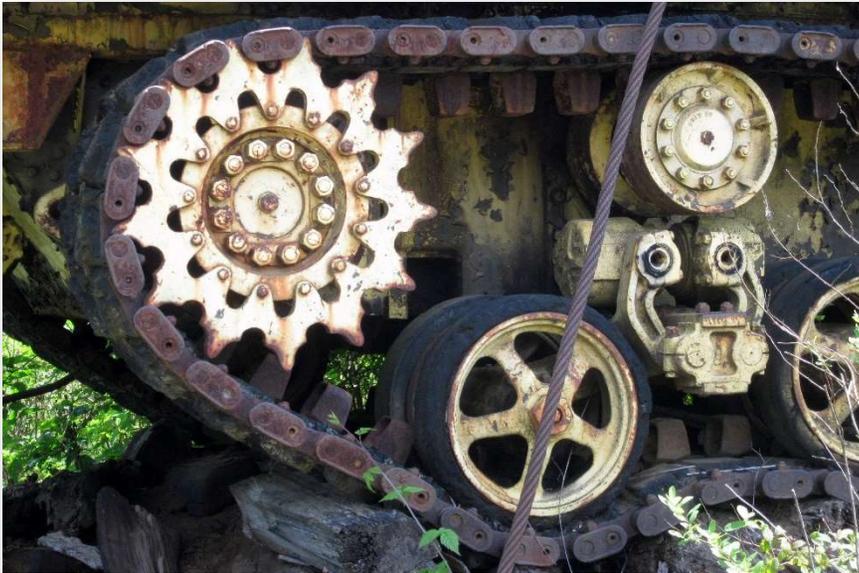


Life With God In Recovery

Seeking Good Counsellors



SEEKING GOOD COUNSELORS

Why are we strongly encouraged to quickly find a sponsor and listen to the advice of people who have been in the program for a while? It's not a new concept introduced by Alcoholics Anonymous. For thousands of years the wisdom of God, as recorded in the Bible, has been reminding us that we need wise counsel if we are to succeed in recovery, and in all of life. ***I'm absorbed in pondering your wise counsel. Yes, your sayings on life are what give me delight; I listen to them as to good neighbors! (Psalm 119:24 MSG)***

Jesus knew his disciples would experience deep grief as they observed His suffering and death on the cross. He was concerned for them, and is equally concerned for us when we go through grief and severe trials. When Jesus' time had come He gathered His disciples around Him and spoke with them about the future. He asked them to show their love for Him by doing those things He had taught them. He also said that He would ask His Father to give them a wise counselor who would be with them forever. Jesus wanted them to be cared for as His friends and not as people who were left without someone to counsel and guide them. He told them, ***"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you. "I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you. (John 14:15-18 RSV)***

We live in difficult days. Jesus knows what we need. His prayer for us today is that we too would seek and find wise counsel to help us on our journey to life and peace. Jesus is always present with us in the person of the Holy Spirit and He is the wisest counselor that anyone could have. As we seek Him for guidance in every area of our lives He will show us fullness of truth. Jesus said, ***"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free"*** (John 8:32 NIV)

In recovery we must find new direction for our lives, new ways of responding to issues, and new guidelines for making decisions. Our old pattern of thinking and behaving brought us to where we are today. As we establish new and healthy boundaries and actions based on God's Word, God will support us through the power of His Holy Spirit. He will also put us in the way of human counselors and trustworthy people who are walking with Him. We certainly need help from people who continue to walk the path that remains unfamiliar to us. Through

sharing our life's stories, these people will inspire us to receive healing for past traumas that hinder our recovery. They will also have worthwhile suggestions on how to cope with the changes we need to make. The Bible says, "**Where there is no counsel, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety**". (Proverbs 11:14 NKJV) When we surround ourselves with wise, dependable counselors, we are building a solid foundation for recovery.

Good counsel can come from many sources, the Bible, pastors, friends who know and live for God, or books and media that honour the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It may also come from a professional Christian counselor who understands addiction and recovery. Knowledgeable people we encounter on our journey may also encourage us by sharing the Godly wisdom they received when dealing with issues similar to those we are currently experiencing. **Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down the other can help him up. But if someone is alone ... there is no one to help him ... Two men can resist an attack that would defeat one man alone.** (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 GNT)

We need help from everyone who can enlarge our vision and broaden our perspective. We need to share honestly about the temptations we are experiencing. The family of believers understands temptation because they continue to experience it. We are not unique! We need to pay attention to what God and others are saying to us. We need to respond in humility to honest feedback others are giving us, and, foundational to all other counsel, we need to seek the Holy Spirit who will guide us into all truth. **As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.** (Proverbs 27:17 NIV)

The founders of AA and the 12 Steps were aware of Biblical principles and based on these, they structured the program to include counselors whom we call sponsors. If we haven't done so, it's probably time to prioritize the involvement of wise counsel into our lives. Following is some helpful information to consider as we prayerfully seek a sponsor.

What is the Role of a Sponsor?

1. A sponsor may discuss, in detail, troubling issues that are too personal to share, or would take up too much time, in a group meeting.
2. A sponsor is available in times of crisis or potential relapse.
3. A sponsor serves as a sounding board by providing an objective point of view.

4. A sponsor is there to encourage one to work through recovery principles at one's own speed.
5. A sponsor attempts to model the lifestyle that results from personally working the steps.

What are the Qualities to look for in a Sponsor?

1. Does he/she have a growing relationship with Jesus Christ?
2. Does he/she exhibit the character of Jesus in their life?
Does their walk match their talk?
3. Does the person express the desire to help others on the road to recovery?
(Helping others find help versus trying to fix others)
4. Does he/she show compassion, care and hope but not pity? (I don't need someone who is simply going to feel sorry for me.)
5. Is the person a good listener? (Does the person really care about what I have to say?)
6. Is he/she strong enough to confront my denial or procrastination?
7. Can the person share his/her own current struggles with others?
(Openness, vulnerability, transparency)

Questions for Reflection and Group Discussion

1. Make a list of the sources of good counsel I am currently using (church, meetings, sponsor, pastor, group leader, books, Christian TV teaching, counselor, sober peers). For each, list my use of them in the last week.
2. Why are we strongly encouraged to quickly find a sponsor and listen to the advice of people who've been in the program a while?
3. What am I doing these days to seek wise counsel from trusted individuals?
4. What obstacles am I facing in my search?
5. What am I doing with feedback I know is good for me? What am I doing with feedback I don't like?
6. Where am I avoiding seeking counsel and keeping things to myself?

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, Thank You for pursuing me with Your love and for sending Your Holy Spirit to give me counsel and to help me come to the knowledge of all truth. Give me ears to hear what You have to say. I commit to lay down my pride and seek help from other wise counsellors. Keep me honest. Help me walk in the light of Your presence and follow the path of recovery to new life in You. I am forever grateful that you care. AMEN