

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 37

Monday

DEALING WITH INSULTS AND LIES

Jesus said some things that are very difficult to do and do not seem to fit the categories of comfort or encouragement.

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. (1 Peter 3:9 NIV)

Does Jesus really mean this? Isn't it enough that we don't act violently in response to what others say and do or spread vicious rumors about them to others? The Bible teaches us not to return evil for evil and challenges us even further when we are taught to bless the one who may speak badly about us.

While it may be a challenge, it is true that God will help us when we choose to stop the cycle of insults and unkindness. This does not mean that we smile while our fists are clenched. It does mean that we give up the desire for revenge. We let God speak truth to our hearts and give us peace within, so that the insults and evil lies of others wash off us like oil on a non-stick pan surface. When we do this, we can then ask others to tell us what their problem is and listen long as they offer an explanation or, as is sometimes needed, simply walk away and pray for the wounded angry person.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, When someone insults me, I can't imagine not paying them back but I'm willing to do things Your way. With Your help I will do my best to bless a person who, either in the past or even today, speaks evil to me or about me. Remove all lies from my mind and heal my wounded heart and help me to see myself and others as You see us. Amen.

Tuesday

GETTING TO KNOW HOW GOOD LIFE CAN BE

God has good plans for us and He's more than willing to make those plans known to us. He promises us a life that is even better than we could ask for or imagine. This is the purpose of prayer and meditation--to get to know the good things God has planned for us--and then shape our lives around His life-giving principles. As we act on what God teaches us, we become more and more conscious of how well His ways work in all our relationships.

Jesus said: ***But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! Ask me and I will tell you remarkable secrets you do not know about things to come. If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you.*** (John 15:7, Jeremiah 33:3, James 1:5-6a NLT)

Meditation and reading scripture reveal to us the nature of God and the promises He has made. Underneath the "spiritual exercises" is God's desire to affirm His unfailing love for us. As we become familiar with God's character and ways and make this the foundation for our daily living we will become more and more aware of the loving and uplifting presence of God that is always with us.

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. The humble will see their God at work and be glad. Let all who seek God's help be encouraged. (John 16:13, Psalm 69:32 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I welcome the work of Your Holy Spirit to guide me as You reveal Your will for my life. I am grateful that you give me the desire and power to carry out what You have prepared in advance for me to do. Help me to humbly honour You in all my ways as I chose to serve You in Your plan for my life. Amen

Wednesday

SELF-EXAMINATION

To examine ourselves is to do just that -- examine ourselves! It's so easy to compare what we do with what others do, and then we begin comparing ourselves with them. However, God wants to free us to live in the truth of who we truly are and where we need to exercise His truth and grace to live a better life. The focus of any self-examination must be squarely focused on ourselves.

Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else. (Galatians 6:4 NLT)

When we examine ourselves, it is important to make a judgment both on what is good and what is harmful. Judgment is not about condemning and accusing. A healthy self-examination is best described as taking an inventory -- whether it is the Alcoholics Anonymous Step 4 version or a daily Step 10 review. Harmful things we uncover should be abandoned immediately. Other things we need to keep, no matter how challenged they make us feel. There are some things in our lives that we need to bring before God and perhaps discuss with knowledgeable friends who will help us observe, perhaps over time, whether these things are harmful or helpful for us.

Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. Test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. (Romans 12:3b, 1 Thessalonians 5:21 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to see myself as You see me. Give me a willing heart to admit where my shortcomings lie and the grace to acknowledge the gifts that you have given me. Grant me the humility I need to learn from You and from others who are mature in their walk with You. Please expose anything in me that needs to be brought to light and changed. Amen

FORGIVENESS

Forgiving others is something we must take very seriously if we want to protect our sobriety. We can never make up for the wrongs we have done, but we can let those whom we have harmed know how much we regret having hurt them.

It would be impossible for us to forgive someone who has harmed us if God had not first demonstrated the way. We harmed ourselves and others when we failed to keep God's commandments and yet God was willing to send His Son into the world to pay the debt we owed. If we admit our wrong-doing and repent and turn away from it, and trust in Jesus' sacrifice for our sin, God will give us a new life.

In Christ, God did not hold people guilty for their sins. And he gave us this message of peace to tell people. (2 Corinthians 5:19 ERV)

God did not wait for us to come to Him. He prepared in advance to liberate us from the penalty of our wrongdoing. God reached out to us with His wonderful gift when we didn't dare approach Him. We can reflect on God's way of reconciliation as we begin the work of restoring our own troubled relationships.

Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. (Colossians 3:13 NLT)

Hanging on to a bitter grudge and seeking revenge only sickens our soul and damages those who are close to us. Bitterness is like a cancer that feeds on our insides and shows itself in outbursts of irritability, anger, and resentment. Who do I still need to forgive? Am I ready to invite God into the pain and the injustice and ask Him to show me a way to peace through forgiveness?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You have forgiven me for the many wrongs I have done and even though it is difficult, I choose to forgive those who have harmed me. Please heal me and give me the strength and courage to move forward into a life of peace with others. Amen

STRONG AND HEALTHY

When we are feeling sick, we go to the doctor so that we may find out what is wrong with us. We list the symptoms we are experiencing and the doctor who has been trained to recognize symptoms associated with certain diseases will make a diagnosis. If the doctor is uncertain about the correct diagnosis, further tests may be needed. When we come to recognize we are powerless over our dependencies and our life is unmanageable where do we go for help? Do we look to those who are trained in addiction recovery and to God who is the expert in every disease of mankind?

I am God Most High! The only sacrifice I want is for you to be thankful and to keep your word. Pray to me in time of trouble. I will rescue you, and you will honor me. (Psalm 50:14-15 CEV)

We may have called out to God in the past for help and made promises that we would stop using, but our hearts were not ready to commit to keeping the words we spoke. We often think we know all there is to know about addiction and how we can control it. If that were true, why are we powerless over it and why is our life unmanageable? We need to seek help from those who have been trained in addiction recovery and from God Most High who, when we are ready, will be faithful to His Word and will help us.

Don't ever think that you are wise enough but respect the Lord and stay away from evil. This will make you healthy, and you will feel strong. (Proverbs 3:7-8 CEV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess I am sick at heart and ask You to heal me and make me well. Thank You for caring for me. Amen

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CO-DEPENDENCY

Co-dependence is an addictive relationship. People who are co-dependent form relationships that are normally one-sided, emotionally destructive, and often abusive. A co-dependent person bases their personal value on who they identify themselves to be within the relationship. They often interact with the other person in a way that is harmful to their own well-being.

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)

Contentment in life does not come from controlling or trying to please someone, or from hoping they will meet our needs so that we may feel secure. Another person cannot love us enough or touch us deeply enough to satisfy the longing in our hearts. Only God can satisfy those longings. We have our desires and dreams, and we need to allow others to have theirs. We make our mistakes and others make theirs.

Fullness of life and real freedom from co-dependency can only be found when we are first rooted in a relationship with our Heavenly Father. God made us in His image, and we have great value in His sight. When we base our worth and identity around this truth, rather than on the opinions of others, we begin to experience freedom, and security.

Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. 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. (Ephesians 1:4-5 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I ask You to show me how to live in a way that honours You and honours others. Help me to love You with all my heart, soul, mind and strength and to love others as myself. Fill me with Your love and give me the knowledge and wisdom to follow Your way in all my relationships. Amen