

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



**SEPTEMBER
2020**



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

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

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JUST FOR TODAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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>

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.

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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.

GROWING IN GODLINESS

Growing up is challenging. Someone took care of us when we were babies so we could survive. As young children we had to learn how to walk and talk and behave. Perhaps we can remember as teenagers how difficult it was to listen to our parents and do what they said rather than doing what we wanted to do or what our peers suggested.

Growing in godliness is also challenging. We need to get to know the God who takes care of us and to whom we have committed our will and life. We need to learn how to walk and talk and behave as people of God. We need to devote ourselves to doing the will of God rather than doing what is right in our own eyes or in the eyes of our culture.

Therefore, I will always remind you about these things—even though you already know them and are standing firm in the truth you have been taught. (2 Peter 1:12 NLT)

To live a full and meaningful life with the Power that is greater than ourselves, we need to be assured that this God has given us everything we need for life and godliness. We need to be convinced that our future is guided by the One who knows the way forward. Staying close to our Guide will give us the opportunity to better know the God who loves and cares for us and enables us to avoid giving in to temptation.

May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. (2 Peter 1:2-3 NLT)

As we make healthy choices which lead to a godly life, we will know the kindness and peace of God which cannot be bought with silver or gold, but comes with the wholehearted giving of our will and life over to the care of God.

Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to grow in the knowledge of Jesus who gave His life so that I might be free from sin and enabled to live a Godly life. Amen

***To live a full
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THE WILL TO MAKE AMENDS

Making amends requires a will to do so. Some of us struggle to be sorry for our actions towards another or are more offended by what they did. The goal of Step 9 is to make amends to people we have harmed, wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

You were dead in sins, and your sinful desires were not yet cut away. Then he gave you a share in the very life of Christ, for he forgave all your sins, and blotted out the charges proved against you, the list of his commandments which you had not obeyed. He took this list of sins and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross.
(Colossians 2:13-14 TLB)

The goal of Step 9 is, wherever possible we are to make amends to people we have harmed, except when to do so would injure them or others.

The above scripture says God forgave us all our sins and blotted out the charges proved against us. We know what we have done and yet God was willing to have Jesus pay the penalty for our sin and set us free. Some people we have harmed have also harmed us or others known to us, and we may be hesitant to take the step to make direct amends to them. We believe their sin is greater than ours, so they deserve what we did to them. This is not God's way of dealing with sin.

Christ had no sin, but God made him become sin so that in Christ we could be right with God. (2 Corinthians 5:21 ERV)

When we are selective about making amends it may indicate that there is a lack of repentance about the sins we have committed, or we are unwilling to love a person because of the harm they have caused. Perhaps we need to see this person in the light of God's love for us and treat them as God has treated us, then making amends should be easier.

We love because God first loved us. God gave us this command: If we love God, we must also love each other as brothers and sisters. (1 John 4:19, 21 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to make direct amends to everyone I have harmed and ask that You fill me with Your love for them so that I may do so with a willing heart. Amen

DRY DRUNK OR LIVING SOBER

Being a “dry drunk” is a term used to describe a person whose actions and attitudes are pretty much the same as when they were drinking. Without substance to medicate the pain, they hurt. If we simply stop drinking or drugging and do not address the underlying issues, we can easily get into situations where we are prone to relapse. For example, if the way we deal with anger or handle rejection is a problem we never dealt with, then we could end up ruining a relationship and that could cause us to pick up again.

See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be just as full of light as when a lamp shines its light on you. (Luke 11:35-36 NIV)

Being a “dry drunk” is a term used to describe a person whose actions and attitudes are pretty much the same as when they were drinking.

Some telltale signs of being a dry drunk include: being rigid; being angry, resentful, or sarcastic; having extreme mood swings; full of self-pity and blaming; believing nothing is ever good enough; and a general sense of boredom and dissatisfaction with 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. Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. (Proverbs 4:20-23 NLT)

Jesus wants to heal us and set us free from living as a dry drunk. Accepting His mercy and forgiveness is enough to heal us and make us feel safe, with plenty left over so we can offer the same to others. It's only in the strength of God's love and acceptance that we are able to do the hard work of exposing and handing our character defects over to God so He can remove them from our lives and we can truly live in a new way.

Prayer: Loving God, I know it displeases You when I live as a dry drunk, and don't bother to deal with my character defects. I don't want to live that way any longer. I release myself and my hurts and resentments into Your hands. Help me to change so I can live in Your love in every area of my heart. Amen.

OPTIMISTIC AND JOYFUL

When we begin the recovery process we are often overwhelmed by the guilt and shame of the mess we have made of our lives. The 12-Step program encourages us to admit what we have done, repent, and where possible make amends to those we have harmed. If we sincerely want to change our ways, giving our will and life over to the care of God will make a difference in how we proceed. Because of what Jesus has done for us, God forgave our sin and filled us with His Holy Spirit who strengthens us to walk in unfamiliar paths which lead to a life of joy and peace.

We don't enjoy discipline when we get it. It is painful. But later, after we have learned our lesson from it, we will enjoy the peace that comes from doing what is right. (Hebrews 12:11 ERV)

Being confident in our minds that we can live a positive and joyful life is half the battle. Often, we are unable to picture life without our dependencies. The Bible gives us assurance that the God who created the universe has become our Heavenly Father and He declares in His word that ***“No weapon formed against you shall prosper.”*** (Isaiah 54:17 NKJV) We need to believe and receive this truth and allow our minds to be transformed by standing firm on this promise that God has made to us.

But let those who trust in you be happy forever. Protect and strengthen those who love your name. The Father has loved us so much! This shows how much he loved us: We are called children of God. (Psalm 5:11; 1 John 3:1a ERV)

The mercy of God shown to us is the foundation of our hope and joy. He is the one who initiated our salvation so we could become His precious children and live with Him forever. Some of us cause ourselves needless worry about the future because we forget that Jesus said, if we seek God first, God will meet our needs.

What you should be thinking about is God's kingdom. Then he will give you all these other things you need. (Luke 12:31 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am thankful that through Jesus I am Your adopted child. Please help me to live a positive, joyful life based on the truth that You are ever with me. Amen

Being confident in our minds that we can live a positive and joyful life is half the battle.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Good communication is an important part of all interaction with others and helps people at home and in the workplace co-operate with each other, deal with conflicts and challenges, and build effective relationships. Poor communication on the other hand may bring anger and fear and result in chaos, confusion, and breakdown of relationships. No matter how long people have lived or worked together, one cannot read another's mind and so it is important to practice communicating clearly. Learning how to communicate well is an essential part of this new life with God in recovery that we are now living.

All of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. (1 Peter 3:8-9 NIV)

Learning how to communicate well is an essential part of this new life with God in recovery that we are now living.

Communication is not only done through words. When God wanted us to know how valuable we were to Him, He sent Jesus to earth to demonstrate His love for us and to give His life as payment for our sins so we could have a life-giving relationship with Him forever.

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son. (Hebrews 1:1-2a NIV)

We say a lot without speaking whether it is in the tone of our voice, the expression on our faces while we are speaking, or even the posture of our body. In fact, some non-verbal communication is more sensitively conveyed to those of us who have come from times of trauma and addiction than actual words.

For most of us there are some past experiences or topics we find difficult to talk about. It may be an event that is painful to remember or makes us feel uncomfortable. With God's help we can learn how to communicate those things that need to be brought to the light of God's love and shared.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to pay attention to what You are communicating to me and have a willing heart to act on what You are saying. Please give me the ability and the willingness to communicate in a way that avoids misunderstanding which may cause hurt, anger, resentment, or confusion. Amen

A NEW WAY OF LIFE

While He was on earth, Jesus taught many things and made many statements about the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus said He came to earth to fulfill the law and the prophets. The law was given by God and the prophets foretold many things about the life of Jesus. Jesus came to save the world because humans failed to do what was pleasing to God. Fortunately, our rebellion and sin against God did not stop His love for us.

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through him. (John 3:16-17 NIRV)

The law of our country sets penalties for whatever law is violated and we are sentenced according to the punishment laid out. God set death as the penalty for violation of His laws to ensure that sin would never enter the paradise of God. Jesus came into the world in human flesh and lived a life that never violated the laws of God. As a human, Jesus paid the penalty for all human sin so that those who believe in Him could be saved from paying the penalty of eternal death.

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 5:21 NIRV)

God was well pleased with Jesus and accepted His death in place of our death. The requirement for this exchange is that we believe on the finished work of Jesus, repent of our wrongdoing, turn away from sin, and turn to Christ. When we give our will and life over to the care of God, we become His precious children and have an inheritance forever in the Kingdom of God.

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. (Ephesians 5:8-10 NIV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank You for all You have done for me. I want to live my life according to God's laws. Please help me! Amen

Jesus paid the penalty for all human sin so that each person could be saved from paying the penalty of eternal death.

PRAYING IN THE TIME OF STRUGGLE

One of the great comforts and challenges, all at the same time, is the reality that we are powerless to manage our lives on our own. Nothing makes us feel more vulnerable than not being able to be in control. The truth is that whether we know it or not, life is too much for us and only the care and control of God keeps our world and our lives on track.

In this struggle to maintain our faith and trust in God and not scramble due to the panic of being out of control, we are invited to pray for one another.

Prayer is the number one strategy to employ in order to find the solutions and strength we need.

Whether we've been in recovery for a long time or just getting started, we all know that there are many struggles and challenges to be faced if we are to keep going. The Bible encourages us to pray for one another in the struggle.

I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. (Romans 15:30 NIV)

The struggle may be our own personal challenges with temptation and obsessions. It may be the challenge to keep hope for a loved one who has relapsed once again after seeming to do well for a time. Whatever the challenge, we know that prayer is the number one strategy to employ to find the solutions and strength we need. The deepest level of our lives is the spiritual and all the solutions for every other area of thoughts, emotions, and behaviours are rooted in the spiritual work that is taking place in the core of our being.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:12 NIV)

The evil one is stronger than us but is no match for the power of God. That's why we need a higher power who can restore us and to whom we can pray and regularly give our will and our lives into His care.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I'm glad I don't have to pretend that it's not a struggle to continue to do what is right. Help me today to stand in Your love and to support my friends in prayer as together we offer our powerlessness to You and invite You to continue Your work of restoration in our lives. Amen

LIVING FREE FROM SEXUAL SIN

In Proverbs chapter 5 we read words of warning to young men in the area of living moral lives and avoiding people and places that would lead them into sexual sin. These are warnings not just for men but for all of us.

You will lose your self-respect and end up in debt to some cruel person for the rest of your life. When it's all over, your body will waste away, as you groan and shout, "I hated advice and correction! I paid no attention to my teachers, and now I am disgraced in front of everyone." (Proverbs 5:9, 11-14 CEV)

The effects of dishonouring our bodies for short term pleasure include losing our self-respect and living in shame. The emotional toll on us is like being in debt to a cruel person for the rest of our life. There are far too many reports of the impact of sexually transmitted diseases not just on the individual themselves but often on their partners and even their children. Huge prices are paid in our relationships when we live immoral lives.

In God's eyes there is no casual sex that is safe.

Of course, this is not the message we receive from the media and elsewhere in our society. "Practice safe sex" is what we hear most. In God's eyes there is no casual sex that is safe. In our highly sexualized society, these are challenging words to hear and heed but nevertheless it is God's holy and life-giving standard.

Sinners are trapped and caught by their own evil deeds. They get lost and die because of their foolishness and lack of self-control. (Proverbs 5:22-23 CEV)

Today we would be wise to follow God's instructions and live within the boundaries God shows us to be healthy and life giving. If we do not heed what God says, we risk becoming trapped by our own foolishness and lack of self-control.

God wants us to have a rich and satisfying life. The evil one seeks to harm and destroy us as effectively as he can. Living free from sexual sin is a wonderful way to enter into a life of dignity, respect, and blessing that God has prepared for us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You created me, including my sex drive. Help me to honour You with my body, and honour others in this important area of self-control in my relationships. Amen

IS IT REALLY WORTH IT TO DO THINGS GOD'S WAY?

Now that we are seeking to act with honesty in all our affairs, it's discouraging to face obstacles in our path while we see others lying and manipulating and getting what they want without the hassle we are experiencing. Is it really worth doing things God's way? We are not the first ones to experience inconvenience and suffering as we wait for God to bring about His good plan for our life. Thousands of years ago the writer of these words in the Bible had a similar experience.

But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence. All day long I have been afflicted and every morning brings new punishments. (Psalm 73:2-3, 13-14 NIV)

***My flesh
and my
heart may
fail, but
God is the
strength of
my heart
and my
portion
forever.***

(Psalm 73:26 NIV)

We don't have to pretend we don't have raw thoughts and emotions but we need to learn what to do with them. Along with the writer of these words we need to bring our observations and feelings before God and ask Him to show us what's going on in us and how we are meant to respond.

When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. (Psalm 73:16-17 NIV)

Only God is able to help us see things in perspective and give us wisdom in what we ought to do. Over and over again God promises to give us a future with hope when we faithfully put our trust in Him. Whatever we see others do is only one event in time but God knows the impact of their choices down the line. We don't!

God, in His wisdom, will quiet our hearts and show us how to find rest and security. We often won't see the result of our obedience in the moment but if we open our heart to God and reaffirm our trust in His goodness in our lives, God will be delighted to give us the strength we need for today and provide what we need for tomorrow – in ways we might expect – or in some better but more surprising way.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You are good and You are wise. Help me to trust Your care for me and Your promise to give me a future with hope, regardless of what I see happening in the lives of others. Amen

GETTING TO KNOW GOD BETTER

As we come to know God better through prayer and meditation on the Scriptures, our thoughts about Him change. The God we have come to know is a God who is full of compassion and mercy rather than one waiting for us to break His laws so He can condemn us. Like the Psalmist, we cried out to the God of our understanding for mercy and He gave us hope for a new life with Him in recovery.

I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came over me; I was overcome by distress and sorrow. Then I called on the name of the Lord: "Lord, save me!" The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. The Lord protects the unwary; when I was brought low, he saved me. Return to your rest, my soul, for the Lord has been good to you. (Psalm 116:1-7 NIV)

When distress and sorrow come our way, God invites us to seek Him who is the Power greater than ourselves to help us. Often, we allow what is going on to cause us anxiety and fear and the accuser takes this opportunity to assault our minds with things too great for us to handle. The plan of the evil one is to have us focus on our anxious thoughts, so we forget that God is with us and we never have to face our problems alone.

As we improve our conscious contact with God and pray for the knowledge of His will for us, we are assured that God will guide and support us in the way we should go. God's direction will never conflict with the Scriptures, so we need to spend time learning what God says to us in the Bible.

The Lord helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in him. (Psalm 37:40 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, When circumstances overwhelm me, help me to trust in You and listen attentively for Your Spirit to direct me in the way I should go. Amen

***God
invites us
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THE WISDOM OF MY WORDS

In Proverbs, one of the books of wisdom in the Bible, wisdom is described in the words of a person speaking. Jesus taught that what we say is directly linked to what's in our heart. As we move forward in our recovery, we will do well to look at our lives through the lens of what our lips are saying.

My mouth speaks what is true, for my lips detest wickedness. All the words of my mouth are just; none of them is crooked or perverse. To the discerning all of them are right; they are upright to those who have found knowledge. Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her. (Proverbs 8:7-11 NIV)

For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

Luke 6:45b NIV

If we are doing well, when people look at what we are saying they will find that what we say is not only true but right and fair. Others will learn how to do life better because we share our experience, strength, and hope. What we have to say will matter because God's wisdom coming out of our mouths is precious and there is nothing better.

It takes time to develop God's way of thinking, valuing, and speaking but the upgrade to our quality of living when we do so is absolutely worth the effort.

Now then, my children, listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways. Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not disregard it. Blessed are those who listen to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. (Proverbs 8:32-34 NIV)

God is pleased when we speak well in accordance with His ways. None of us are perfect but when we listen to what God says, give it top priority in our thinking and behaving, we will be blessed.

Prayer: Loving God, What You teach me is more precious than anything else in the world. I want everything I am and everything I say to give honour to You and give a clear demonstration of Your wisdom and truth to everyone I meet. Amen

LABOUR DAY

Today in North America we honour and give thanks for the collective labour-force of people within our families, our communities, and our nation.

The gift of work is first seen with God. God created the earth and its inhabitants in six days and then rested on the seventh day. What beauty there is in this world to admire and enjoy because of God's creative nature displayed in our environment, in the night sky, in animal life, and in one another.

Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. (Genesis 1:31, 2:2 NLT)

God has given skills and talents to each of us to enable us to work and provide for ourselves and our families, and to take care of the earth. We are instructed to work hard, to give our work the best effort we can, and to be content with what we have.

Lazy people want much but get little, but those who work hard will prosper. Work brings profit, but mere talk leads to poverty Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you." (Proverbs 13:4, 14:23, Hebrews 13:5 NLT)

Too many of us have lived between the extremes of either working too much or working too little. God doesn't want us to run after money as the ultimate source of our security. He advises us to work hard and not squander the time and talents He has given us.

Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans. (Colossians 3:23 NLT, Proverbs 16:3 NIV)

As we celebrate Labour Day, let's offer our work – studies, paid employment, volunteer work, recovery work etc. – to the Lord and ask His blessings on all that we do, so that our labour may contribute to honouring God and building up our community.

Prayer: May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us — yes, establish the work of our hands. Amen (Psalm 90:17 NIV)

We are instructed to work hard, to give our work the best effort we can, and to be contented with what we have.

CONTINUING TO TAKE INVENTORY

Step 10 encourages us to continue to take personal inventory and when we are wrong to promptly admit it. All of us can get to that place where we become complacent and feel we no longer need to keep doing the things that helped us get this far in our recovery. Perhaps we stop going to meetings or avoid seeing our sponsor or friends in recovery. We escape conscious contact with God and His principles by not reading the Bible. If any or all of these are present in our lives, a personal inventory will reveal that we are drifting like a piece of wood in a fast running river.

A personal inventory will reveal that we are drifting like a piece of wood in a fast running river.

Here is the law I find working in me. When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. Deep inside me I find joy in God's law. But I see another law working in me. It fights against the law of my mind. It makes me a prisoner of the law of sin. That law controls me. (Romans 7:21-23 NIRV)

If we admit that we have been wrong in our attitude, we will need to discipline ourselves to get back into a daily routine of doing those things that contribute to our well-being. Old habits do not die they have to be overcome with new ones. Scheduling our time may be a way to stop discouragement nagging at our hearts. Improving our conscious contact with God by reading His word is a tried and true way of building up our character and inner strength.

And remember, it is a message to obey, not just to listen to. So don't fool yourselves. For if a person just listens and doesn't obey, he is like a man looking at his face in a mirror; as soon as he walks away, he can't see himself anymore or remember what he looks like. (James 1:22-24 TLB)

Problems need to be brought to God for help to overcome. Being honest with ourselves as we take personal inventory on a regular basis will stem the tide of relapse and help us stay focused on our life with God in recovery.

Prayer: Gracious God, Forgive me when I neglect to seek You in all my ways. Please help me to stay focused on those things that bring me life. Amen

SERVICE

The Ninth AA Tradition is such a great foundational principle for being a supportive community together. "A.A., as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve." They were employing the teaching of Jesus who, in the face of power extremes, always taught that the field was always level. There was never to be the powerful at the expense of oppression. No one was to consider themselves more important than another. We were to serve one another in love.

The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. (Luke 22:26b NIV)

We serve others as an expression of our love and gratitude for God. With our hearts uplifted in God's goodness we seek to bless others as we have been blessed. The focus of our service is to respond to God's work in our lives. Anything we do, whether it is sweeping a floor, washing dishes, or being a speaker who shares God's word.

Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people. (Ephesians 6:7 NIV)

We are also challenged to make sure that we are faithful in our area of service. We shouldn't start and stop just as it's convenient for us but be trustworthy and consistent in doing what we say we'll do in service of others. Not only should we be consistent in our service but have an attitude of joy in what we are doing.

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! (1 Peter 4:10 NIV, Psalm 100:2 ESV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for the opportunity and ability to serve You and others today. It's only Your forgiveness and blessing that makes me have anything to offer. Amen

Serve one another humbly in love.

Galatians 5:13b NIV

SELF-EXAMINATION

To examine ourselves is to do just that – examine ourselves. It's so easy to compare ourselves and examine ourselves in light of what others are doing or not doing. God, however, wants to free us to live in the truth of who we are and where we need His grace and help to grow and get better. The focus on any self-examination has to be squarely focused on ourselves and only ourselves.

Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else. (Galatians 6:4 NLT)

The focus on any self-examination has to be squarely focused on ourselves and only ourselves.

When we examine ourselves it is important to make a judgment both on what is good and what is harmful. Judgment is not about condemning and accusing. A healthy self-examination is best described as taking an inventory - whether it is the Step 4 version or the daily Step 10 format. There are some things we should ditch immediately. Other things we need to hold fast to and not let go of, no matter how challenged we feel. There are some things in life that we need to bring before God and mature friends and have them help us observe, maybe over time, whether these things are harmful or helpful for us.

Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. Test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. (Romans 12:3b, 1 Thessalonians 5:21 NLT)

One of the great benefits of living in conscious contact with God is that the God who knows us best and loves us most, is able to show us our hearts in the manner and time in which He knows things need dealing with, particularly those things deep inside us that we're not conscious of but which lead us to fail over and over again.

How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults. Keep your servant from deliberate sins! Don't let them control me. Then I will be free of guilt and innocent of great sin. (Psalm 19:12-13 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, help me today to see myself as You see me. Give me a willing heart to admit where my shortcomings lie and to acknowledge the gifts that you've given me. Grant me the humility I need to learn from You and from others who are mature in their walk with You. Point out anything in me that needs to change. Amen

CONTROL

Control is usually a relationship problem and is common in addiction. Control issues in a person's life may result from traumatic or abusive life experiences. The fear of painful emotions due to change may cause a person to cling tightly to familiar circumstances, regardless of the effect on themselves or another person. Often drug addiction is rooted in the control of fears that can be calmed by a drug of choice and life for a time made better.

There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life—fear of death, fear of judgment—is one not yet fully formed in love. (1 John 4:18 MSG)

Controlling people want life to be the way they see it rather than the way it is. A person involved with a controlling person may not measure up to the standard set by the controller. Because of this they are judged and criticized for who they are or what they do. The abused person may start to feel confused, frustrated, or resentful and think they are the problem, especially when the controller throws an angry fit over something they have said or done. Manipulation is what is actually happening and if any of us fit into this category, we need to deal with it.

You will call out to me for help. And I will answer you. You will cry out. And I will say, 'Here I am.' "Get rid of the chains you use to hold others down. Stop pointing your finger at others as if they had done something wrong. Stop saying harmful things about them. (Isaiah 58:9 NIRV)

When we are lacking in self-esteem for whatever reason, we often feel vulnerable and try to eliminate what we are feeling by managing our lives in a way that makes us feel in control. Sadly, this often includes attempting to manage others to fit into our plan. God's way is to give our will and lives over to His care and follow His principles as outlined in the Bible and allow others to do the same.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You know the way that I take. Please heal me and allow Your perfect love to make me secure in my hope for a good life with You in recovery. Amen

Controlling people want life to be the way they see it rather than the way it is.

TRUSTING

What do we mean when we say that we are trusting in the Lord? Often, for some of us, praying to God is like making a list for Santa Claus and hoping we get what we ask for. Trusting is not believing we will get what we want, trusting is believing what God says as recorded in the Scriptures and praying to God for what He says He will do. The winds of time will change but the Word of God is unfailing and will remain forever.

Take note: The earlier predictions of judgment have been fulfilled. I'm announcing the new salvation work. Before it bursts on the scene, I'm telling you all about it. (Isaiah 42:9 MSG)

The winds of time will change but the Word of God is unfailing and will remain forever.

The work of God's redeeming grace in us will bring us back to trusting and obeying the God we have strayed from. Satan blinded our eyes to the truth of God's Word but the Holy Spirit who comes to live with us and in us will enlighten our thinking as we improve our conscious contact with God through prayer and meditation.

David said it all: I saw God before me for all time. Nothing can shake me; he's right by my side. I'm glad from the inside out, ecstatic; I've pitched my tent in the land of hope. (Acts 2:25-26 MSG)

When we know the character of God, we will not allow our own thoughts to guide us but will ensure we have knowledge of what the Word of God says and act accordingly. When we obey God, we can confidently leave the outcome of whatever happens in our lives with Him. Trusting God's Word to show us the way forward in whatever we encounter, is a solid foundation

for trusting Him in all our ways. We will have no fear of evil reports for our hearts will be steadfast, knowing that God is with us and acting on our behalf.

As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him. (Psalm 18:30 NKJV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to trust You in all my ways and not be afraid of what is happening around me. Thank You that You are a shield around me and will act on my behalf in those things that concern me. Amen

DOING OUR BEST IN EVERY SEASON

Recovery is hard work. Finding employment to pay the bills is often a challenge. Employment training or retraining stretches us and in today's fragile economy we wonder if there will be jobs for us when we complete our training. God's word encourages us to give ourselves whole heartedly to the work that is before us today and then we can expect God to take care of the rest.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. (Colossians 3:23-24 NIV)

We are all unique individuals that God has created and we each find ourselves in very different seasons of life. God wants to give students what they need to study well and learn. He will bless employees to be a blessing to others if they do their best in whatever work they are doing – whether it is day labour or a high-pressure job in a downtown office. Each one's job is to serve God and we do that by serving our employer well, by co-operating with other members of a team we might be on, or providing training and support to others so they can succeed right alongside us.

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. (1 Peter 4:10 NIV)

Every place of work or study requires flexibility and grace as we work together to benefit the community. God has blessed each of us with skills and talents and we need to respect the safety and dignity of everyone in our work area.

God has served us well every day of our life and we now can respond to that faithful help by committing our work into God's hands and doing everything we can to bless others.

God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. (Hebrews 6:10 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we commit the work of this day to You asking You to bless us and our work and to make something beautiful of it all in Your time and way. Amen

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

MAKING A MATCH

Step 12 encourages us to share the message of our spiritual awakening with others and to practice the principles we have learned in all our affairs. This means we keep on doing those things that have helped us retain our sobriety and share with others about the Power that enables us to keep going.

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)

We have a message to share with others, but we need to be careful that our lives match what we have learned. We need to be sensitive to those who are still in addiction or perhaps have just entered the recovery process. We need to remember how we felt when the program was new and intimidating to us. In our enthusiasm to share we might scare someone away by being thoughtless in our approach. Remember how vulnerable we were in dealing with our guilt and shame?

We need to be careful that our lives match what we have learned.

Keep a close watch on all you do and think. Stay true to what is right and God will bless you and use you to help others. (1 Timothy 4:16 TLB)

Every person we encounter is special in the eyes of our Heavenly Father and we need to show the love of God in us by being understanding, patient, and kind in all we say and do. We need to allow a person to be where they are at and encourage them to take one step at a time. We should ask ourselves “Who were we drawn to when we first came into recovery? What was it about them that encouraged us?”

Now we can be that kind of encouraging person for someone else. The message of hope for recovery needs to be shared with the grace that God alone can give us. As we greet others today, let’s have good deeds and words to encourage them.

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word. (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to carry the good news of life with You in recovery and help me do it in the Power of Your gentle Spirit. Amen

A SAFE TRUTH

Dishonesty is a tool we use to try to protect ourselves from shame and guilt and to try to feel better in the moment. We used it a lot in addiction so we could do whatever we thought we needed to do to continue in our addiction and get what we thought we needed. Addicts lie to themselves and others all the time. They tell themselves they have things under control when they do not. They minimize the problems they are causing. They simply hide from uncomfortable truths.

The reality is, it is only when we come into recovery and start telling the truth, that we realize what a huge weight is lifted off our shoulders. We are often surprised by the light-hearted freedom we can now experience. God is pleased with us and His blessing settles in our hearts. Telling the truth is a wonderful new way to experience life.

The Lord hates people who tell lies, but he is pleased with those who tell the truth. (Proverbs 12:22 ERV)

Stress levels are reduced significantly when we live in the truth. We do not have to worry about how to cover for the stories we tell and what peoples’ reactions will be when something unpleasant is said. We can be ourselves and allow others to do the same. Dishonesty contributes to isolation and loneliness because no matter how much we convince others with our lies, deep down we know we have lied, and we hate ourselves for our ongoing dishonesty.

If you are good, you are guided by honesty. People who can't be trusted are destroyed by their own dishonesty. (Proverbs 11:3 GNT)

The Bible promises that the truth will keep us safe. There may be momentary discomfort if the truth we need to admit is unpleasant, but the long-term benefit of this groundwork will allow us to live with peace of mind and heart.

Honesty will keep you safe, but everyone who is crooked will suddenly fall. (Proverbs 28:18 CEV)

Prayer: Loving God, please 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. Amen (Psalm 25:5 NLT)

Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds.

Colossians 3:9
NLT

WISDOM FROM WATCHING ANTS

We find many simple pictures in the Bible that help us understand important ways of living well with God in recovery.

You lazy people can learn by watching an anthill. Ants don't have leaders, but they store up food during harvest season. (Proverbs 6:6-8 CEV)

Ants are known to be hardworking and we are encouraged to learn from them. We may not have had all the opportunities we think we deserved but what are we doing with what we have? Too many of us expect the government or others to put conditions in place so we can succeed but we also need to carefully consider if we are doing all we can with what we have. As the hard work and

team effort of ants sustain them, we are encouraged to follow this example. Whether it's in doing difficult step work, attending meetings when it's not convenient, retraining for employment, or any of the other daily challenges we face, it's good to ask ourselves if we have done everything we can without waiting for someone else to fix our problem.

Ants are known to be hardworking and we are encouraged to learn from them.

Ants also highlight for us the value of teamwork and the discipline of having a rhythm of work and rest. Working together with others, based on a God-given intuition about the seasons, they make no excuses for conditions around them and simply get on with the job.

How long will you lie there doing nothing at all? When are you going to get up and stop sleeping? Sleep a little. Doze a little. Fold your hands and twiddle your thumbs. Suddenly, everything is gone, as though it had been taken by an armed robber. (Proverbs 6:9-11 CEV)

This is not a day to let depression or difficulty rob us of the gift of the opportunity to work hard and see how God uses our efforts in His great plan to bless us and give us a rich and rewarding life. Inaction is the devil's tool and he'll use it to keep us asleep while he robs us of a wonderful future. Let's learn from the ants.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Although there are challenges around me, please help me work hard and do everything I can to do my part in building up this life You have given me. Free me from the doldrums of despair and disappointment and help me to keep my focus on Your plans to bless me as I give myself to each task before me. Amen

OUT WITH THE OLD – IN WITH THE NEW

When we repent of our sin and give our lives over to the care of God, the old way of life goes, and we are born again as a new creation in Jesus Christ. To be in Christ means we have a new nature that is like that of our Saviour. Our old way of life which was corrupted by selfish desire is gone and we are made new in the attitude of our mind to live a life of right living and holiness. We can't manage this on our own, but God has graciously given us His Holy Spirit to empower us to do those things that please Him.

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)

In the early days of walking in God's way we often do not feel like a new creation. Old ways of thinking keep coming back and we have a battle with them to do the right thing. The way to have victory over our thought patterns is to submit them to God and speak His words into the situation. The word of God changed this world from being chaotic and void into being the beautiful creation we enjoy. If we speak God's words into our situation, they will have the power to change our thinking and make it line up with the new creation we are.

The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

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)

(2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT)

We have started a new course in life and the way is unfamiliar. We need knowledge of the Scriptures so that we can hold fast to God's words and principles. If we listen to the Holy Spirit, He will be our guide into all truth.

Your commandments give me understanding; no wonder I hate every false way of life. Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:104-105 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your word says that through Jesus I am a new person. Please guide me into all truth, so I can follow Your principles in my new life that has begun. Amen

THE ONE WHO KEEPS ME GOING

Trouble shows up in our lives for many reasons. Some of it we bring on ourselves because of our choices and our self-willed behaviour. Other troubles may have come from outside sources. The good news is that regardless of the source of the trouble, there is a solution. We can bring our troubles to God, ask for forgiveness where necessary, request deliverance and help from the trouble, and expect that God will make us new again.

God, make us new again. May you be pleased with us. Then we will be saved.
(Psalm 80:3 NIRV)

***I know
that God
helps me.
The Lord
is the one
who
keeps me
going.***

**Psalm 54:4
NIRV**

Several times in Psalm 80 as the writer recounts things that have gone wrong and troubles that the people are facing, He reminds God that they are God's chosen people whom He loves. He uses the picture of someone transplanting a plant into new ground, building a protecting wall around it, but then seeing the wall broken down and harm and destruction being done to the plant.

God who rules over all, return to us! Look down from heaven and see us! Watch over your vine. Guard the root you have planted with your powerful right hand. Take care of the branch you have raised up for yourself. (Psalm 80:14-15 NIRV)

The devil will try to use our troubles to have us turn our backs on God. He will either say we don't deserve the problems so God must not care, or, He'll tell us we've wrecked things by our own poor choices and God will not fix the mess we've created. Regardless of the source of the trouble, God is the answer to all of our problems and His solutions are available to us when we turn to Him, repent and seek His forgiveness, and turn our will and life, including our problems, over to His care.

Give us new life. We will worship you. Lord God who rules over all, make us new again. May you be pleased with us. Then we will be saved. (Psalm 80:18b-19 NIRV)

Prayer: Loving God, I come to You once again with all that is going on in my life and world. In all my troubles and problems, I ask for Your wisdom and guidance to resolve the issues, so I can go forward with You into the joyful life You have planned for me. Amen

REWRITING HISTORY OR LEARNING FROM IT

It is interesting to live in a time in history when we seem more willing to rewrite history than to learn from it. There is no doubt that some of both is needed. Both the "Me Too" and the "Black Lives Matter" movements are examples of this need. As we look at our life in addiction and all that took place before, during, and after it, we might be tempted to try to rewrite events in our own minds particularly painful ones, rather than to learn from them.

My people, listen to my teachings. Listen to what I say. I will tell you a story. I will tell you about things from the past that are hard to understand. We have heard the story, and we know it well. Our fathers told it to us. And we will not forget it. Our people will be telling this story to the last generation. We will all praise the Lord and tell about the amazing things he did. (Psalm 78:1-4 ERV)

We can learn lots from God's people and their stories in the Bible. God did many amazing things to bring His people out of slavery and into a new place of freedom and blessing. The facts are clearly recorded in history and have been retold down through many generations. Despite their history and God's goodness, like many of us, many of them wanted things their own way and often broke their promises to God and disobeyed His instructions.

They would remember that God was their Rock. They would remember that God Most High had saved them. But they tried to fool him with their words; they told him lies. Their hearts were not really with him. They were not faithful to the agreement he gave them. (Psalm 78:35-37 ERV)

They would get themselves into trouble over and over again and then call out to God in their misery and, incredibly, God would hear them and help them. What an amazing God we serve who is ready to do the same for us if we will just turn to him, repent of our wrongs, and sincerely give Him control of our lives.

But God was merciful. He forgave their sins and did not destroy them. Many times he held back his anger. He never let it get out of control. He remembered that they were only people, like a wind that blows and then is gone. (Psalm 78:38-39 ERV)

Prayer: Loving God, I'm so grateful for the many new beginnings You have given me. Help me to stand strong with You today and trust You. I want to live in the strength of who I am in Jesus and not be blown about like a leaf in the wind. Amen

***The Lord is
kind and
merciful,
patient
and full of
love.***

Psalm 145:8 ERV

GETTING TO KNOW GOD INTIMATELY

In Step 11 we are seeking through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out. We have come to understand some things about God, but now desire to have a more intimate relationship with Him, so we can discover the plans He has prepared in advance for us to do.

This is what the Lord says—your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go. (Isaiah 48:17 NIV)

The only way we can get to know another person intimately is by spending time with them as they reveal themselves to us.

Many of us have acquaintances that we know some things about but the only way we can really get to know another person intimately is by spending time with them letting them reveal themselves to us. God knows all about us, but until we meditate on His word as recorded in the Bible, we will be unaware of how much He loves and delights in those who want to know Him and follow His principles in all our affairs.

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the Lord upholds him with His hand. (Psalm 37:23-24 NKJV)

Spending time with God each day and living in His presence will delight God’s heart and bring peace to our own. This is not to say that we will never have any problems for Jesus said we would have troubles in this world, but we were not to fear, for through Him who loves us we would have the strength to persevere to victory. As we grow in our relationship with God our

faith will grow and we will choose to follow Him in all our ways.

We show our love for God by obeying his commandments, and they are not hard to follow. Every child of God can defeat the world, and our faith is what gives us this victory. (1 John 5:3-4 CEV)

Prayer: Loving God, I want to draw near to You for You are the fountain of life, and in relationship with You my life is complete. Amen

STAYING AWAY FROM ALL SEXUAL SIN

Proverbs is a book of wisdom in the Bible. Several chapters of the book give instruction about sexual immorality and being lured into trouble when we allow ourselves to be drawn into sexual activity outside of the lifetime commitment of marriage. Earlier in the month we looked at chapter 5 on this subject.

Come, let’s drink our fill of love until morning. Let’s enjoy each other’s caresses, for my husband is not home. He’s away on a long trip ... Don’t let your hearts stray away toward her. Don’t wander down her wayward path. For she has been the ruin of many; many men have been her victims. Her house is the road to the grave. Her bedroom is the den of death. (Proverbs 7:18-19, 25-27 NLT)

Jesus was clear on the issue of sexual immorality when He taught that long before we climb into bed with someone we have allowed our minds and hearts to lust after that person, and therefore committed sin in our hearts.

But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:28 NLT)

We live in a culture that holds a vastly different standard from the principles God has established. As we go forward in our life with God in recovery, we have a choice to make. Even though it may seem like a huge sacrifice to pay, we are required to exhibit self-control in this area until we are married. God knows what He is talking about and what is best for each person. The God who loves to bless His children and fill their lives with good things says to wait for marriage for the intimate giving of one’s self to another. Whose voice will we obey – the voice of lust that leads to ruin or the voice of God that leads to honour?

God’s will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin. Then each of you will control his own body and live in holiness and honor— not in lustful passion like the pagans who do not know God and his ways. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, You have the words of truth and life that give us freedom as we follow Your will and Your ways. Help me to honour You with my body and make any adjustments necessary to live in sexual purity before You. Amen

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. (1 Corinthians 6:18 NIV)

FIGHT OR FLIGHT

When we are faced with a recurring problem, we often just want it to be over and done with. We may have disagreed with another person many times and each one has stood their ground. It is at times like this that we may choose either to flee the situation because we are weary and have no fight left in us or lash out and fight with accusations, blame, and intimidation.

I said, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. I would flee far away and stay in the desert; I would hurry to my place of shelter, far from the tempest and storm." (Psalm 55:6-8 NIV)

To avoid being confronted with situations that we were at least partly responsible for, fight or flight seemed our only options.

Strong arguments exist because each person is unwilling to see the position from the other's point of view. In our addiction we thought we had the right to live as we pleased. Those who cared for us knew we were harming ourselves and tried to discuss how our actions were causing grief for them. To avoid being confronted with situations that we were at least partly responsible for, fight or flight seemed our only options.

I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, according to their own thoughts. (Isaiah 65:2 NKJV)

In some situations, we should work hard at praying and saying nothing when we see the mess another is making. Choosing to go their own way may be the result of a rebellious spirit and until the person gets to a place of seeing the insanity of the situation, we are wasting our breath. If we choose to fight the battle we need to do so in love and not accusation. We need to find a way for the person to express what is going on inside them and patiently work with them from that point of view. If we act in anger, we will likely lose the battle.

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)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to listen for Your wisdom and to understand the wonderful message of reconciliation in any dispute. Amen

LOVE NEVER GIVES UP

We are told in the Bible that love never fails, but in our relationships with other we often fail to love. One day our friend is the greatest person in the world and the next day they do something to offend us and they become our enemy. We are fickle in our love for others. The love of God is quite different from the love we have towards one another.

Here is how you can tell the difference between God's children and the devil's children. Anyone who doesn't do what is right isn't God's child. And anyone who doesn't love their brother or sister isn't God's child either. (1 John 3:10 NIRV)

Before we gave our will and life over to the care of God, we were habitual sinners and did not love or care much for those around us. Our dependency became our first love and all our relationships suffered because we gave our all to what helped us exist in our unmanageable lifestyle. In the pit of our addiction, God broke through with His unfailing love. He never gave up on us even when we refused to obey Him or even acknowledge that He existed.

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1 John 3:1a NIV)

Would we care about others if they were not pleasing us? In our rebellion, God still cared about us because He gave Jesus His beloved son to redeem us from all sin that had us in bondage to the evil one. God paid a great price for our deliverance. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all would be saved from paying the penalty for sin that Jesus has already paid.

As children of God, our love for others should cause us to be tolerant with them even when they are disinterested in our testimony about the goodness of God. We should remember that love never fails, and we should never give up on them. Remember, with God, all things are possible.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to love others with the same love that You have for me. Teach me Your ways and help me to never give up on anyone. Amen

God broke through with His unfailing love. He never gave up on us even when we refused to obey Him or even acknowledge that He existed.

UPDATING OUR OUTLOOK

Life is not perfect and has its challenges. It is easy to let the obstacles and struggles of life get us down, but there is another way to live that is so much better. While we can't control people, places, or things, what we can control is how we respond to them, and this is where developing a positive outlook is helpful. We can certainly do that better when we are sober than when drunk or high. The ninth promise we are given if we live in sobriety for a while is *"Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change."* (Promises of AA)

A happy heart makes a face look cheerful. But a sad heart produces a broken spirit. (Proverbs 15:13 NIRV)

We pull down every proud obstacle that is raised against the knowledge of God; we take every thought captive and make it obey Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:5 GNT

There's plenty of literature on the effect of a positive outlook on life. Stress is reduced. All sorts of physical problems diminish or disappear altogether. Relationship issues tend to be resolved quicker and more satisfactorily when we are looking for what is good rather than blaming, complaining, and seeing the worst possible outcome.

The Lord is my light and my salvation; I will fear no one. The Lord protects me from all danger; I will never be afraid. (Psalm 27:1 GNT)

God will guide us with His light and love. We do not have to be afraid of facing the past, present or the future. God will surround us and protect us from all danger. We can confidently let go of the fear that keeps us looking at life in a negative way because God is always with us.

When I was burdened with worries, you comforted me and made me feel secure. (Psalm 94:19 CEV)

Going forward, God will not only show us what we need to know and do, but when life is challenging, He will comfort us and help us feel secure. We can dare to hope that God has solutions, God has healing power, and God sticks with us when we are struggling. It is time to update our outlook on life with the unending care of God who will never leave us or forsake us.

Prayer: Loving God, I am willing to trade in my pessimistic outlook on myself and life because You have promised me a future with hope. I trust Your love for me and Your ability to work out Your plans in my life. Amen

SLEEP/INSOMNIA

Insomnia is a common sleep disorder that can make it hard to fall asleep, hard to stay asleep, or cause a person to wake up too early and not be able to get back to sleep. It can sap our energy, our mood, our health, and our quality of life. Insomnia and addiction are often linked because a lack of sleep creates physical and emotional issues that we attempt to self-medicate with drugs or alcohol. Insomnia is extremely common in active drinkers and in those who are in treatment after having stopped drinking.

The God who created us promises sleep to those he loves – that's us. There are lots of tips available to try to help us fall asleep: We can practice going to bed and getting up at the same time each day, exercising regularly, not napping after supper, not eating or drinking close to bedtime, avoiding caffeine etc. However, the "go to" method should first be to pray and ask God to give us the sleep He intends for us to have.

In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves. (Psalm 127:2 NIV)

If something has caused us to be fearful, God promises us that we will dwell in safety. We can sleep peacefully because God will be awake to watch over us.

In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety. He who watches over you will not slumber; (Psalm 4:8, 121:3b NIV)

What keeps us awake? If it's worries about the future, then God offers peace to us if we will pray and offload our concerns to Him.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I ask You to wash through my conscious, sub-conscious, and unconscious mind and cleanse me with the blood of Jesus so nothing can harm me while I sleep. I will lie down in peace and sleep because You are watching over me. Amen

Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

Psalm 91:1 NLT