

Tuesday

VICTORY OVER DEPRESSION

He led them from the darkness and deepest gloom; he snapped their chains. (Psalm 107:14 NLT)

We all experience times in life when, for various reasons, we are feeling down. Under perfectly normal circumstances we can get tired and emotionally drained. Satan will try to use anything for evil against us, including normal “down times” which are simply indicators of the need for rest and renewal.

At low times, and any time, in whatever way he can, Satan seeks to fill our minds with negative thoughts and emotions. He is a discourager. He is the giver of despair and he wants to pull us down and keep us down. But Jesus is our encourager. He knows our weaknesses. He gives strength to the weary.

The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. ...you, O Lord, are a shield around me; you are my glory, the one who holds my head high. (John 10:10; Psalm 3:3 NLT)

Our choice when we feel down is either to believe and act on the promises God has made to us or to believe the lie the evil one is telling us. If we will seek God, we will find His strength and wisdom will bring light to the darkness we are experiencing. Our tender and caring God invites us to come to Him and receive rest for our minds and hearts as well as our bodies.

Jesus came to earth to die for our sins, so we would have freedom to live life to the full. Jesus warns us about Satan's strategy to steal the joy that living life with God brings. Knowing and practicing the principles for life given in God's word in the Bible will help us live in victory over depression caused by troubling circumstances.

Prayer: Gracious God, I need Your strength and comfort to see me through this day. I choose to fix my eyes on You and not on my problems. I rest in your presence and trust in your strength to get me through today. Thank you that you care for me and work for good in the things that concern me. I choose to give my will and my life over to Your care and ask that You direct me in all my ways. Amen

Wednesday

TWO ARE BETTER THAN ONE

For some of us being alone and in control of our own life makes us feel safe. Too often we have struggled with the behaviour and comments of family members, friends, and others, and now choose to isolate ourselves from them. We feel that being in relationship with others is more trouble than it is worth. Yet God, after He created Adam, said it was not good for the man to be alone, so he created a helper for him.

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. (Genesis 2:18, Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 NIV)

In recovery, we often find ourselves together with people who, like us, have tried to do life alone. At times, we all struggle to be in community with one another. Sometimes we just want to run and hide and be alone. However, just communicating as gently and as truthfully as we can about what we are feeling will help us move forward in our recovery and in our relationship with those around us.

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. (Galatians 6:2-3 NIV)

God designed us to be together with others in life as surely as the parts of our body work together for good health and getting things done. We all need one another. When one part of the body hurts, it impacts the rest of the body. As we choose to support and encourage one another, we will be strengthened to move forward in our life in relationship with God and with others. On our own, we could never accomplish what is truly possible when we work together in love to build one another up.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to live in relationship with others according to Your original plan. Keep me from the extremes of control and co-dependency. Help me to live each day in the truth of Your Word that two are better than one. Amen

Thursday

UNDERSTANDING LAZINESS

Many years ago a list was prepared of seven things that are death to living a good life. Right in the middle of the list is laziness, or in the language used in those days, being slothful.

A lazy person is simply someone who is unwilling to work or use energy to get something done. There is a lack of energy and activity given to a set task because the lazy person really doesn't care about the task or when it gets done. The Bible uses a stark picture to help us understand laziness.

Some people are too lazy to take care of themselves. They will not even lift the food from their plate to their mouth. (Proverbs 19:24 ERV)

Each of us was created to do good work and giving an honest effort will bring us satisfaction. When we are too lazy to bother, our world becomes confusing, we feel less and less able to cope, and our ability to do so declines.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. (Genesis 2:15 NIV)

We are instructed to do the best we can with what we have been given. We don't have to appear to be more than we are, but we are responsible to give a task all that we've got. God's promise to us is that when we serve others in the best way we can, we will find ourselves receiving back much more than we ever gave out. This isn't just limited to doing jobs but has to do with making space for others in our lives, even when they are strugglers who have attitudes and practices that irritate us.

Don't just do the minimum that will get you by. Do your best. Work from the heart for your real Master, for God, confident that you'll get paid in full when you come into your inheritance. (Colossians 3:23 MSG)

Prayer: Loving God, You created me to bless and take care of Your creation. Forgive me for the many times it seemed too much for me to bother about what needed doing. Help me to mature and become a person useful in Your service and to work from an overflowing heart of gratitude for all You have done for me. Amen

Friday

WHY DO WE NEED TO ADMIT THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR WRONGS?

Step 5 of the 12-Step program of A.A. asks that we admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. The assumption is that we have looked at our past behaviour and made a moral inventory of all our wrongdoing. The details of our inventory clearly show that we lived for self-gratification, and our lives were full of all kinds of wickedness. Thankfully, when we gave our will and life over to the care of God, He forgave all our sins and gave us a new nature.

For he has rescued us out of the darkness and gloom of Satan's kingdom and brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who bought our freedom with his blood and forgave us all our sins. (Colossians 1:13-14)

Why then do we need to admit the exact nature of our wrongs to God, ourselves, and another human being? Confession of our sins gives us protection from the power and accusation of the evil one. Many of us are aware that Satan uses what we have done to fill us with guilt and shame and fear of being found out. When we admit the exact nature of our wrongs as directed by Step 5, we disarm Satan and ruin his strategy against us. Our pride may be deflated by admission of what we have been about for many years, but the truth will set us free from the burden of any sin we might still be wrestling with.

In this way God took away Satan's power to accuse you of sin, and God openly displayed to the whole world Christ's triumph at the cross where your sins were all taken away. (Colossians 2:15 TLB)

It is wise to ask God to show us to whom we might confess the exact nature of our wrongs. Perhaps we may know of a pastor or some other person who, in the past, has demonstrated compassion and understanding of our condition and has been willing to pray for us and for others. As we move forward in our recovery, we may also want to arrange accountability for our future actions to that person.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am forever grateful that, through Jesus, all my sins are forgiven. As I do a Step-5 please help me to be truthful so that Satan ceases to have ammunition with which to accuse and harass me. Amen

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Weekend

MY HELPER and MY DEFENDER

We say the above words over and over again because they are true and applicable to every day of our life. We are powerless on our own. Our lives are unmanageable, our problems are too great, our issues are too confusing, and our emotional challenges are too overwhelming, unless God helps and defends us against our enemy.

Save me by your power, O God; set me free by your might! Hear my prayer, O God; listen to my words! Proud people are coming to attack me; cruel people are trying to kill me—those who do not care about God. But God is my helper. The Lord is my defender. (Psalm 54:1-4 GNT)

Along with the writer of this Psalm, we can confidently come to God today and ask for His help. Many people think it is self-centered to ask God for help and to bring our concerns to Him. The opposite is true. God is waiting for us to invite Him into our circumstances so He can provide the help we need.

Whether it is harsh words from others, misunderstandings that are beyond our control to fix, or just people acting thoughtlessly in ways that cause harm, God wants to come alongside us, care for us, and help us resolve these problems. If we think we have to do it on our own then we are not allowing God to be our helper and our defender and we are missing out on the goodness that God wants to pour into our lives.

So, all you people in faraway places, turn to me and be saved, because I am God, and there is no other. When I make a promise, that promise is true. It will happen. (Isaiah 45:22-23a)

Even though we may be new to trusting God and our ability to believe that God can work effectively is not rock-solid, if we will just turn our will and our life over to His care, God will keep His promises. He will work on our behalf. He will rescue us and help resolve those things that we have turned over to His care.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I choose to trust You to do what You have promised, to be my helper and my defender. I ask that You give me strength and wisdom so that, together with You, I can courageously face those things that concern me today. Amen

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 20

ADMITTING WHAT'S WRONG

Life on God's terms is the way of living we say we want when we come into recovery. Assessing our lives, based on God's principles, helps us recognize how far from the way of truth and the reality of an abundant life we have lived. God created us for relationship with Himself and with others. Wrongdoing is sin and not in keeping with God's original plan for us. To set things right, we start at the beginning and admit and repent of all our wrongdoing before God. We ask for and receive God's forgiveness for our rebellion against Him and for the harm we have caused both ourselves and others. We then seek His guidance to turn away from our learned behaviour and choose to follow His principles that will lead us into a purposeful life.

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (Psalm 51:4, 1 John 1:9 NLT)

Living with the attitude that we don't need God in our lives makes us prideful and eventually will leave us without hope for our future. In the past we had our own ideas about why we were in the condition we were in, but our thinking was flawed and twisted and it's time to admit that we got it wrong. We would do well to ask Jesus to reveal to us the real nature of our problems.

Jesus died to free us from the sin nature we were born with. He wants us to know the truth for the truth will set us free to be the person we were created to be. Jesus will accompany us into those deep places in our souls that we would never dare to venture into on our own. He will reveal what needs to be brought into the light. He'll tell us the truth about ourselves but will do so with tenderness and grace. He'll show us the way out of our insanity and into a life that is filled with peace and contentment.

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. (2 Corinthians 5:17, 19 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to humbly and honestly admit what has gone wrong in my life. Show me the truth about myself. Help me to know and walk in Your ways, honouring You in all I say and do. Amen