

Tuesday

LIFE IMPROVES AS I PRACTICE SELF-CONTROL

Everyone wants a happy life. In the past some of us tried to achieve a good life by taking what are known to be shortcuts. Unfortunately, the shortcuts proved less than desirable, and we found ourselves in chaotic places we would rather have avoided.

In a story in the Bible, Esau traded his blessing as a firstborn son for a bowl of stew to fill his empty stomach. At the time, his primary concern was to satisfy his immediate physical need without any thought at all about his future. Esau had not learned how to practice self-control.

Jesus faced a similar challenge. The plan of God was that Jesus would come to earth as a man, live a sinless life, pay the penalty of death for the sin of all humans, rise victorious over death, and then return to heaven to prepare a place for those who would believe in His saving work. It was a great plan for all humans but a tough journey for Jesus to attain it for us. Satan offered Jesus the shortcut of becoming king over all the earth. If Jesus had yielded to this temptation, He would have obeyed Satan rather than God and we would all be captive in our sins, eternally separated from God. Thankfully, Jesus practiced self-control and followed God's plan.

We need to practice self-control and avoid all shortcuts that take us even one step outside of God's will. We are warned, ***"So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."*** (James 4:7 NLT). Jesus is truly the only way forward. If we give our will and life to Jesus, He will fill us with His Spirit who will help us to make wise choices. As we stay on the path, one step at a time we will find that practicing self-control really does bring the good things that God has planned for us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to walk humbly with You from this day forward and choose to follow Your will for my life. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit so that I may have the gift of self-control over all issues that I encounter. Amen

Wednesday

FACING TROUBLE WITH GOD

In recovery, and in life in general, situations arise which cause us to believe that we are alone and have no one to turn to for help. Fear often wells up within us causing that old feeling of wanting to run and hide and medicate in our addiction. What can we do when this happens?

I cry out to the Lord; I plead for the Lord's mercy. I pour out my complaints before him and tell him all my troubles. When I am overwhelmed, you alone know the way I should turn. Wherever I go, my enemies have set traps for me. (Psalm 142:1-3 NLT)

When the pull of addiction tempts us, it is like a bully who will not cease until we are wounded and defeated. When we give in to the obsession, we will find ourselves back in the prison of insanity knowing we are powerless. However, when we cry out to God and bring the "bully" before Him, the tormentor loses his power.

As children of God, we do not stand alone while defending ourselves against temptation. The battle is the Lord's! When we come close to God, He will come close to us. Just like a strong person coming to our aid and standing up to a bully on our behalf, so we will find God to be a place of safety and protection for us. Even though the battle may rage in our minds for a time it will eventually quiet down. The enemy who is responsible for the promotion of our obsessive thinking must surrender to God's overwhelming power.

It's important to know both the strengths and limits of our enemy. The enemy will claim to have unstoppable power over us but as we put our trust and faith in the finished work of Jesus, we will experience God's saving power that is greater than any other power.

Heavenly Father, Thank You for being my shelter and my help in time of need. When I experience the enemy trying to have power over me, help me to stop and call out to You for help to overcome, for You alone have the Power that will give me victory over the enemy of my soul. Amen

Thursday

COPING WITH ANXIETY OR DEPRESSION

When we first come into recovery, we may have feelings of anxiety or depression. For some time, we have been medicating ourselves with a substance or perhaps have been involved in an unhealthy relationship which temporarily seemed to give relief from the unease we felt inside. Now in recovery, we have given our will and our life over to the care of God and are coming to believe that there might be hope for a better life. However, the physical change we were anticipating may not be keeping up with our expectations. We may feel oppressed by something that we cannot explain but know it causes our minds to be darkened by its presence. If we share with those who have gone through the recovery process, we will find that we are not alone in having experienced this darkness of soul. We need to seek God's comfort in this situation and stand strong in the truth that Jesus has all power over heaven and earth and has rescued us from the dominion of darkness.

"Be still and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world." The Lord of Heaven's Armies is here among us; the God of Israel is our fortress. (Psalm 46:10-11 NLT)

Because we are struggling, we may conclude that God is no longer with us or that He does not exist, and we are facing this overpowering darkness alone. This is what the evil one would have us believe. The Bible tells us that as children of God we cannot be outside of His presence. He is in the highest heavens and in the lowest hell. Even though our feelings may go up and down, there is nothing that can hide us from God's presence. He is ever with us!

God's Spirit is with us through the darkest valleys of anxiety and depression and when we get to the other side, we will give thanks that He was with us guiding and directing us all the way.

Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for being with me when tension and unease cause me anxiety. I am forever grateful that You are always with me and will give me the strength to stand on the truth of Your Word and be an overcomer. Amen

Friday

THE GOOD LIFE

Addiction for many of us focused on trying to find happiness in all the wrong places and things. Some of us thought that escaping pain would bring happiness. Others, who didn't have a lot of pain, sought pleasure. However, God shows us the way to true happiness. He lays out a good path for us to follow. He also reveals traps and obstacles along the way that we are to avoid.

Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do. But not the wicked! They are like worthless chaff, scattered by the wind. They will be condemned at the time of judgment. Sinners will have no place among the godly. For the Lord watches over the path of the godly, but the path of the wicked leads to destruction. (Psalm 1:1-6 NLT)

God invites us to recover the life He created us to live, a life that is strengthened by His Word and fruitful as a healthy tree planted by a riverbank. God wants our lives to bless others. When difficult times come, God wants to refresh us and help us prosper. God invites us to freedom and purity of heart as we follow His ways and live under the protection of His watchful eye.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to listen to You and follow Your ways so I may joyfully live under the protection of Your watchful eye and experience the fullness of life You desire me to have. Amen

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Weekend

MAKING GOOD ON OUR PROMISES

In his distress, the person who wrote the following Psalm is making many promises to God. Most of the promises he made are good, but he is human like any one of us, and subject to failure. Even so, he appears to see himself as having the will and strength to do whatever he says. He appears to be seeking to please God and to control others so that God will show him favour and come to him.

I will sing about love and justice. Lord, I will sing to you. I will be careful to live a pure life. I will live in my house with complete honesty. When will you come to me? I will not even look at anything shameful. I hate all wrongdoing. I want no part of it! I will not be involved in anything dishonest. I will have nothing to do with evil. I will stop anyone who secretly says bad things about a neighbor. I will not allow people to be proud and think they are better than others. I will look throughout the land for those who can be trusted. Only such people can live with me. Only those who live pure lives can be my servants. (Psalm 101:1-6 ERV)

How many of us, both in addiction and in recovery, have prayed to God like that? We have been in trouble and prayed to God for help. We have made promises to live good lives in return for God's favour. The problem is, unless we have the Power greater than ourselves living in us, God knows we would never be able to fulfill our promises. When a crisis dies down, we often forget about God and just carry on in our self-serving existence.

God tells us to call on Him in our time of trouble. The Scriptures say that His eyes roam throughout the whole earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him. God knows when our hearts are fully committed to Him and, when they are, we have His favour, and He will hear and answer our prayers.

Prayer: Loving God, Forgive me for the promises I have made and not kept. My desire is to be fully committed to You and to practice Your principles in all my affairs. Please help me! Amen

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 33

Monday

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

The end of Tradition 12 in the Big Book of AA sums up an important principle in our recovery: We need to regularly count our blessings.

We are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all. (Big Book of AA)

The Bible gives us many wonderful words on which to focus our thoughts as we put this principle into effect.

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV)

God speaks blessings of protection, peace, and tenderness over us. God offers us the blessing of forgiveness for all our wrongdoing. Jesus died on the cross and took the punishment for every sin we have ever committed and for those we are not yet aware of. We are blessed today with a clear conscience as we confess our wrongs to God and allow Him to remove our sin.

On the recommendation of the founders of AA, let's make it a habit to count our blessings each day. As we do, we'll become more aware of all that God has given us and our hearts will be filled with joy because of His love and care.

Prayer: Loving God, I acknowledge that on my own my life is an unmanageable mess. I am grateful for the gifts You bring to my life each day. Give me the courage to receive all you are offering me and the humility to remember that all I am and have comes from You. Amen