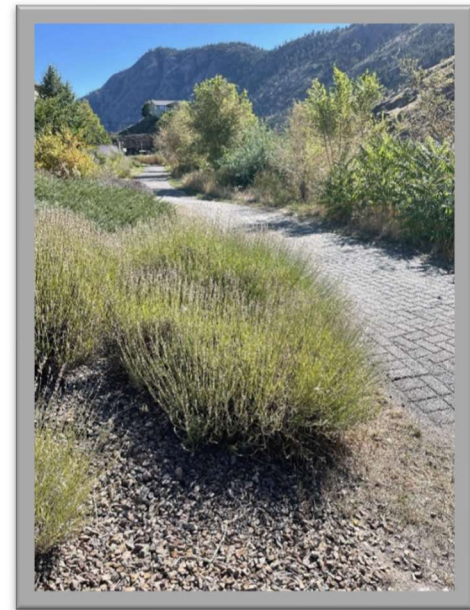


**LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY**

# **Daily Meditations**



**SEPTEMBER 2023**



These meditations are available online  
for computer, tablets, and smart phones  
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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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Phone or text: 604-215-0335

## JUST FOR TODAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

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

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

## 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

SEPTEMBER 2023

#### CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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#### PHOTOS

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VOLUME 08, NUMBER 09

## ***How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery***

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

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

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

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

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

## JUST FOR TODAY – I WILL TRY TO LIVE IN CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD

*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.*

What daily decisions have we made and continue to make that enable us to live in conscious contact with God?

People who love each other spend as much time together as possible. Because of God's love for us, God desires to spend time with us. When we love God in return, we will want to spend time with Him. Those who are in love want to share with each other all of who they are and what they experience. Shared experiences help build the memories that nourish the life they share with each other. Each one gets to know the likes and dislikes of the other. Each one marvels at what their loved one does while alone and each delights in what they share and achieve together.

*I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:16-19 NIV)*

As men and women who are learning to live in a loving relationship with God and have a desire to know His will, it is important to speak with God through prayer. We honour God by expressing our joy and thanksgiving about what He is doing in our lives. We can ask God for wisdom and guidance as we share our plans with Him. As we walk in conscious contact with God, He is faithful to complete what He has begun in us. God is always present with us and will tenderly direct and encourage us when we bring our plans to Him and are willing to respond to His input.

*Prayer: Loving God, I want to live in conscious contact with You. Help me to recognize Your presence with me and Your will for my life. Fill me with Your power and grace to carry out those things You have planned for me to do. Amen*

***As we walk  
in  
conscious  
contact  
with God,  
He is  
faithful to  
complete  
what He  
has begun  
in us.***

## THE WILL TO MAKE AMENDS

Making amends requires a will to do so. Some of us struggle to be sorry for our harmful actions towards another and want to justify ourselves for what we did. The goal of Step 9 is that wherever possible we are to make amends to people we have harmed, 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 so we could be set free. Some people we have harmed may also have harmed us or others known to us, and we may be hesitant to take the first step to make direct amends to them. We may 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 for the sins we have committed, or we may simply be unwilling to love a person because of the harm they have caused us or those dear to us. As we see this person in the light of God's love for us and decide to treat them as God has treated us, making amends will become 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 so that I may do so with a willing heart. Amen***

## HEALING BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

Making amends is a responsibility we must take very seriously if we want to protect our sobriety. While making amends is not necessarily a comfortable process, it is necessary for our growth. If we can admit what went wrong in our past relationships and admit our part in it, there is a good chance we will choose not to make the same mistakes again.

***Suppose you are offering your gift at the altar. And you remember that your brother or sister has something against you. Leave your gift in front of the altar. First go and make peace with them. Then come back and offer your gift.***  
(Matthew 5:23-24 NIRV)

***When we make  
amends under  
the guidance of  
our loving God,  
everyone is  
blessed.***

For us to risk taking the first step in making amends with others would be impossible if God had not first demonstrated the way for us. Repeatedly we failed to keep God's commandments and yet God sent His Son Jesus into the world to atone for our sin so that we could be reconciled to Him. God has completed the work necessary for us to know peace and now He calls us to extend that peace to those in our circle of family and friends. God didn't wait for us to come to Him. He prepared in advance. He reached out to us with this wonderful gift of reconciliation when we didn't dare approach Him. As we begin the work of restoring our troubled relationships, we can reflect on God's way of offering forgiveness and peace.

***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)

When we make amends under the guidance of our loving God, everyone is blessed. Confessing our wrong to someone we have harmed means they will no longer need to carry around the lingering excess baggage of the event. The resentment we held towards one another will begin to disappear and each of us will experience more freedom in the future.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for sending Jesus into the world so that my relationship with You could be restored. Now I ask You to work in my heart so that my relationships with others may also be made right. Amen***

## SECURITY

We tend to base our security on the experience of our personal relationship with others. If we have grown up with attentive loving parents, we likely learned to trust others and have a good sense of healthy boundaries. If we were raised in dysfunctional families, we tend to be wary of others because we experienced or witnessed violations of personal boundaries in our homes. As children some of us also had to deal with unmet needs. Now, as responsible adults, we need to assess and recognize those people we can truly trust.

***Keep me safe, O God, I've run for dear life to you. I say to God, "Be my Lord!" Without you, nothing makes sense. And these God-chosen lives all around—what splendid friends they make! Don't just go shopping for a god. Gods are not for sale. I swear I'll never treat god-names like brand-names. My choice is you, God, first and only. And now I find I'm your choice! You set me up with a house and yard. And then you made me your heir!*** (Psalm 16:1-6 MSG)

When we admitted that we were powerless over our dependency and our dysfunctional lifestyle, we looked for a secure place where we could be restored to sanity. Some of us chose for a place where there were God inspired people all around. These people became our friends. Their desire for us is to turn our will and our life over to the God they know can be trusted. Some of these friends may also share their experience, strength, and hope with us of how they learned to trust God and discovered the security they found in being part of His family. The person writing the above Psalm discovered that when he chose to trust God, he was actually God's choice. He is amazed that being in relationship with God makes him a child of God, and an heir of all God's promises.

Today, let's consider if we have found our security in the God who loves and cares for us or are we still shopping for an alternate god. Without the living God in our lives, nothing in life will really make sense.

***Prayer: Loving God, I confess that at times I still seek my security in people and things. Help me to choose You alone, first and only for You alone are the author of life. Amen***

***Keep me  
safe, O God,  
I've run for  
dear life to  
you. I say to  
God, "Be my  
Lord!"  
Without you,  
nothing  
makes sense.***  
(Psalm 16:1 MSG)

## 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 those around us.

***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)

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

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 environment in which we live. 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 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)***

## SLEEP/INSOMNIA

Insomnia is a common sleep disorder that makes it hard to fall asleep, hard to stay asleep, or causes a person to wake up too early and not be able to get back to sleep. It saps 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 recovery after having stopped drinking.

The God who created us promises sleep to those he loves – that's us. There are lots of available tips to help us sleep: the practice of going to bed and getting up at a set time each day; exercising regularly; not napping after supper; no food or drinks close to bedtime; avoiding anything with 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 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, 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 my anxious thoughts with the blood of Jesus so nothing can unsettle 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***



## RESPONDING TO FRIENDSHIP

Through Jesus, we are invited to a relationship with God. As we respond to God's unfailing love and care for us, we will find friendship, peace, and security. That security will help us grow strong and enable us to be a loving and caring friend to others.

We get an early example of this in the Bible through the story of Abraham. ***Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness, and he was called God's friend.*** (James 2:23 NIV)

We know that Abraham left his family and went to an unknown land because God had told Him to do this. Abraham stood strong and followed God through a number of very challenging circumstances. However, at certain times in the journey, like so many of us, Abraham gave into fear and stumbled. Though Abraham didn't always do what was right, God knew Abraham's desire to obey Him. Even when Abraham was unfaithful to God, God was still faithful to Abraham. That's a true friend.

***Jesus has promised to be a friend to us, the closest friend possible.***

Like Abraham, we also need help as we try to be a friend but struggle because of happenings along the way. Jesus has promised to be a friend to us, the closest friend possible. Jesus will show us the way forward as we determine in our hearts to follow Him. He will teach us about love and commitment. Jesus will always be with us to guide us. Jesus offers us friendship that will last for eternity.

***The Lord is a friend to those who fear him. He teaches them his covenant.*** Jesus says: ***Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.*** (Psalm 25:14, Revelation 3:20 NLT)

Friends spend time together, share interests and concerns. Jesus invites us to walk and talk with Him throughout the day, welcoming Him to share what we are experiencing, and learning from Him how to resolve issues that arise. Today is a wonderful opportunity to say "Yes" to friendship with Jesus.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is to have a lifetime of friendship with You. I welcome You to know my thoughts and feelings. I want to share my ideas with You and in turn hear what You have to say to me. Please help me to be a good friend and to choose to follow Your principles in all my affairs. Amen***

## GUILT THROUGH CONDEMNATION

***So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.*** (Romans 8:1 NLT)

When we permit our thoughts to be controlled by any power other than the Holy Spirit, we give permission to that power to accuse and condemn us for our past misdeeds and fill us with endless guilt. Condemning thoughts flood our minds such as, "You will never be free from those sins. You will never be what God created you to be. God is disappointed in you. You are weak-willed. How long can you expect God to put up with you?" These assaults are vicious attacks on our minds from Satan the one whom Jesus says seeks to destroy us.

***When we were controlled by our old nature, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires that produced a harvest of sinful deeds, resulting in death. But now we have been released from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its power. Now we can serve God, not in the old way of obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way of living in the Spirit.*** (Romans 7:5-6 NLT)

We need to encourage ourselves with the truth of God's Word rather than allow feelings of inadequacy and lingering guilt to control us. When we accept Jesus' death as payment for our sins, we are freed from all condemnation and empowered by the Holy Spirit to live our lives according to the written words of God contained in the Bible. Taking time to pray and meditate on the Scriptures will grow our faith and produce strength in us to live in the freedom we have in Christ. We seek progress each day, not perfection. Slogans such as, "Let go and let God" remind us that God seeks a heart that is fully surrendered to Him.

Jesus prayed for us who would believe in Him, ***"Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth".*** (John 17:17 NLT)

***Prayer: Loving God, Thank you for being merciful to me, rather than condemning me for my sinful ways. Today I choose to let go of the guilt I carry about my past sins and proclaim the truth of Your Word that, through Jesus, I have been set free from all condemnation. Hallelujah! Amen***

***We need to encourage ourselves with the truth of God's Word rather than allow feelings of inadequacy and lingering guilt to control us.***

## DETOXING SPIRITUAL POISON

In sobriety, we begin to be aware of how much spiritual poison we have allowed to build up in our hearts and minds. We have many misguided desires and false ideas about life. The most toxic spiritual poison we have fed ourselves is the belief that we know how to live life on our own without God.

*Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy, and we hated each other. But, when God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved*

***In sobriety,  
we begin to  
be aware of  
how much  
spiritual  
poison we  
have  
allowed to  
build up in  
our hearts  
and minds.***

*us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior.* (Titus 3:3-6 NLT)

The truth is, we were created for a relationship with God. While trying to gratify our desire for inner fulfillment, we have used relationships that have proven to be as defective and destructive as the use of alcohol and drugs. Like harmful substances, these relationships and activities did not fulfill our desire for a meaningful life and our souls need to be cleansed from the false hope that we have attached to them.

God created us to live in relationship with Him, submitted to His ways. That's why the founders of A.A. framed the 12 steps to begin with admitting our powerlessness to face life on our own and the need to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God.

These first steps are the foundation that life recovery is built on. The Bible confirms these teachings.

*There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death. Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.* (Proverbs 14:12, John 14:6 NLT)

*Prayer: Gracious God, I admit that I am powerless on my own and my life has become unmanageable. Please strengthen me as I choose to turn my will and life over to Your care. I want to know You more and experience the truth of Your Word to guide me on the path to new life. Amen*

## DEALING WITH DENIAL

Denial is described as a refusal to admit the truth or reality of a situation. Denial is a coping mechanism people use to help them deal with uncomfortable memories or circumstances.

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

Denial of our dependency on a substance and/or a person, is the first obstacle we must overcome in recovery. Others may have identified the negative impact our dependency has on us, but we may continue to deny that a problem even exists. Step One reminds us: *We admitted we were powerless over our dependency and that our life had become unmanageable.* Failure to acknowledge this keeps us from seeking the help we need and taking the necessary steps to get well.

*For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.* (Romans 7:18-20 NIV)

God calls us to live in truth. When we put our faith and trust in Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us, and He will reveal the truth we need to acknowledge about ourselves.

Jesus said, *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.* (John 16:13 NLT)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please reveal to me where I am vulnerable to denial of the truth and the effect it is having on my life and relationships. Fill me with the life-giving truth of Your Word and help me to walk in Your ways. I desire to be free from those things that hinder my life with You or my recovery. Amen*

***Denial of our  
dependency on  
a substance  
and/or a  
person, is the  
first obstacle  
we must  
overcome in  
recovery.***

## DRY DRUNK OR LIVING SOBER

Being a “dry drunk” is a term used to describe a person whose actions and attitude are pretty much the same as they were when they were drinking. Without a substance to medicate the pain, they still hurt. When a person just stops drinking or drugging and does not address the underlying issues, they may easily find themselves in situations where they are prone to relapse. For example, if a person has a problem dealing with anger or rejection then any new relationship will suffer and perhaps end because of tension in the relationship, and that could cause the person 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 attitude 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; being 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 for our offences will bring healing and restore us to new life. When we have been forgiven for our wrongs, we can then forgive others for their wrongs against us. It's only in the strength of God's love and acceptance of us that we can do the hard work of exposing our character defects so that God can remove them. Only then can we truly live in a new way.

*Prayer: Loving God, I know that You are displeased 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 give myself and all my hurts and resentments to You and ask that You bring healing to my wounds. Change my heart and help me to live my life according to Your principles. Amen.*

## PRACTICAL TIPS FOR AVOIDING TEMPTATION

God promises to supply what we need to overcome temptation. He will empower us to keep on the right path even during difficult times of temptation. What God starts, God will finish. Where we are weak, God will show Himself strong on our behalf. The most powerful strategy for overcoming temptation is reminding ourselves, as often as necessary, that God's grace is sufficient to meet all our needs.

***May God himself, the God who makes everything holy and whole, make you holy and whole, put you together—spirit, soul, and body—and keep you fit for the coming of our Master, Jesus Christ. The One who called you is completely dependable. If he said it, he'll do it!*** God says, ***“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.*** (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 MSG, 2 Corinthians 12:9 NIV)

Some practical ways we can express our trust in God's care and move beyond temptation:

- Recognize what is going on – the devil is trying to destroy us. Do we want him to succeed, or do we want victory over Him?
- Stop obsessing on whatever is tempting us and pray instead. Ask God for strength, healing, comfort, and insight.
- Reach out for support and solutions. Seek help until we connect with someone who can help.
- Be willing to see any problem in perspective. We need to consider the positive outcome of handling a problem as soon as it arises. We also need to see the negative consequences that will result from avoiding or mishandling a problem. One fleeting moment of pleasure may have a high cost.
- Distract ourselves with healthy thoughts and choose, just for one day, to believe God's word and act accordingly. One day quickly grows to two and then a week, a month, a year, and even a lifetime.

God will hear our prayer when we sincerely come to Him and ask for help. If we obey what God says, He will deliver us from the power of temptation.

***Prayer: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.” Amen*** (Matthew 6:9-13 NIV)

***God promises to supply what we need to overcome temptation.***

## 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 will forgive our sin and fill 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.***

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 dependency. 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 love and mercy God has shown to us is the foundation for 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 and therefore, I will never face my problems alone. Amen***

## FIGHT OR FLIGHT

When we are faced with a recurring problem, we often just want it to be over and done with. Many times we have quarreled with another person over the same issue and each of us has stood our ground. It is at times like these that we may choose either to flee the situation because we are weary and have no fight left in us, or continue to lash out 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)

Strong disagreements exist because each person is unwilling to see the issue from the other's point of view. In our addiction we thought we had the right to live as we pleased. Those who cared about us knew we were harming ourselves and tried to discuss how our actions were causing distress not only for us but also for them. To avoid these confrontations that we are partly responsible for, fight or flight may seem like the 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)

When angry confrontations keep occurring without anything being resolved, we should be silent and spend more time praying for God's guidance in the situation. If either person continues to act without change, it may be the result of a stubborn spirit and until either person gets to a place of seeing the insanity of the situation, both are wasting time and energy. If there is a chance that the conflict may be resolved, it needs to be handled with love and not accusation. Each person needs to let the other express what is going on inside them and patiently work with the other's point of view. If either act in anger, the hostilities will continue.

***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 counsel and give me wisdom to understand the healing message of love and reconciliation in any dispute. Amen***

***To avoid confrontations that we are partly responsible for, fight or flight may seem like the only options.***

## THE WISDOM OF MY WORDS

In Proverbs, one of the books 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 if we 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 in our life in recovery people will listen to what we have to say because they desire truth. As we share our experience, strength, and hope with them, those who are still struggling may be stirred to know more so they also may live their lives according to the Scriptures. What we have to say truly matters because God's wisdom is precious and uplifting to those who are still in bondage to their old way of thinking and unmanageable lifestyle.

It takes time to mature in God's way of thinking, evaluating, and speaking, but the upgrade to our quality of life 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 clearly to others about living our life in accordance with His ways. None of us are perfect but when we choose to listen and do what God says, give it top priority in our thinking and behaving, we will be truly blessed and will also be a blessing to others.

***Prayer: Loving God, What You teach me is truth and is more precious to me than anything else I have encountered in this world. I want all that I am and all that I do to honour You. By acts of love and kindness towards others, help me to witness to the wisdom and truth of Your Word. Amen***

## LIVING FREE FROM SEXUAL SIN

In Proverbs chapter 5 we read words of warning to young men about avoiding people and places where they might be led into sexual sin. These are warnings not just for young men but also 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 also further transmission to their partners and even their children. A huge price is paid in our relationships when we live immoral lives.

This, however, 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.

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

***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)

We would be wise each day 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 the 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 those with whom I have a relationship in this important area of self-control. Amen***

## 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 a breakdown in a relationship. 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 bodies. 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 also let me have a willing heart to act on what You are saying. Please give me the ability to communicate in a way that is kind and avoids misunderstanding which may unintentionally cause hurt, anger, resentment, or confusion. Amen***

## SERVICE

The Ninth A.A. Tradition is a foundational principle that supports caring people as they serve others in their community. *"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 level. There was never to be the powerful at the expense of the oppressed. 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 to God. When our hearts are uplifted by God's goodness, we seek to bless others as we have been blessed. The focus of our service is simply loving response to God's work in our lives. Everything that we do, whether it is sweeping a floor or being a speaker who shares God's Word, ought to be considered as service to the Lord rather than to people.

***Serve one another humbly in love.***

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

***Galatians 5:13b NIV***

The Scriptures challenge us to be faithful in our chosen area of service. We should not start and stop as it is convenient to us but be consistent in doing what we have committed to do. As well as being reliable we should 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 to serve You and others with great joy. I am mindful that what I have to offer is because Jesus paid the price for my sins and set me free from the powers of darkness. I am truly humbled by Your love and mercy poured out on me. Amen***

## REWRITING HISTORY OR LEARNING FROM IT

It is interesting to live in a time when people seem more willing to rewrite history than to learn from it. As we look at our life in addiction and all that took place before, during, and after, we might be tempted to rewrite our past and make allowances in our own minds for events that happened rather than choosing 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 through many generations. Despite their history and God's goodness, like many of us, many of them wanted things their own way and were unfaithful to the agreement they had made with Him.

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

Psalm 145:8 ERV

***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)

The people would get themselves into trouble over and over again and then call out to God in the misery they brought upon themselves 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 am so grateful to You for the many new beginnings You have given me. Help me to be faithful to You each day and trust You to guide me in everything I do. 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***

## CONTROL

Control is a relationship problem which 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 we think can be calmed by use of a substance. Using does seem to make life better for a time, but that time gets shorter and shorter, and chaos and turmoil return quicker and quicker.

***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 and 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 of dealing with this type of control is to encourage us to give our will and life over to His care and then follow His principles for living without fear. With God as our Father, we will begin to feel secure in His perfect love.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, You know why I feel insecure and seek to control my life and others. Please heal me of my insecurities and allow Your perfect love to make me secure in the life that You have planned for me. 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 at least some of what we ask for. Trusting is not believing we will get what we want. Trusting is believing what God says and simply asking God to do what He says He will do in His Word. The winds of time will change where we are at, 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 where we are at, but the Word of God is unfailing and will remain forever.***

The work of God's love and redeeming grace 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 within us will enlighten our thinking as, through prayer and meditation, we seek to improve our conscious contact with God.

**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 our ways but will make sure we are letting the Word of God determine our actions. When we obey God we can confidently leave the outcome of whatever happens with Him. Trusting God's Word to show us the way forward in whatever we are

planning is a solid foundation to build on. 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 opposition from those with differing opinions. Thank You that You are a shield around me and will act on my behalf in those things that may cause me concern. Amen**

## DESIRE TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT

Having a loving relationship with God and praying with Him about everything we do is the solid foundation for those who seek to build their lives with God in recovery. When we begin to experience the love, joy, and peace that an intimate relationship with God brings, the desire to do the hard work to restore and maintain other relationships will grow within us as well.

Jesus said: ***You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven.*** (Luke 6:36-37 NLT)

We have all been hurt and let down by others. It's part of being human around other humans in our world. Some of us have lived so long focused on how we've been victimized and how others have hurt us that we fail to see how we have hurt others and ourselves in the process. God invites us to stop running, acknowledge the pain and brokenness in our past relationships, and deal with the harm that was caused.

When we ask God to help us recall the people and circumstances where we caused harm, He will do so without accusation or condemnation. God will also help us identify the part we played in those painful events. When we confess and humbly take responsibility for the wrongs we have done, God will forgive us and bring healing. He will also supply the grace we need to become willing to make amends.

***"And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.*** (Matthew 7:3-5 NLT)

**Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for helping me acknowledge the harm I caused in my relationships and for giving me the will and desire to make amends. Please work for good in my life and in the lives of those persons I have injured. Amen**

***God invites us to stop running, acknowledge the pain and brokenness in our past relationships, and deal with the harm that was caused.***



## MOTIVATED BY GOD'S WILL IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS

The desire to express our love for God and our neighbour should be the motivation behind what we do each day and how we work through our agenda. At the end of the day we should take inventory of how well we demonstrated God's love to those with whom we were in contact. When we do an honest assessment, we can be pleased with those things we managed to do well. In those areas where we know we fell short we can ask God to help us improve.

***The desire to express our love for God and our neighbour should be the motivation behind what we do each day and how we work through our agenda.***

***See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.*** (Hebrews 3:12-13 NIV)

What standard do we use for evaluating how we are honouring God in all our affairs? Jesus said we should love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love our neighbour as ourselves.

Did each of us wake up this morning loving God with our whole being and desiring to be a part of what God wants to do through us today? Did we ask God for guidance in all those things we planned to do? What unplanned events occurred? In each event did we function in a way that was pleasing to God and encouraging to our neighbour? Were we conscious of God being with us as we responsibly carried out the requirements of each event?

***Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.*** (Jeremiah 33:3 NIV)

God's word assures us that when we call upon Him for help with our everyday agenda, He will answer us and give us wisdom and discernment to do those things that please Him.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am grateful that You give me the desire and the will to do what pleases You. Help me to love You with all my heart and to seek You in all my ways. Help me to encourage and love others as You love and encourage me. Amen***

## REBUILDING SELF-ESTEEM

Some significant events in our life have destroyed our sense of value and punctured holes in our self-esteem. A noteworthy part of living with God in recovery is the restoring of our understanding of our true value which has firmly been established by the God who created us.

Regardless of what we have done in our past or for how long we did it, when we accept forgiveness of our sin through Jesus, we become new people and God says to us, "You are forgiven. Nothing can separate you from My love. You are created to do good work. My plan and purpose for your life is to give you a future with hope."

***So now 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. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love.*** (Romans 8:1-2, 38 NLT)

We need to tell our hearts and minds these truths until incorrect thought patterns are transformed and we are resting secure in God's unfailing love and care.

***See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.*** (1 John 3:1a, Luke 12:7 NLT)

As beloved children of God we need to exchange our self-will for God's will. When we focus on what God says works, and put those things into practice, we will begin to experience a life that is purposeful and satisfying.

***Don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up, and be alert to what is going on around Christ—that's where the action is. See things from his perspective. Your old life is dead. Your new life, which is your real life—even though invisible to spectators—is with Christ in God. He is your life.*** (Colossians 3:2-3 MSG)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to daily focus on Your Word and put it into practice so that I may have wisdom to live this new life You have graciously given me. Amen***

***A noteworthy part of living with God in recovery is the restoring of our understanding of our true value which has been firmly established by the God who created us.***

## MOVING AWAY FROM DEPRESSION

We cannot control all our circumstances, but we don't need to let a difficult situation negatively impact our day. When we turn our hearts and minds towards God's generous promise of help to meet our need, we can deal with most incidents that cause discouragement. The Bible tells us how: ***"we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."*** (2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV)

Sometimes we feel depressed because we think we cannot face the truth, and on our own we probably can't. However, when we seek God, He will give us all the strength we need to face the truth about our circumstances. We will begin to overcome depression when we see things from God's perspective and stop looking for someone to blame for how we are feeling.

***God offers us a new life as we focus on His love for us, rather than on the events that have taken place in our lives.***

***Shout for joy, you heavens; rejoice, you earth; burst into song, you mountains! For the Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.*** (Isaiah 49:13 NIV)

We are not stuck. We are not damaged for life. We are not broken beyond repair. God offers us a new life as we focus on His love for us rather than on the events that have taken place in our lives. He is ready and willing to fill us with peace of mind and heart regardless of the life-altering things that have happened to us.

***Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*** (John 8:31b-32 NIV)

No harm or injustice is bigger than God's ability to heal and restore. We need to let go of the incorrect beliefs we have held about some situations in our lives and ask God to heal the pain. We need to forgive those who have harmed us and stop blaming them for the problems that life has brought our way. We need to acknowledge that it is God who gives us a future with hope. As we focus on what God says to us, life will improve, and our emotions will be impacted in a positive way.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that I have allowed lies to keep me in bondage to fear. I want the truth of Your Word as written in the Bible to set me free. Please help me to know and speak the truth into each situation that causes me stress. Thank You for loving and caring for me. Amen***

## HUMAN LIMITATIONS

The night before Jesus died on the cross, He shared a meal with his friends including one of His closest companions, Peter. Then the group headed over to the Mount of Olives where Jesus knew He would face arrest and great sorrow. Part of that sorrow was the knowledge that His closest friends would abandon Him.

Peter's expectation of himself was that regardless of what anyone else would do, he would be loyal and stay at Jesus' side. However, before that night was over Peter denied three times that he even knew Jesus. At the time Peter vowed his loyalty, he meant what he said to Jesus, but he was relying on his own strength to be a faithful friend. When none of the other disciples were around Peter was intimidated by the threat of unfriendly people and their accusations, and his fear caused him to deny his Lord.

***Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.*** (Romans 12:3 NIV)

How often do we have the same desire and the same bitter defeat as Peter? Thankfully we can turn our will and our lives over to the care of God because we recognize that we are powerless on our own and our lives are unmanageable. God accepts us as we are and invites us to rely on His strength to help us live successfully.

***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)

God doesn't leave us in our brokenness. God works with us to identify those defects of character that lead us to act and react in harmful ways. As we come humbly before God each day and inventory our lives with Him, He will help us make the necessary changes to get rid of our character defects and anything else that limits healthy growth in our recovery.

***Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to grow strong as I daily seek conscious contact with You. I want to get to know You and Your ways and ask that You show me Your will for my life. Strengthen me by the power of Your Holy Spirit so I can choose to do those things that please You. Amen***

***God accepts us as we are and invites us to rely on His strength to help us live life successfully.***

## I CAN'T. GOD CAN. I THINK I'LL LET HIM.

The familiar slogan “*I can’t. God can. I think I’ll let Him*” describes the decisions made in the first three steps of the Twelve Step program of A.A. These guiding words can be applied to many situations we will encounter in our life in recovery.

The story is told of how one rainy afternoon, a father came up with an idea to entertain his bored eight-year-old daughter. He tore a large map of the world into small pieces, mixed them up, and told her to put them back together like a jigsaw puzzle. To her father’s surprise, the girl completed the puzzle in just a few minutes. “How did you do it?” the father asked. “It was easy,” she said. “At first I couldn’t fit all the lines and dots and colors together on the map. Then I saw part of a man’s face on the back of one of the pieces, so I turned all the pieces over. When I got the man together, the world map took care of itself.”

***When we choose to apply the simple principle, “I can’t. God can. I think I’ll let Him” we’ll experience a new and satisfying life – life with God in recovery.***

***Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you. He will make your innocence radiate like the dawn, and the justice of your cause will shine like the noonday sun.*** (Proverbs 37:5-6 NLT)

God sent His son Jesus into the world to redeem sinful, broken, screwed-up individuals like us. By dying on the cross, Jesus gave His life for the sin of the whole world. When we believe that Jesus’ payment is sufficient to set us free from sin, we will receive the new life that God has promised. Alternatively, we can continue to live in guilt and frustration as we try to sort out our complicated lives by ourselves. When we choose to apply the simple principle, “I can’t. God can. I think I’ll let Him” we’ll experience a new and satisfying life – life with God in recovery.

***Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens.*** (James 1:17 NLT)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit that I am powerless over people, places, and things. I believe that Jesus’ death paid the price for my sin and invite You to live in me and work in me, so I can fulfill Your good plan for my life. Amen***

## A SAFE TRUTH

Dishonesty is a tool we use to protect ourselves from shame, guilt, or embarrassment. We used this tool a lot in our life in addiction and it enabled us to continue in our dysfunctional lifestyle. We deceived those we came into contact with so we could get what we wanted from them. 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 that 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 are experiencing. God is pleased with us and His blessing settles in our hearts. Telling the truth is a wonderful way to experience new 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 the stories we tell and what peoples’ reaction 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***

## LOVE NEVER GIVES UP

We are told in the Bible that love never fails, but in our relationship with others we often fail to love. One day we think 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)

***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.***

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? Amazingly, even though we rebelled against Him, God still cared about us, and He gave Jesus His beloved son to redeem us from the sin that held 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 trying to pay what 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 because 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*

## CARING FOR UNEASY FEELINGS

When we live in depression our number-one enemy is our emotions. Emotions are unreliable. They change from day to day and feelings often don't convey the truth, or at least the complete truth, of what is going on in our lives. Acknowledging the truth of our emotional state to God, and asking for His help, will bring His wisdom into the situation, together with healing, encouragement, and blessing.

*I look to the Lord for help. I wait confidently for God to save me, and my God will certainly hear me. Do not gloat over me, my enemies! For though I fall, I will rise again. Though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be my light.* (Micah 7:7-8 NLT)

When we feel tired or discouraged, we should not fall into the trap of telling ourselves "I feel depressed," or, "It's too hard for me to face this day." God invites us to look at the very same feelings and say, "God, I feel tired and discouraged so I place myself in your care. Thank You Lord that Your unfailing love and tender mercy are available to me right now. Show me the way forward. Fill me to overflowing with a sense of Your goodness. "

*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.* (Psalm 23:5-6 NIV)

From time to time we all have anxious feelings but we can choose to make our feelings line up with our decisions. That's why God gave us the fruit of self-control.

The Bible tells us, ***Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*** (James 4:7 NIV)

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, You are a man of sorrows and understand my grief. I am thankful that there is no condemnation from You when I feel sad or discouraged. Please draw me close to Your heart and give me the endurance and strength I need to change my attitude when dark thoughts enter my mind. Fill me with Your peace. I choose to stay close to You and ask You to make me whole. I am grateful that I can confidently rely on You to restore my soul. Amen*

***From time to time we all have anxious feelings but we can choose to make our feelings line up with our decisions.***