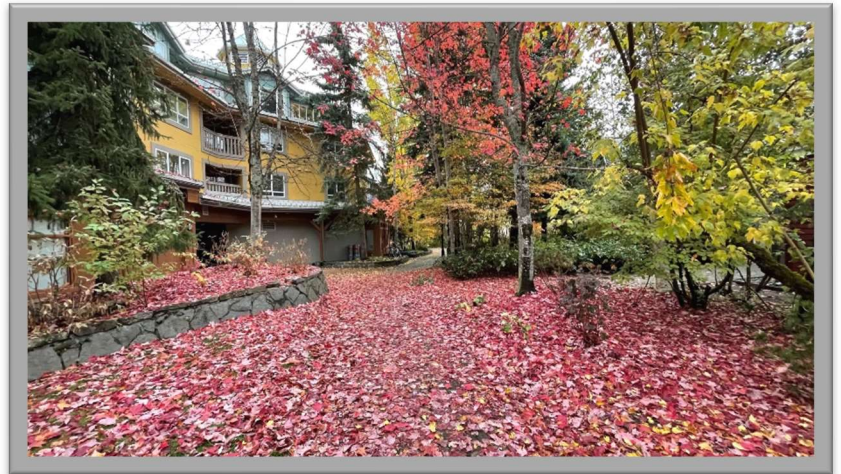


LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



OCTOBER 2023



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

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JUST FOR TODAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

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

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

PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

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



LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations

OCTOBER 2023

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

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VOLUME 08, NUMBER 10

How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery

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

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

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

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

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

TRANSITION

Transition is difficult for us when we first come into recovery. It requires that we leave behind a known way of life and transition to a new way of living. What has been known to us in the past is comfortable, even though it may not have been good for us and most certainly was not the best way for us. Growth requires change. A seed is put in the ground and dies so that a new life form may develop. Flowers and fruit grow in their season. Unless the fruit is eaten or the flowers are picked and arranged to beautify a setting, both will wither and die where they have grown. Dead plants may be plowed back into the ground to provide nutrients for the next crop to come. Transition takes place from one season to the next.

The Lord will lead you. He himself is with you. He will not fail you or leave you. Don't worry. Don't be afraid! (Deuteronomy 31:8 ERV)

In recovery we are transitioning not only from the misuse of substances but also from things such as:- a lifestyle of isolation to one of looking for and accepting peer support; from trying to figure out the "big questions of life" about meaning and purpose and destiny to consulting God and learning how God answers those questions. We are transitioning from avoiding the pain in our hearts to confronting it and receiving comfort and healing. We are moving away from impulsive and obsessive thinking to gratitude and solutions which develop as we pray and learn – and the list goes on.

The Lord says, "I will teach you and guide you in the way you should live. I will watch over you and be your guide. (Psalm 32:8 ERV)

Without God's promise to teach and guide and watch over us in this new of life, the burden would be too great for us. That is why it is important to remember every day of our lives that we are powerless and that on our own our life is unmanageable. Each day it is necessary for us to take time to read the Scriptures and get to know this wonderful God who will restore us to sanity. Then moment by moment, day by day, we purposefully turn our will and life over to His care.

Prayer: Loving God, as I face this day, give me the strength and courage to make whatever transition is necessary in my heart, in my thinking, and even in my circumstances, so that my character defects will go, and Your will becomes the desire of my heart in all my affairs. Amen

***I am
creating
something
new. There
it is! Do you
see it? I
have put
roads in
deserts,
streams in
thirsty
lands.***

Isaiah 43:19 CEV

LIVING RIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

STEP FOUR – FEARLESS FOCUS ON MYSELF

When we come to Step 4 in the 12-Step program we are asked to focus on ourselves and make a searching and fearless moral inventory. We are not to focus on anyone else or on the impact they may have had on our lives. We are to concentrate on ourselves and truthfully admit that it was our decision making that got us to where we are today. We are the ones who chose our way of life.

My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body. (Proverbs 4:20-22 NLT)

The reason we look at ourselves is to measure how our judgment measures up with the principles contained in the Word of God and in society in general. Taking responsibility for our actions is a great first step in the right direction. As we look at situations where we made irresponsible choices, we can assess our thinking process at that time and give some thought as to why we chose the route we did. In some instances, we may have acted without even thinking about the consequences of our actions.

We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:4-5 NLT)

Most of us want to avoid self-examination. It is so much easier to blame others for the harm they caused us and to believe their actions contributed to our defects of character. Masking grief with any substance or behaviour does not bring about health. We need to expose what happened to a trusted friend or counselor and allow recovery to begin. Our wounds will not heal until we see Jesus taking them upon Himself and receive the healing He offers to us in place of the pain.

Come to me, all you who are tired and are carrying heavy loads. I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to be honest in my self-evaluation and allow the healing process of my life with You in recovery to begin. Amen

Taking responsibility for our actions is a great first step in the right direction.

DETERMINED DECISIONS

God is willing to support and strengthen us as we lay down our self-directed ways and invite Him to lead us along the path He has chosen for us. It's helpful to regularly take inventory of our lives and determine what decisions and changes we need to make to get us to where we want to be.

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

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

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

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

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

determine to live in a way that gives God an opportunity to demonstrate these facts?

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

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

TUTORED IN THE BASICS OF LOVE

As we get to know the Lord Jesus our self-centered attitude begins to change and with care and compassion we become more aware of what is happening in the lives of others. We respond to others with kindness even when they are unkind to us because we are familiar with the place they are at.

I will bless the Lord who counsels me; he gives me wisdom in the night. He tells me what to do. (Psalm 16:7 TLB)

All of us have had to humble ourselves before God as we learned the error of our ways. We have had to admit that our standards for right living were not God's standards but those influenced by our old nature. To follow God's ways, we have needed to change our way of thinking and doing as we learned to respond well to God and others. Our new nature needed to be tutored in the basics of love so we could be guided and directed in the ways of God.

This plan of mine is not what you would work out, neither are my thoughts the same as yours! For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than yours, and my thoughts than yours. (Isaiah 55:8-9 TLB)

Kindness towards others requires us to be generous with our forgiveness for all insults and injury. We refuse to hold on to bitterness or act in vindictive ways towards those who have harmed us. God has forgiven us because Jesus paid the penalty for our sin with His life and therefore, we with thankful hearts are willing to forgive others.

But I say: Love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way you will be acting as true sons of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust too. (Matthew 5:44-45 TLB)

In our new life with God in recovery we can choose to be kind to others because Jesus is perfecting His enduring love in us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for teaching me the basics of love. Help me to love and forgive others as You continue to love and forgive me. Amen

Love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!

***Matthew 5:44
TLB***

RESPONDING TO LIES

The following Psalm was written by the future King David of Israel at a time in his life when he was being pursued by those who sought to kill him. David called out to God to help him and was explicit in his desire for God to act with revenge against those who were hounding him and speaking lies about him.

I say to the Lord, "You are my God." Hear, Lord, my cry for mercy. Sovereign Lord, my strong deliverer, you shield my head in the day of battle. Do not grant the wicked their desires, Lord; do not let their plans succeed. Those who surround me proudly rear their heads; may the mischief of their lips engulf them. May burning coals fall on them; may they be thrown into the fire, into miry pits, never to rise. May slanderers not be established in the land; may disaster hunt down the violent. I know that the Lord secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy. Surely the righteous will praise your name, and the upright will live in your presence. (Psalm 140:6-13 NIV)

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Luke 23:34a NIV

Some of the slander that grieved David concerned a priest to whom he had gone for help. An onlooker who was there at the same time exaggerated what he saw to David's enemy, King Saul. Unfortunately, the outcome was that the help given by the priest resulted in the priest's entire family, except one son, being put to death. David had to flee and he and the men who gathered with him were hunted like animals. In his grief, David is asking God to bring disaster on his enemies and not let their plans succeed.

David's prayer is quite different from that of the Lord Jesus who experienced lies being told about Him. Because of His great love for us, Jesus allowed Himself to be rejected, beaten, and nailed to a cross, even though He had done no wrong. In His great concern and love for those who crucified Him, Jesus prayed, ***"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."*** (Luke 23:34a NIV) How many of us have caused trouble for others by telling lies about them? If lies were told about us, how would we respond? There is no greater love than we would lay down our lives for our friends. How about our enemies?

Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to love my enemies and pray for those who persecute me so that I may behave like a true child of my Father in heaven. Amen

RATIONALIZING EXCUSES FOR POOR CHOICES

In active addiction we seldom made the right choice and even now in recovery it is still a learning process. God has provided a way for us to learn and grow. That way is to first receive forgiveness for the sins we have committed by accepting that Jesus died in our place to pay the penalty incurred for all our wrong choices. We need to stand in the truth of who God says we are – flawed human beings but precious and valued sons and daughters of God who are washed and cleansed from all our sins.

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

Without accepting forgiveness of our sins and a right relationship with God we will continue to rationalize what we have done because we are afraid of the shame, the pain, the embarrassment, and the disappointment that has resulted from our poor choices.

It seems easier to make excuses for our behaviour or to blame someone else, so the burden is "off our shoulders." If rationalizing makes us feel better, we deceive ourselves into thinking that the situation has improved. To be honest and confess that we have made poor choices may threaten our comfort zone in the short term or even cause us great embarrassment. However, regardless of these feelings, we need to come clean and admit to all our wrong-doing.

Sometimes we've rationalized our behaviour for so long that it has become an unconscious process rather than an attempt to deliberately deceive. We need to seek God to awaken us to the harmful choices we are unwilling to disclose. He knows the poison stored in the roots of our destructive actions and reactions.

God loves to show us truth and help us to rise above rationalizing and excusing. He knows that living in the truth is the most free and most satisfying way to live.

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

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

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

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

Be good to your servant, that I may live and obey your word. Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions. I am only a foreigner in the land.

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

Don't hide your commands from me! I am always overwhelmed with a desire for your regulations. You rebuke the arrogant; those who wander from your commands are cursed. Don't let them scorn and insult me, for I have obeyed your laws. Even princes sit and speak against me, but I will meditate on your decrees. Your laws please me; they give me wise advice. (Psalm 119:17-24 NLT)

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

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

We live in a world where people are arrogant and think they don't need to seek God. They rebel against God's principles and choose to do what is right in their own eyes. If we are to remain steady and strong in the plan that God has for our lives, we will need to seek Him in all our affairs and rely on His strength to support us as we choose to do what is right.

We need to daily read and meditate on God's word and surrender our self-will to the Holy Spirit's power and guidance. As we do, God works in us and around us to achieve His good plan for our lives.

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

WISDOM: RETRAIN AND REPOSITION

Coming out of addiction and living life in sobriety is always challenging and should be lived one day at a time. Our addiction kept us busy fulfilling its demands and now our thought patterns need to be retrained in ways of healthy living. Our bodies are in a state of shock. We miss and grieve the familiar way of addictive life and the people who used to be around us. New beginnings require planning and help in order to move from one place to the next, so it is always wise to seek help from those who are experienced in having done so.

Leave your simple ways behind and begin to live; learn to use good judgment. Wisdom will multiply your days and add years to your life. (Proverbs 9:6, 11 NLT)

Living in recovery requires that we keep away from our old stomping grounds and from the people who are still out there. Initially we may think that seeing a familiar face is good for us and we might even be able to influence someone to also seek recovery. It is more likely that they will lead us back into addiction than we will influence them for good. It is much wiser to seek the company of someone who has been in recovery for a time and can share their experience in avoiding the pitfalls that lead to relapse.

So don't bother correcting mockers; they will only hate you. But correct the wise, and they will love you. Instruct the wise, and they will be even wiser. Teach the righteous, and they will learn even more. (Proverbs 9:8-9 NLT)

Looking back at our life with guilt and shame will bring us misery and stifle our growth unless we have chosen to repent of our sin and give our will and life over to the care of God. Jesus died so we could be free from the penalty of sin. We can't change what's been done, but when we accept that we have been forgiven by God, we can move forward.

Fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment. (Proverbs 9:10 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am not afraid to leave my past behind because I know You will care for me and teach me to use good judgment in my future life with You. Amen

Leave your simple ways behind and begin to live; learn to use good judgment.

Proverbs 9:6 NLT

OCTOBER 6, 2023

TOGETHER WITH GOD ANY DIFFICULTY CAN BE WORKED OUT

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

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. (Jeremiah 29:11-12 NIV)

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

***We must
stop using
our
problems
as an
excuse to
sit on the
sidelines
of life.***

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

If trouble should arise God will help us face each situation calmly and with courage. As we apply God's principles in each circumstance, we can confidently leave the outcome with Him. The challenge for us is to trust God when His direction may seem contrary to what we would have Him do. God knows the perfect way through our difficulties and our principle for life should be to simply trust and obey Him

one step at a time and allow Him to lead us forward.

Let me hear of your unfailing love each morning, for I am trusting you. Show me where to walk, for I give myself to you. Rescue me from my enemies, Lord; I run to you to hide me. (Psalm 143:8-9 NLT)

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

OCTOBER 27, 2023

KNOW-IT-ALL

The longer we live in sobriety the more we recognize that we have lots to learn. It is interesting though, that in early recovery some of us become "know-it-alls" who think a sponsor is unnecessary, their advice inconvenient, and not what we require.

This kind of arrogance is rooted in denial and insecurity. Underneath our outward smugness we may have realized there truly is a lot we don't know, but we feel we dare not admit it. Those who desire to be solidly grounded know that there is a great deal to learn and they will have their ears and hearts open to the experience, strength, and hope that others are willing to share with them.

Be friendly with everyone. Don't be proud and feel that you are smarter than others. Make friends with ordinary people. (Romans 12:16 CEV)

How do we know we are living humbly rather than as a know-it-all? One obvious way is seen in our level of willingness to learn from God how life truly works. The Bible was written to help us, to correct us, and to show us how to live. Are we consulting it, or do we think we can do fine with our own understanding of how things work? As we learn what God says is the right way to do things, are we willing to adjust and adapt our life habits accordingly, or do we simply want to carry on as we have in the past?

Everything in the Scriptures is God's Word. All of it is useful for teaching and helping people and for correcting them and showing them how to live. (2 Timothy 3:16 CEV)

God's Word is full of wisdom and His way of doing things is much higher than ours. Are we living in that truth today? Our Step Ten inventory each evening is one way we can observe our behaviour and determine how willing we are to learn from God and others.

The Lord says: "My thoughts and my ways are not like yours. Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, my thoughts and my ways are higher than yours. (Isaiah 55:8-9 CEV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your thoughts are so much wiser than mine and Your ways are so much better than any way I could figure out on my own. Help me to live humbly in this truth and learn all I can from Your Word and from those who are walking with You. Amen

***The
longer we
live in
sobriety
the more
we
recognize
that we
have lots
to learn.***

PROMISES OF GOD

When we encounter a promise of God in the Bible, do we stop and think about what God is saying? Some of God's promises are conditional and we need to look at what our part may be, so we can make claim to the promise.

So I say, live by the Holy Spirit's power. Then you will not do what your desires controlled by sin want you to do. (Galatians 5:16 NIRV)

If we seek the Holy Spirit to help us think on things that are right and pure, He will help us.

If we live by the Holy Spirit's power, we will not be controlled by the sin we want to do. When we first come into recovery it is almost impossible not to think about our former dependency. We lived so long under its power that it is still seeking to control us. How can we stop thinking about it? God has made us such that we cannot focus on two things at once. So, what we need to do is to change our focus and our attention to proclaiming the promises God has made to us. We also pray and seek the Holy Spirit to strengthen us to do what God says.

Finally, my brothers and sisters, always think about what is true. Think about what is noble, right and pure. Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect. If anything is excellent or worthy of praise, think about those kinds of things. (Philippians 4:8 NIRV)

When we are driving a car and turn our eyes away from the road the car will veer in the direction we are looking. The same is true when we keep focusing on our past.

The Holy Spirit is willing and ready to help us concentrate on those things that are right and pure.

For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him. (2 Corinthians 3:17-18 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to live by the Holy Spirit's power so that I can focus on those things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Amen

SECURE IN GOD'S CARE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PRACTICING AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Practicing an attitude of gratitude – is this just a happy little catchphrase or something to think about one day a year on the Thanksgiving holiday, or is it a way of facing each day that changes our perspective on life?

Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NLT)

As we go forward in recovery there are many battles in our lives that are bigger than we alone can handle. Often our automatic response might be to worry, work, lie, cheat, or scam our way through the circumstances we estimate to be overwhelming. God has a better way. He wants us to remember that we belong to Him, that He has been good to us in the past, and if we trust Him, He will be good to us in each current situation. He will show us a good way forward.

Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done.

***Philippians 4:6b
NLT***

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19 NIV)

Why give thanks while still facing challenges? That's how we acknowledge the truth that God is our provider and that everything we have comes from Him. That's how we remind and encourage our hearts that God truly is with us and we do not face our problems alone.

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

Believing and acting on the truths contained in God's Word will eliminate fear and produce stability and security in our lives.

Heavenly Father Thank You for all that You do for me. Thank You for providing my daily needs of food, clothing, and shelter. Thank You for fighting battles on my behalf and helping me stand firm on Your Word. Thank You for giving me clean hands and a pure heart. Thank You for strengthening me to be a person of character and dependability. Thank You for blessing me so I can truly be a blessing to others. Amen

DOING IT RIGHT

Does it really pay to do what's right? Up to now our current practice has been to do whatever worked to get what we wanted. It is a hard habit to break and we may ask ourselves if it is really worth it. Doing the right thing may make life more challenging and inconvenient in the moment but, as we take the long-term view in this new life we are building, we will find that doing what is right has far more lasting benefits than we could ever have imagined.

Doing right makes life better for those who are good, but the wicked are destroyed by their own wicked ways. Doing right sets honest people free, but people who can't be trusted are trapped by their greed. People who do what is right are on their way to life, but those who always want to do wrong are on their way to death. (Proverbs 11:5-6, 19 ERV)

As we inventory our past in a fearless and honest way, we will have to admit that our difficulties and destructive lifestyle were the result of our repeated choice to do wrong. We would agree with these words from the Bible that we were trapped: trapped by our addiction; trapped by our fear of what others would do to us if they found out how we had wronged them; and trapped in the darkness of frustration and hopelessness that resulted from one bad situation building precariously on top of another.

God wants us to live in freedom from sin. When we try to do what is right, God tells us He is pleased with us, and most people around respond similarly. God pours out blessings upon us when we try to do things His way and when we ask for His assistance, He willingly comes alongside to help.

The Lord hates those who love to do evil, but he is pleased with those who try to do right. People are pleased with those who try to do good. Those who look for trouble will find it. (Proverbs 11:20, 27 ERV)

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to be conscious of Your principles for life in all my affairs. Help me to purposefully choose to do the next right thing, trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will. Amen

People who do what is right are on their way to life, but those who always want to do wrong are on their way to death.

***Proverbs 11:19
ERV***

HAVING FUN

God's plan for a satisfying and fulfilling life is that we would find enjoyment in daily living while always remaining vigilant about threats to our sobriety and well-being.

A cheerful heart makes you healthy. But a broken spirit dries you up. The best thing we can do is to enjoy eating, drinking, and working. I believe these are God's gifts to us. (Proverbs 17:22 NIRV, Ecclesiastes 2:24 CEV)

Too many people think that all the fun gets left behind when we are no longer going to bars and parties where substances are used and abused. What many of us have discovered is that there is much more enjoyment in the fun times of life when we experience them sober rather than when we were "under the influence."

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.

(Ecc 3:1 ESV)

There is a time to weep and there's a time to laugh. There is a time to be sad and there's a time to dance. (Ecclesiastes 3:4 NIRV)

Having fun helps us to bond with others who appreciate the same things we do. Friendships deepen as we play together and enjoy shared interests. There is more to recovery than sharing our stories in meetings, as important as that is. We were created to enjoy God, each other, and creation and it is important to take time to do that in light-hearted ways.

There is an old saying, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." Play relieves stress. Our brain works better when

we give it a rest and enjoy leisure activities that bring us pleasure.

This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be happy today! (Psalm 118:24 ERV)

Different people find relaxation in different things therefore, we need to experiment with what is fun for us. God's invitation to us today is to find time and a way to lighten up and have some fun, enjoying a playful activity.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to find the right balance of working hard and having fun. Give me the heart of a child to enjoy simple pleasures and make the most of what each day has to offer. Amen

THANKSGIVING – A WAY OF LIFE

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

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

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

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

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

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

When thanksgiving becomes a way of life rather than a day of celebration on the calendar, life will change for us.

OCTOBER 10, 2023

WORDS, WORDS, AND MORE WORDS

Whether we speak words with our mouths or use our fingers to type them on social media, we seem to be people of many words. God has help for us as we take an inventory of the words that come out of our hearts and are expressed in these ways. In Proverbs, a book of wisdom, we are given several comparisons of good and bad words. This should help us sort out what words to keep and what words to learn to eliminate.

People sometimes lie to hide their hatred, but saying bad things about someone is even more foolish. The words of good people are like a spring of fresh water, but the words of the wicked only hide their violent plans. (Proverbs 10:18, 11 ERV)

Words from good people are like pure silver, but thoughts from the wicked are worthless.

Proverbs 10:20 ERV

Many of us have been guilty of hiding resentment and anger and hatred behind lying words, not just during active addiction but even today in recovery when our responses cannot be blamed on the use of drugs or alcohol. God reminds us that this is a foolish way to live. God promises that if we speak the truth in love, peace and understanding will follow. It may not come in an instant, but it will surely come when words spoken in truth and love are given a chance.

If you fail to speak the truth, trouble will follow. If you speak openly, peace will come. Good people say things that help others, but the wicked die from a lack of understanding. (Proverbs 10:10, 21 ERV)

Sometimes we just use too many words. When we are feeling nervous or when we have allowed someone else's opinion to trigger strong emotions within us, we tend to use unkind words to express what we are feeling. In some situations, we might do well to just walk away. Often it is wise to just be quiet.

A person who talks too much gets into trouble. A wise person learns to be quiet. Wise people are quiet and learn new things, but fools talk and bring trouble on themselves. (Proverbs 10:19, 14 ERV)

Gracious God, Help me to choose my words wisely and to be quick to listen and learn and slow to speak. Especially in tense situations, help me to speak in ways that bring peace and understanding or remain quiet. Amen

OCTOBER 23, 2023

KNOWING I AM VALUED AND BELONG

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jesus wants us to experience the joy of knowing that we are valued and that we belong.

STEP TWO – POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES

As we turn our hearts towards God, He strengthens us to do what we need to do. Our confidence is stirred to believe that there is a Power greater than ourselves who will restore us to sanity. God not only has the Power to restore us to sanity but is able and willing to do so. Our part is to allow Him to teach us His Word and to become willing to obey His principles in all we say and do.

The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. Show me the right path, O Lord; point out the road for me to follow. (2 Chronicles 16:9a; Psalm 25:4 NLT)

God not only has the Power to restore us to sanity but is able and willing to do so.

God's ways are totally different from the twists and turns we made in our past life. At times life itself seemed grossly unfair to us. Perhaps we looked at others with envy because of the things they had that we felt we were missing out on. Perhaps our unmet needs led us down the pathway of addiction. In Step 2 we are choosing to believe that God will work those years of hardship for good and will restore us to the sanity of living a joyful, purposeful life.

Give me a sign of your goodness, that my enemies may see it and be put to shame, for you, Lord, have helped me and comforted me. (Psalm 86:17 NIV)

God loved us so much that He sent Jesus into the world to redeem us from our sin. Jesus did not come to judge us for what we have done but to save us by paying the debt we incurred. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is the power working in us to restore us to sanity. By believing in Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection we are forgiven our sin and raised to new life with Him. One day we will go to live with Jesus forever in the place He has gone to prepare for us. What a wonderful day that will be!

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, In Christ alone my hope is found for only through Jesus can my life be restored to sanity. I am eternally grateful that Jesus ever lives to intercede on my behalf before Your throne of grace. Amen

CHEERFUL

All of us who have weathered the storms of an addictive lifestyle know that our days were filled with trials of one sort or another. Each day required that we meet the need of our dependency from whatever source we were able to do so. We also had to cope with negative thoughts about those who loved us and wanted us to act responsibly towards those who were dependent on us. Our powerlessness over the demands of our life left little space for anything remotely cheerful.

All the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast. (Proverbs 15:15 NIV)

When we decided to turn our will and life over to the care of God things started to change. We were set free from our dependency and enabled by the Holy Spirit, the Power greater than ourselves, to begin the healing process of reconciliation with those we had harmed. Asking God to remove all our shortcomings and making amends to those we have harmed sets us free to seek the will of God for our lives. Through Jesus we found peace, joy, and comfort because God accepted us as His beloved children and promised to meet all our needs from His plentiful resources.

Those who serve Christ in this way are pleasing to God. They are pleasing to people too. (Romans 14:18 NIRV)

As we follow God's principles in all our affairs our hearts will be filled with joy and peace as the hope we have in Jesus floods our whole being. Our cheerful faces will begin to reflect the measure of God's love within us, and our actions will reveal that God's love overflows from us to those around us. We will gladly carry the message to others of what God has done for us, so they too can experience the joy of the Lord.

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. (Proverbs 17:22 NIV)

Jesus takes us from a crushed spirit to a cheerful heart. The good medicine of the Word of God enables our spirit to soar like an eagle so we can run and not be weary.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for bringing me from darkness into Your glorious light and for the joy in my thankful heart that gives me a cheerful face. Amen

Our cheerful faces will begin to reflect the measure of God's love within us.

COMING OUT OF THE SHADOWS

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

To come out of the shadows and live in the light, we must be willing to shift our focus from our grief and woundedness to God's comfort and care.

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

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

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

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

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

IMPULSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Many of us, especially in early recovery, find it difficult to control our impulsive behaviour. Our history of relapses is a stark reminder of this fact. Sometimes relapse happens while we are doing well at holding back on the use of our addictive substance, but then we begin to act out in other areas such as gambling, sex, rage, over-eating etc. To be successful in recovery we need to control the thoughts and emotions that drive our impulsive behaviour.

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, it is probable that our brains have become incorrectly programmed about how to successfully live our lives. Our brains will need to be reprogrammed. In Step 2 of the 12-Step program, we come to believe that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. God has promised to show us the way to maintain a life of doing what is right and to enjoy the peace that goes with it. Step-by-step our way of thinking will be changed as we submit to following God's principles.

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 first become aware of our impulsive behaviour is in our emotional reactions to what others say or do. With God's power working in us to control ourselves we can 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. Others' recovery in this area is a testament to what God can do and will give us hope that we also can learn to control our impulsive behaviour.

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

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)

HONOURING GOD WITH MY BODY

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

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

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

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

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

Our attitude and words are important indicators of whether or not our bodies are a home where God's Holy Spirit dwells. We need to deal with complaining, fault finding, persistent arguing, blaming etc. The poison of bitter resentment and grudges needs to be cleansed from our system. Are we spending more time talking about our problems than seeking possible solutions? Does our attitude and speech encourage others?

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

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

BEING DECISIVE

Making decisions and taking responsibility for our choices requires courage. It was easy in our addiction to bully people for things we needed to feed our habit but a healthy weighing up of facts and coming to a reasoned decision that is good for everyone tends to bring out our vulnerabilities. There are just so many things we don't know about ourselves and about life. We hate both physical and emotional pain and still want to do whatever we can to avoid it. How do we come to that place where we know that this or that way is the route we should take?

In simple terms, we seek wise counsel from God and then obey what He says in His Word. God promises to watch over and guide us and, if we start to head in the wrong direction, He will whisper a correction into our ears.

The Lord shows his people how to live, but the wicked have lost their way. If you wander from the right path, either to the right or to the left, you will hear a voice behind you saying, "You should go this way. Here is the right way." (Psalm 1:6, Isaiah 30:21 ERV)

It is not God's plan that we swing between the extremes of being pushy or being passive. Too often we are willing to say, "Whatever happens, happens" and even to add in "for a reason." The truth is, things often happen because of our choices that could have been made differently.

Lord, help me learn your ways. Show me how you want me to live. Guide me and teach me your truths. You are my God, my Savior. You are the one I have been waiting for. (Psalm 25:4-5 ERV)

Each day we take a daily inventory of how we behaved so we can learn and perhaps do better on another day. We pray for conscious contact with God and for knowledge of His will for us and the power to help us carry it out. Both of these practices help us start to find balance and to be decisive in a healthy way.

I praise the Lord because he taught me well. Even at night he put his instructions deep inside my mind. I always remember that the Lord is with me. He is here, close by my side, so nothing can defeat me. (Psalm 16:7-8 ERV)

Prayer: Loving God, help me to know You and Your ways and to walk in them. Amen

It is not God's plan that we swing between the extremes of being pushy or being passive.

JUST FOR TODAY – I WILL BE UNAFRAID

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

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

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

To live without fear we must intentionally choose to believe God and receive the kindness and tenderness He offers us.

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

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

To live without fear we must intentionally choose to believe God and receive the kindness and tenderness He offers us. We must bring every thought captive to Him and allow Him to renew our minds. We must affirm God's forgiveness for our wrongs and His acceptance of us as His precious children. We must look to Him to give us peace of mind and heart. We must ask Him to give us

the will and the power to forgive others and ourselves. We must affirm the truth that God does not condemn those who are in Christ Jesus.

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

A SOLID PLACE TO STAND

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

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

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

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

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

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

FEAR AND INSECURITY

As humans, we long for security in many forms; security within our own family, security about who we are inside our own heads, security of our position within any group we are a part of, security from any type of threat to our well-being, and security from anything else we may consider a threat to our lives. The lack of anything we consider necessary to our well-being may make us feel insecure.

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

This is the security the founders of AA had in mind when they assured us that as we turned our will and our life over to God's care and walked in humility and sobriety with God, fear of people and economic insecurity would leave us.

***Life without
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Him.***

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ... So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you! Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised. (2 Corinthians 9:8 NIV; Hebrews 10:35-36 NLT)

God will hold us steady while life shifts and turns around us and while our emotions settle within us. God invites us to seek Him in the middle of unpredictable and insecure circumstances. God promises to provide all we need not only for ourselves but also so we can be productive and helpful in every good work. We are encouraged to confidently trust in God, knowing that as we focus on doing His will in all our affairs, all God's promises are rightfully ours.

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6 NASB)

Life without God is uncertain and dangerous, but life with God is filled with peace, hope, and a future, as we trust Him in all our ways.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to trust You to provide all I need, at all times, in all things, so I can do the good work that You've prepared for me and receive the rewards You promise to those who diligently seek to do Your will. Amen

INTIMACY

When we talk about intimacy we are usually referring to a close, familiar, protective, loving relationship between two persons. Jesus had this type of relationship with His Father and showed it by choosing to be obedient to Him in all His ways. Jesus often spoke of the works He was doing and said that He was simply doing what the Father had given Him to do. Because of His Father's great love for us, Jesus was willing to set aside His eternal majesty and come to earth to redeem us from our sin.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. (Philippians 2:5-7 NIV)

Our Heavenly Father desires to have an intimate relationship with us. At one time, in the cool of the evening, humans walked with God in the Garden of Eden. However, the intimate relationship they had with God was severed by their listening to the lies of the evil serpent and then choosing to disobey God's instructions. How many of us have ruined our relationships by listening to the voice of the deceiver and disobeying the commandments of God?

Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. (Romans 5:18 NLT)

Our intimate relationship with God is restored when we believe that Jesus took all our sins to the cross and paid the penalty for them. We have been born again into a new life with our Heavenly Father who is extravagant in His love and care for us. As we practice God's principles in all our affairs, we grow to be more like Jesus and obey His command to carry the message to others.

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them. (John 3:36 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please forgive me for my sins and restore me to eternal life so I can have an intimate relationship with You. Please help me to be more like Jesus and set my own agenda aside, so I may obey Your principles and start living life to the full. Amen

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STEP ONE – FINDING A WAY OUT

“Where is life going from here?” This is a question we may ask ourselves when we come to admit that we are powerless over our dependencies and that our life has become unmanageable. We are aware that there are very few options left open to us. We have used up our resources and abused both family and friends so we could keep doing what we were doing. We have finally admitted that there is nothing good in our lives while we are serving our addiction.

You used to live as sinners when you followed the ways of this world. You served the one who rules over the spiritual forces of evil. He is the spirit who is now at work in those who don't obey God. At one time we all lived among them. Our desires were controlled by sin. We tried to satisfy what they wanted us to do. (Ephesians 2:2-3a NIRV)

My troubles are like a prison. Set me free so I can praise your name.

Psalms 142:7 NIRV

When we realized our life's journey was taking us on a downward spiral to a place we might never get back from, we called out to God and asked Him to help us find a way out of this dilemma. God, in His grace, heard us and made a way for us to get the help we needed. He showed us a way to break the chains we had forged for ourselves.

My troubles are like a prison. Set me free so I can praise your name. Then those who do what is right will gather around me because you have been good to me. (Psalm 142:7 NIRV)

We did not become powerless over our dependencies in a day and it is certain we will not get freedom from them in a day. We need to learn about God and His power to free us. We also need to learn from people who have knowledge of the path we are on and are willing to share their experience, strength, and hope with us.

Lord, teach me how you want me to live. Do this so that I will depend on you, my faithful God. Give me a heart that doesn't want anything more than to worship you. (Psalm 86:11 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for giving me hope of turning from my sinful ways and embracing Your ways that lead to freedom from my bondage to self-will. Amen

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY – WHO'S TO BLAME

Accepting responsibility for our behaviour is difficult for most of us even in recovery. It seems that when we have sustained past hurts, we have tended to use the pain suffered to excuse our bad behaviour. Because of the injustices that life brought our way, we expected our loved ones and others to tolerate our anger and mood swings. Often, by the time we became adults, the victim role was well established. Unfortunately, we are often comfortable continuing in the same manner until we are challenged by emotional upheaval or a deteriorating lifestyle. Peace and freedom will only be found when we take responsibility for the choices we have made and deal with the consequences that have resulted.

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

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

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

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

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