

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



NOVEMBER 2025



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

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<http://www.partnersinhope.ca/hope-for-today>

*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.*

For more recovery resources
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JUST FOR TODAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. Ephesians 2:10 NLT

SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

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

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

PRAYER: FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

Loving God, Thank You for rescuing me from the dark power of Satan and bringing me into loving relationship with Your Son, Jesus. I ask for wisdom and understanding from Your 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 we I dare ask or imagine. Amen



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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.

NOTES

SURRENDERED TO YOUR WILL

When you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. I will be found by you," says the Lord. "I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. (Jeremiah 29:12-14a NLT)

Living with God in recovery and following the twelve steps is a spiritual journey that requires spiritual commitment. Surrendering our will to God is not simply a one-time decision, it is an on-going process of continuous surrender. Life practices we've known in addiction will be challenged by the Word of God. We may think these are unconnected to our recovery because they are not specifically drug or alcohol related. However, they may have directly contributed to the problems that led us into addictive behaviour. As we daily choose to follow God's principles in all our affairs, our thinking and behaving will change and life will improve.

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)

We need help to understand how to be in a healthy relationship with God and with others. When we face conflict between God's way of life and life as we have known it, we will need to abandon our flawed thinking and allow God to teach us new ways. At any given moment we need to be prepared to stand firm against our desires and feelings and persevere through to victory over our familiar way of handling situations. God is aware of what we are going through and, if we call on Him for help, He will strengthen us to do what is right.

Even though it may be inconvenient, and perhaps momentarily uncomfortable, today is another opportunity for us to surrender our will and life to the care of God and allow Him to lead us on a new path to become the person He created us to be.

Throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. (Ephesians 4:22-23 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please give me the will and desire to do what pleases You. Amen

When we face conflict between God's way of life and life as we have known it, we will need to abandon our flawed thinking and allow God to teach us new ways.

DEFEATING OUR ENEMIES

When we were living a rebellious lifestyle, we gave little thought to our spiritual enemies who were working to keep us from doing what is right and good. That is because our lives were being lived in the evil way they desired. Now that we have given our will and life over to the care of God and moved into the Kingdom of Light, they are fighting hard to reclaim us. The following Psalm tells us that it is only through God's power and His name that we can tread down our enemies.

You are my King and my God. Decree victories for your people. For it is only by your power and through your name that we tread down our enemies; I do not trust my weapons. They could never save me. Only you can give us the victory over those who hate us. My constant boast is God. I can never thank you enough! (Psalm 44:4-8 TLB)

Like the writer of the Psalm, we need to put our trust in the weapons that God has given us.

Jesus won the battle over our enemies of sin and death and by believing in Him, our constant boast must be that we have the victory over those who desire to cause us harm. How can we make this claim? The Word of God is a shield for those who take refuge in Him. We cannot depend on our own thoughts but need to bring every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ. We need to put our trust in the weapons that God has given us. They are the ones that will save us from the attacks of the evil one who wants to destroy us.

Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You'll need them throughout your life. God's Word is an indispensable weapon. In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. (Ephesians 6:14-18a MSG)

Tempting us to do wrong and then causing us to feel guilt and shame when we do so is how the enemy wears us down. To defeat him we need to do a daily inventory and promptly admit any wrongs to God who can be depended on to forgive us and cleanse us from every wrong. As we seek the Holy Spirit's guidance in all our ways, we will have the power to overcome any temptation that comes from the lust of our flesh.

Prayer: Gracious God, I can never thank You enough that You are a shield around me and the One who lifts me up each time I fall down. Amen

NOTES

ESCAPING GREED'S TRAP

Greed is that intense need within us that has us always "grasping for more." It is just one item on a long list of things that make us foolish before God and vulnerable to trouble in this life.

Adultery, greed, hate and cheating come from a person's heart too. So do desires that are not pure, and wanting what belongs to others. And so do telling lies about others and being proud and being foolish. (Mark 7:22 NIRV)

**God
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In some places in the Far East those who want to trap monkeys set a trap. They prepare a small box with a tasty nut inside it and carve an opening just large enough for the monkey to put its hand inside but too small for the monkey to get its hand out if it's clenched into a fist. The monkey won't let go of the nut in its clenched fist and so is easily captured. Too often we are greedy for something that is leading us into captivity and our unwillingness to let it go keeps us from being free.

We are greedy when we want more than what we really need, whether it is power or money or toys or even everyday things like food. It's the character defect behind the feeling we give credibility to when we say, "It's never enough." We don't have to be trying to earn our second billion dollars to be greedy. Too often we are just living with a misplaced focus on how to live securely.

They have lost all feeling for what is right. So they have given themselves over to all kinds of evil pleasures. They take part in every kind of unclean act. And they are full of greed. This is what happens to those who are greedy. Whatever they get destroys them. Doing right sets honest people free, but people who can't be trusted are trapped by their greed. (Ephesians 4:19 NIRV, Proverbs 1:19, 11:6 ERV)

God promises to provide all we need so we can live well and do wonderful things.

Some people are greedy and never have enough. Good people are generous and have plenty. (Proverbs 21:26 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for the times I have slipped easily into greed. Help me to live life based on Your supply rather than on what I think I need. I place my trust in Your promise to supply all my needs today, and each day that lies ahead. Amen

PEACE IS POSSIBLE

When we eventually arrive at that place where we live in peace with those around us, we may still encounter some people who are hostile towards us. Despite our caring comments and gestures, they insult us or accuse us and just go out of their way to irritate or hurt us. How should we respond? How can we maintain peace? God knows these situations will arise and so we are given some helpful advice in the Bible about living at peace with everyone.

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. (Romans 12:18 NIV)

The first phrase in the above verse is: "***If it is possible.***" This indicates that there may be times when peace with another person is not possible. The person may not be interested in a peaceful environment, or they may even enjoy causing harm to others. What are we choosing to do? Our responsibility is to maintain peace in our own heart. We remember and hold fast to God's kindness to us and keep our thoughts filled with kindness, goodness and forgiveness towards the other person.

But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness. (James 3:17-18 NLT)

The second phrase in the same verse is, "***as far as it depends on you.***". We are not meant to co-dependently prop up someone in their sinful or harmful behaviour or attitude. We can walk away from a person who is belligerent, but we must be careful to do so with peace in our own heart. Irritation and condemnation need to go. God's healing and peace need to be received so the effects of the hostile environment can be soothed. When we have settled our hearts, we should pray for the other person that they would grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus and receive His grace, mercy and peace.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to live at peace with everyone. Help me to resolve conflict with others when it is possible, and if it depends on me. My desire is always to be peaceable, loving and gentle. As You have given grace generously to me, help me to give grace generously to those I find hard to love and not expect anything in return. Amen

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(Romans 12:18
NIV)

NOVEMBER 4

KNOWING GOD'S WILL

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.

So don't be foolish with your lives, but learn what the Lord wants you to do.
(Ephesians 5:17 ERV)

The founders of AA were very clear that we needed to both know God's will for us and have the power to carry it out. The first principle we should acknowledge is that we need help to do God's will. We need to ask for the gift of understanding and allow God to teach us what we can do for ourselves. God is more than willing to give us gifts, but we need to be humble and admit that we need to open our hearts and minds to receive all that God has to offer.

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We keep asking God to fill you with the knowledge of what he wants. We pray he will give you the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives. (Colossians 1:9b NIRV)

We need to lay down our own perspective on what is needed in any given situation and be willing to see things from God's perspective. Our old ways of understanding life are flawed. They may be familiar, but they took us to dark and destructive places. We need what is new, even though that means embracing different and unknown strategies for living life to the full.

We will be encouraged and strengthened to overcome our own feelings of helplessness as we hear testimony of how others chose to obey God's ways, and it made a positive difference in their lives. Each time we stretch ourselves to follow God's will as laid out in the Bible, we increase our deposit of peace and trust and will soon discover that God is faithful to do all that He has promised.

Walk in obedience to all that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days. (Deuteronomy 5:33 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to humble myself and let go of my own perspective of life. I desire to know Your will for my life and put it into practice in all my affairs. Please give me the gift of understanding how to do this. Amen

NOVEMBER 29

STOP LYING

During our time in addiction, we didn't give a second thought about telling lies. It was simply a way of life, a way of survival. We lied so we'd look better than we were acting. We lied to try to gain advantage. We lied because we were angry with someone and wanted to get back at them. We lied to ourselves to minimize and excuse our addictive behaviour. The truth is, whenever we try to live without God we quickly descend into a habit of telling lies.

They all fool and defraud each other; no one tells the truth. With practiced tongues they tell lies; they wear themselves out with all their sinning. For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. (Jeremiah 9:5, John 8:44 NLT)

The life we are called to recover is shaped by choosing to tell the truth in all circumstances. Our character reflects God's character when we speak the truth. In contrast, it reflects that of the evil one when we are lying.

Towns and cities have regulations and practices to promote good sanitation. Why? They need to provide a clean environment so that their citizens can stay healthy. Similarly, God wants us to experience a rich and blessed life. Lying contaminates and destroys relationships and so life in God's world is based on His spiritual sanitation system of telling the truth.

Who may climb the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies. They will receive the Lord's blessing and have a right relationship with God their savior. (Psalm 24:3-5 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for the many times I have lied to You, to others, and to myself. Help me to always speak the truth and be transparent in all my ways. Amen

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PRAISE THE LORD

Reading the following Psalm is a great way to start the day. The people of every nation on earth are encouraged to praise God for His kindness and great love towards them.

Praise the Lord, all you nations. Praise him, all you people of the earth. For his unfailing love for us is powerful; the Lord's faithfulness endures forever. Praise the Lord! (Psalm 117:1-2 NLT)

The people of every nation on earth are encouraged to praise God for His kindness and great love towards them.

Those of us who have given our will and life over to the care of God know we no longer carry the baggage of our past sin and the accompanying guilt and shame. We have been forgiven and declared blameless by the kindness of God in sending Jesus into the world to set us free from the power of sin. We are no longer guilty. We, who once lived in rebellion against the things of God, are now reconciled to our Heavenly Father who lavishes His love on us. We are His cherished children. If that's not something to praise God for, what is?

How priceless your faithful love is! People find safety in the shadow of your wings. They eat well because there is more than enough in your house. You let them drink from your river that flows with good things. (Psalm 36:7-8 NIRV)

At times we may feel undeserving of the goodness of God. The truth is, when we believe in the finished work of Jesus to wash away our sins, we receive an eternal inheritance from God that Jesus purchased for us with His life. We

don't deserve it, but God declares the price of our sin is "paid in full" by Jesus.

Great blessings belong to those who live pure lives! They follow the Lord's teachings. Great blessings belong to those who follow his rules! They seek him with all their heart. (Psalm 119:1-2 ERV)

Let's improve our conscious contact with God and praise Him for His goodness and mercy that will follow us all the days of our life.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Let me not be silent. I am grateful for all that Jesus has done for me. I ask You to give me the will and desire to live my life in praise and thanksgiving for my inheritance through Jesus. Amen

DEALING WITH ANXIETY

Every one of us deals with anxiety at some point in our lives. Many of life's circumstances can cause us to feel anxious such as:- a deadline to find housing and nothing affordable is on the horizon; bills overdue for payment and no money in the bank; caught in a traffic jam and the time for an important appointment is creeping ever closer, etc. etc. When the mind and body come under stress, adrenaline is released into the bloodstream. We feel jumpy, our hearts beat faster, our breathing becomes irregular, and we feel nervous. Often, our sleep is affected. While it's normal to feel anxiety in certain situations, for some of us this condition is experienced often, and has become our normal life's experience.

The Bible tells us: ***Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*** (Philippians 4:6 NIV)

God says the way to deal with anxiety is to deal with its root cause.

How can we ever hope to achieve a condition where we are not anxious about anything? Isn't that an unrealistic expectation? Aren't we just setting ourselves up for failure? God says the way to deal with anxiety is to deal with its root cause. If it's anxiety over past mistakes, then God invites us to confess them and receive forgiveness. If we're worried about a current condition or circumstance and we don't know what to do about it, God's solution is to bring it before Him in prayer, obey whatever He tells us to do, and trust Him to work out the rest.

I confess my sins; they fill me with anxiety. I am filled with trouble and anxiety, but your commandments bring me joy. (Psalm 38:18, 119:143 GNT)

If we are anxious and nervous and not even sure why, we can ask God to help us sort out what's going on in our minds. He'll not only show us what's going on but will comfort us in the middle of our troubled thinking and calm our anxious thoughts.

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. Whenever I am anxious and worried, you comfort me and make me glad. (Psalm 139:23-24 NIV, 94:19 GNT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your desire is that I choose to live in peace and feel secure in Your care. Help me to understand my anxious thoughts and bring them to You, for You are my refuge and my deliverer and will guide me in the way I should go. Please help me! Amen

TAKING CARE AS WE MAKE AMENDS

When we come to the point of making amends, fear can overwhelm us as we remember those we have harmed. We were enemies of God and serving a different master when we hurt others. Now we have been reconciled to God and are willing to admit the error of our former ways. God has forgiven us for the wrongs we have done and now we need to make amends and, if possible, reconcile with others.

At one time you were separated from God. You were his enemies in your minds, because the evil you did was against him. But now he has made you his friends again. He did this by the death Christ suffered while he was in his body. He did it so that he could present you to himself as people who are holy, blameless, and without anything that would make you guilty before him. (Colossians 1:21-22 ERV)

God has forgiven us for the wrongs we have done and now we need to make amends and, if possible, reconcile with others.

When we are reconciled to God we have the power of the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen us to do what we need to do. God cares for the people we have harmed. Some of our former relationships may no longer exist however, we still need to make amends to those we have harmed, except when to do so would further injure them or others. We need to pray and seek advice from God, our sponsor, or another trusted friend, as to when and how we can appropriately make our amends.

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. (Romans 13:8 NIV)

Though we may dread doing the work of reconciliation, in the end it will give us peace in our hearts. Hopefully the people we have harmed will offer us forgiveness, but if they choose not to, that choice remains with them. We have chosen to make amends and when we have done what God requires of us, we can leave the outcome of our obedience with Him.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, As I do the work of making amends with those I have injured, I ask for the courage to do whatever needs to be done. Together with my amends, please help me to demonstrate love and care for those I have harmed and truly desire what is best for them. Amen

I WILL ADJUST MYSELF

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.

When we pray the complete Serenity Prayer, we say the words: “Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it, trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will.” These are easy words to memorize and say with sincerity, but they are more difficult to put into practice. They ask us to demonstrate the character quality of being flexible.

We are used to having our own way and feel vulnerable when that is blocked. We are not yet comfortable in the new and strange world of recovery and “surrendering to God” is unfamiliar to us. Having the grace and patience to trust that God will work all things out is a very steep learning curve for us to embrace.

Be earnest and disciplined in your prayers. Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. (1 Peter 4:7-8 NLT)

To be flexible involves being open to new ideas. We need to be willing to learn new ways of looking at things and new ways of behaving in certain situations. We need to be willing to see the bigger picture of life, rather than our self-centered one.

Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make it as clear as you can to all you meet that you're on their side, working with them and not against them. (Ephesians 4:2 NLT, Philippians 4:5 MSG)

We need to look beyond our current circumstances and be willing to trust that God is at work. He hasn't forgotten us. He's not too busy to act on our behalf. He is a good God and a good Father, and He will come through for us in a way that is life-enriching if we will just give Him a chance.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit I am powerless to adjust myself to what is and not try to adjust everything else to my desires. Please work in me to adjust my attitude and my emotions, so I can trust that You are truly working all things together for good in my life. Amen

We need to be willing to see the bigger picture of life, rather than our self-centered one.

PROBLEMS! PROBLEMS! PROBLEMS!

Problems! Problems! Problems! Sometimes life seems full of them. One problem seems to pile on top of another until we feel like it's all too much and we don't know what to do, or where to turn. With full knowledge of all that is going on in our lives, God tells us not to be afraid because He will be with us, and take care of us.

Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you. (Deuteronomy. 31:8 NLT).

In some recovery meetings we affirm this principle: **God is always with me. I need never face my problems alone. Together with God, any difficulty can be worked out and overcome.**

***Together
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God made the universe. The sun rises in the east every morning and sets in the west every evening, as God ordained. God controls the powerful ocean and protects a delicate little flower that grows up through a crack in the sidewalk. As problems arise, we can bring each one to God because He cares for us. ***Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.*** (1 Peter 5:7 NLT)

Challenging circumstances may complicate life for us. We need a new set of skills to handle the consequences of our past choices and move forward in the way God is directing us. When we are unsure about God's love and care for us, we will fall under the weight of our own fear. Fortunately, if we bring our problems to God seeking His wisdom, together with God any difficulty can be worked out and overcome.

God says: ***"Call on me when you are in trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory." Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.*** (Psalm 50:15, Proverbs 3:6 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to see my problems in a new way – as a journey to trust You and learn Your ways, and see Your wisdom at work in my life. Give me the will and desire to follow Your ways, trusting that You are a good Father who faithfully loves and cares for me. Amen

WHAT KIND OF GOD DO WE COME TO?

The writer of today's Psalm is putting his trust in a faithful and righteous God and asks Him to listen to his cry for help. He acknowledges that God is a moral judge and asks for mercy, declaring that no one is innocent of sin before Him. When we came to God for help, did we know that He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love? Many of us did not know these things about God but what we did know was that we were powerless over our dependency and our lives had become unmanageable. In our despair we called out to God and asked Him to help us.

Hear my prayer, O Lord; listen to my plea! Answer me because you are faithful and righteous. Don't put your servant on trial, for no one is innocent before you. My enemy has chased me. He has knocked me to the ground and forces me to live in darkness like those in the grave. I am losing all hope; I am paralyzed with fear. I remember the days of old. I ponder all your great works and think about what you have done. I lift my hands to you in prayer. I thirst for you as parched land thirsts for rain. (Psalm 143:1-6 NLT)

Like the writer, we faced an enemy who knocked us to the ground and forced us to live in the darkness of our chaotic life. Each day was the same as the one before and all our energy was consumed by meeting the demands of our dependency. We were paralyzed by fear and losing all hope of ever having a purposeful life.

When we cried out to God, we were unsure if He heard us. However, God is faithful to His Word and is continually searching the earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are turned toward Him. God did answer our prayer, had mercy on us, and invited us to give our will and life over to His care. Now through prayer and meditation on the Scriptures, we are understanding more about this amazing God who knew us before we were even formed in our mother's womb.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I ponder Your great works and think about all that You have done and continue to do for me. I am thankful that You are a forgiving God who is slow to anger and rich in love for me and for all who call on Your name. Amen

***I lift my
hands to
you in
prayer. I
thirst for
you as
parched
land thirsts
for rain.***

Psalm 143:6 NLT

EXCELLENCE VERSUS PERFECTIONISM

All of us want to be successful and do things well. When we accept an affirmation for a job well done or a goal achieved, we feel good about what we accomplished and that is how it should be. Unfortunately, some of us set goals that are unreasonable and impossible to achieve, we fail to see the progress we have achieved because we are blinded by perfectionism.

While it's important that we do our best within the limits we have of time, talent, and resources, we need to recognize that perfectionism is something quite different and is much more sinister. Excellence is the noble effort any of us make

to "live one day at a time, one moment at a time, accepting hardship as a pathway to peace." Perfectionism is that fear-driven approval-seeking obsessive pressure that overwhelms us until we are defeated and choose to quit.

We find our perfection by trusting in the finished work of the only person who was perfect.

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him. (Hebrews 12:1b-2a; 5:8-9, NIV)

What comfort these words from the Bible give us. Only Jesus is perfect and we're not Jesus. We find our perfection by trusting in the finished work of the only person who was perfect. Jesus is the "perfecter of our faith." The Bible is full of imperfect characters like us who were loved and redeemed by the one true God.

God is not looking for perfection in us but rather that we have faith in the perfect work of His beloved Son. God desires obedience to His word as our focus. He wants us to acknowledge our failures and have an open heart to His forgiveness, cleansing and restoration. That is life at its best for whoever chooses it.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to live well, but I know that I can't do life perfectly. You know that too and so You sent Jesus to suffer and die for my sins so I could receive forgiveness and healing for the failures You knew would happen. I put my trust once more in You, for only in Your power can I live a life of excellence with joy. Amen

STUBBORN PRIDE

Pride is a very destructive character defect. It is evident in our lives when our thoughts are negative, angry, or related to feeling victimized. When we have been harmed or offended by someone, pride tells us that we know best how to deal with it. We decide to use our own ideas which are fatally flawed, and the result is that instead of solving problems, we become slaves to destructive life practices that fill our lives with increased suffering.

Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice. A fool's mouth lashes out with pride, but the lips of the wise protect them. Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Pride brings a person low, but the lowly in spirit gain honor. (Proverbs 13:10; 14:3; 16:18; 29:23 NIV)

Pride is destructive because it removes God's presence and God's will from any thoughts about how to deal with a situation. Pride says "I will do it MY way" regardless of the consequences.

Though the Lord is great, he cares for the humble, but he keeps his distance from the proud. Though I am surrounded by troubles, you will protect me from the anger of my enemies. You reach out your hand, and the power of your right hand saves me. The Lord will work out his plans for my life—for your faithful love, O Lord, endures forever. (Psalm 138:6-8a NLT)

Humility enables us to stand with God, face the hurt and injustice we have endured, and invite Him to show us a calm way forward. God promises to work out His good plan for our lives in a way that demonstrates His faithful love for us.

If we truly want to build a secure life it is necessary to come to God with a humble heart and willingly follow the directions given in His Word.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I repent of the pride and arrogance that led me to solutions that were not in keeping with Your Word. Forgive me for the times I thought that Your principles for living in recovery were not working because I wanted healing in my way. Help me to trust and act according to Your ways and lean not on my own prideful understanding. Amen

Pride is destructive because it removes God's presence and God's will from any thoughts about how to deal with a situation.

NOVEMBER 24

RECOVERY TOOL--PRAYER

Step 11 of the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous encourages us to improve our conscious contact with God through meditation and prayer. What is prayer? Simply put, prayer is talking with God.

By day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me— a prayer to the God of my life. (Psalm 42:6 NIV)

God created us for relationship with Him. Friends are people who like each other and who enjoy sharing activities and spending time together. They share their thoughts and feelings with each other during good times and in times of struggle. Texts or emails often complement the sharing. In other words, friends get to know one another and become familiar with each other's lives. They trust one another with their life experiences. Through God's infinite knowledge He knows all about us and asks us to open the door of our hearts and allow Him to come in so we can talk and share with one another as friends. That's prayer.

***What is
prayer?

Simply
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talking
with God.***

Jesus says: ***"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me."*** (Revelation 3:20 NIV)

Prayer includes listening to God as we read the Bible. We pray when we ask for understanding of what we are reading and observing in His word. We can talk to God about happenings in our day, tell God about our needs, thank God for life's simple pleasures and even seek His guidance when we bring our frustrations and complaints before Him. When we fail, we can bring our guilt and shame to God and receive His forgiveness and healing. All of this is done through prayer. This interaction with God helps our friendship with God deepen and grow

God promises in His word, ***"Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking, I will hear."*** (Isaiah 65:24 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You that I am Your precious child and the smallest detail of my day is important to you. You are a good Father and I want to improve my conscious contact with You. Help me to seek Your counsel in every detail of my life. Amen

NOVEMBER 9

WALKING SAFELY IN A NEW DIRECTION

To go forward in recovery, we must find a new direction for our lives and new ways of responding to issues, plus new guidelines for making decisions.

Our old pattern of thinking and behaving brought us to where we are today. As we establish new and healthy principles and actions based on God's Word, God will support us by the power of His Holy Spirit. He will also put us in the way of human counselors and trustworthy people who walk with Him.

The Bible says, ***Where there is no counsel, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.*** (Proverbs 11:14 NKJV)

Good counsel comes from many sources including the Bible, pastors, friends who know and live by God's laws, or books and media that honour the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It may also come from a professional Christian counselor who understands addiction and recovery. Knowledgeable people we encounter on our journey may also encourage us by sharing the wisdom they received when dealing with similar issues to those we are currently experiencing.

Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down the other can help him up. But if someone is alone ... there is no one to help him ... Two men can resist an attack that would defeat one man alone. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 GNT)

We need help from everyone who can enlarge our vision and broaden our perspective. We need to share honestly about the temptations we are experiencing. We are not unique! Wise sober friends have had similar experiences and have learned lessons that can help us. We need to respond in humility to honest feedback others are giving us, and, foundational to all other counsel, we need to seek the Holy Spirit who will guide us into all truth.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to welcome Your wisdom and the help of wise counselors. Keep me honest. Help me to lay down my pride and, together with You, follow the path of recovery to new life. Amen

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ATTRACTION RATHER THAN PROMOTION

Who would have thought that the way we are living in our relationships, taking responsibility for our actions, and doing the work that is required of us each day, would attract others to think about getting what we have? We lived for such a long-time using bullying and manipulation and lies and pleas to get what we wanted. We hurt and disappointed so many people. No one wanted to come near us, let alone learn from the way we were living. What a change God has brought about in us.

Our public relations policy is based upon attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.

AA 11th Tradition

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 NIV)

When we live by God's principles we are blessed, and goodness just naturally flows into all our activities and relationships. We are living in a world that is filled with anger and fear. When people encounter someone who has true inner peace and a simple heart to do the next right thing, they long for the same. Too many people hear negative words, listen to their negative thoughts, and live with despair rather than hope. What a gift we bring when we come alongside them with kindness, compassion, and strength that comes directly from inside us.

Let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. (Matthew 5:16 NLT)

The answers people long for are not found with the "big-name million-dollar lifestyle" people. Simple people like us who have allowed God to work in our hearts and change us from the inside out are known only to a small circle of friends and loved ones but – we have the message!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to live today in a way that pleases You and blesses others. I want to carry the message of how You have not only given me sobriety but a whole new life in Christ. Amen

TAKING THE LID OFF THE PAST

Step 5 of the 12 Step program requires that we admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. We are asked to uncover those things we have done and those humiliating things done to us that we pushed down, so we could behave as if they had never happened. To lay bare our souls and admit what took place in our lives makes us feel extremely vulnerable.

You spread out our sins before you—our secret sins—and you see them all. (Psalm 90:8 NLT)

We may be able to hide our wrongs from others, but God sees everything. He even knows the thoughts that caused us to sin. The good news is, when we give our will and life over to God's care, He forgives our sins and gives us a new nature and a desire to do what is right.

Admitting our wrongs helps us deal with those things that caused harm. It brings them into the light of God's presence and gives us the opportunity to grieve both over the harm we caused, and the harm caused to us. Telling another person about what happened to us makes the events more real and therefore helps us begin the healing process.

Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. (Psalm 103:2-4 NLT)

Exposure of sin means it has no more power over us. We are free to enjoy a new life of joy and peace. The favour of God is upon us and through prayer and meditation we can improve our conscious contact with God, as we pray for knowledge of His will for our lives and the power to carry it out.

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. (2 Peter 1:3 NIV)

Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for Jesus who gives me freedom from sin and heals my wounds. I claim that through Jesus I have been made whole in body, mind, and spirit. Amen

We may be able to hide our wrongs from others, but God sees everything.

A NEW IDENTITY

When we surrender our will and our lives into God's care we are restored to relationship with God. Our spirit comes alive as God's Spirit resides in us. God begins to pour His unfailing love into us. We begin to believe that we belong to God and are His cherished children who bring delight to His heart. This truth grows in our spirit and nurtures stability and freedom in our soul – that part of our being where we think and feel and make choices.

Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.

(1 Thessalonians 5:23 NLT)

***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)

Where we have previously felt isolated and detached, we now begin to experience a sense of connectedness and, as we are assured that God is watching over us, fear gives way to a sense of security. God is working on our behalf. The reality that we no longer are alone begins to sink into our minds. Confusion gives way to more and more clarity. Hope grows, and despair moves away as surely as fog is dispersed by the warm sunshine. God is making us whole, holy in every way.

Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24 NLT)

New patterns of behaviour are appearing as our spirit and soul are impacted by the truth of God's word. We begin to think more positively. Rather than reacting and running, we start to feel more secure and confident in dealing with what life brings our way. Our co-dependent need for approval from others diminishes as we learn to stand firm on the truth of God's Word and acknowledge our identity as the treasured person God says we are. Lying and cheating and scamming are no longer necessary. We are living as people of integrity, and it feels good.

Prayer: Gracious God, Once again I affirm my identity in Christ Jesus and declare that I am a new person through Jesus' finished work on the cross. Thank you for my new life. Help me to live as the treasured person You say I am. Amen.

LEST WE FORGET

Today we remember blood that was spilled on battlefields around the world by brave men and women who gave their lives for the cause of freedom and justice. Our hearts are touched as we watch young faces on parade to honour some old veterans. We see the memories etched in the veterans' faces and can only imagine the stories they will never forget. We don't have those memories in our hearts, so we need to hear stories and look at symbols that help us pay attention and remember. Poppies, moments of silence, and ceremonies at cenotaphs around the country all help us reflect and remember.

Often in the recovery process, we receive key fobs and medallions to mark milestones in our journey. These symbols are indicators of time in recovery and help us celebrate our sobriety in community with others with whom we share the journey.

As Christians we have symbols of Christ's sacrifice of His life for us. These are the bread and wine of the Lord's supper used in the celebration of Communion in churches around the world.

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:23b-26 NIV).

On Remembrance Day, we hear the phrase, "Lest we forget." As Canadians, we should never forget the sacrifice of our brave soldiers who lost their lives in battle. As people in recovery, we should never forget the impact of our life in addiction and the new opportunity we have to live life to the full each day. As Christians, we should never forget the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ who gave His life for our eternal salvation.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I pause to remember and live in gratitude for all the benefits I have received. Thank you for the symbols and events that help me remember the cost of my freedom, my time in recovery, and my new life with You through Jesus my Lord and Saviour. Amen

***We need to
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REMOVING DEFECTS OF CHARACTER

When we come to Step-6 of the 12-Step program, we have admitted the exact nature of our wrongs to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, and are now entirely ready to have God remove our defects of character. If we have been honest in our inventory, we will feel a sense of excitement as we let go of what we don't want in our lives and look forward to what God has promised to bring into our lives as we walk in His ways. In the Bible story of Jesus calling Lazarus from the dead, Lazarus came out of the tomb in grave clothes and Jesus told the people around Him to free Lazarus from these clothes and let Him go.

The dead man came out. His hands and feet were wrapped with strips of linen. A cloth was around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the clothes he was buried in and let him go." (John 11:44 NIRV)

We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Lazarus is a picture of where we are at in Step 6. Our defective nature deadened us to the ways of God but now we are entirely ready to have God remove what hinders our new life with Him in recovery. Jesus called Lazarus out of the grave and told the people around him to take off the grave clothes so he could move freely. Jesus, by His redeeming work on the cross made it possible for us to be "born again" to a new life. Those around us who have been walking the recovery road are the ones who will help us get rid of those things that cause us to stumble in our new life with God in recovery.

You were taught not to live the way you used to. You must get rid of your old way of life. That's because it has been made impure by the desire for things that lead you astray. You were taught to be made new in your thinking. You were taught to start living a new life. (Ephesians 4:22-24a NIRV)

In 12 Step meetings we encounter people who are willing to share their experience, strength, and hope with us. They will inspire us to get rid of our old ways and to put on the new nature that God has given us which enables us to live the life He has called us to.

Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to remove everything that would hinder me from running the race You have set before me. Amen

LEARNING TO LET GO

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.

Holding on to anger and pain doesn't fix anything. Burying a grudge deep within and putting layers of blame on top of the hurt doesn't bring healing. Whether the irritation or the wound is recent or something we've held for a long time, perhaps today is the day to finally let go, so we can be joyful, optimistic and grateful.

For everything there is a season ... A time to search and a time to quit searching. A time to keep and a time to throw away. (Ecclesiastes 3:1a, 6 NLT)

Our shame is often one of the greatest barriers to living joyfully. God promises us forgiveness. Jesus paid with His life so we could have eternal life and freedom from sin. The devil seeks to keep us hiding our pain in the darkness of unforgiveness so we will feel like damaged goods. It's time to let the past go into the cleansing river of God's unlimited forgiveness.

Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Proverbs 28:13 NIV)

Admittedly, life isn't perfect, and we may face circumstances and challenges that seem bigger than we can handle. Thankfully we can let our feelings of worry and fear point us to our need for God's help, which will surely be available when we ask for it. As many others have done in the past, let's get rid of everything that slows us down and causes us to fall. Let's notice and use the gifts we have today and let the rest go.

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

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You know me and You know everything about me and my circumstances. I bring all that hinders me to You and choose to let it go into Your cleansing river of forgiveness, so that I may live in Your peace and joy each day. Amen

It's time to let the past go into the cleansing river of God's unlimited forgiveness.

REPROGRAMMING OUR THOUGHTS FOR GROWTH

Step 10 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 His desire is that we obey His Word as we serve both 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 reasoning is based on the comfort of the half-truths we continue to hold on to and 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 some time. 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. By learning and obeying these principles our minds will be transformed, and we will experience a freshness in all we think and do. Reprogramming our minds may be challenging at first because some of our reasoning is based on the comfort of the half-truths we continue to hold to and believe. However, when we know and apply 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 assess if our actions are guided by the wisdom of God's principles. As we see positive results from an obedient response to God's Word, we will develop a deep reverence for God and His ways.

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

GUARDING AGAINST COMPARING

When we don't feel good about ourselves it is often the result of comparing ourselves with others. We pay attention to what others are doing; project what we think they expect of us; determine whether they are noticing and appreciating us; or not noticing us at all. We define what we think they are saying and the tone in which it is said. How confusing our thoughts become! Instead of God's standards, we measure others by our own flawed worldly standards. This enables us to quickly get into the "victim mode" and, from there, how easy it is to stumble into relapse.

We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. (2 Corinthians 10:12 NIV)

We need to be aware of our thoughts that accuse and condemn others. As soon as we begin to think thoughts like these, we need to do a self-check and find out what is really going on in our hearts. If we observe negative traits in others, we should pray for them and bless them and leave their negativity with them. We should not allow their problems to become our problems. We also need to be careful of harboring a critical spirit which points out other people's failures or/and criticizes their faults. Jesus gave us some good advice on this type of behaviour. We need to be forgiving towards others and help them if we think they may be troubled. Accusation and condemnation will not glorify Christ. Carrying one another's burdens will.

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

(Galatians 6:2 NIV)

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. Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Matthew 7:4-5 NLT, Galatians 6:1-2 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to see others and myself as You see us. You created each person as a unique individual, exquisitely designed for Your purpose. Thank You that I am fearfully and wonderfully made in Your image, as is each person I meet with. Amen

GUILT – THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

The slogan “Guilt – the gift that keeps on giving” is often mentioned in recovery circles. Guilt reminds us of our wrong actions and thoughts. The Bible teaches us how to recognize guilt in various forms and gives us God’s instructions on how to deal properly with all guilt that invades our thinking.

God made us with a conscience where guilt reveals to us our wrongdoing. The Bible records that the first humans knew they had done wrong when they disobeyed God’s instructions. Because of their guilt, they hid from God and tried to cover themselves. We, at times, continue to act just like the first humans. Neither of them accepted blame for what they had done and attempted to shift the blame away from themselves.

**God made us
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The Lord God called to the man and said, “Where are you?” The man said, “I heard you walking in the garden, and I was afraid. I was naked, so I hid.” (Genesis 3:9-10 ERV)

Guilt is a gift to us when it reminds us to deal with our wrongdoing so that we can be at peace with God, ourselves, and others. If we do not deal with our wrongdoing, guilt will fester and turn to shame. Shame will cause us many problems. Sometimes we will try to overcome the shame we feel by justifying the offence, or by using our substance of choice to help us feel better. Neither of these options work. The truth is that when we confess to God what we have done, He will

forgive us, and we will be freed from harmful shame. Only then will we have the right heart to go to those we have harmed to seek reconciliation.

Our God, you bless everyone whose sins you forgive and wipe away. You bless them by saying, “You told me your sins, without trying to hide them, and now I forgive you.” (Psalm 32:1-2 CEV)

Guilt is a blessing that keeps on giving when we allow it to become a reminder to seek forgiveness for the wrongs we have done, and then ask God to remove all our shortcomings.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to quickly deal with guilt when I have done wrong. Also, help me to forgive others for their wrongful acts just like You have forgiven me. Amen

SHOW RESPECT FOR GOD

Through the 12-Step Program of A.A. and reading the Bible we came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity and, as we moved along in our life in recovery, many of us came to that place where we made a decision to turn our will and life over to the care of God. The benefits of doing so are too numerous to list and the wisdom in making that move is evidenced in the new life we are experiencing.

Anyone who shows respect for the LORD has a strong tower. It will be a safe place for his children. Respect for the LORD is like a fountain that gives life. It turns you away from the jaws of death. (Proverbs 14:26-27 NIRV)

As much as we regret the negative impact on our loved ones while we were living a destructive lifestyle, we can take heart that, as we give ourselves to the task of loving God and respecting His ways, we will now be a blessing to them. We will also be a witness to them of the safety and stability one finds as they live each day in the will of God.

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. Since God is on our side, who can be against us? (Psalm 46:1 NLT; Romans 8:31 NIRV)

Just as a fountain of clear spring water is refreshing and life-giving when we drink from it, so God pours out His life-giving Spirit upon us to give us the energy, grace, and wisdom we need to walk in His ways. The question is, how deeply are we willing to drink of the fountain of life that God provides?

During unpredictable times, it is a comfort to know that all we need to persevere through to peace in our hearts will come from God and not from our own limited resources. What a privilege it is to turn our hearts towards our gracious God and know He is waiting and listening, ready to guide us and act on our behalf.

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to live respectfully each day as I honour You. Thank You for being a safe and life-giving place as well as a source of blessing for me. I am so glad You are on my side and that I can live under Your protective care. Amen

**Anyone
who
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respect for
the LORD
has a
strong
tower.**

***Proverbs 14:26
NIRV***

BEING SENSITIVE TO OTHERS

In the Bible we read that Jesus was repeatedly sensitive to people and what they were dealing with, and He reached out to them with mercy and compassion. Recovering the life God intends us to live includes learning how to move away from being overly sensitive about our own needs, being more aware of what others are going through, and compassionately caring for them.

Don't be jealous or proud but be humble and consider others more important than yourselves. Care about them as much as you care about yourselves. (Philippians 2:3-4 CEV)

Jesus was repeatedly sensitive to people and what they were going through, and He reached out to them with mercy and compassion.

It's important to be sensitive about what we say, when we say it, and how we say it. We need to be honest and compassionate to those we are speaking with. This goes together with truth telling.

...Everyone should be quick to listen. But they should be slow to speak. They should be slow to get angry. ...Say only what will help to build others up and meet their needs. Then what you say will help those who listen. (James 1:19, Ephesians 4:29 NIRV)

God's word instructs us to be careful about what we do and say so that we won't offend others. When we insensitively say and do "what we want, when we want to," we may harm those who are seeking to recover from hurtful situations.

You say, "I have the right to do anything." But not everything is helpful. Again you say, "I have the right to do anything." But not everything builds us up. No one

should look out for their own interests. Instead, they should look out for the interests of others. (1 Corinthians 10:23-24 NIRV)

God desires that we have confidence in being the person He created us to be. He longs for us to get rid of feelings of inferiority which may lead us to living over-sensitively to the words and actions of others. God encourages us to stand strong in His love and acceptance of who we are.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to speak and behave with wisdom and compassion. Help me to be gentle and kind in all my dealings with others. Amen

OVERCOMING HATRED AND INJURY

Most people love the prayer of St. Francis. It's been put to music, made into wall hangings, and often prayed where people gather to seek God.

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love,
Where there is injury, pardon
Where there is doubt, faith,
Where there is despair, hope,
Where there is darkness, light,
Where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, Grant that I may not so much
Seek to be consoled as to console,
Not so much to be understood as to understand,
Not so much to be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
It is in dying that we awake to eternal life.*

***Love
your
enemies.
Pray for
those
who
hurt
you.***

The problem is that these nice words are immensely difficult to put into practice. If we are honest, how do we normally respond when we are shown hatred, or are injured by someone else's choices, or hemmed in by someone living in despair and sadness? When things are not going well with another person, do we want to console that person more than we want to be consoled, to understand them more than we want to be understood? The truth is, we may want to escape or retaliate more than we want to bring peace.

***Matthew
5:44 NIRV***

If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? (1 John 4:20 NLT)

We are called to love others but fortunately God doesn't leave us to do that on our own. If we are going to overcome hatred for another person we can only do so as we live in God's love. We receive love. We pray for our enemies and, in the amazing power of God's love, speak and act in loving ways no matter what.

We love each other because he loved us first. (1 John 4:19 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, as I pray the prayer of St. Francis from my heart, I ask that You help me put the words into practice in my thoughts, words, and deeds. Amen

DIFFICULTY FOLLOWING THROUGH

Many of us have never been disciplined in the art of following through on the commitments we make. We start something and then get tired when it takes more effort than we are willing to give. Committed relationships often suffer from this type of attitude. While a relationship is contributing to our needs we are fine, but when it starts requiring effort that we are unwilling to give, then we are ready to walk away rather than work on the challenges.

If God didn't hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and exposing himself to the worst by sending his own Son, is there anything else he wouldn't gladly and freely do for us? (Romans 8:32 MSG)

Following through requires that we be like Jesus and do the will of God no matter the cost.

Because of our Heavenly Father's love for us, Jesus was willing to die in our place for the sins which separate us from our loving God. Through forgiveness of our sins, our broken relationship with God is restored and we have life with Him forever. Jesus endured the ridicule of people around Him and the agonizing pain of dying on the cross so that He could fulfill God's perfect plan of salvation.

We despised him and rejected him—a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief...He was despised, and we didn't care. Yet it was our grief he bore, our sorrows that weighed him down. (Isaiah 53:3-4a TLB)

What is required for us to follow through and be a doer of God's will? When we repent of our sins and turn our will and life over to the care of God, we receive everything we need to live the life God has planned for us. The Scriptures teach us the ways of God, and we need to follow through on what they say regardless of our feelings. Before Jesus went to the cross, He asked, ***"My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me"*** but in obedience to God's will He finished with, ***"Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."*** (Matthew 26:39b NLT)

Following through requires that we be like Jesus and do the will of God no matter the cost.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am weak but You are strong. Please strengthen me to follow through and do the right thing in all my affairs. Amen

SEEING OUR TRUE VALUE

Self-worth is the value we see in ourselves and our role in life. Some of us overrate ourselves and some of us undervalue ourselves according to our position in life. What is the right approach to assessing our self-worth? When selling a house, the asking price is not the true value of the house. Its true value is the price the buyer is willing to pay for it. God was willing to pay a high price to buy us back from the broken and isolated condition we were in because of our sin and rebellion against Him.

When people sin, they earn what sin pays—death. But God gives his people a free gift—eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23 ERV)

We are of great value to God because Jesus came into the world to pay the price for our sin so that we could be free from its penalty. How do we value what Jesus has done for us? If we reject what Jesus did for us, then we are assessing no worth to the plan of God for our deliverance from the penalty of sin. Our self-worth is then self-determined or assessed by the value others place on us.

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

Jesus came into the world not to judge the world but to save it. Our unwillingness to receive this precious gift of new life through Jesus is what will judge us. Our true value is determined by who we become when we accept the finished work of Christ on our behalf. In Christ we become children of our Heavenly Father. Our worth to God is more than we could ever imagine. We are God's masterpieces created in Christ Jesus to do good works.

God rescued us from dead-end alleys and dark dungeons. He's set us up in the kingdom of the Son he loves so much, the Son who got us out of the pit we were in, got rid of the sins we were doomed to keep repeating. (Colossians 1:13-14 MSG)

Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to base my self-worth on the truth of who You are and all that I am because I have accepted what Jesus did for me. I am grateful that You have become my Heavenly Father and that I am Your precious child. I truly am of great value! Amen

Our worth to God is more than we could ever imagine.