LIVING AS HONOURABLE PEOPLE

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10 NIV)

God created us to live as honourable people – honouring God, honouring others, and experiencing the joy of living as persons of integrity and honour. Living life only to please ourselves, whether in addiction or recovery, leaves us dissatisfied and vulnerable to harmful ways of living. However, living our lives with God in recovery is truly satisfying and purposeful. How can we find this good life?

HONOURING GOD AS HIGHER POWER BY OBEYING HIS COMMANDS: What we believe will cause us to act in an honourable way

towards others and in so doing preserve our personal honour. When we believe in the Loving God of the Bible as our Higher Power, then we are guided by Him and live accountable to His laws. God, our creator, knows the best way for His creation to live and, as we read the Bible we find out what a truly satisfying life looks like. One of the Pharisees' religious scholars asked Jesus which of the commandments in all of God's laws was the most important. Jesus answered and said that there are two laws on which all of God's laws are based and that is to love God and love our neighbour.

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.' The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37-40 NLT)

HONOURING THE COMMON GOOD OF SOCIETY: If we are unsure that God exists, or believe that God does not exist, then we determine our own behaviour and are only accountable to the laws of the country in which we live. If we break a law of our country, and get caught, then we pay the penalty set by the law for our actions. Governments add to, or remove laws, in the belief that the laws will cause the community to honour one another and protect property. However, today's society seems to be on a

collision course with the law and appears to be more interested in their individual rights rather that in the common good of society. It is truly evident that life without God does not lead to society honouring one another above themselves.

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one. (Psalm 14:1-3 NIV)

HONOURING THOSE WITH WHOM WE HAVE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS: When we believe that God is real and loves us with an all-encompassing love, this belief will be reflected in our behaviour. There is no way we can receive all the love that God pours on us and not have it overflow to others around us. God commands that we honour our Father and Mother. This command may also be applied to our primary care givers. The honour we are to give to our parents is not based on their parenting skills but on their position of authority over us. When we are married we are told to honour our spouse and to keep the marriage bed pure. God knows that adultery and sexual immorality harms our body and our relationship. His desire is that we fulfill our commitment to our spouse in order that the purity of our union of body and soul is preserved. With regards to others,

we are instructed to love one another and to honour others above ourselves. Integrity in these disciplines will be achieved when we first find respect for ourselves in the grace that God so generously pours upon us.

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. (Exodus 20:12; Hebrews 13:4; Romans 12:10 NIV)

LIVING TO HONOUR OTHERS RATHER THAN DEMANDING OUR RIGHTS: Before we surrendered our lives to God, we likely retaliated in anger and caused strife when we were not treated with the respect we thought we deserved. Based on another's actions we concluded that our worth had been devalued and that our dignity had suffered. In our pride we saw ourselves as deserving of more respect. We may have reacted by "setting the person or persons aright" about the honour they should have given us. While fighting for the honour we supposed we deserved, were we prepared to honour the person or persons involved with the same honour that we expected to receive from them? How about being willing to give up our perceived rights and honour others above ourselves?

How blessed the man you train, God, the woman you instruct in your Word, Providing a circle of quiet within the clamor of evil, while a jail is being built for the wicked. God will never walk away from his people, never desert his precious people. Rest assured that justice is on its way and every good heart put right. (Psalm 94:12-15 MSG)

HONOURING GOD BY REFLECTING HIS CHARACTER: God wants our lives to reflect Him in us. Jesus said that anyone who had seen Him had also seen His Father. Jesus reflected His Father's character when He went about doing good and healing everyone who was under the power of the evil one. Are we, like Jesus, willing to look towards the well-being of our family, our friends and those around us? How can we honour them? God will enable us to be the person He created us to be -- a person who experiences honour as we honour God and others above ourselves.

The Lord says, "I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them. I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation." (Psalm 91:14-16 NLT)

<u>Questions for Reflection and Discussion</u>

1. Do I honour God as my higher power by learning and following all of his commandments? Where does my own self-will or convenience challenge this?

2. How am I doing in this area of being willing to give up my perceived rights and honour others above myself?
3. In what ways do I honour God and purposefully try to honour others around me? Where do I fall short?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, My desire is to live a purposeful and satisfying life devoted to You and willing to honour others above myself. I confess that in the past I have been prideful and puffed up in my self-seeking attitude concerning myself. Fill me to overflowing with Your all-encompassing love. Thank You for enabling me to experience honour as I honour You and others above myself. I am forever grateful that You care for me. AMEN