

What's New About Life With God in Recovery?

In just a few hours the new calendar year will be upon us. On what basis can we hope to truly have a new and better new year? When we come into recovery after a long time in addiction we sometimes feel overwhelmed because we have so much stuff to wade through - so many unanswered questions in our minds, and so many painful things in our hearts. If we've come and gone from recovery before then we are often worried about our ability to maintain sobriety with any level of peace and joy for any length of time.

God's answer is very positive, very simple and very direct. It comes in the form of an invitation: **Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, people of Israel? For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live! Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!** (Ezekiel 18:30-32) (2 Corinthians 5:17)

It is God's commitment to us that if we will simply turn away from all offenses -- those done by us and those done to us -- then sin will never again be our downfall. We will never live in fear and resentment and bitterness and woundedness again that will drive us back into an addictive mindset and ultimately some kind of addictive attitude or behaviour. God's offer is a new heart and a new spirit. In fact, God offers a brand new person, a brand new life with the old gone.

Does this sound like pie in the sky? Sound like an end run around the hard work of recovery and things like working the steps and sorting out our heart? It's not. It's simply making ourselves available to a kind and loving God to be taught a new way of living today and every day. Jesus said, **"Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."** (Matthew 11:28-30 NLT)

Every ounce of pain we find in our heart and mind matters to God. It matters so much that Jesus went through suffering and a cruel death on the cross in order to carry it away from our hearts and minds. From before we were born until this very moment it has continuously been God's desire to remove every painful memory from our mind and soul so we could live carefree, joyful, and at ease in our own life, with Him, and with others. This condition of peaceful living is available to every single person in full measure right here, right now. What do we need to do to experience it? One issue, one thought, one memory at a time we **TURN FROM** fear, anger, resentment, or painful wound and **TURN TO** the gentle healing and direction of Jesus Christ.

Too many of us feel like we can only hope for a measure of joy and peace at some point way down the line when we get

all our "issues sorted out." Not true. The complete healing and fulfillment of what our heart longs for and needs is available to you and I today and every day. The only reason we sort through issues is to see if we are in any way living disconnected from the kindness and healing of God and to climb into that goodness as quickly as we can. Thousands of years ago this was as evident as it is today: **Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.** (Isaiah 64:4)

We enter treatment centers and come to meetings in order to learn new information about the goodness of God we never knew. We can then take the opportunity to welcome that kindness into any pain we are currently experiencing. We study our lives in the light of truth so we can come to see and know all the possibilities we never knew existed for us. Do many of God's promises seem too good to be true? Often. However, every time we connect our life with God's promise we will come to experience safe and dependable goodness coming alive in us. This will often result in a new song singing it's way through our lips. **He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the LORD and put their trust in him.** (Psalm 40:3)

God is completely filled with beauty, goodness, and kindness. He has nothing ugly, nothing bad, and nothing harsh or unkind in His nature. We are created in that same beauty, goodness, and kindness because we are created in God's image. On top of that, when we invite Him in, God chooses to come and live His wonderful nature in us and through us. There is nothing ugly, nothing useless, nothing broken beyond repair about any of our lives. There is no hopeless set of painful thoughts we have to carry on with. There are no heavy burdens of painful guilt, shame, or rejection that need weigh us down. God makes a new life of beauty, goodness, and kindness available to us right now. He always has. He is now offering. He always will. This new life is actually wonderful beyond our ability to imagine it. **The wisdom we speak of is the mystery of God—his plan that was previously hidden, even though he made it for our ultimate glory before the world began."No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him." But it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit. For his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God's deep secrets. No one can know a person's thoughts except that person's own spirit, and no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit. And we have received God's Spirit (not the world's spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us.** (1 Corinthians 2:7, 9-12)

God is inviting you and I today to a new life with Him where we are astonished over and over again by our experience of goodness. Will we give over the old life to God? Will we welcome and enter into the new, unimaginably beautiful life God is offering us today?