

HIDING BEHIND A MASK

Tonight many children put on costumes and go door-to-door “trick-or-treating.” Some of them wear masks to complete their costume. Many adults also dress in costumes at their workplace and later in the evening may attend parties where a mask is used to disguise who they really are. Everyone wants to have a good time as they pretend to be someone they are not for a few hours.

Truth is, many of us don’t just don masks on Halloween. Sometimes we have worn masks for so long that we forget who we really are. A mask, of course, covers the truth of who we truly are with a lie. When we live behind a mask, we are denying our true self and rejecting the person God created us to be.

You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. (Psalm 139:13-14 NLT)

God created us in love with a purpose for our lives. God invites us to allow our unique personality to complement each of our relationships. This is what life with God in recovery is all about, becoming the person God created us to be and following the plan He has for our lives. When we dare to take off the mask and let our true self be known, we experience freedom from the burden of our false persona. The question for each of us is, do we want to remove the mask and find out who we truly are, or do we want to continue telling lies and hiding behind a mask?

No more lies, no more pretense. Tell your neighbor the truth. In Christ’s body we’re all connected to each other, after all. When you lie to others, you end up lying to yourself. (Ephesians 4:25 MSG)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, from this day forward I commit to letting go of everything that hinders me from becoming the person You created me to be. Help me to tell the truth in every circumstance and leave the outcome with You. Amen

SURRENDERED TO YOUR WILL

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.

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)

At any given moment we need to be prepared to stand firm against our desires and feelings and persevere through. 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

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Partners in Hope Recovery Society
1906 – 615 Belmont Street
New Westminster, BC V3M 6A1
604-215-0335
phil@recovery@gmail.com
www.patnersinshope.ca



LIFE WITH GOD IN
RECOVERY
DAILY MEDITATIONS

SPEAKING TO GOD IN PRAYER

When we first come into recovery many of us are intimidated by the thought of speaking to God in prayer. Often, we are not even sure that there is a God who listens and responds to us. How do we get faith to believe that God really does exist and hears and answers our prayers?

You can never please God without faith, without depending on him. Anyone who wants to come to God must believe that there is a God and that he rewards those who sincerely look for him. (Hebrews 11:6 TLB)

We do not find it difficult to believe the wind is real whether it is a gentle breeze or a hurricane. We cannot see the wind, but we see the effects of it as it moves. All around us we see the beauty of God’s creation. Earth’s plant life obeys God and grows in the appointed season. Oceans, sky, birds and animals all exhibit His creative beauty and power. With this evidence, the only reason we would not believe God exists is that we have chosen by an act of our will not to.

Jesus, while on earth, often went off on His own to pray to His Heavenly Father. In this action, Jesus demonstrated that for us to live life on this earth according to the will of God, we must continuously seek God’s input into our lives. As we bring our problems to God and experience His response to our needs, we will find that God does exactly what He says He will do.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I choose by an act of my will to have faith in You. Please hear and answer my sincere prayers as I look to You for guidance. Amen



Tuesday

DON'T EVEN KNOW I AM LYING

Our default position when facing past problems was to live in denial that they even existed. It's only natural to assume that as we face problems in our recovery, we will be prone to denial once again. Dealing with anger, shame, and hurtful relationships can make us vulnerable to our continued use of denial.

The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? But I, the Lord, search all hearts and examine secret motives. (Jeremiah 17:9-10a NLT)

It's so easy to blame others for problems we currently experience. We are accustomed to minimizing our issues and find it difficult to be vulnerable and honest in admitting what is truly going on. In recovery, we now find ourselves acting in the same way when faced with frustration and failure. Angry reactions and heated arguments indicate that denial is still fueling our thinking. We make excuses for our behaviour and hope the reasons we give will be enough to avoid taking any necessary action.

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. (Psalm 139:23-24 NIV)

Today is another opportunity to deepen our awareness of how denial continues to affect us and to invite God to bring about positive change. A simple inventory might include questions like: What denial techniques do I use to maintain the lie that I don't have a problem? What action do I need to take so I can live in the freedom that God promises?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that my heart is deceitful. Forgive me for the times I have sought to escape responsibility for my actions through denial. Fill me with the courage and strength I need so that I can change my ways and do what is necessary to live honestly and deal with what is true. Amen

Wednesday

DON'T WORRY ABOUT TOMORROW

Some of the most welcome phrases in life and certainly in recovery circles are, "One day at a time" or "Just for today." They are meant to lighten the heavy burden we carry about our past actions and our unknown future so that it is more bearable for us to deal with today in a realistic way. These sayings are also ways to live by the teaching of Jesus.

So don't worry about tomorrow. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Tomorrow will have its own worries. (Matthew 6:34 ERV)

The above words can be found in the most famous record of Jesus' teaching called, "The Sermon on the Mount." Jesus had just been speaking about some of the things we worry about – money, clothes, food etc. – and He encouraged His followers to believe that God cared for them and would provide for their needs.

Instead of worrying, Jesus says we should seek God and His plan for each day and then do what God says. If we do, we can trust God to take care of everything else.

What you should want most is God's kingdom and doing what he wants you to do. Then he will give you all these other things you need. (Matthew 6:33 ERV)

We are not encouraged to live in denial and bury our heads in the sand. There are things we need to deal with each day and not all of them will be easy. But, if we seek Him, God will meet our needs and at the end of the day we too will have examples of God's faithful care and guidance to share.

Because God knows best how to help us mature in our faith He may stretch us beyond our comfort zone at times, but He will never give us more than we can handle.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your Word tells me not to worry about my life or the things of tomorrow. Forgive me for my lack of confidence in Your ability to work everything together for my good. Please help me to deal with those things I can and make any necessary changes, and leave those things I cannot change in Your care. Amen

Thursday

HOPE IN JESUS

There is an account in the Bible of ten men who were lepers. Somehow, they must have heard of Jesus healing a leper and that gave them hope that Jesus might also heal them. They gathered at a place where they thought they would see Jesus passing by on his way to Jerusalem.

Lord, you hear the desires of those who are hurting. You cheer them up and give them hope. You listen to their cries. (Psalm 10:17 NIRV)

Often in our addictive lifestyle we gathered with people who were in the same position as we were. We lost all hope of recovering from the dependency that kept us in bondage, so we formed an existence with those who were just like us. Maybe at some point we heard about someone who had given their will and life over to the care of God and who managed to turn their life around, and this gave us hope that perhaps we could do the same. Perhaps it is time for us to get to a place where we can meet with Jesus.

I love those who love me; And those who diligently seek me will find me. (Proverbs 8:17 NASB)

In the account of what happened with the lepers, Jesus did not immediately heal them, He told them to go show themselves to the priest. On the way they were cleansed of the disease but only one of the ten returned to give thanks and praise to God for the healing. This one man, in returning to glorify God for his healing, received more than just physical healing. He received complete wholeness and salvation.

Jesus said, "Were not ten healed? Where are the nine? Can none be found to come back and give glory to God except this outsider?" Then he said to him, "Get up. On your way. Your faith has healed and saved you." (John 17:17-19 MSG)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I praise and thank You for giving me hope to live a sober life. I now ask You to cleanse, heal and restore me to wholeness in body, mind, and spirit. Amen