

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



JUNE 2026



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

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

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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.



<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>

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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.

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.

TO YOUR FAITH ADD KNOWLEDGE

Steps 1, 2, and 3 of the 12-Step Program help us develop faith in Jesus Christ, a power greater than ourselves who can restore us to sanity. The Bible tells us that one of the characteristics we are to add to our faith is knowledge. Is faith in the finished work of Jesus not enough? Yes and no. When we give our will and life over to the care of God our sins are forgiven, and we are guaranteed life forevermore with our Heavenly Father. What we need to develop is, knowledge of the wonderful plan God has for our lives, and understanding of how we are to put that plan into action.

I want you to open their eyes, so that they will turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then their sins will be forgiven, and by faith in me they will become part of God's holy people. (Acts 26:18 CEV)

Jesus said the above words to Saul of Tarsus when he revealed Himself to Saul on the road to Damascus. Saul, who later changed His name to Paul, was a persecutor of those who believed in Jesus. Saul read the scriptures but lacked knowledge of God's plan of redemption until Jesus enlightened him. Jesus also spoke to Saul of the plan God had for his life. If we add knowledge to our faith, we will become aware of God's plan for our lives.

My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:2-3 NIV)

***To goodness,
add
knowledge. To
knowledge,
add the ability
to control
yourselves.***

2 Peter 1:5b-6 NIRV

Before we came to faith in Jesus, we lived in the darkness of our own limited understanding. We did not have much knowledge about God or of how Jesus came into the world to pay the penalty for our sins. As we meditate on the scriptures, we will come to know God's plan for our lives and increase in the knowledge of how we are to carry it out.

Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions. (Psalm 119:18 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for the Bible which contains the wisdom and knowledge of all of Your ways. Through the Power of Your Holy Spirit, and prayer and meditation, give me understanding of Your Word and of Your will for my life, and empower me to carry it out. Amen

JUNE 2

NOTES

FACING THE STORM AS WE MAKE AMENDS

Seeking out those to whom we need to make amends can be intimidating. We know what we have done, but often do not know where the person we hurt is, or what the impact of hearing from us might be. However, Jesus said if someone has something against us, we are to go and be reconciled with that person.

.....no weapon will be able to hurt you; you will have an answer for all who accuse you. I will defend my servants and give them victory. The Lord has spoken. (Isaiah 54:17 GNT)

***We need
not be
troubled or
allow
doubts to
sink us.
Jesus is
always with
us, ready to
reach out
and help us.***

After feeding 5000 people in a remote place, Jesus insisted that his disciples get into a boat and cross to the other side of the lake while He dismissed the crowd. The disciples obeyed Jesus. As they were crossing the lake strong winds arose and they had to fight heavy waves to stay afloat while trying to get to the place where Jesus had told them to go. We may experience similar storms in our hearts when we come to make amends. We feel unsettled and we wonder what trauma will happen when we approach a person to whom we are seeking to make amends.

In view of all this, what can we say? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31 GNT)

When the boat was a considerable distance from the land, Jesus came to the disciples walking on the water. When Peter knew it was Jesus, he asked to come to Him on the water and Jesus agreed. Peter got out of the boat, took a few steps, looked at the wind and the waves, was

terrified, and began to sink. Some of us are like Peter, we have taken some steps and have made a list, but when we look at the list, we are terrified and start to doubt. As we work through our list of needed amends, we should remember that we need not be troubled or allow doubts to sink us. Jesus is always with us, ready to reach out and help us.

Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. "You have so little faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?" (Matthew 14:31 NLT)

Prayer: Dear Jesus, The list of people I have harmed is intimidating but I choose to trust You and make the effort to be reconciled with each person. Please help me! Amen

NEIGHBOURLY GOODNESS

God created us to be in relationship with Him and also with each other. This is the fulfilling life of belonging that God desires us to recover. God wants human beings to know that they never have to be alone. In our relationship with God, we are wrapped in the love He has for us, and in turn, that love becomes the motivation which helps us to love others.

When asked by an expert in religious law, which is the most important commandment? Jesus replied: **“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself”.** (Matthew 22:37-39 NLT)

If we find it hard to love those around us, let’s ask God to fill us with His love and goodness, so we can love others as He loves us.

If we are being unkind to our neighbor we are saying by our actions that this is the way we want to be treated. If we treat our neighbour kindly it says we desire to be treated kindly. God’s desire is that we encourage each other rather than be critical, judgmental, and seeking to find fault. When we are wronged, we are to forgive as God has forgiven us. It’s a tough order to follow but we have been called out of darkness into light. In our new life with God in recovery, we are to reflect the light of Christ to everyone around us.

So roll up your sleeves, put your mind in gear, be totally ready to receive the gift that’s coming when Jesus arrives. Don’t lazily slip back into those old grooves of evil, doing just what you feel like doing. You didn’t know any better then; you do now. As obedient children, let yourselves be pulled into a way of life shaped by God’s life, a life energetic and blazing with holiness. God said,

“I am holy; you be holy.” (1 Peter 1:14-16 MSG)

Today, let’s reflect on how we have been behaving towards family and friends. If we find it hard to love those around us, let’s ask God to fill us with His love and goodness so we can love others as He loves us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for helping me to recover a meaningful life of belonging in my relationship with You and with others. Please fill me with your love and goodness so I will easily love and care for others as You love and care for me. Amen

PERSISTENT PROBLEM SOLVING

Powerful people harass me without cause, but my heart trembles only at your word. I rejoice in your word like one who discovers a great treasure. I hate and abhor all falsehood, but I love your instructions. I will praise you seven times a day because all your regulations are just. Those who love your instructions have great peace and do not stumble. I long for your rescue, Lord, so I have obeyed your commands. I have obeyed your laws, for I love them very much. Yes, I obey your commandments and laws because you know everything I do. (Psalm 119:161-168 NLT)

We may become discouraged and question God’s principles when we face conflict and challenges for choosing to do the right thing. We feel harassed without cause when people who differ with God’s principles confront us. We may experience fear and insecurity or feel confused and irritated. It’s so easy to feel sorry for ourselves. We think it’s not fair that we have troubles. Sometimes we are tempted to lie and scheme to avoid our problems. We certainly know how to do that. We had years of practicing deception in our time in addiction. It is difficult for us to believe and admit that our familiar defective way of handling challenging situations is not superior to God’s way.

God knows what is going on in every situation. God knows what we are thinking, feeling, and even planning to do, even before we are conscious of what is going on within us. When we put away dishonest ways of sorting out situations and choose for God’s way, we will find great peace and will not stumble or fall.

When we persevere in practicing God’s principles in all our affairs, we will discover that we are experiencing positive change in our hearts and minds, in addition to having our problems sorted. What an unexpected blessing!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, even though my circumstances may not always be as I would want them to be, help me to persevere and put Your principles into practice in all my affairs. Help me to stop doubting and believe that Your way is the best way. Amen

It is difficult for us to believe and admit that our familiar defective way of handling challenging situations is not superior to God’s way.

JUST FOR TODAY – I Will Be Joyful, Optimistic, and Grateful

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.

Early in recovery “JUST FOR TODAY” principles may help us maintain sobriety. While we are not sure we can stay sober for the rest of our lives, we realize we can make a choice that, today we will have a sober and meaningful day. As we grow in both our sobriety and our relationship with God, we will come to realize that “today” is a gift from God. We are blessed to enjoy this gift and use it in ways that will encourage and bless others. As we take the opportunity to use the talents and abilities that God has given us, we will find joy and fulfillment in communicating with others and in helping them.

This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24 NLT)

Just for today I have every reason to be joyful, optimistic, and grateful.

It takes time for us to believe that all our bridges are not burned and there is hope for a meaningful life. With some help we can get the necessary training to be involved in satisfying work. We will never navigate safely through today’s situations on our own. God goes ahead of us and prepares the way. God directs our activities as we listen for His guidance. God empowers us to do what needs doing as we stretch and learn and develop new abilities.

I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:12-13 NLT)

What a relief it is to know that God has a plan for each day of our lives and that He is willing to show it to us, one step at a time. Regardless of the obstacles that we may encounter along the way, God will provide everything we need to be successful in His plan. Just for today each one of us has every reason to be joyful, optimistic, and grateful.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, I put my hope in you. You’ve brought me out of the darkness of addiction to live successfully in Your plan for my life. Help me to keep my focus on what You are doing in me and through me. Please help me to trust You in every situation regardless of how I feel. Today I am joyful, optimistic, and grateful for all You have done for me. Amen

JUST FOR TODAY – I Will Strengthen My Mind

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.

There are many ways we can interact with God’s word on a regular basis. Most individuals in recovery start their day early with a bit of quiet time and read a selection from the Bible, from the Big Book, or from a meditation book – often a combination. It doesn’t matter if the words are from a traditional book or from an App on our smart phone, these truths can help us focus on a positive agenda for the day.

Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me ...Then the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:9 NLT)

Our minds have long been patterned on the negative and the self-centered. By starting the day with a desire to hear from God, we give ourselves the opportunity to have fresh eyes with which to see and understand more about life within us and around us. God has plans for us to have a meaningful day and have a positive influence on every person and situation we encounter. We read God’s Word to get to know God, and to follow His good plans. Spending time with God also helps us learn His principles for life and relationship and to understand how He acts on our behalf.

But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. Jesus said: ***“Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”*** (James 1:22 NLT, Matthew 7:24 NIV)

Real change happens for us when we don’t just get to know God’s will but actually put it into practice. Each time we read God’s Word it’s important to ask Him to show us what He wants us to know and what He wants us to do with what He is teaching us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for taking time to meet with me today as I read Your Word. Help me to understand what You are saying to me. Fill me with courage and power to put into practice what I have read. Amen

Real change happens for us when we don’t just get to know God’s will but actually put it into practice.

NO SHORTCUTS

The 12-Step Road often seems a long and winding one to us and some of us think we can reach the same destination by taking shortcuts that are more agreeable. Those persons who have walked this road before us will warn of the danger of these shortcuts because they have tried them and found them to be treacherous. What makes us think that we could do any better than they?

Nothing in all the world can be hidden from God. He can clearly see all things. Everything is open before him. And to him we must explain the way we have lived. (Hebrews 4:13 ERV)

***Staying
away from
shortcuts
will bring us
to our
desired
destination
of a
meaningful
new life.***

Some of us make an inventory of some facts from our past and keep others hidden. We believe that revealing everything will require us to face guilt and shame that will be overwhelming when we admit the exact nature of our wrongs. A fearless moral inventory requires the recording of everything that can be counted as a contributing factor to how we got to where we are. Taking shortcuts means we are not willing to reveal all. What we don't realize is that whatever we leave out is information that is essential to our long term recovery. We need to ask ourselves the question that Jesus asked a man who had the same complaint for 38 years, "Do you want to get well?"

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. So now anyone who is in Christ Jesus is not judged guilty. (1 Peter 2:24; Romans 8:1 ERV)

If we decide that we want to shortcut those things that cause us the most pain, then we are just adding to our burden of deceit and will miss the joy of being set free that results from telling the truth. Choosing the road that has proven trustworthy to many in the past and staying away from shortcuts will bring us to our desired destination of a meaningful new life.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please keep me safe from taking shortcuts and help me choose the well-trodden road that leads to abundant life. Amen

A NAGGING SENSE OF GUILT

Many of us are plagued throughout the day with a nagging sense of guilt. Where do these feelings come from? What should we do with them? Guilt feels like a shadow that has settled on our hearts. We long for the sunshine and joy of freedom but, each time we think we are approaching that state, guilt seems to cast a shadow over our thoughts and emotions and drags us down.

Sometimes the guilt comes because of things we have done that we know we should not have done. The Bible tells us that all of us have done things we ought not to have done and have failed to do things which we should have done.

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. If we claim to be without sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. (Romans 3:23 NLT, 1 John 1:8 NIV)

Each person has their own set of wrongs, and one sin is not more difficult for God to forgive than another. Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for all sin.

If you kept a record of our sins, who could escape being condemned? But you forgive us so that we should stand in awe of you. (Psalm 130:3-4 GNB)

God's desire is that we admit we did wrong, be sorry for the wrong we have done, and desire to change our ways. The path forward is to ask for God's forgiveness, receive it, and then move ahead. Any lingering guilt we feel over issues which God has forgiven is false guilt which comes from condemnation that the devil tries to entrap us with.

When Jesus says our wrongs are forgiven, they are truly forgiven. We need to agree with God that we are forgiven and re-align our thoughts and emotions with God's assurance that the debt for our sin has been paid-in-full.

Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. (Psalm 32:5 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I have done wrong. I admit I have harmed others and lived in my own self-will rather than following Your will and Your ways. Please forgive me and wash me clean from all my offences. Today I put my trust in what Jesus has done for me on the cross and receive forgiveness and a fresh start to my life. Amen

***When Jesus
says our
wrongs are
forgiven,
they are
truly
forgiven.***

WHAT A RELIEF!

We feel many things in recovery. Some negative and others positive. There are feelings of fear and uncertainty about our future, and guilt and shame over things done wrong in the past. If we pay attention, we will also notice feelings of joy and relief that we have finally escaped from the bondage of our addiction and recognized that we truly do need help.

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT)

What a relief to know that we do not have to pretend we are OK. Now we can acknowledge there were happenings in our life that caused us pain. Now we can speak about that pain and share with those who have experienced similar issues and understand what we are going through. Now we don't have to hide from the situations we did not honestly understand or the circumstances we were challenged with and unable to cope with. We can admit we are human and need the support of others who are willing to share their experience, strength, and hope with us. What a relief!

God is our protection and source of strength. He is always ready to help us in times of trouble.

Psalm 46:1 ERV

God assures us: ***“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)

The God who called out to us until we heard His voice and responded to Him will be with us every day as we move ahead. It is certain that along the way we will make mistakes, but God's love for us is everlasting and His kindness is unailing. What a relief!

The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unailing kindness. (Jeremiah 31:3 NIV)

We do not know what the future holds, but God does. He has a good plan for our lives and will reveal it to us one day at a time. What a relief!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I reject my tendency to try to do life on my own. I know I can't and I know that I need you. Thank you for being there for me, for accepting me in my weakness, and for taking me forward in Your good plan for my life. Amen

A LIFE PLAN – UNDER CONSTRUCTION

We are just moving into summer and hopefully looking forward to long days lounging around in the sunshine. Summer is also a time for building construction and road repairs. We sit in long line-ups waiting for flaggers to direct us around the ongoing work. Sometimes we wonder if there is a way to get to where we want to go because so many roads are being worked on and traffic is so congested. As difficult as these situations are, we must keep in mind that the construction plans for these projects, and the ability of workers to follow those plans, will result in many people experiencing less frustration when they travel through these areas in the future.

As we follow God's plan for our lives, even if some details are inconvenient in the moment, we can be assured that the building of a wonderful life is in progress.

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)

God's path for us requires that we follow the details of His plan so that we can reap the benefits. These details are clearly written in the Bible. God promises that as we follow His plan we will be blessed. Telling the truth, completing a searching and fearless moral inventory, making amends – these are challenging parts of the recovery journey as we go through the necessary repairs and reconstruction of our lives. Taking time out to complete a treatment program or even putting in the effort to go to a meeting after a long workday may not feel convenient in the moment. However, with a planned long-term view, they are a small inconvenience for the reward of smooth travel throughout the rest of our lives.

For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11 NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, I choose to follow Your principles in all my affairs. Even when it is inconvenient, help me to surrender to Your will and Your ways, so I can experience the wonderful life You have prepared for me. Amen

As we follow God's plan for our lives, even if some details are inconvenient in the moment, we can be assured that the building of a wonderful life is in progress.

IS THERE ANY GOOD REASON TO WAIT?

We are not pleased when we have to wait for anything. In fact, we totally dislike waiting. We hate traffic congestion, line-ups for various services, being put on a wait list for housing etc. Who of us likes to sit in the doctor’s office waiting to be seen? We’d much rather have the instant access to information and service we can get on the internet or from social media. What do we do with the many times the Bible tells us we are to be patient and wait on the Lord? Is there any good reason for us to do that?

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, And in His word I do hope. My soul waits for the Lord More than those who watch for the morning—Yes, more than those who watch for the morning. (Psalm 130:5-6 NKJV)

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope.

Psalm 130:5 NKJV

When we first come to believe in God, all of us are impatient for what we want Him to do for us. Like the good Father He is, God is very gracious and often responds quickly to His newborn children, but there comes a time when He will teach us to wait. Learning to wait for what we want is one way to leave certain character defects behind and to grow into being a mature person.

The Lord is wonderfully good to those who wait for him, to those who seek for him. It is good both to hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. (Lamentations 3:25-26 TLB)

We are not good at waiting for God to act. Like a good Father, God will not always give us the answer we want to our prayers at the time we want it but will answer what we have asked for at just the right time. Sometimes when we encounter traffic congestion we try to avoid waiting and seek another route only to find that others have done the same thing and we end up in a bottleneck that is even longer than where we first were. When we fail to wait for God to act and seek an alternate way, just like in our impatience with traffic congestion, we often end up in a worse mess.

This foolish plan of God is wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God’s weakness is stronger than the greatest of human strength. (1 Corinthians 1:25 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to be willing to wait when You are silent and choose instead to have faith that You are still at work on my behalf. Amen

BENEFITS OF WALKING WITH WISDOM

Employers negotiate work contracts with individuals and unions. The terms and conditions agreed to are then implemented into an agreement between the Employer and Employee. Part of the negotiations will likely include benefits that workers will be entitled to as part of their payment package. These may include medical and dental benefits, childcare benefits or retirement plan benefits. Benefits enhance the life of the employees who receive them.

In the program of A.A. we are told about the benefits of sobriety that those who have walked the road of recovery before us have discovered to be true. In the Bible, God tells us of the benefits of a better life when, rather than trying to do life on our own, we do life His way. Living according to the wisdom of God has more benefits than we would ever have space to list. Following are just a few of those promised benefits:

JOY: Joyful is the person who finds wisdom, the one who gains understanding. (Proverbs 3:13 NLT)

A GOOD LIFE: Grow a wise heart—you’ll do yourself a favor; keep a clear head—you’ll find a good life. (Proverbs 19:8 MSG)

STRAIGHT TALKING: Wisdom will save you from evil people, from those whose words are twisted. (Proverbs 2:12 NLT)

SAFE AND SATISFYING WAY OF LIFE: Store my commands in your heart. If you do this, you will live many years, and your life will be satisfying. (Proverbs 3:1-2 NLT)

PROTECTION AND LOVE: Get wisdom; develop good judgment. Don’t forget my words or turn away from them. Don’t turn your back on wisdom, for she will protect you. Love her, and she will guard you. Getting wisdom is the wisest thing you can do! And whatever else you do, develop good judgment. (Proverbs 4:5-7 NLT)

Let’s sign up for this benefit package today. It’s a good deal!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for the many benefits You promise me as I choose to wholeheartedly live according to Your principles. Give me the wisdom to daily seek conscious contact with You so that I may honour You in all I say and do. Amen

Living according to the wisdom of God has more benefits than we would ever have space to list.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

One of our first priorities in recovery is sorting our life practices according to the truth. We come into recovery weary, sick, and sinful. We want to feel better right away and get on with life. We think that once we are physically stronger, we can sort everything out. The truth is, God's way of lasting change and improvement in our lives is to change us from the inside out. Our circumstances and relationships will improve when we admit that we are powerless over them and ask God to change our thinking and believing. First things first!

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33 NIV)

One of our first priorities in recovery is sorting our life practices according to the truth.

We cannot imagine what sanity or goodness is until God works in us to remove the fog, the pain, and the lies we have believed. We must ask God to give us an undivided heart as sincerely as we have asked God to remove the obsession for our substance of choice, or our addictive habits. We must develop a solid foundation of truthful thoughts and healthy desires before we can hope to progressively build our life in recovery.

For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. (Romans 7:18 NIV)

Only God can forgive the sin at the core of our destructive and addictive lifestyle. Our damaging behaviour has been influenced by the hurts we have sustained and hidden deep in our hearts. We need to allow God to bring truth, forgiveness, and healing to our hearts. Doctors and counsellors can then provide the medical help and therapy we need to help our physical well-being.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. (1 Timothy 1:15-16 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I need forgiveness, new life, and the power of Your Holy Spirit working in me to heal and change me from the inside out. I invite You into my life to bring me to the knowledge of all truth. Please help me to accept all the help I need. Amen

DEALING WITH DISGUST

Disgust is a reaction that arises when a person's good taste or moral sense is deeply offended. That is not to say that everyone is disgusted by the same things. Disgust may be aroused in some people by something as simple as observing the eating traditions of certain ethnic groups. While in our addiction, our family and acquaintances may have reacted with disgust at the degrading effect our substance of choice had on us. On the other hand, we may have reacted with disgust towards anyone whose actions interfered with our destructive way of living.

An offended friend is harder to win back than a fortified city. Arguments separate friends like a gate locked with bars. (Proverbs 18:19 NLT)

God has created us for joyful relationship with Him and with one another. The best way to avoid disgust is to follow the principles for living set out in the Bible. We are told not only to look out for our own well-being but to also look to the well-being of others. Instead of criticizing and finding fault with one another we are to love and encourage one another to good works, and with grace forgive one another when we have been offended. Jesus' advice to us when we feel disgust rising in us is to find a way to love. That doesn't mean we endorse ugly behaviour, but it does mean that we find a way to think about and react to what we see in a way that offers love and calls forth love. Jesus, who rightfully could have been disgusted by the behaviour He observed in our destructive lifestyle of addiction, chose not to react but to offer us forgiveness and a new life.

Jesus' advice to us when we feel disgust rising in us is to find a way to love.

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. (John 3:17; Romans 14:10 NKJV)

When we have given our will and life over to the care of God, we are freed from all condemnation. For this reason, let's be more like Jesus and not judge others, but be willing to love and care for their well-being.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You gave Your life so that I might be saved from judgment and eternal death. Please help me to encourage those around me to know Your love and forgiveness which will set them free from sin and condemnation. Amen

ACCEPTING HARDSHIP AS A PATHWAY TO PEACE

God doesn't lie. God doesn't sugar coat the truth. Fortunately for us, God always tells the truth and helps us to get ready for what we will face.

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (John 16:33 NIV)

Our problems don't disappear simply because we decide to live with God in recovery. In fact, for a while it may seem like we have more problems than we know what to do with. In addiction we ran from problems, covered them up with destructive substances and habits, and blamed others for our troubles. We lied, cheated, stole, and basically did whatever we could to avoid dealing with pain or hardship.

***God's
unfailing love
throughout
our recovery
is powerful
enough to
sustain us
and help us
overcome
evil.***

Jesus offers us a new and better way when we choose to surrender to Him. As we bravely face painful memories, financial difficulties, challenging obsessions, and irritating people, God promises us peace. How? Jesus' response is, "in me." What does He mean? Jesus faced hardship in his life on earth and the sin of others brought Him to death on the cross. However, by His resurrection from the dead Jesus conquered those hardships on our behalf. With Jesus living in us, the same resurrection power that raised Him from the dead gives us the strength we need to bravely face and overcome painful challenges.

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. (1 John 4:4 NIV; Philippians 4:6-7 NLT)

God's unfailing love for us throughout the recovery process is powerful enough to sustain us and help us to persevere so we can overcome evil.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Help me to live secure in Your Presence and trust Your promise to help me remain committed on the pathway to peace. Because I am in You, I will not fear. Amen

LIVING SOBER – DEVELOPING NEW INTERESTS AND SKILLS

Living in addiction is chaotic. A person is never at peace either in mind or body. Each addict is continuously at work seeking to fulfill the demands of whatever is their master. The Bible tells us there is no peace for those who refuse to follow God's ways.

But the wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up mire and dirt. "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked." (Isaiah 57:20-21 ESV)

To be effective in our new life in recovery, we need to choose to follow God's ways. We need to find new sources of interest and a new set of skills to help us stay clean and sober. As we check around, we will find individuals who are willing to share with us what they know about the recovery process, and some will be willing to teach us about things we may never have thought about. Some may share their skills related to employment. Others may share recreational interests such as hiking or sports. Skills and interests are varied but each person can share those things they have learned or enjoy doing. Everyone can contribute in some way, even if it is just taking time to listen to others and explore possibilities with them.

So get rid of your old self, which made you live as you used to—the old self that was being destroyed by its deceitful desires. Your hearts and minds must be made completely new, and you must put on the new self, which is created in God's likeness and reveals itself in the true life that is upright and holy. (Ephesians 4:22-24 GNT)

If we are willing to learn, being in community will teach us a new set of skills. Living sober with selfless love needs to be a priority on our agenda. God is well pleased with us when we are patient and kind toward others, especially those who appear to be disadvantaged. As we seek God and His ways, He will encourage us to be interested in others, and He will supply the skills we need to do whatever He has called us to do.

Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for giving me new life and bringing me to a place where I want to look out for the interests of others. Please empower me with the skills I need to do the work You have planned for me to do, and help me to have much joy in doing it. Amen

***Whoever is
being taught
God's word
should share
the good
things they
have with
the one who
is teaching
them.***

Galatians 6:6 ERV

WISDOM – ADOPTING A DIFFERENT MINDSET

Often when we come into recovery, we miss our old way of life and the people we socialized with. They did not contribute much to our well-being, but they were there when we needed them. Mostly their lives were like ours – on a downward spiral – but they did not judge us, and we did not judge them, so we got along in the insanity of our dysfunctional lifestyle.

Whose heart is filled with anguish and sorrow? Who is always fighting and quarreling? Who is the man with bloodshot eyes and many wounds? It is the one who spends long hours in the taverns, trying out new mixtures. (Proverbs 23:29-30 TLB)

If we want to stay on track in our recovery, we need to have a mindset that reflects our intention to get well and stay well.

Our new life principles require that we leave behind our old way of life. That means staying away from our old haunts and the people who are still there. When we have just recovered from a deadly virus, it would be unwise to go anywhere close to where others still have that virus and expose ourselves to being re-infected. If we want to stay on track in our recovery, we need to have a mindset that reflects our intention to get well and stay well.

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think. Then you will learn from your own experience how his ways will really satisfy you. (Romans 12:2 TLB)

Rather than allowing ourselves to dwell on whatever we were dependent on, we need to have continuous contact with our Heavenly Father and ask Him to meet our needs. We also need to admit the truth that our dependency is not dependable for it leaves us in want. We must find a reliable sponsor to help us set healthy boundaries and hold us accountable for our actions. This sponsor should be available for contact when temptation raises its ugly head or other problems arise. With help, our new mindset will be established and our life in recovery will have a solid foundation to build on.

Get the truth and never sell it; also get wisdom, discipline, and good judgment. (Proverbs 23:23 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit I cannot live this new life on my own. Please give me the will, the wisdom, and the desire to follow Your principles in all my affairs. Amen

STRESSFUL EVENTS

When stressful situations come our way, and Jesus said they will, the best way forward is to make a conscious effort to turn to God and seek His help.

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (John 16:33 NIV)

Many of us obsess and get stressed over events of the past which cannot be changed. We replay in our minds the unkind words said to us or envision the painful occurrences which caused us shame. We want those who hurt us to be brought to justice and the world to see how we have suffered. These recollections cause us inner pain which becomes burdensome. God's way of relieving emotional stress is for us to forgive those who harmed us, receive His healing and comfort, and then choose to let go of the resentment we are harbouring. God will give us peace as we forgive those who have behaved unjustly towards us.

Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven. (Luke 6:37 NLT)

Some of us worry about future events that we feel we will be unable to cope with, if they happen. We may feel overwhelmed by our responsibility to meet our own needs or those of our family and want to run away. God promises He will take care of our concerns, if we ask Him.

And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus. (Colossians 4:19 NLT)

We can live free from the bondage of stress by turning our will and our lives over to the care of God. God can be trusted to show us the way forward and give us the strength to take the next right step.

Prayer: Loving God, I struggle with control in my life. Help me to let go of the things I cannot change and to purposefully change the things I can. Give me the will and the desire to trust You with everything that concerns me. Amen

When stressful situations come our way, the best way forward is to make a conscious effort to turn to God and seek His help.

THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR WRONGS

The exact nature of our wrongs is rooted in the lie that our problems are caused by what is around us rather than what is within us. It's time to admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being that our way of dealing with problems does not solve them. Doing things our way versus God's way will always create greater problems for us and for those around us. It's time to confess that we cannot do life on our own and seek God to help us change our ways.

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path. I've promised it once, and I'll promise it again: I will obey your righteous regulations. I have suffered much, O Lord; restore my life again as you promised. (Psalm 119:105-107 NLT)

It's time to confess that we cannot do life on our own and seek God to help us change our ways.

It's time to agree with God about the exact nature of our wrongs. It's time to admit that we are guilty of wrong thinking and wrong doing.

God's principles for living life to the full should be our first choice rather than our "choice of last resort." We need to learn from God's word and listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit within us. We need to heed the advice of mentors and others who have faithfully walked with God for some time. With God's help we can put into practice all that we have learned.

If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. (1 John 1:8-9 NLT)

When we finally face the reality of our sins it is helpful to recall God's loving and compassionate nature. No sin is too great that it cannot be forgiven. God's beloved Son Jesus already sacrificed His life on the cross to pay the debt of sin that we owe. Let's repent of our sin and receive His forgiveness and a new life.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit that I cannot do life on my own. I need Your help. I repent of my past sin and turn away from my independent, self-centered way of living. I choose to trust You and follow Your way to a purposeful, fulfilling life. Amen

DON'T JUDGE OTHERS

Judging others is a problem area for many of us and something that Jesus tells us needs to change if we are to live well in recovery and in life.

And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye. (Matthew 7:3-5 NLT)

How we judge others is often a reflection of how we have been judged by others and even by ourselves. Many of us lived in dysfunctional homes that typically used verbal and emotional abuse to force others into subjection. We easily fell into that learned behaviour when we came face-to-face with those whose actions caused us pain and humiliation.

We've all made mistakes, both in addiction and in recovery. We are all learning. Our recovery journey is unique and the same is true for everyone else. Character defects differ among us. We all have some defects that are easier to overcome and others that are more difficult. No one is worse off or better off than us. Their journey of recovery is just different. God is willing to forgive us and remove our defects of character as we humbly acknowledge them before Him and ask for His help. This is true for each of us.

Someone has wisely said: "*People who criticize others are unaware of how much pain they themselves are experiencing. Truly happy people don't have the need to bring others down.*" Instead of judging and condemning others, let's offer encouraging words and loving support to fellow strugglers on the journey.

Continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. (1 Peter 4:8, Galatians 6:3 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for loving me and offering me forgiveness for my sins. When I am tempted to judge or condemn others, please help me to stop and think and choose to be kind. Help me never to look down on another person unless I am helping them up. Amen

No one is worse off or better off than us. Their journey of recovery is just different.

REPROGRAMMING OUR THOUGHTS FOR GROWTH

Step 10 of the 12-Step program advises us to continue to take personal inventory and, when we are wrong, promptly admit it. All of us have character defects which are clearly observed by others but not so much by ourselves. These may be familiar habits or personality traits that have not been corrected since we gave our will and life over to the care of God. The God we serve is a Holy God and He desires that we obey His Word as we serve Him and others.

You were getting along so well. Who has interfered with you to hold you back from following the truth? For God is at work within you, helping you want to obey him, and then helping you do what he wants. (Galatians 5:7; Philippians 2:13 TLB)

Reprogramming our minds may be challenging at first because some of our thinking is hidden in the comfort of the half-truths that we believe.

God says we are to get rid of those things that hold us back from following the truth of His Word. If we want to get our body in shape, we go to a physical-fitness gym. The initial physical workouts will be painful as we stretch muscles and tendons that have not been stretched for a while. If we want to get our spirit and soul in shape, we need to read the Bible and learn what God says we are to do. From the principles we learn and obey our minds will be transformed, and we will experience a freshness in all we do and think. Reprogramming our minds may be challenging at first because some of our thinking is hidden in the comfort of the half-truths that we believe. However, when we know the truth, the truth will set us free.

May kindness and peace be yours from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness. Jesus was the first to conquer death, and he is the ruler of all earthly kings. Christ loves us, and by his blood he set us free from our sins. (Revelation 1:5 CEV)

A daily inventory will help us build a deep reverence for God and His ways so our natural response in all we do and say will be guided by His principles.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to continue to take daily personal inventory and when I am wrong, promptly admit it. Give me wisdom in Your Word so that I may obey Your principles in all my affairs. Amen

FATHERS DAY

Today is a day to honour Fathers. Some of us are Fathers. All of us have a Father. The relationship of a loving Father to his child is a picture of God's heart for us.

Nothing stirs a Father's heart more than looking at his newborn child. There is a God-given desire in a good father to care for his child, to protect that child even to the point of laying down his own life on behalf of the child. This is God's heart for you and me.

A father is tender and kind to his children. In the same way, the Lord is tender and kind to those who have respect for him. (Psalm 103:13 NIRV)

Some of us have suffered the abuse or absence of a Father and that is a significant issue in our journey. God makes the gracious offer to be the good Father we never had and to care for us and meet our needs. God also will provide the safety and protection which our earthly father either couldn't or didn't provide. Only God's love can satisfy that deep need within us to belong.

Even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will hold me close. (Psalm 27:10 NLT)

Whatever our past, whether it's being well-loved or wounded and abandoned by our Father, or even being disappointed in ourselves as a Father, God invites us today to make a connection to His family.

Our Heavenly Father will receive us as His precious children. He will love and care for us and heal our wounds. Like any good dad, God will carefully mark out a path for us where there are safe places to walk with boundaries around the edges, so we don't wander off and trip and fall and hurt ourselves. There's never been a better time to get to know our loving Heavenly Father.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You gave me life. You knit me together in my mother's womb and You know me. Thank You that through belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus I have been invited into Your family. In the safety of Your loving care, help me to sort out any issues I may have with my earthly Father or with being a Father to my children. Please support me as I seek the healing and restoration I need. Thank You for being particularly close to me as I make the effort to live a life worthy of Your calling. Amen

Even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will hold me close.

Psalm 27:10 NLT

LOVE IS NOT DEMANDING

Many of us struggle to recognize the difference between asking and demanding. Demanding people believe they are entitled to what they deem to be their rights. They will often require more from another person than what that person intends to give. Demanding people regularly use manipulation and threats to get what they want. On the other hand, a person making a respectful request recognizes that granting any request must be left to the discretion of the person being asked.

Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. (Ephesians 4:2-3 NLT)

***Love
is not
demanding
but selfless
in all
its ways.***

Demanding people are usually concerned for their own needs but, as children of God, we are told to also be concerned about the needs of others. That is why the Bible tells us to love one another as we love ourselves. Love requires that we give people freedom to be who they are without any imposed demands on them to meet our needs or do things our way. If we love someone, we will allow them to make their own choices. That is what God does for us. He did not make us robots who are required to do what He demands. He gives us free will to choose to love Him and follow His ways.

We pray that the Lord will make your love grow. We pray that he will give you more and more love for each other and for all people. We pray that you will love everyone in the same way we love you. (1 Thessalonians 3:12 ERV)

Jesus demanded nothing from us when He came into the world to save us from our sins. To be selfless like Jesus we need to remember that love is not demanding but exhibits humility in all its ways. Each person should be respectful of others' boundaries and choose not to impose their own expectations or desires on another. Love is never demanding!

Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love makes up for many of your faults. (1 Peter 4:8 TLB)

Prayer: Gracious Father, Please help me to be non-demanding in all my ways and to love and respect others and the boundaries they have set. Thank You for the love You lavish on me as You give me the will to choose to love You. Help me to be more like You. Amen

GOOD ORDERLY DIRECTION

Recovery meetings have common formats from place to place and there is structure to the way things are done. For example, how often in an A.A. meeting when "How It Works" is read, are we reminded of what is important for sobriety today. The words settle and bring a sense of focus to us in that moment. This is the reason we attend meetings. God also has structure for His people as they gather for praise and worship.

Be sure that everything is done properly and in order. For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. (1 Corinthians 14:40 NLT, 1 Corinthians 14:33a ESV)

Our God is a God of order and when we live in the structure and order He has planned, things go well for us. For example: we will not be tempted to jump off a balcony or go skydiving without a parachute. We know that to do so would end in disaster because gravity is in place in our world. Our body is also a good example of order. When one little virus gets into one cell, before very long our whole body suffers and, as in recent times, our whole society is thrown out of order. One resentment against a relative for something they did a long time ago, can grow to poison many family gatherings and other relationships. Angry words, cold shoulder silence, "in your face" intimidation, or long-distance avoidance are all ways things are out of order and are making a mess of our daily lives.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:12 ESV)

We have numerous needs in our daily life and sometimes it's hard to keep priorities in order, but God gives us a simple structure for that as well: Give our attention to Him, follow what He is saying, and He will direct us and meet all our needs.

Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. (Matthew 6:33 NLT)

Good orderly direction – a wonderful gift from God to all of us.

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to live in the orderly way that You have planned for this day and each day of this season of my life. Please give me ears to hear Your guidance and a heart that is willing to be ordered by Your wisdom. Amen

***Our God is
a God of
order and
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well for us.***

WHY FOLLOW JESUS

Jesus says: ***"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.*** (John 14:6 NLT) For us who are used to doing things our own way and basing our hopes and dreams on our expectations, that's an exclusive statement for Jesus to make. God's word clearly tells us: ***"There is a way which seems right to a person, But its end is the way of death.*** (Proverbs 14:12 NASB) What do these words mean to you and me as we learn to walk in truth in recovery?

Often, we make choices that for the present time seem to be good, but before we know it, we end up in trouble and wonder what happened. Sometimes we even attribute the blame to God when we find ourselves burdened down by our own deliberate choices. The truth is that God alone knows what is best for each person. Only God has the foreknowledge necessary to guide us over the long haul.

We were created to live in relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

We were never made to live life on our own. We were created to live in relationship with God through Jesus Christ. God's intention was for us to thrive and have a good life as, through His Holy Spirit, He empowered us to follow His principles in all our ways. Following the desires of our own heart results in us needing to be forgiven and saved and healed from the effects of our poor decisions.

God invites us to consider the consequences of our past choices and to choose a new way of life. In the Bible we read that Jesus humbled Himself and came to earth to die for our sins and to restore our relationship with God. We also read about God's principles for living life to the full. Today, let's accept all that Jesus has done for us, humble ourselves, and turn from our rebellious ways to God.

Our sins are heavy upon us; we are wasting away! How can we survive? As surely as I live, says the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of wicked people. I only want them to turn from their wicked ways so they can live. Turn! Turn from your wickedness, O people... (Ezekiel 33:10b-11 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Life is not everything I hoped it would be and I confess that the reason for this is I continue to do things my way. Please forgive me. I surrender my will and life into your care. Come and live in me. Help me to surrender self-will and choose to do Your will, so I can experience the abundant life You have promised. Amen

DISCERNMENT

How can I get discernment? What do I do with it when I get it? Discernment comes from God's Holy Spirit living in us and giving us understanding of God's character and His ways, so we can build a life on the foundation of love, joy, and peace. God desires that we know Him intimately. Through the wisdom of God's Word in the Bible and the understanding given us by the Holy Spirit, God will help us discern the plan He has for our lives.

Let those who are wise understand these things. Let those with discernment listen carefully. The paths of the LORD are true and right, and righteous people live by walking in them. But in those paths sinners stumble and fall. (Hosea 14:9 NLT)

As we begin to take the first steps in our life with God in recovery, we need to seek God's wisdom to discern the right path for us. We need God's guidance when we are uncertain of the way to take, but we need it even more when we think we know the way. Our approach to any new situation is often swayed by our way of thinking in the past.

Some simple steps we might take in this process are:

- ✓ list the known pros and cons of the choices before us.
- ✓ consider the gifts God has given us.
- ✓ pray and trust that God will direct our steps in the way we are to take.
- ✓ seek guidance from someone who knows us well (perhaps a pastor, priest, parent, counselor) and carefully consider their advice.

This is what the Lord says—your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is good for you and leads you along the paths you should follow." (Isaiah 48:17 NLT)

We need to make a truthful assessment of our will versus God's revealed will in each situation, and not allow our imagination or desires to mislead us. God promises to direct our steps as we submit our life to Him.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is to have understanding of Your ways so that I may have discernment in all I undertake to do. Please guide me in all my ways. Amen

Through the wisdom of God's Word in the Bible, and the understanding given us by the Holy Spirit, God will help us discern the plan He has for our lives.

MEDITATING IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND

In Step 11 of the 12-Step program of A.A. we are invited through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us, and the power to carry it out. We achieve this through meditating on the Scriptures we read in the Bible, seeking to understand why Jesus came to earth to do the will of His Father, and why He tells us to follow Him.

My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me. (John 10:27 ERV)

Like the first followers of Jesus, we also need to take time to meditate on what He is saying, ask questions, and attentively listen for explanations.

When Jesus had finished preaching to the crowds who gathered to hear Him, His disciples often didn't fully understand what He was saying. Jesus then spent time alone with them and explained in more depth those things He had taught that day. When Jesus spoke of the plans that were in place for Him to complete His work on earth and return to His Father, one of His disciples straight up told Him he didn't understand where He was going or the way. Another asked Jesus to show them the Father and then they might understand. Like the first followers of Jesus, we also need to take time to meditate on what He is saying, ask questions, and attentively listen for explanations.

Thomas said, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. The only way to the Father is through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father too. But now you know the Father. You have seen him." Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father. That is all we need." Jesus answered, "Philip, I have been with you

for a long time. So you should know me. Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father too. So why do you say, 'Show us the Father'? (John 14:5-9 ERV)

When we begin to understand why Jesus came to earth, we will know our Father's heart for us. Jesus was aware each person would need help to fulfill God's will for their life. At Jesus request, the Holy Spirit was sent to earth to be with us and in us. He is the Power who helps us persevere and complete the will of God for our lives.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I pray You will give me the knowledge of Your will for my life and the Power of Your Holy Spirit to carry it out. Amen

USELESSNESS AND SELF-PITY DISAPPEAR

On pages 83-84 of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous we read twelve promises that will happen as we diligently work the twelve steps. The question is asked: - *"Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us – sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them."*

The Bible also makes this "extravagant promise." ***That's also how it is with people. The ones who stop doing evil and make themselves pure will become special. Their lives will be holy and pleasing to their Master, and they will be able to do all kinds of good deeds.*** (2 Timothy 2:21 CEV)

Many of us have wasted years and even decades in addiction. By the time we get to recovery our bodies are tired and worn out, our minds are fragile, and it takes a long time for us to work out new ways of doing things and to learn new skills. We often feel like the opportunity to be successful and productive has passed us by, but the sixth promise in the Big Book speaks directly to this time as it says, *"That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear."*

This promise is echoed in one of God's many promises to us. God's plan for our lives will be effective the moment we put our trust in Him and follow His ways. God knows our past, our present, and our future, and will work everything together for our good because of His great love for us. God appointed us to be saved and has a purpose for each of our lives.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV)

How does God do it? How does it all come about? We don't know, and we don't have to know. Our part is to get to know God, follow His guidance, stay strong in His love, and be available. God will teach us everything we need to know and promises we will experience a fruitful and fulfilling life.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I wasted so much time in addiction and unhealthy life practices. Help me to believe Your promise that You can use me in a way that blesses others and fills me with joy and satisfaction. Show me my part and help me to fulfill Your plan for my life. Help me to do the next right thing and leave the rest with You. Amen

You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit.

John 15:16a NLT

KNOWING AND DOING THE RIGHT THING

People with discernment will naturally do the right thing in each situation. Spiritually discerning people also have the capacity to separate and sift what is good from what is best, based on their knowledge of God and His ways.

When humans were created, we were meant to live in relationship with God. In His wisdom God gave humans free will to choose to love and obey Him. Even though humans chose to disobey God and our relationship with Him was cut off, eternity remains in our hearts where it was planted in the beginning.

God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God’s work from beginning to end. (Ecclesiastes 3:11 NLT)

As we spend time with God each day and practice His teachings, He gives us a discerning heart to know His ways.

Many humans continue to function in this world as though they will live forever. They don’t consult God as to what is best for them. They think they know it intuitively and end up suffering painful consequences. The truth is that without God’s wisdom, we don’t know how to live purposefully in this life, or what will happen to us in the next. What are we to do?

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16 NIV)

God invites us to know Him personally by receiving salvation through His Son Jesus. His Holy Spirit then comes to live in our hearts and, through the Scriptures

recorded in the Bible, teaches us God’s principles for life that we could never know on our own. The result is that we will have discernment to choose what is right. This is more than our conscience speaking or “trusting our gut.” This is God revealing truth to us, so we can live well. As we spend time with God each day and practice His teachings, He gives us a discerning heart to know His ways.

Deal with your servant according to your love and teach me your decrees. I am your servant; give me discernment that I may understand your statutes. (Psalm 119:124-125 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that You are the only wise God. Teach me Your ways that I may discern and choose what is the best path for my life. Amen

WHO REALLY KNOWS ME?

How do we feel when people who should know us don’t? Jesus understands our sadness and wants to heal our hearts from disappointing relationships. Jesus wants us to experience the joy of knowing that we are valued and that we belong.

He came into the very world he created, but the world didn’t recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:10-12 NLT)

Sir Christopher Wren was the architect of St. Paul’s Cathedral and other buildings in London, England. Some of those considered to be the most beautiful buildings in London were designed by him and he earned much respect for his work. It seems unthinkable that people of that time would not have recognized Christopher Wren. Jesus, who was both the architect and creator of this world came into it, and those who should have recognized Him didn’t and, in fact, they rejected him.

He (Jesus) was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. (Isaiah 53:3a; Ephesians 1:5-6 NLT)

Jesus was despised and rejected when He came into the world and subsequently was crucified. Through belief in His sacrificial death on our behalf, we are fully accepted into the Kingdom of God. Jesus knows the experience of deep grief and therefore has great compassion for us. When we feel lonely and don’t think that we belong, Jesus is with us. He offers us a relationship that will fill our hearts with peace and joy. When we open our hearts to Jesus, He will teach us how to have a deep and abiding relationship with Him, and with others.

Prayer: Come into my heart Lord Jesus and give me the courage to love You with all my heart. You created me to belong and experience the joy of being part of Your family. Heal me from past disappointments. I want to have a loving relationship with You and learn how to love others and experience healthy relationships. Please help me. Amen

To all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

1 John 1:12 NLT