper than gasoline and more readily available but if we put water into the gas tank of our car, we will destroy the car's engine and it will not perform as it should. All clear fluids do not have the same purpose.

At our core we are spiritual beings, so in order to live well we need to find a spiritual solution for what's going on in our lives. Trying to fill ourselves up with work, sex, money or pleasure of any kind will only break us down. We need the Spirit of God who alone can fill us with life and give us true understanding of how life works.

Jesus replied, "I assure you no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So, don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.' (John 3:5-7 NLT)

When we invite God into our lives, He makes us alive by the power of His Holy Spirit and fills us with life-giving truth. Only then will we begin to think and feel and act differently, and new ways of choosing and behaving will be evident in our lives. Everything changes when we become spiritually alive.

Prayer: Loving God, on my own I'm ruining the beautiful life You created me to live. I need a Spiritual solution to solve my addiction issues. Come into my life and make me alive Spiritually so that I can know the completeness of life as it was meant to be. Amen

***But the
person
who is
joined to
the Lord is
one spirit
with him.***

***(1 Corinthians
6:17 NLT)***

GOD GIVES PROTECTION

When we give our will and life over to the care of God we come out of darkness into His light. In the darkness we were unable to see what was right and good but in the light of God's presence, and through His Word as recorded in the Bible, we can determine right from wrong. God promises His protection over us as we set out on our path to recovery and righteous living. If we seek God in all our ways, we will find Him to be a present help in times of trouble.

The LORD will keep you from all harm— he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

(Psalm 121:5-8 NIV)

The LORD will keep you from all harm— he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.
(Psalm 121:5-8 NIV)

As we begin to read the Scriptures, it will be glaringly evident to us that our former way of living was far from the way God desires us to live. What we couldn't see in the darkness is now clear in the light of God's Word. The evil one desires to keep us bound in a rebellious way of living which we have already admitted is a totally unmanageable life. The evil one will also present God's ways as a stumbling block for us but, if we wholeheartedly commit to God, He will protect and strengthen us to hold fast to the principles contained in His Word.

But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one. (2 Thessalonians 3:3 NIV)

The temptation to seek our dependency and the weakness of our flesh desiring to do so, may cause us to suffer as we try to stay free from its power. To be overcomers, we need to first seek the strength of the Lord to protect us and share the truth of our temptation with our sponsor or another person who understands our situation and will support us in this time of need.

For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. (1 John 5:5 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am glad that I have been born again to a new life. Please protect me from the lies of the evil one and help me to be an overcomer. Amen

MAKING ROOM FOR THE NEW BY CLEARING OUT THE OLD

How can a person become complete in God lacking nothing? Circumstances that are happening around us often add to what is already happening inside us. If we had a cupboard which was already packed and we were trying to get more in, some stuff would spill out all over the place, because the cupboard is not equipped to contain those things we are trying to add. Our minds are like that. We need to clear out some of the old before we can add the new, otherwise confusion will result, and life will remain unmanageable.

So get rid of all that is wrong in your life, both inside and outside, and humbly be glad for the wonderful message we have received, for it is able to save our souls as it takes hold of our hearts. (James 1:21 TLB)

When something is complete it means that it has been worked on to bring it to that state. To be complete in God we need to work on getting rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behaviour that we have been exhibiting. Life's hurts may have intensified our behaviour, but God wants us to forgive those who have harmed us and instead, be kind and compassionate towards them, just as He has been towards us.

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32 ESV)

When we have cleared out some of the old behaviours we can then replace them with the new lifegiving behaviours that will draw us closer to God. We need to have daily conscious contact with God. We need to keep a personal inventory and be honest about what is causing us to keep doing something which is harmful to us. God wants us to be complete, lacking nothing, but we need to be willing to have faith in His word and practice His principles in all our affairs.

You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. (James 2:22 NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, Please give me the will and desire to get rid of my harmful ways and, in all that I do, let my actions make my faith complete. Amen

You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete.

James 2:22 NLT

LOVE IS ALWAYS HOPEFUL

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

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

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

1 Corinthians
13:7a NLT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.***

HEALING THE HURT THAT LIES BELOW THE SURFACE

When we think of healing we often look to physical healings recorded in the Bible. Jesus restored sight to several blind people and healed some who were paralyzed so they could walk again. We can see the need for healing of physical conditions but what about a heart that has been broken by harsh and degrading words or actions? Like a hammer drives nails that fasten things together, demeaning words and actions drive hurt deep into our souls and fasten it to the person we come to believe that we are.

I'm heartsick and heartbroken by it all. Their contempt has crushed my soul. I looked for sympathy and compassion but found only empty stares. He (Jesus) heals the wounds of every shattered heart. (Psalms 69:20; 147:3 TPT)

Jesus made a way for healing for everyone who needs restoration of body, mind, or spirit.

It might help those of us who have suffered from verbal or physical abuse to know that the words from Psalm 69 above speak about Jesus and what He suffered from those who spoke against Him and plotted to have Him killed. They rejected, mocked, spit on Jesus, told lies about Him, and had Him flogged and crucified. Do you think that Jesus might understand our pain when we have been devalued by those things said and done to us? Jesus invites us to come to Him and give our will and life into His care.

Are you weary, carrying a heavy burden? Come to me. I will refresh your life, for I am your oasis. Simply join your life with mine. Learn my ways and you'll discover that I'm gentle, humble, easy to please. You will find refreshment and rest in me. (Matthew 11:28-29 TPT)

Jesus made a way for healing for everyone who needs restoration of body, mind, or spirit. Jesus paid with His life for the sin and abuse we have suffered. Why not give our will and life into the care of the One who fully understands our brokenness?

Jesus understands every weakness of ours, because he was tempted in every way that we are. But he did not sin! (Hebrews 4:15 CEV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I come to You for healing and restoration for You know and understand what I have suffered. I am tired and weary of carrying this heavy load. Please help me to believe and receive the new life You offer me. Amen

WHERE TO LOOK WHEN I AM LOST

Jesus was often challenged by the self-righteous actions of some of the religious leaders who saw themselves as guardians of God's law. He did not approve of their religious pride or their blindness to the needs of ordinary citizens and sinners.

Many tax collectors and sinners came to listen to Jesus. Then the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to complain, "Look, this man welcomes sinners and even eats with them!" (Luke 15:1-2 ERV)

Jesus told people a story – a parable – to help them understand why He was sent into the world. Jesus said that if a man owned a hundred sheep and one of them wandered from the flock, the owner would leave the ninety-nine in the field and go and search for the one sheep that was lost. When the sheep was found the man would rejoice with his friends and neighbours.

Then Jesus made a connection between the sheep and us: ***In the same way, I tell you, heaven is a happy place when one sinner decides to change. There is more joy for that one sinner than for 99 good people who don't need to change.*** (Luke 15:7 ERV)

We are like the lost sheep who wandered away from our Heavenly Father. The religious leaders saw themselves as the 99 good people who did not need to change. Some of us are like them. We look on and judge what Jesus has done for us but fail to acknowledge that Jesus is our only way back to God. By acceptance of Jesus' death and resurrection we can be freed from sin and adopted into God's family. Today, if we choose to turn our will and our life over to God's care, heaven will be a really happy place.

Here is what Christ wants us to beg you to do. Come back to God! Christ didn't have any sin. But God made him become sin for us. So we can be made right with God because of what Christ has done for us. (2 Corinthians 5:20-21 NIRV)

Prayer: Loving God, I have wandered and know I am lost without You. I accept what Jesus did to restore me into Your family. Help me to stay close and follow You in all my ways. Amen

The religious leaders saw themselves as the 99 good people who did not need to change. Some of us are like them.

FORGIVE US AS WE FORGIVE OTHERS

When the disciples of Jesus asked him to teach them how to pray, it is significant that Jesus' teaching included asking forgiveness for their sin based on how they forgave others who had sinned against them. How often do we hear someone say, "I can never forgive that person for what they have done to me." God desires that we love one another as He has loved us, but we truly cannot love a person who has harmed us until we see them in the light of God's forgiveness of our sin, and the amazing love He exhibits towards us.

Forgive our sins, just as we have forgiven those who did wrong to us. I give you a new command: Love each other. You must love each other just as I loved you. (Matthew 6:12; John 13:34 ERV)

Jesus' teaching included asking forgiveness for their sin based on how they forgave others who had sinned against them.

If we see the sin we have committed as worthy of forgiveness but see the hurt we have sustained from others as not worthy of forgiveness, then something is wrong with our thinking. To be forgiven and to forgive is the only way to peace in our hearts. Some people came to Jesus and told Him of tragedies that occurred in their area. It seems they thought the ones who suffered deserved what happened because of the way they were living, but Jesus said:

"...do you think that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse offenders than all the other people who live in Jerusalem? No, I tell you, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:4-5 NASB)

When we are hurt, the pain we incur may cause us to judge the offender and hold fast to unforgiveness in our hearts. How then can we come to God and pray, ***"Forgive our sins, just as we have forgiven those who did wrong to us."*** God wants us to love those who have harmed us because it is life giving. Refusing to forgive is like a cancer that will destroy us.

I have gained perfect freedom by following your teachings. When I am hurting, I find comfort in your promise that leads to life. (Psalm 119:45, 50 CEV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, As You have loved and forgiven me, I choose to love and forgive those who have harmed me. Amen

STEP THREE – NO HOLDING BACK

Turning our will and life over to the care of God as we understand Him is just the beginning of our new life with God in recovery. We have much to learn and as we wholeheartedly seek to know God's principles for life as recorded in the Bible, He will give us discernment to do what is right in all our affairs.

Yes, if you cry out for discernment and lift up your voice for understanding; if you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

(Proverbs 2:3-5 NKJV)

When we give our will and life over to the care of God and repent of our sins, nothing should be held back. Holding back means we are not fully committed to the cleansing process of the blood of Jesus. This mindset will keep us sitting on the fence with one foot in our past life and one foot in our new life. To move on we need both feet on the path of righteous living in the power of the Holy Spirit, the power greater than ourselves. If we knowingly hold back anything, we are not supporting the decision we are making and are leaving ourselves open to relapse.

Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do. (James 1:7-8 NLT)

God supports a pure heart even when our decision is a timid one. As we truly desire to follow Him, God encourages us and works on our behalf to bring restoration and healing in those places that have been broken. It is not in our own power to amend who we are. That is only done by the Power greater than ourselves. He's the one who restores us to a good, pleasing, and perfect life.

Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. (2 Corinthians 13:11 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I give my will and life fully into Your care. Please carry on Your renewing work in every part of my being until I am perfected in You. Amen

When we give our will and life over to the care of God and repent of our sins nothing should be held back.