

Friday

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)

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. We need to be forgiving towards others and help them if we think they may be troubled.

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. (Galatians 6:1-2 NIV)

Accusation and condemnation will not glorify Christ. Carrying one another's burdens will.

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

Weekend

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.

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

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LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 46

Monday

WALKING SAFELY IN A NEW DIRECTION

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

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 experience.

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 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. 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

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.

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 messages!

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

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. We see the memories etched in the veterans' faces and can only imagine the stories they will never forget. 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.

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 us.

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

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.

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 NIV)

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