

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



September 2017

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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.*

We want to hear from you.

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

Partners in Hope Recovery Society
1906 – 615 Belmont Street, New Westminster, BC V3M 6A1
Email: pihrecovery@gmail.com

Come and learn and grow with us:

***Christian 12-Step Recovery Meeting
Wednesdays, 7:00 pm***
325 6th Street
New Westminster, BC

***Christian 12-Step Recovery Meeting
Thursdays, 7:30 pm***
543 Powell Street
Vancouver, BC

*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*



2017

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SEPTEMBER 2017

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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VOLUME 02, 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.

NOTES

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2017

NEW CLOTHES FOR THE NEW SEASON

It's a new month and the warm and lazy days of summer are ending. The days are getting shorter and cooler. It's time to put away shorts and t-shirts and bring out something a little warmer. Programs begin again and parents and children are in stores buying clothes and supplies as they prepare for the new school year.

When we turn our will and our life over to the care of God, it's a bit like taking off worn clothes and putting on brand new ones. In our new life with Him in recovery, God wants us to look at what we need to get rid of and exchange it for something better that we are being given.

You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. (Galatians 3:26-27 NLT)

In our addiction our lives were unmanageable and we were powerless to sort out our problems. In recovery God clothes us with strength and power each day so we can face life's circumstances in a positive way.

I am overwhelmed with joy in the Lord my God. For He has dressed me with the clothing of salvation, and draped me in a robe of righteousness. (Isaiah 61:10 NLT)

People notice when someone is wearing new clothes, particularly the new fashion of the season. God has wonderful fashion for us to wear each day in recovery. Those around us will notice what we are wearing and perhaps want to know where to get it!

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. (Colossians 3:12, 14 NLT)

New month, new season, new clothes, new life. These are the gifts God gives us as we journey with Him in recovery.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, When I came to You unclean and dressed in filthy rags, You washed me and clothed me in robes of righteousness. Thank You for caring for me and giving me new clothes. Amen

God clothes us with strength and power each day so we can face life's circumstances in a positive way.

LIGHT THAT OVERCOMES DARKNESS

As part of energy conservation, we are being introduced to new light bulbs for our homes. Some of us don't like them very much. They save energy but they don't give the brightness that makes reading and other activities easy. These bulbs have a dullness that makes us want to "turn up the light" only to find that the light is shining to its fullest.

If we have given our will and our life over to the care of God, the light of Christ is in us and the darkness will never be able to overcome us.

All of us should be grateful that in God's kingdom we have a light that burns brightly and completely overcomes the darkness. That light is Jesus Christ. Jesus came to our dark world to bring light to our lives so we could be focused and filled with hope.

God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.
(John 1:3-5 NLT)

In our addictive lifestyle we saw many dark deeds going on around us. Also, we know from reading the newspapers or watching the daily news that there are disturbing and widespread dark deeds going on all around the world. The good news is that if we

have given our will and our life over to the care of God, the light of Christ is in us and the darkness will never be able to overcome us. For whatever reason, we may sometimes experience dullness, or even darkness, in our own thinking or emotions. However, if we seek God's help in our circumstances, the darkness will flee. Nothing, absolutely nothing can extinguish the light of Christ within us.

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." (John 8:12 NLT)

As children of God, we don't have to fear darkness because Jesus is the light of the world and His light leads to everlasting life.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for bringing me out of darkness into the light of Your presence. I am forever grateful that darkness cannot overcome me for Jesus, the light of the world, is ever with me. Amen.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2017

HOW TO BE HAPPY – AS TAUGHT BY JESUS

The following teaching of Jesus may not be as well-known as the Ten Commandments but Jesus made these eight statements that have been called “The Beatitudes,” describing the kind of behaviour that brings joy to a person in their daily living. Do we want to be happy? Here are eight ways to get there.

- † **God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.**
- † **God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.**
- † **God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.**
- † **God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.**

† **God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.**

† **God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.**

† **God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.**

† **God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.** (Matthew 5:3-10 NLT)

Jesus described the kind of behaviour that brings joy to a person in their daily living.

How do we implement these teachings in our recovery?

THE POOR IN SPIRIT – Humbly admit that God exists and turn our will and our life over to His care.

THE MOURNERS – Admit the pain we carry and bring it to God for His comfort and healing rather than running from it or burying it.

THE MEEK – Acknowledge that we can’t do life on our own, ask God to show us His way, and then submit ourselves to follow it.

THE HUNGRY FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS - Desire for God to make all things right and good in all our relationships and all our dealing with others.

THE MERCIFUL - Extend God's incredible compassion and mercy to others.

THE PURE IN HEART - Submit to God's ways in all we think, say, and do, no matter who is watching.

THE PEACEMAKERS - Bring healing, and togetherness to our world rather than cause disruption.

THE PERSECUTED - Follow Jesus and do right despite any situation that may arise.

Prayer: God, I want to be happy. Help me to learn from you and follow your ways in all I do and say. Amen

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – GUARANTEED INHERITANCE

When we have walked with the Lord for a period of time our natural inclination is to praise Him for all He has done for us. We remember how He lifted us out of the pit we dug for ourselves. Now we rejoice in our inheritance as His precious children.

Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. Who can proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord or fully declare his praise? Blessed are those who act justly, who always do what is right. Remember me, Lord, when you show favor to your people, come to my aid when you save them, that I may enjoy the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may share in the joy of your nation and join your inheritance in giving praise. (Psalm 106:1-5 NIV)

When we sought the Lord, He came to our aid, saved us and set us on a new path. God poured out His grace and favour on us and, through our belief in the finished work of Jesus, brought us to new life. Together with other believers we worship and praise this wonderful God whose love endures forever. We share the joy of knowing we are a part of the family of God who act justly and do what is right. We have tasted the goodness of God and the power of the Holy Spirit and we have obtained an inheritance that lasts forever.

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. (1 Peter 1:3-4 NLT)

God keeps careful watch over us and has given us the assurance that our inheritance in the Kingdom of God is certain.

Prayer: Loving God, I am thankful that my inheritance through faith in Jesus is guaranteed. I praise Your name that Your unfailing love endures forever. Amen

We have tasted the goodness of God and the power of the Holy Spirit and we have obtained an inheritance that lasts forever.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2017

WISDOM FOR THE RECOVERY JOURNEY (I)

Listen to the words of the wise; apply your heart to my instruction. For it is good to keep these sayings in your heart and always ready on your lips. (Proverbs 22:17-18 NLT)

Main Street in Vancouver is famous for its antique shops. You can wander up and down the street and see all sorts of interesting items in store windows. Some of those things look like just what they are – old -- but they wouldn't be in that shop if they didn't have special value because of their quality and what they can tell us about the workmanship of the time period in which they were made.

We may trust the valuation of an item given by a knowledgeable person in an antique shop but we can fully trust the written scriptures that God says are valuable and trustworthy and will endure forever.

The book of Proverbs in the Bible is a collection of wise sayings and common-sense teachings. In chapters 22-24 there are "30 Wise Sayings". They are ancient wisdom. The question is, are they worthless or valuable antiques to be treasured and applied to our new life in recovery?

Here are some examples: ***A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences. The wise are mightier than the strong, and those with knowledge grow stronger and stronger. So don't go to war without wise guidance; victory depends on having many advisers.*** (Proverbs 22:3, 24:5-6 NLT)

Old-timers in the program of AA, sponsors, and others who have more time and stability in recovery than ourselves have great wisdom to share with us. Do we see them as "outdated" or recognize the value of their experience, strength, and hope by putting their suggestions into practice?

We may trust the valuation of an item given by a knowledgeable person in an antique shop but we can fully trust the written scriptures that God says are valuable and trustworthy and will endure forever.

Prayer: Thank You God for your reliable words in the Bible, and for the experience, strength, and hope of friends in the program who help us understand how to put wisdom into practice in our recovery. Amen

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2017

DON'T JUDGE OTHERS

Judging others is a problem area for many of us in recovery and something that Jesus tells us needs to change if we are to live well.

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)

Judging others is often a reflection of how we have been assessed by others and by ourselves. Many of us lived in dysfunctional homes that were characterized by verbal and emotional abuse and we easily fall into that learned behaviour as we encounter those who act in ways that cause us pain and humiliation.

We've all made mistakes both in addiction and in recovery. We are all learning. Our recovery journey is unique and the same is true for everyone else. Character defects differ among us. We all have those defects that are easier or more difficult to overcome. No one is worse off or better off than us because their journey of recovery is different. God is willing to forgive us and remove our defects of character as we humbly acknowledge them before Him and ask for His help. The same is true for everyone else.

Someone has wisely said: ***"People who criticize others are unaware of how much pain they themselves are experiencing. Truly happy people don't have the need to bring others down."*** Instead of judging and condemning others, let's offer encouraging words and loving support to fellow strugglers on the journey.

Continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. (1 Peter 4:8, Galatians 6:3 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for loving me and offering me forgiveness, rather than judging me. Help me to never look down on somebody unless I'm helping them up. Amen

No one is worse off, or better off than us, because their journey of recovery is different.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2017

SPIRITUAL DETOX (4)

We need spiritual detoxing in order to stay clean and sober. We don't need to ask why God created and structured life the way He did. We don't even need to understand how things all work together for good over the long term. It's enough to know that consuming poison kills, whether it is a substance or a belief. We need to quickly get that poison out of our system or it will kill us.

As something negative disturbs our thoughts, we need to consciously discard it and replace it with something true and uplifting from God's word.

Christ loved the church (the people of God). He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. (Ephesians 5:25-27, Psalm 119:11, NLT)

As we struggled with cravings and thoughts of using while physically detoxing from a substance, so the evil one wants to fill our minds with rebellious thoughts and desires while spiritual detoxing is taking place. How do we continue with the process? As something negative disturbs our thoughts, we need to consciously discard it and replace it with something true and uplifting from God's word.

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)

We need to gently remind ourselves what is true, until our hearts are comforted and our minds are at rest. Meditating on encouraging truths in the Bible, even memorizing them, is a wonderful way to allow God's healing power to wash over our aching hearts until they become well. Peace in our soul is the evidence that spiritual detoxing has been effective.

I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. (Psalm 119:11 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, cleanse my thoughts and desires from all that is poisoning them. Fill me with rest and care. Do what is necessary in me so I grow healthy in body, mind, and spirit. Amen

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2017

WISDOM FOR THE RECOVERY JOURNEY (2)

Yesterday we introduced an inventory of wise treasures found in the Bible in the book of Proverbs. The wisest man of his time, King Solomon compiled these sayings. We often think that addictions are limited to drugs and alcohol, but we are coming to know there are many other substances and practices which we use to cover our feelings of pain. Food and money are two other components of common problem areas.

Listen to me, my children! Be wise and have enough sense to follow the right path. Don't be a heavy drinker or stuff yourself with food. It will make you feel drowsy, and you will end up poor with only rags to wear. Give up trying so hard to get rich. Your money flies away before you know it, just like an eagle suddenly taking off. (Proverbs 23:19-21 CEV)

Trading from socially unacceptable addictions to ones which are socially acceptable doesn't solve our real problems. Whenever we seek to sort out or avoid our feelings with anything other than the comfort and healing of God, we will only create a path of continued suffering. God knows what we need in every area of our life and He promises to take care of us if we will come to Him first and let Him work out His will in each situation.

Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. The Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear.

What can mere people do to me? Jesus said: Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 13:6, Matthew 11:28 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, there are so many things in life that I don't understand and don't know how to sort out on my own. Help me to do the work of recovery that uncovers what needs healing. Give me the strength not to run but rather to reach out to you for the comfort and healing I need. Amen

Whenever we seek to sort out or avoid our feelings with anything other than the comfort and healing of God, we will only create a path of continued suffering.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2017

WISDOM FOR THE RECOVERY JOURNEY (3)

We have much to learn from generations that preceded us. They made mistakes and sometimes they didn't parent us well. However, they learned some things that we would do well to apply to our daily living.

Pay attention to your father, and don't neglect your mother when she grows old. Invest in truth and wisdom, discipline and good sense, and don't part with them. Make your father truly happy by living right and showing sound judgment. Make your parents proud, especially your mother. (Proverbs 23:22-25 CEV)

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When the 10 Commandments were given to God's people one carried a wonderful promise – it was the commandment to honour our parents. ***Respect your father and your mother, and you will live a long time in the land I am giving you.*** (Exodus 20:12 CEV)

When Jesus lived on earth He taught us how to relate to God as Father. Jesus said: ***For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will.*** (John 6:38 NLT) Jesus was obviously successful because God affirmed him with these words at His baptism: ***"This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.*** (Matthew 3:17 NLT)

No human relationship is perfect and we don't have to have perfect parents to begin to honour them as God intends. We can learn from their wisdom and their mistakes. We can give them joy by rising above life's difficulties to live with dignity and compassion. Why not make our parents proud today by following God's word and living right? They will be proud of us if we show sound judgment in our decision making. Let's make it a priority today to build a healthy relationship with our parents.

A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son brings grief to his mother. (Proverbs 10:1 NIV)

Prayer: Loving God, thank you for being our Heavenly Father and for giving us life through our biological parents. Fill us with Your love so that we can live in a respectful way that will honour everyone. Amen

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2017

SPIRITUAL DETOX (3)

God wants us to have a life that is good, pleasing and perfect, and in the Bible, He teaches us what that life looks like. God also provides the power to live it.

For too long we have done what we wanted, when we wanted, without thought for the impact of our behaviour had on others. We need this way of self-centered thinking and mindless responding to our feelings, together with our rebellious self-will, to be detoxed from our system. How do we do that? We ask God to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves - detox the spiritual poison of independent and rebellious self-will from our hearts.

Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me. (Psalm 51:1-3, 7,10 NLT)

As we set aside our old way of thinking, no matter how familiar it is to us, and make a choice to trust and rely on God, He begins to wash out the pain and fill us with forgiveness, love, and comfort. God also pours in hope and faith and strength for the days ahead.

For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (Philippians 2:13, Romans 12:2 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that I am lost without you. I want a new life. I turn away from my rebellious ways and turn to You. Forgive my sins. Wash me clean. Come and live in me and fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Amen

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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2017

SPIRITUAL DETOX (2)

In sobriety, we become aware of how much spiritual poison we've allowed to build up in our hearts and minds. We have many misguided desires and false ideas about life. The deadliest spiritual poison we have fed ourselves is the belief that we know how to live 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

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each other. But, when God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved 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. Other relationships we have used to gratify our desire for fulfillment 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 now our souls need to be cleansed from the false hope that we've attached to them.

God created us to live life well in relationship with Him, submitted to His ways. That's why the founders of AA 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. All the rest of our recovery is built on that foundation. This is what the Bible teaches us as well:

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: God, we admit that we are powerless on our own and our life has become unmanageable. Help us today to get to know you and to turn our will and our life over to your care. Amen

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2017

WISDOM FOR THE RECOVERY JOURNEY (4)

From cover to cover the Bible is filled with wisdom and good direction for our lives. When we read and meditate on God's word and obey His instructions we will experience a meaningful and purposeful life. This is what Step 11 speaks to when it reminds us, "*we sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out.*"

The wise are mightier than the strong, and those with knowledge grow stronger and stronger. Fear of the Lord (respect and reverence) is the foundation of true wisdom. All who obey his commandments will grow in wisdom. (Proverbs 24:5, Psalm 111:10 NLT)

God wants to help us know what is right and good. All we have to do is ask Him. **If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.** (James 1:5 NLT) The important part in gaining wisdom is for us to put it into practice so we begin to see that what God says actually works. That's when wisdom fills our heart and we grow stronger and stronger.

God doesn't just give us words and instructions. When we surrender our lives to God and invite Him to be the Lord of our lives, God's Spirit comes to live in our hearts and he teaches us everything we need to know. **But when the Friend comes, the Spirit of the Truth, he will take you by the hand and guide you into all the truth there is. He won't draw attention to himself, but will make sense out of what is about to happen and, indeed, out of all that I have done and said.** (John 16:13 MSG)

We gain wisdom as we meditate and put into practice the words of God as written in the Bible. We become people of integrity as we obey and honour God in all we do and say. We enjoy safety and peace as we journey together with Him in recovery.

Prayer: Loving God, My desire is that You would grant me a willing heart to follow You. Give me understanding of Your word and help me to obey what You say so I may have wisdom in all I undertake to do. Amen

**God wants
to help us
know what
is right and
good. All we
have to do is
ask Him.**

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2017

WISDOM FOR THE RECOVERY JOURNEY (5)

We often think a person who reads a lot of books or has a few college degrees must have a lot of wisdom. We certainly want any judge we stand in front of to be wise in their decision making.

Corrie Ten Boom, a Dutch woman who lived during the Second World War was a wise woman. In whatever situation she was in, Corrie wanted to live for God and do God's will. She and her family helped Jewish people escape from Nazi persecution. They hid them in their house and helped many get to freedom. Corrie and her family were caught and ended up in a concentration camp where they endured much suffering. Years later after Corrie was released she came face to face with one of the prison guards who had caused great suffering to her and her sister. She demonstrated her learned wisdom by offering forgiveness as God's word taught her to do.

Let's get wisdom by reading God's word, by obeying God's instructions and by being alert to the urgings He gives us through His Spirit.

For the Lord grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity. He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him. Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will find the right way to go. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy. (Proverbs 2:6-10 NLT)

Many of us will not face the extreme challenges that Corrie Ten Boom did in the concentration camp. However, everyday life in recovery will bring challenges where we need God's guidance to live wisely. We need help for big and small decisions. God's Holy Spirit will give us wise counsel and we will gain wisdom as we listen to and obey His guidance.

Let's be wise people today. Let's get wisdom by reading God's word, by obeying God's instructions and by being alert to the urgings He gives us through His Spirit.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for your gifts of wisdom and understanding. Help us to be wise as we practice your principles in all our affairs. Amen

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

SPIRITUAL DETOX (1)

Saint Augustine, a wise and famous early church leader stated, *"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."*

At the beginning of a new season many of us think of making a fresh start. That's when some of us make the effort to clean up and get sober. We recognize that we are worn out physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. We are running on empty. Often our first step on the journey to recovery is to enter a facility to detox from the chemicals we have put into our body and to find rest and support as we make a new start. In the detox center, we are monitored by caring professionals as we experience a mixed combination of headaches, nausea, aching bones, convulsions and seizures, anxiety or depression, shaking, irritability, cravings, and fatigue while we detox. For a number of days, we just try to hang on and get through the discomfort.

It's not only our body that needs detoxing. Our souls and spirits need cleansing and healing as well. Pain and shame, anger and bitterness have poisoned our hearts and twisted our thinking. We need a safe refuge and help to uncover and find effective treatment for our soul. God invites us today to come to Him to find that spiritual rest and care so we can detox safely in every area of our being and prepare for what is ahead. Coming close to God requires only a choice for us. God is waiting for us to open ourselves to His presence so He can fill us with His love that surpasses knowledge.

God invites us: ***Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:28-29 NIV)***

Prayer: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit in me. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and give me a willing heart to embrace the new life you are setting before me. Amen

It's not only our body that needs detoxing. Our souls and spirits need cleansing and healing as well.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – MORE DESIRABLE THAN GOLD

Some of us in recovery have transitioned from knowing little or nothing about the amazing God who pursued us with His love, to completely giving our will and our life over to His care. We know that living a self-directed life brought us to a place of darkness where life was totally unmanageable. Now, through His word, we are beginning to know this loving God and His perfect ways to light and life.

The instructions of the Lord are perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The commandments of the Lord are right, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are clear, giving insight for living. Reverence for the Lord is pure, lasting forever. The laws of the Lord are true; each one is fair. They are more desirable than gold, even the finest gold. They are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the comb. They are a warning to your servant, a great reward for those who obey them.
(Psalm 19:7-11 NLT)

***Now,
through
His word,
we are
beginning to
know this
loving God
and His
perfect ways
to light and
life.***

As we choose to make conscious contact with God and follow His ways, we experience peace in our hearts which brings light to our eyes. The Holy Spirit guides us and our conscience becomes a trustworthy judge. As we follow God's instructions we make more and more right choices, begin to feel better and better inside, and find freedom to become more and more transparent to the world around us.

They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right.
(Romans 2:15 NLT)

The Lord's ways are perfect. When we follow His principles for living we can leave all the consequences with Him. Great reward is promised to those who wholeheartedly trust and obey the Lord. As joy and contentment fills our souls, life will seem sweeter than honey dripping from the comb.

Prayer: Gracious God, I am convinced that all Your ways lead to light and life. Help me to follow and treasure Your ways as I would treasure the finest gold. Amen

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2017

BENEFITS OF WALKING WITH WISDOM

Employers negotiate work contracts with individuals and unions and the terms and conditions agreed to are then implemented into an agreement between the Employer and Employee. Part of the negotiations will likely include benefits that workers will be entitled to as part of their payment package. These may include medical and dental benefits, child care benefits or retirement plan benefits. Benefits enhance the life of the employees who receive them.

In the program of AA we are told about a number of promises that those who've walked the road of sobriety before us have discovered to be true. In the Bible we find many promises about life together with God, rather than life on our own. Living according to the wisdom of God has more benefits than we would ever have space to list. Here are just a few of those promised benefits:

JOY: Joyful is the person who finds wisdom, the one who gains understanding. (Proverbs 3:13 NLT)

A GOOD LIFE: Grow a wise heart—you'll do yourself a favor; keep a clear head—you'll find a good life.
(Proverbs 19:8 MSG)

STRAIGHT TALKING: Wisdom will save you from evil people, from those whose words are twisted.
(Proverbs 2:12 NLT)

SAFE AND SATISFYING WAY OF LIFE: Store my commands in your heart. If you do this, you will live many years, and your life will be satisfying. (Proverbs 3:1-2 NLT)

PROTECTION AND LOVE: Get wisdom; develop good judgment. Don't forget my words or turn away from them. Don't turn your back on wisdom, for she will protect you. Love her, and she will guard you. Getting wisdom is the wisest thing you can do! And whatever else you do, develop good judgment. (Proverbs 4:5-7 NLT)

Let's all sign up for this benefit package today. It's a good deal!!

Prayer: Thank you God for the many benefits you promise as I wholeheartedly live according to your principles. Give me the wisdom to daily seek conscious contact with You so that I may honour You in all I do. Amen

***Living
according
to the
wisdom of
God has
more
benefits
than we
would ever
have space
to list.***

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – THE KINDNESS OF GOD

When we have admitted to ourselves and another human being the harm we have caused in our rebellious lifestyle, the next step is to ask God to redeem us from our self-centered way of living. We need to be renewed in our thinking and believing about following the ways of God rather than living and doing what is right in our own eyes.

We have sinned, even as our ancestors did; we have done wrong and acted wickedly. When our ancestors were in Egypt, they gave no thought to your miracles; they did not remember your many kindnesses, and they rebelled by the sea, the Red Sea. Yet he saved them for his name's sake, to make his mighty

power known. He rebuked the Red Sea, and it dried up; he led them through the depths as through a desert. He saved them from the hand of the foe; from the hand of the enemy he redeemed them. The waters covered their adversaries; not one of them survived. Then they believed his promises and sang his praise. (Psalm 106:6-12 NIV)

The love and kindness of God is available to all who surrender their will and life to Him. Are we truly willing to believe and receive?

The effects of nations not choosing to uphold the ways of the one true God are visible all around us. Pride rules in the hearts of mankind and we humans have come to believe that we know better than our Creator what is best for us. Some of us may choose to believe that God does not exist and is only a crutch for the weak. Some of us may choose to believe that the ways of God will not lead to a meaningful, purposeful life. God has dealt with

these thoughts and beliefs in the scriptures written in the Bible.

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

The love and kindness of God is available to all who surrender their will and life to Him. Are we truly willing to believe and receive?

Prayer: Loving God, I want to believe You are real and trust You with all my heart. Please help me to remember Your love and kindness towards me so I may joyfully follow You in all I do. Amen

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2017

WIND – INVISIBLE BUT REAL

There's nothing more refreshing than a walk in the evening with a fresh breeze. When the wind is blowing we can see the branches of a tree move back and forth. We feel the wind on our cheeks and in our hair. At the ocean, we can see the effect of the wind on the waves as they roll back and forth. However, none of us can actually see the wind. Scientists can measure the wind. Meteorologists can tell us what speed to expect the wind to be, what direction it will blow, whether it will be warm or cold, have moisture or be dry. Even though it is invisible we all know the wind is real.

God is invisible as He does the work of restoration in our new life in recovery but He is just as real as the wind. When we turn our will and our life over to God's care, He comes to live in us in the power of the Holy Spirit. That's God's promise to us.

Jesus answered, "You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." (John 3:7-8 NIV)

God wants us to live well both here on the earth and then with him forever in heaven. He invites us to experience a new birth which we cannot "see", but the effects of which are as real as the what we experience on a windy day. When we ask God to remove our defects of character, things begin to change. When we seek to improve our conscious contact with God, we suddenly begin to notice the many ways He is present with us in our daily living.

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

Prayer: Heavenly Father, come into my life and fill me with your Holy Spirit. I want to be born again so I can be filled with the joy and peace and power that comes from You. Amen

God is invisible as He does the work of restoration in our new life in recovery but, He is just as real as the wind.

DOORS

Everywhere we go we find doors -- apartment doors, elevator doors, bus or car doors. We open some and shut others so we can go in and out.

If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.” Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips.
(Genesis 4:7, Psalm 141:3 NIV)

Jesus waits for us to decide if we will open that door to him and invite him into our lives so He can provide us with companionship and blessing, forgiveness and healing.

These verses remind us to be careful to do what is right because wrong-doing opens the door to all sorts of troubles that will eventually overwhelm us. A little lying, a little cheating will cause us great trouble. Our mouth is like a door and we need to be careful when we open it to say something.

Another important door to consider is the door of our heart. Jesus waits for us to decide if we will open that door to him and invite him into our lives so He can provide us with companionship and blessing, forgiveness and healing. It is up to us whether we choose to turn our will and our life over to the care of God. He simply waits for us to make the choice. When we do so, God accepts us into His family and we are assured of life with Him forever.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.
(Revelation 3:20 NKJV)

As we go in and out of doors today, let's remember to speak and act with integrity. Let's pray with faith and perseverance. Most of all, let's invite Jesus to come through the door of our hearts so we can enter the door of heaven and live with God forever.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for coming into my life when I opened the door by turning my will and my life over to you. As I go in and out of doors today help me ensure that I am speaking and acting with integrity. Amen

FACING FEAR WITH KINDNESS (I)

Many of us identify a fearful person as a coward, someone who is not assertive, or someone who cowers when intimidated. But fear can also be expressed by unrealistic bravado, excessive talking, work, alcoholism, drug addiction and lying. Fear reveals itself in cover-ups and phoniness. Fear keeps us from being fully honest about our feelings, prompting us to project false or only partially true images of who we truly are. Fear makes us deny, consciously or unconsciously, that anything is wrong. "It's all good" is a sure sign that it is not.

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 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. (Titus 3:3-5 NLT)

In order to inventory our lives honestly, we have to look at what causes us to be fearful. Perhaps our deepest fear is that our inventory will reveal the person we have become. We may also be fearful that the events of our past will cause us to be rejected by those around us and by God. We find it hard to believe that God could care for the person we have become.

Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him! God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. (Psalm 34:8 NKJV 1 John 4:16, 18 NIV)

God invites us to set aside all our apprehensions and just do what His word tells us. He'll take care of the rest.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your word brings me joy as I deal with the anxiety of making a fearless moral inventory of my life. When I am afraid, help me to trust in Your unfailing love for me. Amen

Fear keeps us from being fully honest about our feelings, prompting us to project false or only partially true images of who we truly are.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2017

FACING FEAR WITH KINDNESS (2)

When King David, a king of Israel, did an inventory of his heart he exposed murder and adultery and lying and self-righteous pride. He knew he deserved nothing from God but disapproval. Despite this, he relied on God's loving kindness and wrote these words: ***Yet I am confident I will see the Lord's goodness while I am here in the land of the living.*** (Psalm 27:13 NLT)

In the recovery process, as we make an inventory of our defects, we sometimes think first of ways others have let us down. We were hurt or betrayed, attacked or molested, lied to or beaten, stolen from or cheated. Sometimes this went on for numerous years. We came to believe that life was unsafe for us and we began to live in fear. Fear caused us to behave in unhealthy ways. At times, our actions towards others even mirrored the painful behaviour that was inflicted on us.

Life based solely on human interaction is only as secure as the humans we entrust our lives to.

When our personal well-being hinges on the actions and opinions of other people, we will continually react in fear because we can never be sure when we might be rejected, criticized or ignored. Life based solely on human interaction is only as secure as the humans we entrust our lives to. We are created to live securely by living first for God, the God who loves us perfectly, in spite of our weaknesses.

Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble

or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35, 39 NLT)

In this life, all of us will have troubles. They will show up in various seasons of life, but God's love will strengthen us and enable us to get through even the most devastating of times.

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

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to see You as You truly are, a God full of grace and power. Amen

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2017

CHOOSING TO LIVE A NEW WAY

We are faced with choices every day as we journey forward in recovery. Too often it seems easier to just choose to do what we feel like doing when we feel like doing it. However, if we really want to get well, we cannot continue to behave in this way. A person who chooses to live for God must surrender their life to the ways of God. They must choose to follow God's principles as God's Spirit directs them.

Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. (Isaiah 55:6-7 NIV)

When we are truly surrendered to God, regardless of our feelings, we will choose to obey Him because we are committed to doing what He says. We will study and reflect on His Word and seek guidance from our sponsor, pastor, or other responsible Christians to understand what God is saying. We will make ourselves accountable to wise and loving mentors who will help us put God's new ways into practice in our daily lives. Our caring community will celebrate with us when we do well and encourage us when we make mistakes. When we do things God's way, our lives demonstrate the fruit of the Holy Spirit who lives within us.

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23 NLT)

A conscious choice to follow God's way brings change in our lives. It may not be instant change but as we continue to obey God, our relationship with Him and others will prosper.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me today to improve my conscious contact with you so I can know your will and have the power to carry it out. Amen

When we are truly surrendered to God, regardless of our feelings, we will choose to obey Him because we are committed to doing what He says.

GOSSIP - WAYS TO STOP IT

Almost everyone says they hate gossip and yet many of us are easily drawn into conversations that are unkind. How can we be a person who stops gossip rather than one who contributes to its spread?

1. We agree with God that the time to deal with gossip is NOW. **But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language.** (Colossians 3:8 NLT)

How can we be a person who stops gossip rather than one who contributes to its spread?

2. We decide that we won't participate in a conversation about another person when the words that are being said would be painful for that person to hear if they were present. **The words of the godly encourage many, but fools are destroyed by their lack of common sense.** (Proverbs 10:21 NLT) If the conversation around us moves towards gossip we can change the subject and talk about something else -- anything else that is positive.

3. We can end gossip by simply not passing on any of those words and rumors we have heard. **Without wood a fire goes out; without a gossip a quarrel dies down.** (Proverbs 26:20 NIV)

4. We can make a point to counter negative things said about a person by expressing positive things about them.

5. We can encourage a gossip to speak with the person they are gossiping about.

6. Sometimes if we simply suggest, "I don't feel comfortable talking about this person this way" may help the gossip to consider what they are saying.

If a person persists in gossiping, then we are commanded by God to step away from them because it is not good for us to keep company with them. **Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers. Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended.** (Psalm 1:1, Proverbs 22:10 NIV)

It's helpful to remember that those who gossip to you will definitely gossip about you. Don't partake. Let's stop gossip today!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to put positive practices into my life that will stop the cycle of gossip. Amen

FACING FEAR WITH KINDNESS (3)

To live without fear we must intentionally receive the kindness and tenderness that is offered by God. We must bring every thought captive to Him and allow Him to renew our minds. We must look to Him to give us peace of mind and the will to forgive. If we lack compassion, we must allow God to fill us with His sanctified compassion. We must receive the acceptance and forgiveness of God over and over again. We must declare that God does not condemn those who are in Christ Jesus.

It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realize it was I who healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love. To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I bent down to feed them. (Hosea 11:3-4 NIV)

To progress in living without fear, we need to focus on God's care and kindness and reject our own negative thoughts. This will require changing our current belief system and bringing it into line with what God says. Instead of living life based on "I think" we need to come to that place where we believe and act on what God says in His word.

So clean house! Make a clean sweep of malice and pretense, envy and hurtful talk. You've had a taste of God. Now, like infants at the breast, drink deep of God's pure kindness. Then you'll grow up mature and whole in God. (1 Peter 2:1-3 MSG)

For us to purposefully live well in recovery, it is essential that we believe and rely on God's unconditional love for us. When we experience God's love, our hearts will be tender towards others and we won't want to lash out or isolate in our fears.

Perfect love casts out fear. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (1 John 4:18; 2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to experience Your unfailing love for me. Help me to overcome my fears by trusting in You. Amen

To live without fear we must intentionally receive the kindness and tenderness that is offered by God.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2017

ANCIENT VIRAL VIDEO

Tweets on Twitter “go viral”. Instagram photos or Facebook posts often do the same. They are retweeted, and shared sometimes to millions in just a few hours.

There’s a simple story in the Bible about Jesus that would have gone viral for sure. Jesus courageously crossed boundaries to care for someone who was hopelessly stuck on the margins of society and His actions had an incredibly positive effect on the entire local community.

Whenever we think our lives are too insignificant, too unhealthy, too broken, or too lost, we need to remember that God has his eye on us.

Jesus left Judea and started for Galilee again. This time he had to go through Samaria, and on his way he came to the town of Sychar ... It was noon, and after Jesus' disciples had gone into town to buy some food, a Samaritan woman came to draw water from the well. Jesus asked her, “Would you please give me a drink of water?” “You are a Jew,” she replied, “and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink of water when Jews and Samaritans won’t have anything to do with each other?” (John 4:3-9 CEV)

Jesus chose to travel among people who were so detested that others walked many additional miles to avoid even putting their feet on the same ground as them. At a time when men ruled the world and women weren’t given much respect, Jesus courageously crossed prejudicial boundaries to come close to a woman, and not just any woman, but one of ill repute. He cared enough to speak with her and offer her a new way of life.

Whenever we think our lives are too insignificant, too unhealthy, too broken, or too lost, we need to remember that God has his eye on us. God loves us and wants to help us today. God wants to come close to us. The decision, which is ours to make is, will we accept and welcome him or shut him out?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for pursuing me with Your love and rescuing me from the dark power of Satan. It amazes me that You think about, and care for me. Amen

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2017

WHAT DOES GOSSIP SOUND LIKE?

Gossip shows up in our lives in many forms. God hates them all because He knows how harmful destructive words are to our dignity and our relationships. Here are some types of gossip and what God's word says about it. In which of the following areas does the tendency to gossip affect us?

1. Slander spreads rumors or lies about a person in order to damage them. ***Hiding hatred makes you a liar; slandering others makes you a fool.*** (Proverbs 10:18 NLT)

2. Rumors abound. We hear something and even though it's not confirmed we pass it along. Gossip spreads and harm is done. ***Careful words make for a careful life; careless talk may ruin everything.*** (Proverbs 13:3 MSG)

3. Speaking with innuendo and planting seeds of doubt which question a person's character or actions is another destructive form of gossip. ***By our speech we can ruin the world, turn harmony to chaos, throw mud on a reputation, send the whole world up in smoke and go up in smoke with it, smoke right from the pit of hell.*** (James 3:6 MSG)

4. It easy to complain about things which are not perfect or aren't going our way. This “behind the scenes gossiping” can cause great harm. ***Complain if you must, but don't lash out. Keep your mouth shut, and let your heart do the talking. Build your case before God and wait for his verdict.*** (Psalm 4:4-5 MSG)

5. Bad-mouthing, back-stabbing, back-biting. These words seek to describe the harmful practice of speaking negative and harmful words about someone who isn't there to defend themselves. The Bible says: ***Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Don't speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters. If you criticize and judge each other, then you are criticizing and judging God's law ...*** (Matthew 7:1, James 4:11NLT)

God hates gossip. God wants us to use kind words in all circumstances so that the practice of gossip will decrease or stop altogether.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You hate gossip because of the harm it does to all of us. Help us to speak kind words and deal with difficulties in an open and truthful way. Amen

God wants us to use kind words in all circumstances so that the practice of gossip will decrease or stop altogether.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2017

GOSSIP

The practice of gossip is extremely destructive to our growth in living with God in recovery. What is gossip? It is anything we would say behind a person's back that we would not say if they were present in the conversation. **A troublemaker plants seeds of strife; gossip separates the best of friends.** (Proverbs 16:28 NLT)

We all say we dislike gossip, yet so often when we are offered an opportunity to hear or speak it, many of us find it impossible to resist.

Gossip isolates and discourages the people being talked about. When we gossip about others it hinders us from examining our own life as we should. Instead of taking pertinent inventory of our own lives, we tend to focus more on the lives of others. We all say we dislike gossip, yet so often when we are offered an opportunity to hear or speak it, many of us find it impossible to resist. From God's perspective, even listening to gossip is as bad as speaking it.

Do not spread slanderous gossip among your people. Do not stand idly by when your neighbor's life is threatened. I am the Lord. Wrongdoers eagerly listen to gossip; liars pay close attention to slander. (Leviticus 19:16, Proverbs 17:4 NLT)

To live well in recovery, it's important to remove our own character defects before we even look at, or gossip about others. If we don't abide by this rule, our gossiping lifestyle will cause us to shrink away from our own recovery while also discouraging those we gossip with and about.

Do I find myself engaging in gossip? Do I spread rumors or speculate about why someone did something? Would others say I am a busybody, a blabbermouth or a meddler? Am I known as someone who makes statements that injure the well-being or reputation of another? How many of my words could pass the 3-question test for wise speech -- Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?

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

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I'm grateful you don't share the ugly story of my sinful brokenness with others. Help me to honour others as you honour me. Help me to rid myself of the habit of gossiping. Amen

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2017

CRAZY OR WHAT?

What would we think of an individual who was excitedly running up and down the streets telling us to come and see a man who was revealing all the details of our sins and failings? We'd probably think that poor soul was crazy.

That's why it's amazing that a woman who had just met Jesus did that. In her conversation with Jesus he helped her own up to the fact that she had a promiscuous past. The community knew some details about her life and were likely avoiding her because of her lifestyle. This woman's reaction was to avoid people by doing her daily errands at a time when no one else was around. Suddenly, without fear or shame, and with real excitement, this same woman is running through the town and trying her best to tell as many people as she could about what Jesus had said.

The woman left her water jar and ran back into town. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! Could he be the Messiah?" Everyone in town went out to see Jesus. (John 4:28-30 CEV)

Many of us carry dark and shameful secrets that we are afraid to admit to ourselves and are fearful of having them exposed to others. The one place where we can reveal these secrets safely and find healing and forgiveness is in the presence of Jesus Christ. Just like this woman, if we dare to meet with God, we will find forgiveness and healing and will be unable to keep from celebrating our new-found freedom with others.

Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight. (Romans 4:7 NLT)

Jesus is ready to meet with us, just as he was ready to meet with this woman. He offers us a new life that will completely satisfy. What will we do? Hide in our shame or live in joyful celebration of God's gift of forgiveness and healing?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I invite You to come into my life and free me from my past, forgive me, and make me whole. Amen.

If we dare to meet with God, we will find forgiveness and healing and will be unable to keep from celebrating our new-found freedom with others.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2017

THIRST PROBLEMS

It's inconvenient to be without water, for even a short time. Jesus met a woman who was dealing with a water problem. In the middle of a hot day she had run short of water and was sneaking out to the community well to get some more.

Jesus answered, "Those who drink this water will get thirsty again, but those who drink the water that I will give them will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give them will become in them a spring which will provide them with life-giving water and give them eternal life." "Sir," the woman said, "give me that water!" (John 4:13-15 CEV)

Jesus has everything we need to sort out the issues that are causing problems in our life.

She had another kind of water problem too. She was thirsty. Like so many of us, she was thirsty for love and to try to satisfy this thirst she had created a troubled life for herself. Now she was thirsty for acceptance and friendship, for dignity and respect. She was thirsty for help that would ease her sad heart and lift her out of loneliness and shame. Jesus met her and promised her water that would satisfy all the things her heart was longing for. He makes the same offer to us.

Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.' (John 7:37-38 NLT)

Living with the problems of loneliness, sin, guilt and resentment is miserable. We may try unhealthy relationships or various substances to help us deal with the pain we are feeling but satisfaction is not found in people or in substances. Jesus has everything we need to sort out the issues that are causing problems in our life. This woman received what Jesus was offering and her life was dramatically changed. Jesus is ready to do the same for us today. Will we receive what He is offering?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Please satisfy my thirst for Your life-giving water that I may live a life that is pleasing to You. Amen

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2017

SUNDAY PSALM – THE SUN COMES UP

For some of us, coming into recovery has opened our eyes to the beauty of creation. In our former dysfunctional lifestyle, we lived in the darkness of soul where our addictive habits took us. Our minds were in bondage to the addiction that controlled us. The spectacular beauty of the skies was something that never even entered our thinking. Now we are coming into a new place where we can truly appreciate the simple beauties of life - like the sky as we look up.

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth. (Psalm 19:1-6 NIV)

When we gave our will and life over to the care of God, light came into our darkness. As we look up at the sky each morning we can see the magnificence of God's handiwork. Nothing is said to it, but the sun faithfully comes up in the place where we reside and in every other place on earth to announce a new day. The sun not only gives us light but also gives warmth. It reveals the beauty that is all around us. God wondrously made all things for His precious people.

Simple beauty and the ability to enjoy it. These are gifts from God in our recovered life today.

As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease. (Genesis 8:22 NIV)

Our lives truly change when we can appreciate and give thanks for the endurance and beauty of God's creation.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I praise You for You are awesome in all Your works. Thank You that You truly are my glory and the lifter of my head. Amen

Our lives truly change when we can appreciate and give thanks for the endurance and beauty of God's creation.
