

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY: Equipped For Growth

The place to start equipping ourselves for growth is in our thoughts and the attitudes of our heart.

You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:20-24 NIV)

We need to determine in our minds that we will put off our old self and our former way of life. By a conscious choice of our will we need to abandon and be healed from those things which keep us in bondage to our addiction. We need to give up those co-dependent relationships which support a physical or emotional need or longing. We need to surrender our will to God and seek His help to put on our new self. We need to determine that we will walk in God's way, doing those things which will help us grow in righteousness and holiness. We need to get to know our Heavenly Father so that we will trust Him. ***Give your burdens to the LORD, and he will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall.*** (Psalm 55:22 NLT)

After the death of Moses, the leader of God's people, a young man named Joshua set out to lead the people into the Promised Land. As he started his journey God gave him instructions which are timeless for all who set out on a new path, including us as we go forward in recovery: ***"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."*** (Joshua 1:8-9 NIV) AS we look to God's word to direct our path we will find guidance and hope for our journey. God is faithful to do what He has promised.

God has said that He will guide us as we seek to know Him and His ways. God gives us His word, the Bible, and His Holy Spirit to live in us. His word will be revealed to us by His Holy Spirit who will help us know and understand His ways. ***When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.*** (John 16:13 NLT) All the training and equipment we need for healthy growth has already been provided. Our part is to realize we already have the tools and commit to use them. We need to follow the instructions in the manual, in the way that God says works, and trust His direction.

At the same time, we need to be aware that we have an enemy, who does not want us to grow and become all God intends us to be. Jesus said that the enemy of our soul comes to steal, kill and destroy. However, we can take comfort in the truth that the evil one has power over us only as we

choose to give it to him through disobedience and leaving our tools in the toolbox. If we fail to fill ourselves up with the fullness of God and choose not to be doers of His Word, we open ourselves to relapse. Jesus said, ***"When a corrupting spirit is expelled from someone, it drifts along through the desert looking for an oasis, some unsuspecting soul it can bedevil. When it doesn't find anyone, it says, 'I'll go back to my old haunt.' On return, it finds the person swept and dusted, but vacant. It then runs out and rounds up seven other spirits dirtier than itself and they all move in, whooping it up. That person ends up far worse than if he'd never gotten cleaned up in the first place."*** (Luke 11:24-26 MSG) God is very clear that there is a battle going on within us and around us. The battle has already been won. The enemy has been defeated. The enemy, however, is still prowling around looking for someone to devour.

We prepare ourselves for battle when we surrender ourselves to the power of the Holy Spirit. It is His power and authority working through us that sends the forces of darkness fleeing. We equip ourselves for victory when we bring an open ear to God's voice and remain self-controlled and alert to His leading throughout the battle. We employ effective weapons when we stand firm in our faith in God and resist the devil. We put the enemy to flight by consistently applying the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, just as Jesus did when He was tempted. ***For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*** (Hebrews 4:12-13 NIV)

Growth comes when we choose to rely on our God regardless of our circumstances. God's word says that He works all things together for our good. The enemy of our souls is a created being with limited power. God has ultimate power and will deliver us from anything that comes against us, if we look to Him. ***Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us.*** (2 Corinthians 1:9-10 NIV)

God has provided tools and instructions to equip us for effective growth today. Are we willing to pick up these tools and follow the instructions in the manual? ***Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.*** (Colossians 2:7 NLT)

QUESTIONS

1. In what ways have you equipped yourself for growth in your new life in Christ?
2. How have you prepared yourself to recognize and have victory over the deception of the enemy of your soul?