

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



MAY 2026

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



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

at:

<https://www.partnersinhope.ca/meditations>

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.

Visit us at www.partnersinhope.ca or write to us at:

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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.



<p>SUBSTANCE ADDICTIONS:</p> <p>Alcohol Caffeine Injected or smoked substances such as: Crack, Crystal Meth, Heroin Marijuana Prescription Medications Sugar Tobacco</p>	<p>BEHAVIOUR ADDICTIONS:</p> <p>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)</p>
<p>SOFT ADDICTIONS:</p> <p>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</p>	<p>RELATIONSHIP ADDICTIONS:</p> <p>Abusive Relationships: Includes: Intimidation, Isolation, Domination, Blaming, Humiliation, Withholding, Forcing acts against one's will Approval dependency Attention Seeking Codependence/Rescuing Power/Control</p>

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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PHOTOS

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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.

GAINING WISDOM FOR THE JOURNEY

We often think that people who read lots of books or have a few university degrees have gained a lot of wisdom. We certainly want the judges in our court system to have knowledge of the law and to be wise in their decision making.

Corrie Ten Boom, a Dutch woman who lived during the Second World War was a wise woman. In whatever situation she encountered, Corrie lived by her knowledge of the Scriptures and to do God's will. She and her family helped Jewish people escape from Nazi persecution. They hid them in their family home and helped many get to freedom. Corrie and her family were eventually caught and ended up in a concentration camp where they endured much hardship and suffering. Years after the war Corrie came face to face with one of the prison guards who had caused great suffering for her and her sister. At first it seemed impossible for Corrie to forgive this person when he asked her for forgiveness, but Corrie demonstrated her learned wisdom of the Scriptures by being obedient to God's Word and forgave the man who had been so cruel to her and to her beloved sister.

For the Lord grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity. He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him. Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will find the right way to go. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy. (Proverbs 2:6-10 NLT)

***Everyday
life in
recovery
will bring
challenges
where we
need God's
guidance to
live wisely.***

Many of us will not face the extreme challenges that Corrie Ten Boom faced in the concentration camp. However, life in recovery will bring us daily challenges where we need God's guidance to live wisely and act according to His principles. We need help with both big decisions and small ones. If we ask Him, God's Holy Spirit will give us wise counsel and we will gain much needed wisdom as we listen to and obey His guidance.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your gifts of wisdom and understanding. Keep me alert to the voice of Your Holy Spirit as You guide me throughout each day. Regardless of how I might feel, help me to be wise and choose to obey and practice Your principles in all my affairs. Amen

PRACTICAL WISDOM – DEALING WITH CLUTTER

Some of us are reluctant to admit problems and deal with painful events as they occur. We push them down into the deep recesses of our souls and put on our best face. This is like shoving clutter into a closet and tightly closing the door before guests arrive. It works for a time but, like opening the closet door and having the clutter fall at our feet, the events we have suppressed will eventually cause us to explode with anger and hostility towards those around us who may have had nothing to do with the events that caused our deep-rooted bitterness.

The human spirit can endure a sick body, but who can bear a crushed spirit? (Proverbs 18:14 NLT)

We clean up the clutter in our homes by taking the things that have been stashed away and dealing with them in an orderly manner. Some things get thrown out. Others get mended, washed, or ironed and become usable again. We need to do the same with the hidden events of our lives. We need to reveal what occurred and deal with each event in an appropriate manner.

It is not right to acquit the guilty or deny justice to the innocent. The name of the Lord is a strong fortress; the godly run to him and are safe. (Proverbs 18:5, 10 NLT)

We will never feel acceptable to God or to others while we allow who we truly are to be determined by our past. Unforgiveness towards others or ourselves needs to be carefully exposed, and then disposed of. The pain and brokenness we feel in our hearts will need to be lovingly cared for and mended. Our hidden talents will need some encouragement, so they become usable again. God is a master restorer, and as we improve our conscious contact with Him, He will provide all that we need to make us complete in Him.

Prayer: Gracious God, please help me to allow those hurtful events I have buried deep in my soul to be exposed and healed by the power of Your love. I desire to improve my conscious contact with You and pray for the knowledge of Your will for my life as I follow Your principles in all my affairs. My hope is to have a fulfilling life with You and with others.

Amen

OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE – CARRY THE MESSAGE

We are reminded over and over again in the AA Traditions, Twelve Steps, and the experience of so many of us, that it is the simplicity and focus of sticking with one primary purpose that helps us help one another. *Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.* (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions page 150) This is the focus we need as we gather to support one another in sobriety and in the new life God is giving us.

What you should want most is God's kingdom and doing what he wants you to do. Then he will give you all these other things you need. (Matthew 6:33 ERV)

The foundational principles for our new life are: admitting our powerlessness without God; coming to believe in a Power greater than ourselves; and turning our will and our life over to the care of God.

God's Word also encourages us to have a single-minded focus on what matters. When Jesus was asked what the most important focus of life was, this is what He said: *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and most important command. And the second command is like the first: 'Love your neighbor the same as you love yourself.'* (Matthew 22:37-39 ERV)

***Our focus
on day-to-
day living
has to be
God's
agenda and
giving Him
opportunity
to work
that out in
our lives.***

Drinking and drugging are responses to deeper issues of the heart to which God alone has the solutions. As those who shared with us when they have found the key to living free from the effects of a deadly disease, we now need to be sharing this message of freedom with others. We know that as we share the message, the gift of this rich new life comes more and more alive in us as well.

God did not keep back his own Son, but he gave him for us. If God did this, won't he freely give us everything else? Give freely, and you will profit. Help others, and you will gain more for yourself. (Romans 8:32 CEV, Proverbs 11:25 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for Jesus who brought the message of Your love for me to earth, even to the cross where He died for my sins. Help me to be focused on what matters today and to carry the message of Your redeeming grace with love and clarity to those I meet. Amen

SARCASM – HUMOUR OR HOSTILITY?

One of the ways many of us try to hide our hurt and anger is through sarcasm. We say something nasty about someone which makes them feel or look stupid before others, and then try to get away with it by saying “I was just joking.” If someone is hurt by what we say, we need to consider what we have said and expose the motive behind it.

Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing.
(Proverbs 12:18 NLT)

***Set a
guard
over my
mouth,
Lord;
keep
watch
over the
door of my
lips.***

Why do we feel we need to make spiteful comments about others? Do we think it makes us look smarter or better than the other person? Are we hoping that people will find us witty and appealing by speaking this way? Do we care about how someone might feel about what we say or are we just interested in being entertaining?

Much of the so called humour we see on TV talk shows or comedy sit-coms is filled with sarcasm. Everyday relationships are often damaged by its cunning use. Professionals describe sarcasm as “hostility disguised as humour.” When we speak sarcastically about others, some of the things going on in our own hearts are:- feelings of inferiority; a desire for something to happen but we are afraid to ask directly for it; fear of being not good enough; passive-aggressive anger; and attention seeking.

Psalm 141:3 NIV ***Enemies disguise themselves with their lips, but in their hearts they harbor deceit. Though their speech is charming, do not believe them.*** (Proverbs 26:24-25a NIV)

To encourage one another, we need to speak in a way that uplifts a person rather than tears them down. As followers of Jesus we represent God in all our interactions. How would Jesus speak or behave towards another person? That answer should be our guide.

If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God.
(1 Peter 4:11a NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for the times I've hidden my anger and hurt behind sarcasm. Help me to speak as You would speak and build others up with my words and actions. Amen

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. Wrong doing 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.

We were born with a sin nature that Jesus died to free us from. 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 do and say. Amen

***To set things
right, we
start at the
beginning
and admit
and repent
of all our
wrongdoing
before God.***

MAKING RESTITUTION

When we have hurt someone, we need to take responsibility for the harm we have caused and do all in our power to make things right. This is what we call making restitution. That could mean repaying money for things we have stolen; clearing up an attack on a person's reputation; or owning up to the truth for some action of ours that we previously blamed on others. The list of wrongs needing to be righted is endless and is unique to each of our life experiences.

Proper restitution to others is challenging to make if we haven't seen our own behaviour in the light of God's love. We broke God's laws. We harmed persons made in God's image. We owed a debt we could never repay. In His foreknowledge of our broken ways, God recognized the need for restitution if our relationship with Him and with others was to be healed. What was God's response? Through Jesus, God chose to pay the debt on our behalf and made restitution for all our wrongs.

For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God.
2 Corinthians 5:21 NLT

Christ carried our sins in his body on the cross. He did this so that we would stop living for sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you were healed. God paid a very high price to make you his. So honor God with your body. Live like free people, but don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. Live as those who are serving God. (1 Peter 2:24; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Peter 2:16 ERV)

As we recognize what God has done through the forgiveness of our sins and the restoration of a loving relationship with Him, we will find our attitude towards others has changed. We are so thankful for all that we have received that we want others to receive the same blessing. Although it's never easy to make restitution to another person, we will be motivated to take the necessary steps when we truly reflect on God's work of restitution for us.

Prayer: Thank You for Jesus who died on the cross for my sins so that I could be reconciled to You. I ask for wisdom and courage to humbly approach family members and friends and to make restitution to them with a heart and mind that both honours them and You. Amen

GETTING IT RIGHT

God wants us to "get it right." If we will pay attention to, and obey what we learn from God's Word, God's Spirit will lead us on the right path every time.

We may think we are doing the right thing, but the Lord always knows what is in our hearts. Doing what is right and fair pleases the Lord more than an offering. (Proverbs 21:2-3 CEV)

Too many of us prefer to figure things out on our own, give it our best shot, and then we wonder what went wrong when things don't work out. We bring our failures to God and remind Him of how hard we worked in our effort to get it right. We thought we knew what was right by gut feeling without first checking with God, the One who has wisdom beyond all that we could ever know or imagine. He knows our motives, our abilities, our limitations, and even factors beyond our ability to grasp. It's always the wisest move to include God when making plans. Not only will God share with us what we need to know but it will give Him pleasure when we ask for His guidance.

If you try to be kind and good, you will be blessed with life and goodness and honor. (Proverbs 21:21 CEV)

How reassuring it is to know that we don't always have to get it right the first time in order to be blessed. God's word reminds us that it is the person who tries who is blessed with goodness and honour. There are many things going on in people's hearts and in their circumstances that are impossible for us to know and plan for. Our responsibility is to make our best effort and be honest about what we know and don't know. Unexpected things will take place. We will become aware of more details as we proceed and may even need to change course. However, if we are sincerely seeking to know and follow God's plan, we will find ourselves on the winning side.

It's always the wisest move to include God when making plans.

Wicked people bluff their way, but God's people think before they take a step. No matter how much you know or what plans you make, you can't defeat the Lord. (Proverbs 21:29-30 CEV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to take time to plan my day with You. I admit that I don't know everything I will need to know, but You do. Help me to humbly surrender my will, together with my thinking and plans, into your care for You alone know everything. Amen

PATIENCE

We come into recovery because we are tired and worn out from the physical and emotional consequences of a lifestyle of addiction and the destruction it imposes. We want the pain and discomfort to go away as quickly as possible. In our addiction, we chose to ease our pain with whatever was readily available. Now we are committed to taking the time and effort necessary to rebuild a new life. One of the character qualities we need to develop is patience.

Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised.
(Hebrews 10:36 NLT)

Only God is patient enough to love us and walk with us through all the twists and turns on the journey we need to take to develop patience.

Patience is both a gift from God and something that we learn to develop through practice. Patience has been described as the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset. A patient person is flexible, even-tempered, and willing to walk a known path, trusting that good will come to them if they stay the course and complete the journey.

May the Lord lead your hearts into a full understanding and expression of the love of God and the patient endurance that comes from Christ. (2 Thessalonians 3:5 NLT)

To develop patience requires that we repeatedly choose to move out of our "comfort zone" because that's the place of the "quick-fix", where we "cut corners," and do whatever we want regardless of the cost. Even though these are familiar ways for us to operate, they are damaging to our life and our relationships.

Only God is patient enough to love us and walk with us through all the twists and turns of the journey we need to take to develop patience. We are reassured that "God could and would if He were sought."

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I have lived too long as a self-centered, impatient person. Please forgive me. I ask that You fill me with your Holy Spirit so I have both the desire and the strength to do whatever it takes to change my ways. Please help me! Amen

HAPPY JOYOUS AND FREE

Life in recovery can be challenging at times. We have joy in the fact that we are no longer in the pit of our addiction but are uneasy about living in situations that are unfamiliar to us. People are encouraging us to stay the course, but we are unsure and even fearful about our new environment. This is a natural reaction to changing our lifestyle and learning new ways to cope. We were "experts" in our dysfunctional lifestyle but are "newbies" in our life in recovery. Thankfully, God has promised to help us cope in this process that leads to a life that is happy, joyous, and free.

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. (James 1:2-4 NLT)

The transition from living in self-will to living in God's will is a real test of faith. We may ask ourselves, "Is there truly joy in walking in the ways of God?" Sometimes we can say a definite "Yes" as we experience joy in having made good decisions. Other times we find ourselves in a battle with our will as we are drawn to familiar things of our past. If we seek God during these times of struggle, He will take us by the hand and safely lead us forward on our new path. The struggle will quiet down. Feelings will change. Joy will come when we realize that, together with God, we have faced and overcome a challenge.

Keep me safe, O God, for I have come to you for refuge. You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever. (Psalm 16:1; 11 NLT)

Like any child learning to walk we may stumble and fall but, like any good Father, God will lift us up when we stumble and will rejoice over us when we learn to walk steadily forward. If we wholeheartedly seek Him, God is committed to leading us into a life that is happy, joyous, and free.

Prayer: Loving God, You have called me out of the darkness I was in and now invite me to walk together with You in the light of Your presence. Steady me in times of struggle and help me to take one more step forward today. Amen

The transition from living in self-will to living in God's will is a real test of faith. We may ask ourselves, "is there truly joy in walking in the ways of God?"

MORAL EXCELLENCE

When we chose to believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we were reconciled to our Heavenly Father. We were born again from above into the family of God and given the will and the desire to live a life of moral excellence that is pleasing to God. We inherited a divine nature and became children of God who have a place in God's kingdom.

Jesus answered: I tell you for certain that before you can get into God's kingdom, you must be born not only by water, but by the Spirit. Humans give life to their children. Yet only God's Spirit can change you into a child of God. (John 3:5-6 CEV)

We were born again from above into the family of God and given the will and desire to live a life of moral excellence.

We were helpless to do anything for ourselves when we were new-born babies in our human family. We relied on our parents or caregivers and teachers to help us grow and mature so we could live effectively in this world. It's much the same when we are born again into the kingdom of God. We are helpless on our own and need to rely on our gracious God to help us grow and mature so we can live effectively in the kingdom of God.

I am writing this to you, my children, so that you will not sin; but if anyone does sin, we have someone who pleads with the Father on our behalf—Jesus Christ, the righteous one. (1 John 2:1 GNT)

In the past, we chose to live by what was right in our own eyes and eventually ended up in an unmanageable existence which we were powerless to change. Now, as we seek God and practice His principles in all our affairs, the guidance and strength we need to move forward into a life of moral excellence will be there for us. Moral excellence may not happen overnight but, as we persevere, we will be active and effective for the kingdom of God.

Do your best to improve your faith. You can do this by adding goodness, understanding, self-control, patience, devotion to God, concern for others, and love. (2 Peter 1:5-7 CEV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank You for all You have done, and continue to do for me. Help me to live a life of moral excellence and to carry the message to everyone I meet. Amen

FINDING RELIABLE EVIDENCE AS I COME TO BELIEVE

Creation suggests that there is an intelligent creator. The laws of gravity, the dependence of earth's ecosystems on one another, and the planetary systems in the sky give us proof that there is an amazing designer behind life here on earth. We see a code of morals and values that points us to a higher power who establishes boundaries and helps us identify evil when individuals and groups go beyond the set boundaries. Our own bodies are intricate and function with amazing complexity. We are not just a body but have a soul and a spirit as well.

The following statement is a quote by Albert Einstein: "There is a real external world that is orderly and knowable, and the trustworthiness of our minds to grasp that world – science cannot proceed apart from these assumptions."

For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. (Romans 1:20 NLT)

Step 2 of the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous invites us to "come to believe that a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity." The good news is, the all-powerful God who created us and the amazing world in which we live, loves and cares about each one of us. If He is sought, He promises to help us.

Let's determine today to get to know this amazing God so that we may overflow with hope for our future.

When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you set in place—what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them? (Psalm 8:3-4 NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, The evidence in what I see all around me confirms that You truly are an amazing creator. I want to get to know You more. Help me to come to believe that You are a power greater than myself who can restore me to sanity. Amen

Romans 1:20 NLT

Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

LOVE IS NOT RUDE

Rudeness shows itself in our speech and actions towards others. It consists of inappropriate words spoken or disrespectful behavior. Rudeness may show itself in a person's unwillingness to accept tradition or appropriate dress when invited to an event. No thought is given to offending others. It also shows itself in selfish ambition and a disinterest in helping others. Some of us, when we are not at ease in a given situation, may unintentionally be rude or even deliberately offensive to others who are familiar with known procedures.

Be sincere in your love for others. Hate everything that is evil and hold tight to everything that is good. Love each other as brothers and sisters and honor others more than you do yourself. (Romans 12:9-10 CEV)

Consideration and kindness in all our words and actions will go a long way to helping us establish lasting friendships.

In recovery we are meant to focus our minds on those things that will help us develop healthy relationships with one another. Rather than isolating ourselves from people or events where we feel awkward, we should seek to learn what is expected of us. Where we are willing to comply, we can then become supportive. We will need to let go of offhand remarks and gossip about those who follow traditions we are not familiar with. Consideration and kindness in all our words and actions will go a long way to helping us establish lasting friendships.

Don't mistreat someone who has mistreated you. But try to earn the respect of others, and do your best to live at peace with everyone. (Romans 12:17-18 CEV)

Love is never rude. The Bible tells us that we will reap what we sow. Who among us wants to reap disrespect or humiliation? Let's make it a point to take personal inventory each day and choose to change the things we can, especially if our tendency is to be uncaringly rude.

My prayer for you is that you will overflow more and more with love for others, and at the same time keep on growing in spiritual knowledge and insight. (Philippians 1:9 TLB)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to let go of those things that are part of my corrupt nature, especially rudeness. Help me to treat my friends and neighbours with respect and compassion and truly love and care for them as You love and care for me. Amen

IRRITABILITY and ANGER

Many of us who are overcoming a lifestyle of addiction experience irritability and anger in certain situations.

Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. (Ephesians 4:31 NLT)

On any given day we may not be feeling good about who we are. When this happens it is easy to blame those we believe are contributing to our discontent. An incident may occur and suddenly we find ourselves becoming irritable and angry. We feel justified to lash out at those who have offended us. The person or persons on the receiving end of our behaviour may not even understand what is happening. They may have innocently said or done something that triggered a fuse within us which caused us to explode into a rage. What on earth is going on within us when a situation can arouse this type of behaviour?

Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and my God! (Psalm 42:11 NLT)

Irritability and anger are likely reflective of something going on deep inside us. Our angry response to a situation may even bypass our rational thinking process. However, we still need to bring these behaviours before God and seek His wisdom about the root cause. We need to be willing to expose the underlying reason for our wounded heart. We may be discouraged over things that have happened in our past and have never grieved their impact on us or asked God for His healing. We may even doubt that anyone, including God, could help us. Fortunately, we are reminded in recovery meetings that "God could and would if He were sought." With God, understanding and even overcoming our deep-rooted anger is possible.

Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me—now let me rejoice. (Psalm 51:7-8 NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, Please reveal the underlying root of my irritability and anger problems and enable my wounded heart to be made whole, so I may find peace and joy in all I do. Amen

We need to be willing to expose the underlying reason for our wounded heart.

KEEPING JOY ALIVE

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous discusses building relationships and how joy will impact our ability to do so. "We aren't a glum lot. If newcomers could see no joy or fun in our existence, they wouldn't want it. We absolutely insist on enjoying life." (Big Book Page 132)

The founders of AA linked misery to self-will and addictive habits and joy to an open loving relationship with God. They followed God's ways and recognized how it brought joy to their relationship with God and others. Joy is a quality we surely need as we move forward in our life with God in recovery.

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. (James 1:2-4 NLT)

What steals our joy? It very often is pride. We begin to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to. We start to find fault in our recovery program, in the people around us, and in our leaders and mentors. We blame others and our environment for our discontent.

You have felt secure in your evil ways. You have said, "No one sees what I'm doing." Your wisdom and knowledge lead you down the wrong path. You say to yourself, "I am like a god. No one is greater than I am." (Isaiah 47:10 NIRV)

If we desire to be joyful in our recovery, we will need to be mindful of our thoughts and actions. We need to find out what God's principles are for successful living and reshape our behaviour around them. We need to surrender pride every time it raises its ugly head, remembering that the Holy Spirit is always with us to give us wisdom and guidance as we submit to His ways.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for being prideful and believing that I could live a joyful life in recovery without You and without those who counsel and mentor me. I am forever grateful that You, the God of hope, will fill me with all joy and peace as I trust Your ways to take me forward in my recovery. Amen

WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND

A saying we often hear is, "What goes around comes around." It is usually said with reference to how a person treats others. It means that if we treat someone badly today, that's what we can expect to experience from others in the future." God's word brings a positive truth to this saying. His promise is that as we bless others we can expect God to bless us.

Happy are those who are concerned for the poor; the Lord will help them when they are in trouble. The Lord will protect them and preserve their lives; he will make them happy in the land; he will not abandon them to the power of their enemies. (Psalm 41:1-2 GNT)

God loves to pour goodness into our lives and one of the ways we open the door to that is by being kind and helpful to others. This is different from the co-dependent way we often have of doing something nice for someone so they in return will do something nice for us. We need to be attentive to what is going on in the lives of others, and like God, respond with compassion whether it is convenient or not. The person needing our help may be someone we genuinely care about or someone that easily gets under our skin. Whatever the case, we can be assured that as we bless that person God will surely bless us.

Give to others, and God will give to you. Indeed, you will receive a full measure, a generous helping, poured into your hands—all that you can hold. The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you. (Luke 6:38 GNT)

God's antidote to co-dependence in these situations is to turn the focus from the "You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" way of operating, to acting from a higher standard – the standard of love and compassion. God is love. God loves us. God cares for those who suffer. We can also love and care for those who suffer. We can reach out and support others without wanting anything in return. God may use that person to bless us in the future, or He may bless us by some other means. The choice is up to Him. We just know that when we serve God by loving others, He will be there for us in our time of need. God's Word is our guarantee.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I love how You love and care for me. I want to live motivated by love rather than by co-dependency and selfish motives. Open my eyes each day to see people in need and show me the way to take care of them as You would take care of me. Amen

But those who trust in the Lord will be blessed. They know that the Lord will do what he says. Jeremiah 17:7-8 ERV

A BLAMELESS CONSCIENCE

As we seek to restore a clear conscience before God we need to examine the truthfulness of our society's values. The beliefs we form need to be compared with what God says is right and good and not by what is acceptable in our culture.

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:2 NLT)

The beliefs we form need to be compared with what God says is right and good and not by what is acceptable in our culture.

Many people whom society considers "normies" are those with addictive and destructive habits that are socially acceptable but just as destructive as any drug addiction. We don't want to trade addictions. We want to live free. We need to observe and learn the difference between acceptable values in our culture and God's values.

God defines sin this way: ***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 5:19-21 NLT)

From God's view point, sex outside of marriage is wrong even though our culture leaves that decision to personal choice. Terminating life is wrong even when society gives us the right to choose. Anger and rage are wrong even though we excuse our outbursts by blaming others for injustice done to us.

Our conscience will be reprogrammed as we read and apply the truth of God's word. In every situation where we need discernment the Holy Spirit will bring truth to us and our renewed conscience will guide us to make the right choice.

The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. (Romans 14:22 NASB)

Prayer: Teach me your ways, O Lord, that I may live according to your truth! Grant me purity of heart, so that I may honor you. Amen (Psalm 86:11 NLT)

FINDING ENTHUSIASM AGAIN

Recovery is hard work. Sometimes we feel joy in the journey and other times we don't seem to feel anything at all. We spend a lot of time analyzing our feelings as we remember our past with its many difficulties and challenges. Our self-esteem suffers and we feel uncomfortable, maybe even distressed. If we are honest, sometimes we just get tired of dealing with it all. How can we find the strength we need to feel joy and enthusiasm for this journey of growth again?

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people. Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth. (Colossians 3:23 GNT, 2 Timothy 2:15 NLT)

Particularly when our emotions are a challenge it's helpful to be able to lean back on God's promise to be with us and get us through what we are facing. If we will ask God for help, and do what we can with as much enthusiasm as we can, we can expect that God will help us through one more day. We may not see the finish line, but we can have the satisfaction of living well one more day.

The Lord your God will fight alongside you and help you win the battle." (Deuteronomy 20:4 CEV)

Part of finding enthusiasm again comes from recognizing the progress we have made on a long and often difficult journey. Some of our discouragement may have come from setting only long-term goals that take time to reach. We need to set goals for one hour or one day or one activity and then stop and give thanks as we achieve each goal. This is why the "progress not perfection" principle is so powerful. Some other effective tools include, practicing gratitude, taking time to find beauty in nature, listening to praise music, or trying something new and then intentionally sharing about it with someone we know has a similar interest. If we do these things, joy and enthusiasm will catch up with us again.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to find rest and joy as I go through this tough part of my journey. Help me to lean on You and remember that You are always close to me. Thank You for supporting me through one more successful day in recovery. Amen

Work hard and do not be lazy. Serve the Lord with a heart full of devotion.

Romans 12:11
GNT

MOVING FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING

There will always be things that are right and good in our lives, and other things that are yet to be sorted out. Some days we will wake up feeling energetic and other days we'll wish we could just pull the blanket over our heads and go back to sleep. In every circumstance, God invites us to live in the ultimate security that He provides. Particularly in challenging times, giving up on God should never be an option. We will experience joy when we determine to trust God and follow His instructions, knowing that in His perfect timing things will improve.

In order to move from a lifestyle of surviving to one of thriving we must empty ourselves of all that keeps us from living totally dependent on God.

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. Be still and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world. (Psalm 46:1,10 NLT)

We often get discouraged when things do not work out in the time or the way we think they should. We feel disappointed and our focus shifts. We may become unwilling to communicate with God, to hang in there, to believe God, to trust, to hope, to grow. At times like these we need to stop what we are doing and ask ourselves, "How is God teaching me to thrive in this situation?" When we acknowledge that God is still teaching us, we can be assured that He is at work in the thing that concerns us and our peace will return.

For God is so wise and so mighty. Who has ever challenged him successfully? (Job 9:4 NLT)

In order to move from a lifestyle of surviving to one of thriving we must empty ourselves of all that keeps us from living totally dependent on God. We may need to peel back the layers of familiar traits such as lying, cheating, stealing, anger, impatience, hate, lust, and self-pity. True joy and satisfaction comes when God looks down on us and says: "Well done, my child. You have not just survived but you have thrived."

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I turn my will and my life over to Your care and ask You to show me how to live life to the full. I choose to listen to You. I choose to follow your principles in all I undertake to do. Please give me the desire to welcome success in my life and to thrive in Your grace and truth. Amen

CAN A MOTHER FORGET A NURSING CHILD?

Today, in our nation, we celebrate Mother's Day. Many things hinder us from having a loving relationship with our mothers. Addiction or destructive habits break down relationships. War and terrorism kill many mothers around the world. HIV and other diseases leave many orphans. Divorce and disability can rob us of time and nurturing interactions with our mothers. We don't always know why a mother leaves her child in the care of someone else. It's a heart-rending situation, no matter the reason. God knows the depth of pain a mother and child may experience when they are separated. In the scriptures, God gives us the following words of comfort.

Even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will hold me close. "Can a mother forget her nursing child? Can she feel no love for the child she has borne? But even if that were possible, I would not forget you! See, I have written your name on the palms of my hands. (Psalm 27:10, Isaiah 49:15-16 NLT)

The Bible tells us that nothing can separate us from the love of God when we are in Christ Jesus. God loved us so much that He sent Jesus into the world to bear the punishment for all sin, past, present and future. Sin separates humans from God and negatively impacts all human relationships. The marks of the nails that went through Jesus' hands and feet are there to remind us that God's love for us goes deeper than anything we could ever experience in this world.

Are we currently feeling the pain of our father or mother abandoning us? God wants to meet us at that place of pain and tenderly comfort us with His love. We can't make human relationships be more than they truly are. However, the good news is that God can heal every heart-wrenching wound left by someone who let us down. God wants to hold us close and fill our hearts with His unfailing, never-ending love. God has not forgotten us. God sees our pain. He has written our names on the palms of his hands.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your never-ending love for me. Draw me close and comfort me. Please heal the wounds in my heart. Help me to honour my mother for giving me birth. Help me to experience the abundant provision of Your Fatherly love and grace as I choose to bless my mother from my heart. Amen

HABITS

It's not surprising that living in active addiction was for years often described as having a habit. A habit is a particular practice that we do over and over again and is usually hard to change or give up. It can also be a practice that we've done so often that we do it unconsciously. An addiction is a negative habit and one tool we have to help us overcome addiction is our ability to form new habits – only this time ones that are positive and life giving.

I will always obey your law, forever and ever. Each morning you listen to my prayer, as I bring my requests to you and wait for your reply. (Psalm 119:44 GNT, Psalm 5:3 CEV)

But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Hebrews 5:14 NIV

The Twelve Steps speak of habits we can build into our new life. They include:- continually taking personal inventory; being involved in prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God; repeatedly turning our will and our life over to the care of God; carrying the message to others; and practicing these principles in all our affairs.

On average it takes about two months of regular practice before a new behaviour becomes an automatic response, so we need to be aware of this and be ready to reward progress rather than perfection. Experts will tell us to focus on one new thing at a time. Perhaps that is the wisdom behind the Serenity Prayer principle "*living one day at a time and enjoying one moment at a time.*" Now there's a positive habit all of us can develop!

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Titus 2:7-8a NIV)

Choosing to be joyful, praying continually, and practicing gratitude are important habits that will help us with every other good practice we develop. Practicing integrity and setting a good example are habits God says will not only help us but will also set an example for others to follow.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to live well with You today and develop life-giving habits that honour You and bless others. Help me to focus on what is most important today. Amen

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

Our choice when we feel down is either to believe and act on the promises God has made us, or to believe the lie the evil one is telling us.

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)

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.

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

UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS – RESPONSIBILITY

People who walk with God in recovery look to Him for wisdom, hope, and direction. They also learn from their past mistakes and are encouraged at meetings by those who courageously share their experience, strength, and hope for a better life. The people in this group are not faultless but have learned to take responsibility for their own behaviour and leave the rest with God. When they do wrong, they trust God for forgiveness. They read God's word, follow His directives, and move steadily forward in the plan God has for them. They have the courage and wisdom to let go of everything else.

God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 1:9 NLT)

Some of us live with the unrealistic expectation that it's our responsibility to fix everything that has gone wrong with us and those around us. Perhaps we think we need to fix the hurt we've caused in the past. Maybe we have a desire to care for and fix the problems of those whose lives impact us. We mistakenly think that we can sort out all kinds of problems. We beat up on ourselves because of thoughts that we haven't done enough or have taken on more than we can handle.

God knows each one of us intimately and is involved in every circumstance of our lives. God is with us when we work hard, do the next right thing, and choose to leave the rest with Him. When we are doing the best we can, God will fill in the gaps and weave all things together for our good.

People who walk with God in recovery look to Him for wisdom, hope, and direction.

Finish what you started in me, God. Your love is eternal—don't quit on me now. Lord, you will give perfect peace to those who commit themselves to be faithful to you. That's because they trust in you. (Psalm 138:8 MSG, Isaiah 26:3 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Life often seems complicated, and I feel limited in my ability to sort out many things that impact me and those around me. Help me to bring all my problems to You and, with Your help and guidance, change what I can in my own situation, help others as I reasonably can, and leave the rest in Your loving care. Amen

THE BENEFIT OF EXPERIENCE

One of the promises given to us as we grow in our recovery is: *No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.* (Big Book pages 83-84) Who of us would deny the contribution of sharing our experience, strength, and hope with others, and in return receiving the same gift for ourselves. We are all excited to share what is working for us. This promise reminds us that it is in being vulnerable and willing to share even the lessons from our weakest times and darkest days that others receive benefit. Are we willing to give that gift today?

No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.

Each time he [God] said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. (2 Corinthians 12:9 NLT)

There's no benefit in sharing "war stories" or wallowing in self-pity about how bad things were. None of us needs the triggering reminders that come from too many details of our experience in the dark days of active addiction. However, what we all need is hope, no matter how far we have fallen. A brief description of our circumstances and the amazing joy of being uplifted by a loving God from there to this day of life in sobriety – now that's a story sure to bring hope to someone else.

I waited patiently for the Lord to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along. He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what he has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the Lord. (Psalm 40:1-3 NLT)

We were hopeless and powerless until God stepped in to rescue us. The grateful sharing of our getting on board with God and the stability He brought to our lives is a message others are longing to hear. It brings a spark of hope to the darkness of their own soul.

Prayer: Loving God, I am thankful for where I am today because You have rescued me and steadied my life. Please give me the willingness, humility, and focus to share how You found me on my darkest day and gave me new life. My desire is that others will be truly amazed at the awesome power You exert to help a hopeless addict. Amen

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 even 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

Lazy people want much but get little, but those who work hard will prosper.

***Proverbs 13:4
NIRV***

CHARACTER DEFECT OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

In our life in addition we became self-centered and uncaring in our attitude towards life and everyone around us. We had no regard for our employer or the requirements of our job. We mismanaged our money, and our family responsibilities were of no consequence to us. Compassion and respect for others was non-existent and we made rude and thoughtless remarks about people, even those who were trying to help us. Our disregard for our own safety and that of others was displayed in reckless acts such as walking or driving against light signals or driving a vehicle while under the influence of drugs and alcohol. Acting in very irresponsible ways was our mode of operation.

You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes—for as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the Lord your God is giving you. (Deuteronomy 12:8-9 NKJV)

**God wants
not only to
look out
for our
own
interests,
but also for
the
interests of
others.**

While we were rebellious against the ways of God and still acting irresponsibly, God was watching out for us. Through Jesus, God had already prepared an inheritance for us, the gift of a new life with Him. God invites each of us to receive this gift so that we can live responsibly and also love and care for those around us. We can never fulfill God's command to love others if we have never received His love and care for ourselves. It's like trying to turn on the light when the lamp has not been plugged into the power. Perhaps as children we were disconnected and never really learned about responsibility. When we give our will and life over to the care of God, He will teach us how to be responsible people who also care for the interests of others.

And so I am giving a new commandment to you now—love each other just as much as I love you. Your strong love for each other will prove to the world that you are my disciples. (John 13:34-35 TLB)

When we humbly acknowledge the exact nature of our wrongs, we can ask God to remove the character defect of irresponsibility and ask Him to teach us how to love and care for others as He loves and cares for us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that I have been very irresponsible in my actions and past dealings with others. Please help me to be accountable to You as I amend my ways. Amen

APPROVAL SEEKING

Those of us who live for the approval of others are not led but driven. We have submitted to our perfectionist demands so that people will like us. Now it is difficult to hear God's Word when He desires to guide us on to the path of truth. God created us to live for Him and has a specific plan for each of us. When our conscience is shaped by a wounded spirit, we will find we are constantly looking for affirmation and mechanically acting out of people pleasing motives, rather than behaving out of love that pleases God.

Am I now trying to get people to think well of me? Or do I want God to think well of me? Am I trying to please people? If I were, I would not be serving Christ. (Galatians 1:10 NIRV).

Here are some things we think or say that indicate people pleasing is likely active in our lives:

1. We try to be who others want us to be.
2. We are afraid to rock the boat by sharing our thoughts.
3. It is hard for us to decide what we want.
4. We avoid speaking our minds.
5. We find it easier to go along with what someone else wants or just agree with their opinion.
6. It is difficult for us to say "No".
7. We try to be 'nice' rather than expressing how we really feel.

The key to living in recovery as God intends rather than being controlled by approval seeking is to get to know and affirm who God says we are regardless of the opinions of others.

Work at everything you do with all your heart. Work as if you were working for the Lord, not for human masters. Work because you know that you will finally receive as a reward what the Lord wants you to have. (Colossians 3:23-24a NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please give me the desire and the will to be a doer of Your word so that my conscience may be reprogrammed with truth. I want to follow Your ways and live by Your principles in all my affairs. Amen

**Am I now
trying to get
people to
think well of
me? Or do I
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think well of
me?**
*Galatians 1:10
NIRV*

WHO UNDERSTANDS MY ANGER?

Anger is an involuntary reaction to a displeasing situation or event. When it is a limited reaction it may be considered normal. However, it becomes dangerous when it is stored. Stored anger causes us to be resentful and hostile with the urge to “get even”. The Bible says, **“In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.** (Ephesians 4:26 NIV) Inner turmoil is the result of not obeying this counsel.

There is only one person who truly understands who we are and why we do what we do. That person is certainly NOT us. That person is Jesus Christ who died for us, and who waits to be invited into our lives so He can forgive us, heal us, and lead us forward into peace and joy. When we are with someone and are feeling annoyed or threatened, Jesus knows exactly what is going on inside us and, if we ask, He will help us do what is right in that moment.

Only God has the power to help us sort out the issues underneath our anger.

What does God have to say in the Scriptures about us being angry, irritated, frustrated, or annoyed?

ANGER SHOWS FOOLISHNESS: **People with understanding control their anger; a hot temper shows great foolishness.** (Proverbs 14:29 NLT)

BEING ANGRY SAYS YOUR RELIGION IS WORTHLESS: **If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless.** (James 1:26 NLT)

HARBORING ANGER LEADS TO SIN: **An angry person starts fights; a hot-tempered person commits all kinds of sin.** (Proverbs 29:22 NLT)

Only God has the power to help us sort out and deal with the issues that are related to our anger. He wants to heal our pain. The first step we need to take is, admit to God that we have deeply rooted hurt within us, the pain of which shows up in anger and rage. He wants us to forgive those who have harmed us and receive healing for the offences committed against us. God also wants us to forgive ourselves for the offences we have committed against others. Let's admit today that we have stored anger and then learn how the power of God can help us deal with it in a way that brings peace to our soul.

Prayer: Loving God, I confess my anger has been a way to suppress the pain I feel inside. Please help me to forgive those who have harmed me and to forgive myself for the harm I have caused others. I ask You to heal me, so that I can live a life of peace and joy in Your presence. Amen

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 TLB)

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

Confession of our sins gives us protection from the power and accusation of the evil one.

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.

Lord who helps me, and I will see my enemies defeated.
Psalm 118:7 GNT

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 ERV)

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

We all want progress in our life in recovery but what are the actual goals we want to achieve? Perhaps we want to get training for an employment position, improve our relationships with family or friends, or increase our conscious contact with God. Whatever the goal, the way to success is to plan how we will work to achieve it.

In everything you do, put God first, and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success. (Proverbs 3:6 TLB)

The greatest obstacle to meeting any goal is failing to seek God's guidance. The next obstacle is not scheduling time each day to work towards our goal. Our natural tendency is to do what we like to do, and before we know it, hours have gone by and we've wasted our day on things that are not contributing to our objective.

A man who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful. But if he confesses and forsakes them, he gets another chance. (Proverbs 28:13 TLB)

All of us have 24 hours in a day. If we are not achieving the goals we set, we need to admit that we are allowing obstacles to get in the way of our plans. Each day we need to schedule our time and make a commitment to stay with the plan. We need to schedule time for conscious contact with God; time for work if we have a scheduled job; time for activities related to our goal; and time for necessary activities like eating and sleeping, not forgetting time to relax and have fun.

Refuse good advice and watch your plans fail; take good counsel and watch them succeed (Proverbs 15:22 MSG)

Finally, many obstacles can be overcome through wise counsel. Seeking advice from others and paying attention to what they have to say can be humbling, but can also be worthwhile if we find the help we need to achieve our goals.

Prayer: Gracious God, I admit to spending precious time on unproductive activities. Please help me to wisely consider the obstacles I allow to get in the way of my goals and adjust my time accordingly. Please give me guidance and wisdom in the plans I make and let them be in accordance with Your will for my life. Amen