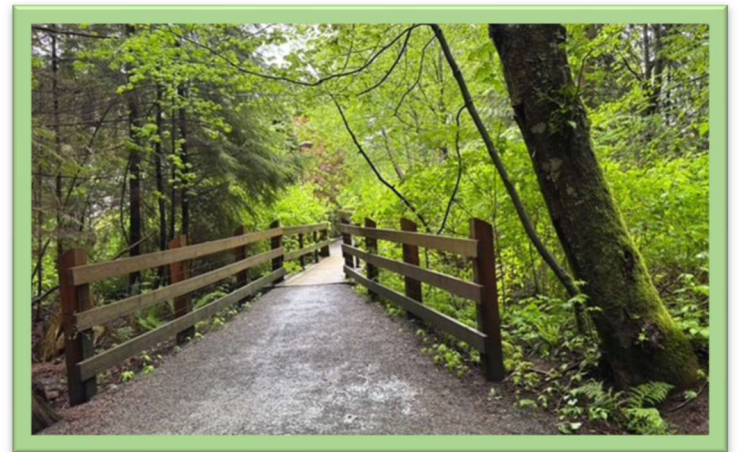


LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



MARCH 2026



These meditations are available online
for computer, tablets, and smart phones
at:

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View our daily video blog 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.*

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JUST FOR TODAY

Just for today I will try to live in conscious contact with God praying only for knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out.

Just for today I will strengthen my mind. I will take a few minutes to read and meditate on God's word, seeking God's perspective for my life today. I will take note of one helpful thing God is saying to me and seek to behave accordingly.

Just for today I will be joyful, optimistic, and grateful. I will take time to notice the gifts in me, in others, and in my surroundings and let the rest go.

Just for today I will adjust myself to what is and not try to adjust everything else to my desires. I will trust that God is working all things for good in my life.

Just for today I will be agreeable. I will not criticize, not find fault, and not try to improve or control anybody except myself. I will pray blessing on one person with whom I struggle to relate.

Just for today I will have a quiet half hour all by myself to relax and enjoy all that God is giving me.

Just for today I will be unafraid, believing that as I trust in God with all my heart and lean not on my own understanding, He will lead me along a good path.

Just for today I will seek to serve others with kindness, doing what is right, and walking humbly with God.

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

SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

For a variety of reasons, many of us have an underlying structure of disorder that is damaging us and others. We invite God to show us the truth about ourselves so we can personally receive God's forgiveness to set us free and healing to make us strong.

SUBSTANCE ADDICTIONS:	BEHAVIOUR ADDICTIONS:
Alcohol Caffeine Injected or smoked substances such as: Crack, Crystal Meth, Heroin Marijuana Prescription Medications Sugar Tobacco	Anger/Rage/Bullying Cutting Crime Eating Disorders: Bulimia, Anorexia, Binging, Obesity Gambling Hoarding Sex/Pornography Verbal Abuse: Gossip, Lying, Accusing Blaming, Condemning Violence (physical, verbal, cyber)
SOFT ADDICTIONS:	RELATIONSHIP ADDICTIONS:
Digital Use: (Time or Content) TV/Phone/Tablet; video games, Social Networking; Cyber-bullying; Online shopping; Gambling, Pornography Exercise Food (See Eating Disorders) Isolating/Sleep Money: Debt/Fraud Religion Shopping Sports Work/Achievement	Abusive Relationships: Includes: Intimidation, Isolation, Domination, Blaming, Humiliation, Withholding, Forcing acts against one's will Approval dependency Attention Seeking Codependence/Rescuing Power/Control

PRAYER FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

Loving God, Thank You for rescuing me from the dark power of Satan and bringing me into a loving relationship with Your Son, Jesus. I ask for wisdom and understanding from Your Holy Spirit in order to live as a person who honours You. Heal me. Make me new. Make me a strong follower of Christ. Root me deeply in Your love. I place my trust in Your power that can do far more in me than I could ask for or imagine. Amen.



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Daily Meditations

MARCH 2026

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

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VOLUME 11, NUMBER 03

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.

HELP FOR THE HELPLESS

When we come to God and admit that we are helpless to live life on our own and choose to surrender our will and life into His care, we are born again to a new life. God cares for us more than we care for ourselves, and He knows the way to abundant life and will empower us to get there safely. With God's help life will be better than we ever imagined or even thought possible.

"Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me." (Psalm 50:15 NRSV)

In the Bible we are told there are two powers active in our world, the devil who is seeking to keep us in bondage to evil desires and God who wants to give us freedom and fullness of life.

Jesus said, ***"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full."*** (John 10:10 NIV)

We are powerless against the forces of evil on our own. However, with the power of God in us, we can overcome any power that would seek to work against us. The first step in living the life that Jesus died to give us is to admit that we are helpless on our own, and our lives have become unmanageable. Secondly, we invite Jesus to rule and reign in our hearts and seek His guidance through reading and acting on what we are taught in the Scriptures. The third step is to make a resolute decision that, regardless of our feelings or the cost, we will follow God's principles in all our affairs.

On our own we are powerless. However, when we wholeheartedly surrender our lives to God, His great power will achieve awesome works in us and through us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit I am powerless to live life on my own. I give up trying to meet my own needs. I give up covering pain and confusion with substances and destructive habits and relationships. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit so that I might have the desire to follow Your principles in all my affairs. Please empower me to live life to the full and do those things You have planned for me to do. Amen

With God's help life will be better than we ever imagined or thought possible.

INHERITING THE PROMISES OF GOD

When we accept Jesus as our Saviour and Lord we receive the same right to the promises of God as a son or daughter has when they inherit the property of a parent after their death. God's promises are given to those who inherit salvation through Jesus. These promises are given so that our minds might be transformed by standing firm on them. We then share in the very nature of God because God's Spirit lives within us guaranteeing all that He has promised.

He has also given us his very great and valuable promises. He did it so you could share in his nature. You can share in it because you've escaped from the evil in the world. This evil is caused by sinful desires. (2 Peter 1:4 NIRV)

In order to claim the promises of God we need to know the details of our inheritance as recorded in the Bible.

If we were told we had inherited money through the will of a deceased person we would need to get a copy of the will and read it. If we meet the criteria outlined, we may claim what has been gifted to us. To claim the promises of God we need to know the details of our inheritance as recorded in the Bible. Then as we meet God's criteria, we can claim every promise.

...All of you must turn away from your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then your sins will be forgiven. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. God has made a great many promises. They are all "Yes" because of what Christ has done. (Acts 2:38; 2 Corinthians 1:20 NIRV)

If we meet the criteria in the paragraph above, we receive two precious promises: our sins are forgiven, and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. These promises bring us into a whole new way of life made possible by this wonderful inheritance that is now ours.

Through prayer and reading His Word we improve our conscious contact with God and grow in our knowledge of what God is like – His very nature. Having had this spiritual awakening, we will then carry this message to others and practice God's principles in all our affairs.

Prayer: Gracious God, Thank you for making a way for me to escape the evil of this world caused by my sinful desires. I want to get to know You and enjoy the many gifts promised to me through believing in Your beloved son. Amen

JUST FOR TODAY

Just for today I will seek to serve others with kindness, doing what is right, and walking humbly with God.

For years what we considered a normal life was actually a self-centered dysfunctional existence. Now, in recovery, we are seeking to live in a way that contributes to a healthy environment for both us and those we come into contact with. God simply and clearly outlines what is required to embrace this new life.

O people, the Lord has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8 NLT)

God invites us to a gentle and humble way of life that gives us peace and fills us with joy. First, we must ensure that we are in right relationship with God, seeking the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out. Then we need to consider others and be kind to them. If someone is struggling, we should be gentle and humble as we seek to help them get back on the right path. We need to support the desire in the spirit of a person to carry out their new life choices even while their flesh is weak. We need to warn against harmful behaviour in a way that calls people to safety. We need to encourage people to seek after more than they are currently experiencing.

Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. (Galatians 6:1 NLT)

Humility will help us remember how dark our world in addiction became and how far God stooped down to rescue us. We need to remind ourselves that without God's unfailing care we could easily relapse. When we appreciate the tenderness and grace we have received from God, we will then be willing to offer forgiveness and encouragement to others. As God forgave us for the wrongs we did, we now choose to forgive our family and friends for the wrongs they did to us. As God has blessed us, we now choose to bless others with whom we have contact.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to live with gentleness and grace and offer forgiveness and encouragement to those who have harmed me. As You have loved and cared for me, help me to love and care for others. Amen

God invites us to a gentle and humble way of life that gives us peace and fills us with joy.

STAYING GROUNDED

Of all the four seasons of the year, spring seems to describe our new life in recovery the best. The temperatures warm up. We hear birds begin to sing again. There are more hours of daylight. New flowers bloom. The bears come out of hibernation, and we feel a similar desire to get outside and enjoy the freshness and the hope of the season.

After long periods of time in coldness and darkness in our addiction it is so refreshing to witness the light of hope within us and allow our hearts to thaw a bit. We welcome both the return of life-giving actions and the newness of safer daily practices in healthy relationships.

Perhaps Jesus was seeing spring around Him when He said the following words:

***If we
ground
ourselves
in God's
will, He will
take care
of the rest.***

Look at the birds: they do not plant seeds, gather a harvest and put it in barns; yet your Father in heaven takes care of them! Aren't you worth much more than birds? And why worry about clothes? Look how the wild flowers grow: they do not work or make clothes for themselves. (Matthew 6:26, 28 GNT)

Together with the hope and growth of a new season we often worry about our future and the vulnerability we feel in moving forward. God knows how frail we are inside, and He encourages us to simply stay focused on Him and do the work of recovery He's called us to do. He promises He will take care of all the rest. Just like a farmer prepares the fields, puts the seed in the ground and then leaves it to grow, so we can trust that if we ground ourselves in God's will, He will take care of the rest.

But more than anything else, put God's work first and do what he wants. Then the other things will be yours as well. Don't worry about tomorrow. It will take care of itself. You have enough to worry about today. (Matthew 6:33-34 CEV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to believe for this new day and the new life You have given me. Help me to remain grounded in You today and simply get to know Your will and do it. Help me to let go of worry about the future. You will make all things right as I surrender to Your will, so that I will be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen

RECOGNIZING SELFISHNESS

To stop using our substance of choice is a great beginning in recovery but God knows that unless we deal with the underlying root of our habits and addictive practices, we will remain doomed for failure. That's why selfishness is listed with drunkenness and other traits as the outcome of following the desires of our sinful nature.

When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. (Galatians 5:19-20 NLT)

Selfishness runs deep in all of us. It is the underlying cause of most of our problems and expresses itself in our way of relating to both God and others. What does it look like? Regardless of what God says or how our selfish behaviour impacts others, we continue to chase after whatever pleases us. The Bible suggests we do an inventory of ourselves and deal with the primary cause of our selfish shortcomings.

An unfriendly person pursues selfish ends and against all sound judgment starts quarrels. For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind. (Proverbs 18:1 NIV, James 3:16 NLT)

How do we overcome selfishness? We ask God to forgive us for our self-centered ways and submit our will and our life over to His care. When we wholeheartedly surrender our lives to God, He promises us freedom from the bondage of preoccupation with self and our own affairs.

Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 7:24-25a)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I am so thankful that You gave Your life to set me free from the deep-rooted self-absorption in my heart. I choose to leave the misery of selfishness behind and ask You to strengthen me as I move forward in my life with You in recovery. Amen

***God knows
that unless
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practices, we
will remain
doomed for
failure.***

THE GOOD LIFE

It does not take much time in recovery for us to realize how much better life can be than we ever thought possible. As healing takes place and God's Presence fills our hearts with peace and joy, we realize our life with God is very precious and better than anything we have ever experienced.

Do good to your servant according to your word, Lord. Teach me knowledge and good judgment, for I trust your commands. Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees. Though the arrogant have smeared me with lies, I keep your

precepts with all my heart. Their hearts are callous and unfeeling, but I delight in your law. It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees. The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold. (Psalm 119:65-72 NIV)

Security in life requires boundaries and limits to be established, particularly in the areas of our out-of-control desires and demands.

In addiction we lived uncaring self-centered lives and our hearts became callous and unfeeling. In recovery we are learning that security in life requires boundaries and limits to be established, particularly in the areas of our out-of-control desires and demands. Though we sometimes struggle with God's way of disciplined choices and balanced living, we believe and are assured that as we continue to surrender to His ways, we will experience the overflowing goodness of God.

He forgives your sins—every one. He heals your diseases—every one. He redeems you from hell—saves your life! He crowns you with love and mercy—a

paradise crown. He wraps you in goodness—beauty eternal. He renews your youth—you're always young in his presence. God makes everything come out right; he puts victims back on their feet. (Psalm 103:3-6 MSG)

Today is another opportunity to think about the goodness of God in sending Jesus into the world to die for our sins so that we might have eternal life.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You are a tender loving God who has demonstrated how much You care for Your people. Please strengthen my resolve to follow You in all my ways. Amen

PALM SUNDAY

The day we call Palm Sunday was foretold in the Jewish scriptures hundreds of years before it happened. As Jesus had told them, His followers found a donkey which the owners allowed to be borrowed and taken to Jesus because they were told, "The Lord has need of him." The disciples threw their clothes on the colt and set Jesus on him. Others spread their clothes on the road as Jesus rode along and, at the Mount of Olives, the people began to praise God for all the mighty works they had seen Jesus do.

Rejoice, rejoice, people of Zion! Shout for joy, you people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you! He comes triumphant and victorious, but humble and riding on a donkey—on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zechariah 9:9 GNT)

Jesus fulfilled many prophecies about His life and death. How could the writers of the scriptures have known things about Jesus hundreds of years before He was even born? Why would the owner of the donkey allow the disciples to take it? Why would a donkey on whom no one has ever sat be calm enough to let Jesus sit on its back? The crowds were full of praise for the things Jesus had done among them. The Jewish religious leaders, who were offended by this display of worship, asked Jesus to stop the people praising God.

He (Jesus) came closer to the city, and when he saw it, he wept over it, saying, "If you only knew today what is needed for peace! But now you cannot see it!" (Luke 19:41-42 GNT)

Jesus knew what was needed for peace. His death and resurrection were required for peace for us and for the Jewish leaders even though they didn't recognize their need. Jesus knew the time of His death was near and He carried through to the end.

As we increase our conscious contact with God, do we praise God for those things that have taken place, and are we able to see and believe for those things God has promised that are yet to come?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank You for restoring me in body, mind and spirit and for giving me Your peace which passes all understanding. You are worthy of my praise and adoration. As You have promised, even so, come Lord Jesus come. Amen

Do we praise God for those things that have taken place, and are we able to see and believe for those things God has promised that are yet to come?

FIRING THE COMMITTEE IN MY HEAD

God's Word often speaks about our enemies, and these are the "enemies of our soul." We may speak about "our demons" or "the committee in our head." We have various descriptions for those powers that seek to steal our recovery and destroy our life. While we have our part to play in choosing to hear God's voice and hanging on to God during times of trial and testing, God's promise to us is that His power will bring us success every time. Our enemies will be defeated, and God's loving plan will go forward in our lives one moment at a time, one day at a time.

Don't let my enemies kill me. Hide me from evil people who talk about how to harm me. Hide me from those people who are planning to do evil. They make their tongues like sharp swords. They aim their mean words like deadly arrows. (Psalm 64:1-2 NIRV)

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28
NIV

We get tired sometimes from the fight with the "committee in our head." The meanness and unfairness of all the harsh words we hear cause us to feel guilt and sorrow. Thankfully we can come to our gracious God and seek relief from our accusers and find rest during the storms we experience.

My faithful God, answer me when I call out to you. Give me rest from my trouble. Have mercy on me. Hear my prayer. Remember that the Lord has set apart his faithful servant for himself. The Lord hears me when I call out to him. (Psalm 4: 1, 3 NIRV)

How do we get from the ugliness in our heads to a place of peace and rest? We speak to God. We ask for rest. We affirm that God is with us. We ask for God's unceasing help. We remind ourselves that God is greater than any obsession

or voice that is swirling around in our heads. God will do for us what we are powerless to do for ourselves. God's ways are always effective.

But God will shoot my enemies with his arrows. He will suddenly strike them down. He will turn their own words against them. He will destroy them. (Psalm 64:7-8a NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, As the enemies of my soul turn up the volume, You know who these horrible accusers are. I trust You to fire this committee in my head and give me the rest and peace I need. During these attacks of evil forces, help me to focus on Your unfailing love and care for me. Amen

"KEEP COMING BACK—IT WORKS IF YOU WORK IT"

At the end of many recovery meetings we say the words, "Keep coming back. It works if you work it." While it is important to do our part, we can be thankful that our recovery has hope because God works on our behalf. Our Higher Power, the God who put the sun and moon and stars in place, has perfect plans and arranges things that bring about a good and satisfying life for us. We can hardly imagine love and commitment like that when we begin our new life in recovery.

No one has ever seen or heard anything like this, never so much as imagined anything quite like it—what God has arranged for those who love him. But you've seen and heard it because God by his Spirit has brought it all out into the open before you. (I Corinthians 2:9-10 MSG)

God meets us where we are and promises to take us forward into a bright future. One of our greatest hindrances to experiencing that bright future is—we think we know what the good life is. In recovery we sort out some of the wreckage of our past and begin to form an idea of what we think a good life looks like. But the truth is, our vision is very narrow when it is based on our own flawed beliefs and limited knowledge. To envision the reality of what God is actively weaving together to bring success to our lives, we need to intentionally seek to know God and His ways.

Trust in the Lord and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you. (Psalm 37:3-5a NLT)

The first step in working a successful recovery plan is to give our will and lives over to God's care and acknowledge the fact that He is at work in our lives and is bringing about a future with hope for us. God's plans for us are better than we could ask for or even dream about for ourselves.

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to give up my own agenda and receive with thankfulness the life You have planned for me. I trust Your unfailing love to sustain me as I allow You to guide and direct me in my life with You in recovery. Amen

God's plans for us are better than we could ask for or even dream about for ourselves.

VICTIM MENTALITY

In recovery, as well as in addiction, one can have a victim mentality. A person with a victim mentality tells their life story with the intent of having people feel sorry for them because they want them to meet their needs. Through a person's sympathy they are, consciously or unconsciously, trying to control and manipulate that person. They will not take responsibility for their own behaviour because they believe someone else is to blame for things that have gone wrong.

Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death. (Proverbs 7:26-27 NIV)

When we are operating with a victim mentality or are trying to be a saviour, we need to allow Jesus to heal us and bring us peace.

God never intended for us to carry our own burdens or for that matter to manipulate others to carry them for us. No human person is equipped to handle the emotional and physical abuse of their own sin, never mind that of another. God saw the trouble that sin brought on all humankind and He had a plan to deal with it. Because of God's great love for us, Jesus willingly came to fulfill God's plan of redemption.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:4-5 ERV)

There is no need for any of us to be either a victim or a saviour. Jesus is the only one who can set us free from the disease of sin. When we are operating with a victim

mentality or are trying to be a saviour, we need to allow Jesus to heal us and bring us peace.

Let us throw off any sin that holds on to us so tightly. And let us keep on running the race marked out for us. Let us keep looking to Jesus. He is the one who started this journey of faith. (Hebrews 12 1b-2a NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to draw near to You for You alone can break the chains of bondage to sin that so easily entangle me. I want to receive all that You offer me through Jesus. Please set me free so I can run the race You have set before me. Amen

BUILDING A GOOD REPUTATION

We did not have a good reputation when we were living in addiction. In fact, even though we tried to hide our problems, we often sunk so deep into our addiction that both our character and reputation were destroyed by our repeated poor choices. Dealing with a bad reputation is one of the most difficult things to face as we seek to live well in recovery with God.

God's word describes the value of a good reputation and has lots of helpful advice for us as we seek to rebuild our lives.

A good reputation and respect are worth much more than silver and gold. Never let loyalty and kindness leave you! Tie them around your neck as a reminder. Write them deep within your heart. Then you will find favor with both God and people, and you will earn a good reputation. Always let others see you behaving properly, even though they may still accuse you of doing wrong. Then on the day of judgment, they will honor God by telling the good things they saw you do. (Proverbs 22:1 CEV, Proverbs 3:3-4 NLT, 1 Peter 2:12 CEV)

The principles behind good choices, which are foundational to good character, are clearly laid out in the above Bible verses:-be loyal; be kind; behave properly; do good. Rebuilding our reputation is about developing positive character qualities; letting God remove our character defects; and being humble in the learning process. There is no mistake we have made, that we cannot learn from. We may have blown the trust of others so many times that it will take time for them to trust us. However, when change is real and consistent, many of us have experienced that people respond with kindness.

Jesus came to earth and laid down His perfectly good reputation to die a sinner's death on the cross, so that we might receive forgiveness and a new life with our Heavenly Father. He sacrificed everything for us. As tough as it may be to rebuild our reputation, God will supply everything we need to help us do that.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Jesus came to earth and gave up His good reputation so I could have a new life. Empowered by Your Spirit, help me to do the work required to rebuild my life so I can be a person who finds favour with You and with others by the way I live. Each day please help me to honour You with my thoughts, words, and actions. Amen

A good reputation and respect are worth much more than silver and gold.

***Proverbs 22:1
CEV***

DESIRE TO CHANGE

Whether in Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous, Tradition 3 highlights that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking or using.

Jesus tells us: ***Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.*** (Matthew 26:41 NIV, Philippians 2:13 NLT)

***As we
make
conscious
contact
with God a
priority, He
will
faithfully
change
our
desires.***

It is not too difficult for us to dislike the suffering and inconvenience we experience alongside our using and drinking. However, it really does take an act of God to remove the desire to drink or use again. God can work a miracle in us so the obsession to pick up is removed. We can expect a “daily reprieve” as we invite God to be the source of our strength to say “NO” when the desire to drink or use arises. We need God’s help to be sober today. We need our actions to be in line with God’s principles, so we have the courage to do the next right thing.

As we add one day of sobriety to another, we will notice change around us. Our relationships will be more joyful and peaceful. As we experience success in some areas, optimism will begin to grow in us. The blur in our minds starts to clear and we find ourselves laughing and enjoying simple pleasures. Together all these things will support our desire not to drink or use.

As we make conscious contact with God a priority, He will faithfully change our desires. The more we obey what God says works, the more we experience the peace of God and a sense of well-being deep in our souls. Life with God will always be sweeter and more fulfilling than a life of drinking or using.

Find your delight in the Lord. Then he will give you everything your heart really wants. Live by the Holy Spirit’s power. Then you will not do what your desires controlled by sin want you to do. (Psalm 37:4, Galatians 5:16 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Change me from the inside out. Help me to enjoy the blessings of this life but most of all to enjoy being cared for and loved by You. Help me to experience the promise that life with You is more desirable than a life of drinking or using. Amen

SURPRISE

Some people throw surprise parties to celebrate notable anniversaries of friends. It’s always interesting to watch the face of the person who is being surprised. They often seem pleased but sometimes the surprise can be overwhelming. A Jewish ruler once surprised Jesus by coming to Him at night. He said that he knew Jesus came from God because of the miracles He was doing. However, the Jewish ruler was surprised and baffled by Jesus’ reply.

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus. He was one of the Jewish rulers. He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. We know that God is with you. If he weren’t, you couldn’t do the signs you are doing.” Jesus replied, “What I’m about to tell you is true. No one can see God’s kingdom unless they are born again.” (John 3:1-3 NIRV)

Nicodemus was confused by what Jesus said. He started to reason about earthly birth and how someone couldn’t go back inside their mother’s womb and be born again. Jesus told Nicodemus that he should not be surprised that people give birth to people, but that the Spirit of God gives birth to the human spirit within us. Jesus came into the world to save the world from sin, so that the dead spirit within us could be made alive by God’s Holy Spirit.

He saved us by washing away our sins. We were born again. The Holy Spirit gave us new life. God poured out the Spirit on us freely. That’s because of what Jesus Christ our Savior has done. (Titus 3:5b-6 NIRV)

Are we surprised that Jesus came into the world so we could have freedom from sin and our dead spirits made alive? When we give our will and life over to the care of God, our dead spirit within us is reborn and we are enabled by the power of God’s Holy Spirit who comes to reside in us and around us, to do those things that please God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your great love that caused Jesus to come into the world to die for my sins so that I might be born again by the power of Your Holy Spirit. Amen

***Are we
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HONOURING OUR PARENTS

We may have much to learn from the generations that preceded us. Sometimes they made mistakes and perhaps did not parent us well but, how does God want us to respect and learn about life through our parents, in spite of their imperfections?

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)

**We don't
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When the 10 Commandments were given to God's people the fifth one carried a wonderful promise for those who fulfilled it. *Respect your father and your mother, and you will live a long time in the land I am giving you.* (Exodus 20:12 CEV)

The pattern for living that Jesus demonstrated was one which gave priority to listening to and obeying His 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) God expressed His pleasure in His son as Jesus lived in the wisdom that came from their times of shared prayer. At Jesus' baptism God spoke these words, *"This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.* (Matthew 3:17 NLT)

No human relationship is perfect. We don't have to have perfect parents to honour them as God intends. We can learn from their wisdom and their mistakes. We can give them joy by allowing them to see us rise 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 as we show sound judgment in our decision making. If it is possible, let's make it a priority today to build healthy relationships with our parents.

Prayer: Gracious 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 honours You, our parents, and those around us. Amen

TOOLS FOR PEACE

Most people long for peace of mind and heart. Life with God in recovery provides many tools which help satisfy this deep longing within us. Jesus willingly died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. When we know we are free from all condemnation, peace will fill our hearts.

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5 NIV)

Knowing and trusting in God's Word is an amazing source of comfort that quiets our souls. When we become children of God, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us and will guide us into all truth. As we follow God's principles in all our affairs we will experience great peace, and nothing will cause us to stumble.

Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful. (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 NLT)

God wants us to be at peace rather than harassed by bitterness and resentment. Not only can we experience the peace that results from God's forgiveness for our failures, but we can know even greater peace when we choose to forgive those who have wronged us.

Get rid of all bitterness, rage, 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)

Applying God's principles to our thoughts and actions will bring us the forgiveness, healing, and peace we desire.

Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You that Jesus' death on the cross brought me forgiveness and healing. Help me to forgive those who have harmed me so that I may live in peace and blessing. May my offenders also come to know the power of the cross of Jesus. Amen

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NEGATIVE THINKING

What we think about has a powerful impact on what we do. Thought usually precedes action. If our thoughts are flawed, then our actions will miss the mark. One of the great spiritual dangers for people in recovery is “stinking thinking.” A false thought we often believe is that God, or others, cannot or will not help us. When we think that way, we tend to allow ourselves to be dominated by fear – fear of the past, fear of embarrassment, fear of loneliness, fear of being hurt. Our flawed thinking is controlling us, causing us to feel guilty and making us vulnerable to relapse.

God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?” (Hebrews 13:5b-6 NIV)

God invites us to the peace and security of living in the truth that He truly does care for us.

When we think that God cannot, or will not help us, we leave ourselves open to negative actions. We are fearful of doing the right thing and end up experiencing emptiness. Too often we make a choice for addictive habits to fill the gap. As we assume that everything depends on us, we get tired, we fall short, and we get hurt. In our frustration, we lash out at others. We blame them for our circumstances. We vent our fears and angry thoughts on whoever is closest to us. Then we end up experiencing discouragement, loneliness, and increased pain from the angry conflicts.

The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life. (Psalm 121:5-7 NIV)

God invites us to the peace and security of living in the truth that He truly does care for us. Our part is to acknowledge God's truth and obediently follow His principles in all our affairs. As we do, we will come to experience the peace and security that God promises.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess my thoughts are sometimes negative and cause me to fear. Please set me free from stinking thinking and help me to uphold the truth of Your word. I am forever grateful for the truth that You lovingly watch over me and will keep me from harm. Amen

RECOGNIZING JESUS

Jesus came to earth when the nation of Israel was ruled by Rome. We know from the Bible that the Jewish leaders did not accept who Jesus was and conspired to have Him killed. The Jewish leaders should have been familiar with the events of the day because they were foretold in the scriptures. However, they saw Jesus as a threat rather than a redeemer.

Why are the nations so angry? Why are the people making such foolish plans? Their kings and leaders join together to fight against the Lord and his chosen king. They say, “Let’s rebel against them. Let’s break free from them!” But the one who rules in heaven laughs at them. The Lord makes fun of them. He speaks to them in anger, and it fills them with fear. He says, “I have chosen this man to be king, and he will rule on Zion, my holy mountain.” (Psalm 2:1-6 ERV)

We know that Pilate, the Roman governor, recognized that Jesus was spitefully accused of wrongdoing. Pilate said He could find no fault in Jesus and yet he still gave in to public opinion and sentenced Jesus to die.

What do we do with Jesus today? Do we believe that He is the One who willingly gave His life for us and surrender our will and our life into His care? God loved us so much that He sent Jesus into the world, not to judge us for our wrongs, but to save us. Do we recognize how much Jesus suffered so that we could be set free from the power of sin?

The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. (John 12:48 ESV)

Historical proof exists of the life of Jesus as written in the Bible. We also hear testimony at meetings of the experience, strength, and hope of the many who found sobriety and life by following God’s principles. If we choose not to believe what Jesus has done on our behalf, the Bible says the words that God has spoken will judge us on the last day. How will we measure up when that day comes?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I repent of my sin and accept Jesus’ death on the cross as the payment for my sins and the way to make me whole. Today I choose to give my will and my life into Your care. Amen

Do we recognize how much Jesus suffered so that we could be set free from the power of sin?

A POSITIVE APPROACH TO FEELING BORED

When we first come into recovery our expectation for a life free from crippling dependencies is huge. We are excited about what the future may hold and say we are willing to do whatever it takes to get our life back on track. As the weeks go on our routine becomes dull and we start to be less enthusiastic. We feel sorry for ourselves and easily get angry with others. The truth is we are bored. We feel challenged and vulnerable in our new routine and have begun to focus on our old familiar pattern of life.

We have all these great people around us as examples. Their lives tell us what faith means. So we, too, should run the race that is before us and never quit. We should remove from our lives anything that would slow us down and the sin that so often makes us fall. (Hebrews 12:1 ERV)

It is a fair question to ask why we are bored and impatient with where life is at today.

It is a fair question to ask why we are bored and impatient with where life is at today. Are we seeking out people who can help us understand what is going on in us, or do we just complain and blame? Boredom is brought about by lack of action. When nothing changes, then nothing changes! Everything in life takes time to accomplish.

Perhaps we need to change our thought pattern and think about those things that are worthy of praise. Maybe we need to work on establishing conscious contact with God, praying for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out. Perhaps we could spend time being helpful to others while waiting for things to happen for ourselves.

Finally, my brothers and sisters, always think about what is true. Think about what is noble, right and pure. Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect. If anything is excellent or worthy of praise, think about those kinds of things. (Philippians 4:8 NIRV)

Let's allow any boredom we may experience to give us time to consider positive action and deeper growth in our relationship with God.

Prayer: Loving Father, I admit that boredom is pushing me back into darkness, and I need help to remove it from my life. Please help me make wise decisions in the use of my time and help me do those things that please You. Amen

DEALING WITH WORRY AND ANXIETY

God has told us to give all our cares and anxieties to him because He cares for us. God promises that He won't give us more than we can handle and will give us the grace that is sufficient to meet every need.

For all of God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding "Yes!" And through Christ, our "Amen" (which means "Yes") ascends to God for his glory. It is God who enables us, along with you, to stand firm for Christ. He has commissioned us, and he has identified us as his own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything he has promised us. (2 Corinthians 1:20-22 NLT)

To trust God rather than be filled with worry and anxiety requires that we hold on to what is true when, for a time, circumstances may challenge that. We need to pray and then pray some more. We need to see what is good alongside what is troubling. In times of trial, we may believe that getting help for our need is a priority. Waiting is hard but, until the problem is resolved, we need to believe that God is for us and not against us. We need to persevere even when we feel like giving up.

I give you peace, the kind of peace that only I can give. It isn't like the peace that this world can give. So don't be worried or afraid. (John 14:27 CEV)

God's new life-giving way for us in recovery is to come to believe that He is the power greater than ourselves who can restore us. Our part? Turn our will and our life – including any particular situation – over to His care. What does this require? That we begin to trust that God is good, that God is for us, and that God will give us what we need – maybe something different from what we think the solution to the situation is – but ultimately what we need is to make it through. Sometimes we need our character strengthened more than we need an instant solution. We don't prefer that gift from God but thankfully God is more interested in our long-term peace and stability than in our demands of the moment.

Prayer: Loving God, You are good and You are with me. You promise to never leave me nor forsake me. Help me to trust in Your faithful care when challenges fill me with worry and anxiety. Amen

God is more interested in our long term peace and stability than in our demands of the moment.

RELATIONSHIP INVENTORY

Our life in addiction was shaped by a controlling relationship with a destructive substance, a habit, a person, – or a combination of these. At some point we began to believe that we were entitled to whatever would give us pleasure and keep pain at a distance. We became focused on ourselves and our needs to the exclusion of every other relationship. We did not know how to love others in a healthy way and believed, because of our familiar feelings of self-rejection, that we were unlovable.

No matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love. Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want

When we come to God in recovery, we must humbly acknowledge that we do not know how to live well in relationship with others.

what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, Doesn't have a swelled head, Doesn't force itself on others, Isn't always "me first," Doesn't fly off the handle, Doesn't keep score of the sins of others, Doesn't revel when others grovel, Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, Puts up with anything, Trusts God always, Always looks for the best, Never looks back, But keeps going to the end. (1 Corinthians 13:4-5 MSG)

When we come to God in recovery, we must humbly acknowledge that we do not know how to live well in relationship with others. Through reading and believing God's word, we will come to the knowledge of His love and truth. As we come into a caring relationship with God, He will teach us how to live in wholesome relationships with others. We need to freely receive and give love. We need to learn from those things that happened in our lives, even those that caused our brokenness. We need to allow God to take the broken person we have become and change us into the person He created us to be.

No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us. (1 John 4:12 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, forgive me for living as a self-centered individual. Teach and empower me to live in loving relationship with You, my family, and those in my community. Please help me to love and care for others as You love and care for me. Amen

WE WILL KNOW PEACE

One of the Twelve Promises of AA tells us:--*We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace.*

Addiction results in a constant state of inner turmoil. What many of us who find life with God in recovery know, is that the longer we stay sober and work on our recovery, the more we begin to experience times of calmness and peace of mind. These times are pretty fleeting in the beginning, but they increase in both time and depth as we live one day at a time trusting God to do in us those things we cannot do for ourselves.

May the God who gives hope fill you with great joy. May you have perfect peace as you trust in him. May the power of the Holy Spirit fill you with hope.
(Romans 15:13 NIRV)

The Serenity Prayer is both a description of the process of finding contentment in this life and a tool we can use over-and-over-again to help us enter the peace that is surely God's heart for us. This prayer gives us words to say that follow the instructions we read in the Bible for finding inner peace--even in times when logically we shouldn't be at peace.

Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God. Then, because you belong to Christ Jesus, God will bless you with peace that no one can completely understand. And this peace will control the way you think and feel.
(Philippians 4:6-7 CEV)

We won't necessarily understand WHY we are at peace, but we will recognize a calmness and a serenity in a deep place within us that wasn't there before. It's what we sometimes describe as feeling "grounded." This serenity is not just something we hope for because the founders of AA said it was possible, it's God's promise to us, and all God's promises to us are life-giving truths we can "take to the bank."

Prayer: God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen

We won't necessarily understand WHY we are at peace, but we will recognize a calmness and a serenity in a deep place within us that wasn't there before.

THE GRUDGES WE CARRY

Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.
(Romans 12:17 NKJV)

When someone has treated us badly, taken something away from us that is rightfully ours, or offended us in some way, we feel hurt by their actions. We want them to make amends. If, for whatever reason, amends are not made for sustained hurts, we may carry a grudge against the offender.

Some of us bury the grief of unresolved offenses inside us and try to relieve the pain and hopelessness we feel with addictive substances or co-dependent relationships. We are causing ourselves more grief and bitterness by not dealing with the wrongs we have sustained.

***Forgiveness
is the only
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See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. (Hebrews 12:15 NIV)

Forgiveness is the only way to stop the pain of a buried grudge. For some of us who have been victimized, forgiveness seems unthinkable. We are in pain and forgiveness rips at our sense of justice. We want the offender to pay; to suffer in return for the suffering they inflicted on us. But, until we forgive the offender, he or she will continue to hurt us because we are tied to this person, and to the past event, by our unwillingness to forgive and be healed.

The Bible gives us the following advice: ***Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written, "I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it," says the Lord. Instead, do what the Scriptures say: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink, and they will be ashamed of what they have done to you." Don't let evil get the best of you, but conquer evil by doing good.*** (Romans 12:18-21 NLT)

Prayer: Dear God, please help me to forgive others for their offenses as you have forgiven me for mine. Amen

NEW SEASON OF GROWTH

Seasons change. The temperature warms up. The grass begins to grow again. Landscapers clear gardens of old growth and we soon will see new green shoots and blossoms appearing. Our new season of life with God in recovery can also be a wonderful time of freshness and new growth. However, we need the skillful planning and work of God, our "spiritual landscaper", to remove the weeds and dead leaves and branches that clutter the garden of our hearts and choke the new growth. We need the right fertilizer to be applied to the soil. When this is done we will have nutrient rich soil in us to sustain new growth.

I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. (John 15:1-2 NLT)

If real change and growth are to take place, our lives need to be given over to the care of God. Only God knows what is best for us, for our relationships, and for our well-being. It's at the beginning of a new season that we particularly need to pay attention to, and cooperate with what God is saying, so our lives are available for all the fresh new things God wants to teach us and grow in our hearts.

Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.
(Psalm 1:1-3 NLT)

Reading God's word plants new seeds. Planting truth helps shape our beliefs, thoughts, and behaviours. God's Spirit will water and feed what has been planted. As we surrender over and over again to God's Spirit working in us, our hearts will be stirred up, and we will become ready for a season of rich new life.

Prayer: Wonder Working God, You know the right time for planting what is necessary in this new season of my life. I surrender my will and my life to Your care. May this be a time of abundant growth and fruitfulness as I follow Your principles in all my affairs. Amen

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WHITE KNUCKLING

We usually say an individual is “white knuckling” when they are just using willpower to stay sober. They have stopped drinking or using but have not dealt with the underlying issues related to their addiction. They are desperately hanging on and very much at risk of relapse because they experience life away from their substance of choice as something to be endured. They are not staying sober to benefit themselves but for other people. They feel like they are in prison rather than having a life. They muddle through one day of not using and hope for another but have a low tolerance for other people and life’s challenges. They are often filled with anger and resentment.

He [God] gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.

Isaiah 40:29 NLT

This is not the life in recovery that God wants for us. He gives us strength for the journey as we tackle complex issues. He offers us comfort and healing for all the painful things we will encounter along the way.

I am the Lord All-Powerful. So don’t depend on your own power or strength, but on my Spirit. (Zechariah 4:6 CEV)

When we begin to feel worried and anxious about our sobriety it’s time to look again to God who knows us better than we know ourselves. As we read the Bible, God will teach us those things we need to know and will help us practice His principles in all our affairs. We need to listen to others share their experience, strength, and hope, and perhaps learn from them. If we seek God, He will help us identify the source of our pain and, through

Jesus, we can receive healing and forgiveness for the issues that are exposed.

You are my strength; I wait for you to rescue me, for you, O God, are my fortress. In his unfailing love, my God will stand with me. He will let me look down in triumph on all my enemies. (Psalm 59:9-10 NLT)

We can’t “fight our demons” on our own but when we ask our all-powerful God to help us, He will give us so much more power to do so.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, When I am feeling frustration and pain, I pray for the willingness to reach out to You for strength, and healing. Help me to surrender every area where I stubbornly “white knuckle” through problem situations. Please guide me to a place of peace and stability. I put my trust in You. Help me to trust You more. Amen

A LIFESTYLE OF TRUTH

It is God’s plan that we not only know truth but believe truth, speak truth, and reorder our lives so that all our actions reflect truth.

Truth stands the test of time; lies are soon exposed. You will know the truth and the truth will set you free. (Proverbs 12:19, John 8:32 NLT)

Truthful living is a huge turnaround from life in active addiction where deception was the rule of the day. For many of us, even prior to active addiction, truth was hard to live because it often wasn’t safe to acknowledge the truth. We believed we had to hide behind a mask and pretend we were someone other than who we were. We felt we had to say something other than the truth, so we wouldn’t create trouble in our home or bring abusive actions upon ourselves. Sometimes we were even forced to lie as violent people tried to beat out of us the words they wanted to hear.

To establish a lifestyle of truth, the first action for many of us is to break free from the underlying falsehood that Satan has rooted in our hearts and minds – that truth is not safe – not worth the trouble to tell – and will never get us what we desire. It’s time to renounce what is false and affirm what is true. We can then accept God’s forgiveness, grace, and healing for the pain these twisted beliefs have brought us.

We will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ. (Ephesians 4:15 NLT)

In that place where lies formerly functioned, we can now fill our minds and hearts with the truth that God’s Spirit is active in our lives filling us with comfort and blessing, healing and power, and everything we need for a meaningful purposeful life. As we daily read the Bible, God will progressively reveal His truth to us and our lives will be transformed. We will experience the security that only living in the truth of God’s word can bring.

Prayer: Loving God, Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you. Amen (Psalm 25:5 NLT)

It is God’s plan that we not only know truth but believe truth, speak truth and reorder our lives so that all our actions reflect truth.

LETTING GO OF DEFENSIVENESS

Letting go of defensiveness is one necessary adjustment we need to make in order to experience growth and success in our life with God in recovery.

It's hard to admit weakness or mistakes. We've spent so much time covering up those things with denial and substances that now it is a real challenge to hear truth, and admit truth, when there is something negative that needs to be faced. We feel insecure and we don't have substances to cover up this painful emotion.

Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. (Psalm 25:5 NIV)

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Romans 12:18 NIV

One of the first signs of being defensive is that we blame others or find excuses for what took place. Now and again, there is a valid reason for the problem we face, but more likely than not our excuses will come from a place of defensiveness. To sort out what's really going on when we are defensive, we need to turn our attention to God and ask for His help to reveal what is true. Accusations from others are not necessarily any truer than our own fearful rationalizations. We want clarity and God wants to help us see what is right. When we see, then we can take the next right step.

When I felt my feet slipping, you came with your love and kept me steady and when I was burdened with worries, you comforted me and made me feel secure. (Psalm 94:18-19 CEV)

We can give ourselves permission to be a "work in progress" without ignoring the need to take corrective action. Our self-worth is not altered by whatever the situation is, or by the criticism we are hearing. We need to listen well and maybe even get help to determine a truthful response, but these actions need to grow from a place of value for who we are rather than a desire to cover up a feeling of inferiority. In fact, when we come to a place of valuing ourselves as God values us, we will welcome the opportunity to make positive change rather than hiding in defensiveness.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to live in the truth of who You say I am and what You know about the situations I am facing. Help me to turn to You when I feel defensive so You can comfort and guide me in the way I should go. Amen

THANKS TO GOD FOR MY LIFE AND MY RECOVERY

Each day in recovery is an opportunity to learn something new and grow. To remain strong, we need to allow God to do for us those things we cannot do for ourselves, as well as diligently doing what is our part. Today we are invited to celebrate and give thanks for those things God has done for us that we could not do for ourselves.

Let me tell you what God did for me. I called out to him with my mouth, my tongue shaped the sounds of music. If I had been cozy with evil, the Lord would never have listened. But he most surely did listen, he came on the double when he heard my prayer. Blessed be God: he didn't turn a deaf ear, he stayed with me, loyal in his love. (Psalm 66:16b-20 MSG)

Sometimes winter months seem long and hard and there are times in recovery when that journey seems long and hard as well. At those moments it is good to pause and rest and reflect on how different things are now compared to how they were when we were struggling in the dark pit of our addiction. Today we can hit the "pause button," look up, look around and be conscious of what we are grateful for.

At the core of our recovery is the God who was there for us when we recognized our powerlessness and admitted that our life was unmanageable. He listened to us and, as the Bible quote above says, "***came on the double when he heard my prayer.***" God didn't just come quickly and help us take that first step. He stayed with us on the road and shone His light on each pothole and ditch ahead. He encouraged us and guided us to the right path when it was extremely hard for us to hang on and keep going.

Bless our God, O peoples! Give him a thunderous welcome! Didn't he set us on the road to life? Didn't he keep us out of the ditch? (Psalm 66:8-9 MSG)

Wherever we share today – on our phone, in a conversation, at a meeting – let's share with gratitude about this God who has kept us out of the ditch and set us on the road to life.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for being there for me when I couldn't even be there for myself. Thank You for making a way for me to find forgiveness and healing and life before I even asked You for it. Today, I reaffirm my trust in Jesus, who has done for me on the cross what I could not do for myself. Today I thank You for my life and my recovery. Amen

Today, I reaffirm my trust in Jesus, who has done for me on the cross what I could not do for myself.

THOUGHTS THAT PARALYZE

How are we to live without paralyzing fear in an unsafe world? God teaches us to distinguish between damaging fear and sober precaution. Fear paralyzes and drives us to dark and lonely places. Precaution helps us to avoid foolish mistakes and maintain safe steps. A cautious person thinks clearly but may take reasonable risks. When real danger exists, they will choose a different path. God knows that in life we will face troubles. God invites us to call on Him so we can experience His companionship and help in our time of trouble.

Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty. The Lord says, "I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with

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them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them. I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation." (Psalm 91:1, 14-16 NLT)

When we are convinced that God's power is greater than any evil that could come our way, we can live with confidence, hope, and optimism. We can face disappointment, failure, and even disaster with soul-settling faith. As we open ourselves to God's truth, we are assured that regardless of our circumstances, God is working everything together for our good. Our faith will grow stronger as we observe the positive results of God guiding the events of our life.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take. (Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT)

The test of trust always comes when life stops making sense. Our trust must be in God even when we don't understand everything we are going through. God tells us that He is our refuge and strength in times of trouble and we are not to fear for He is always with us.

Prayer: Gracious God, When trouble comes my way and paralyzes my ability to think clearly, help me to first seek You for comfort and help. I am so thankful that You are aware of everything that touches my life. You truly are an amazing God in whom I can put my trust. Amen

SHARING HEART TO HEART

It is God's desire that we walk safely and securely in the conscious awareness of His great love and care for us. In the past, we didn't know or even care about God. The outcome of our self-willed, self-directed way of life was a chaotic lifestyle in destructive addiction. God's ongoing invitation is that we enter into a deeply satisfying heart-to-heart relationship with Him.

How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me! (Psalm 139:17-18 NLT)

There's no better friend and companion than God. God's heart is always turned towards us. He pays attention to what is going on in our lives and cares about how circumstances are impacting us. He is willing to listen to us as we share with Him whatever is troubling us. We don't have to wait until our thoughts are "tidied up." God offers to be that close friend to whom we can pour out our hearts and have Him help us sort what is really going on.

God loves us for who we are, not for what we do. The Bible reminds us that God gazes on us with great delight and even rejoices over us with singing. God always has our best interest at heart. He knows better than us what we need. If we seek God throughout each day, He will encourage us and give us guidance to deal with those things that concern us.

I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (Jeremiah 31:3, 1 Peter 3:12, 1 Peter 5:7 NIV)

Today, let's give thanks for God's faithful love for us and enter more deeply into a heart-to-heart relationship with Him.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is to live in conscious contact with You, to know Your will, and have the power to carry it out. Please direct my steps in all I undertake to do. Amen

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PROMPTLY DEALING WITH WHAT'S WRONG

Step 10 of the 12-Step program encourages us to stay on track in our recovery with the following words: *"We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."* The working of this in our lives means we schedule time on a regular basis to monitor our present thought patterns, actions, and communication with others. Where we recognize some of our old behaviour or thought patterns creeping in, we promptly admit it and seek, with God's help, to put things right.

***"We continued
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Big Book of AA

Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. (Hebrews 7:25; 2 Corinthians 9:8 NIV)

When we repent of our sin and give our will and life over to the care of God, we are washed clean by the blood of Jesus and in God's eyes are "justified," which means, "we are just like we had never sinned." What comes next is something called "sanctification," which means letting go of all our sinful ways and allowing God to teach us to do things His way. If we are not vigilant as Step 10 teaches, we can easily slip back into sinful ways and relapse.

So be careful. When you think you are standing firm, you might fall. Then I admitted my sin to you. I didn't cover up the wrong I had done. I said, "I will

admit my lawless acts to the Lord." And you forgave the guilt of my sin. (1 Corinthians 10:12; Psalm 32:5 NIRV)

We need to be honest with God, with ourselves, and with others, and try not to rationalize our behaviour when we do wrong. Taking personal inventory and promptly dealing with our wrongs will enable us to keep on the path of recovery. If we ask God for help in any area we are battling, He promises He will help us.

Prayer: Loving God, When I examine my ways and see the wrongs I have done, please help me to humble myself and seek Your forgiveness. My desire is to follow You in all my ways. Please help me! Amen

CARRYING THE MESSAGE BY ACTING WISELY

The book of Proverbs in the Bible is a collection of wise sayings we do well to learn and put into practice. Chapter 11 in this book has 31 sayings that cover a wide range of topics that contrast right and wrong, good and evil. They address things like honesty, pride, gossip, keeping secrets, being kind, family relationships, and our use of money. Many of these sayings have promises attached to them such as:

If you do the right thing, honesty will be your guide. But if you are crooked, you will be trapped by your own dishonesty. Dishonest people use gossip to destroy their neighbors; good people are protected by their own good sense. Kindness is rewarded—but if you are cruel, you hurt yourself. Try hard to do right, and you will win friends; go looking for trouble, and you will find it. (Proverbs 11:3, 9, 17, 27 CEV)

These are all helpful descriptions of behaviour choices we can make and the positive or negative results that come from our actions.

Near the end of Proverbs 11 is a sentence that encourages us to live right, because as we do, we will not only find the life we long for, but we will be a positive influence on others as well.

Live right, and you will eat from the life-giving tree. And if you act wisely, others will follow. (Proverbs 11:30 CEV)

We talk a lot about carrying the message to others and sharing our experience, strength, and hope. Too often we think this is about words we speak. While it is important and helpful to attend meetings and share our story with others, these wise sayings suggest that a very powerful way to carry the message is to live well and do what is right in God's eyes. This is certainly a way to live the "attraction rather than promotion" principle.

Prayer: Loving God, help me to carry the message well today by practicing Your principles in all my affairs. Help me to live with honesty, kindness, and transparency before You and others, praying only for knowledge of Your will and the power to carry it out. Amen

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