

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 39

Monday

FORGETTING WHAT IS BEHIND

When we first come into recovery, we tend to focus on our past behaviour and the things we have done wrong. We suffered injustice, felt we deserved comfort, and went after comfort in whatever ways we were able to find it. We didn't question the impact our choices might have had on others. We did what we felt we "had to do" to survive and have a little happiness. Sadly, despite some momentary pleasure, we fell deeper and deeper into sin and our heartache increased. God now invites us to shift our focus from what was self-motivated destructive behaviour to a life focused on the healing power of Jesus.

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14 NIV)

God wants us to have a satisfying life. Are we ready to stop allowing our problems to steal the new life God is giving us? If we are, we need to be willing to give up our obsessive thinking about how to cover our pain and instead welcome solutions from God, including His healing power, to restore us to new life. God's call to us today is to take our focus off our problems and let Him show us solutions. Are we willing to make the shift?

Prayer: Loving God, You are reaching out to me today, encouraging me to receive the healing you are offering, and that which I desperately need. Help me to surrender myself to You and choose to faithfully walk in Your ways. Amen

Tuesday

LIFE IMPROVES AS I PRACTICE SELF-CONTROL

The Bible tells us that when God's Spirit lives within us our lives will demonstrate that by showing qualities such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. God works in us so we can choose and act in ways that please God and satisfy our souls.

We live in a time and culture that could easily be labeled as self-indulgent rather than self-controlled. One principle that appears to operate in the lives of people in this 21st century is, "If it feels good, do it." God desires for each person to have a rewarding and fulfilling life. Surprisingly, God tells us that to have that, we will sometimes need to deny ourselves immediate pleasures.

So, let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. (Galatians 6:9 NLT).

Just like the farmer who plants good seeds must deal with weeds all through the growing season, we will need to do what is right while fighting against the temptation for immediate gratification. Sometimes we will have to wait longer than we expected and trust God's promise to provide us with everything we need. While times of waiting are difficult, there are rich rewards to be reaped when we sow the seeds of self-control. As we follow God's guidance and allow God's Spirit to mature the fruit of self-control in us, we will both be blessed and be a blessing to others.

But we belong to the day. So let us control ourselves. Let us put the armor of faith and love on our chest. Let us put on the hope of salvation like a helmet. (1 Thessalonians 5:8 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Though I normally "want what I want when I want it," I repent of this selfishness and pray that Your Holy Spirit will mature the fruit of self-control within me. Help me to walk in Your ways, so I may receive Your blessing and be a blessing to others. Amen

Wednesday

A GENTLE LIFESTYLE

If someone was to evaluate our daily interaction with others, would they describe us as gentle or harsh?

Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. (Ephesians 4:2 NLT)

It is not easy to change from being a self-centered, impatient, and often unkind person to being one who lives respectfully and gently with others, regardless of the circumstances. There is a natural unwillingness in each of us to admit that we are not living and behaving well in the community. We are also reluctant to acknowledge that we are powerless to make any change on our own and need God to work in us to help us do so.

What does a gentle lifestyle look like?

Forgiveness that expresses kindness to those who may have previously harmed us: **Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.** (Ephesians 4:32, 4:2 NLT)

Always speaking about another person with kindness and respect: **They must not slander anyone and must avoid quarreling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone. A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.** (Titus 3:2, Proverbs 15:1 NLT)

Addressing everyone with sincerity and generosity: **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.** (James 3:17 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, I want to be a strong but gentle person. However, I know I often fall short. I am willing to have You work in me to remove my character defects and help me exhibit gentleness to others in my thoughts, my words, and my behaviour. Amen

Thursday

WHAT GOD HATES & WHAT GOD LOVES

When we pray for God's will for us and the power to carry it out, God doesn't point to something which is unfocused or distant. God brings truth up front and close and tells us in simple ways what we need to know and how we need to act. In the book of Proverbs in the Bible, we can find great wisdom in the many sayings written there that teach us how life works. Today we find a list of practices that are clearly NOT God's will. The more we avoid these things and do what God says the more we will grow and find continued success in this new life we have been given.

There are six things the Lord hates. In fact, he hates seven things. The Lord hates proud eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that kill those who aren't guilty. He also hates hearts that make evil plans and feet that are quick to do evil. He hates any witness who pours out lies and anyone who stirs up conflict in the community. (Proverbs 6:16-19 NIRV)

We have all sorts of excuses for lying and for angrily confronting or accusing someone of wrongdoing. It is easy for us to be shifty and underhanded in how we approach someone. Instead of acting in these ways, God calls us to be those who love and lift others up, and with all that we can, encourage them. God is love and He tells us to love one another, promising us that love will never fail.

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7 NIRV)

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for rescuing me from sin and darkness. I admit that I have done things that Your Word says You hate. Forgive me and wash me clean. Help me to be humble, truthful, quick to do what is right and to make peace rather than say things that stir up anger and conflict. Help me to establish new patterns of thinking and behaving regardless of what others may think. Amen

Friday

MAKING A MATCH

Step 12 encourages us to share the message of our spiritual awakening with others and to practice the principles we have learned in all our affairs. We have a message to share with others, but we need to be careful that our lives match what we have learned.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13 NIV)

We need to be sensitive to those who are still in the bondage of addiction or perhaps have just entered the recovery process. We need to remember how we felt when the program was new and intimidating to us. In our enthusiasm to share we might scare someone away by being thoughtless in our approach. Remember how vulnerable we felt while dealing with our guilt and shame?

Every person we encounter is special in the eyes of our Heavenly Father and we need to show the love of God in us by being understanding, patient, and kind in all we say and do. We need to allow a person to be where they are at and encourage them to take one small step at a time. We should ask ourselves "Who were we drawn to when we first came into recovery? What was it about that person that encouraged us?" Now we can try to be that kind of person for someone else. The message of hope for recovery needs to be shared with the grace that God alone can give us. As we greet others today, let's have good deeds and words to encourage them.

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word. (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to carry the good news of living life with You in recovery and help me do it in the Power of Your gentle Spirit. Amen

Weekend

COMPLETELY NEW

When we turned our will and life over to the care of God, we gave God permission to take our unmanageable life and make us new. We were unsure that God could and would change us, but the darkness was so great around us that we knew we needed help to see light. Where is our focus meant to be to bring about the change we desire?

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:1-3 NIV)

It is time to set our minds on things above and not on circumstances – past, present, or future. We need to search the Scriptures and put into practice, the principles God has established, so that we are enabled to live the new life God has given us.

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. (Ephesians 4:22 NIRV)

If we determine to fix our eyes on God's principles and, like an athlete in training set aside everything that would hinder us from running the race before us, we will find that God will make us whole in body, mind, and spirit.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for the great love You have for me and for teaching me Your way of living life to the full. Please help me to put Your principles into practice in all my affairs. Amen

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