

Friday

THE UNFAMILIAR

Coming into a recovery group is threatening for many of us. The place is unfamiliar. We don't know the people, and compared to our former lifestyle, the rules seem restrictive. We are not even acquainted with the God we prayed to when we knew we needed help. We are in unfamiliar territory and unsure if recovery is for us. Thankfully, we can repeatedly cry out to God for help to get us through the unfamiliar, and God assures us that He will help.

Ah, God, listen to my prayer, my cry—open your ears. Don't be callous; just look at these tears of mine. I'm a stranger here. I don't know my way—a migrant like my whole family. Give me a break, cut me some slack before it's too late and I'm out of here. (Psalm 39:12-13 MSG)

If we listen attentively, we will hear God's quiet voice encouraging us to be at peace and allow Him to settle our hearts as we make necessary adjustments. If we choose for God and all His ways, rather than quitting, we will be accompanied by the One who is full of wisdom, compassion, and unfailing love for us.

Show me the right path, O Lord; point out the road for me to follow. Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you. (Psalm 25:4-5 NLT)

As we put our trust in God to help us, we will soon relax and become familiar with the routine of the program we have chosen. We will get to know the people around us and allow them to get to know us. If we have surrendered our will and our lives over to the care of God, nothing will be impossible for us to achieve. We will soon be aware that our fear of the unfamiliar has abated, and the power of God will continue to strengthen us as we begin our new life with Him in recovery.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You are ever present with me in my time of need. When I am challenged by the unfamiliar, give me the confidence to remain close to You and do the next right thing. Thank You for being my safe harbour from the storms of life. Amen

Weekend

DEALING WITH STRESS – THIS TOO SHALL PASS

When we are dealing with stress the slogan 'this too shall pass' is a helpful principle to remember. God's unfailing love surrounds and supports us in every situation, and His strength is sufficient for all our needs. We can get through challenging days, get the rest we need, and face the next day with confidence, because God is always with us. When our hope is in the living God, we cannot fail. Troubling times will come, but good days will return.

The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. I say to myself, "The LORD is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!" (Lamentations 3:22-24 NLT)

God will never permit circumstances to break or shatter us. He knows our limits and will not allow us to be stretched beyond what we can bear. God seeks to use our stressful times as opportunities for us to gain His perspective, lean on His strength, and develop perseverance with which we can better run life's course. God may not alter the circumstance that is currently pressing on us. He may not remove the person who is bothering us. He may not heal the condition that daily grates away at our body and soul, but God will dramatically alter our emotions and responses as we improve our conscious contact with Him and seek answers from His Word.

We deal best with stress when we call on God for help, acknowledge that He is on our side, and faithfully do what He says. With God's help, "this too shall pass."

Prayer: Heavenly Father, When life is overwhelming and I feel distant from You, help me to remember that You truly are listening when I pray, and are working in every situation for my good. I am forever grateful that You love and care for me. Amen

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LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 49

Monday

COMMITTED TO LIFE AND GROWTH

To grow and mature and do well in any area of life requires commitment. To develop their skills, professional athletes consistently practice for long hours, at inconvenient times, over many years. Medical professionals spend huge amounts of time and money to learn the necessary skills to properly care for patients who are injured or sick.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. (2 Timothy 2:15, Romans 12:1 NIV)

Maintaining our life with God in recovery also takes time and effort. The habits and disciplines we began to practice when we got sober need to be carried on if we are to maintain our sobriety.

Moving away from a focus on God's plan for our lives into a focus of "me and my needs/problems" is a constant challenge for us in recovery and for those who are just living life. Deciding that going our own way will work better than God's instructions and the advice of trusted friends is a temptation we will face repeatedly. Have we decided that God's way is best and committed to His plan no matter what? This is the challenge in turning our will and our life over to the care of God. It's not a one-time pledge but an everyday commitment.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Once again I turn my will and my life – all the plans and ideas I have about today – over to Your care. Show me Your will and help me to walk in it. Amen

FINDING PURPOSE

From time to time some of us get into a rut and struggle to see the purpose that God has for our lives. We have given our will and life over to God's care and are now waiting to see what He will do as we ask for His help to turn our lives around. While we are waiting there is something all of us can do. We can improve our conscious contact with God by praying and reading the Scriptures.

Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. (Acts 17:11 NIV)

Both groups mentioned in the above Scripture were Jewish, but only the Berean group examined the Scriptures every day to see if what they heard was true. When they heard something different from what they understood to be true they made the effort to verify the truth of what they heard. We also will find purpose for our life when we do the same. We need to know if the things we are being taught about God are true and the only way to find out is to read the Bible and ask the Holy Spirit to give us understanding.

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe. (1 Thessalonians 2:13 NIV)

God has a purpose for each of our lives, but we need to have conscious contact with Him to find out what it is. If we make it our objective to seek God's will, His favour and honor will rest on us, and we will be successful in His plan for our life.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, give me the desire to seek You with all my heart and to honour You in all my ways. Let Your Word be a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Amen

WALKING WARILY OR TAKING STEPS

TENDERLY

Christmas lights brighten the darkness of December evenings and are a reminder to us that no matter how dark this season may be, the coming of Jesus into the world brought light, and hope, and joy. Jesus is the light of the world. Jesus is the reason for the season.

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." (John 8:12 NLT)

If we call on Him, God will be our shelter in times of trouble. Where there is darkness in our lives, God will bring light. When we walk with Him, He will lead us to the pathway of peace. In the past we walked alone in our sorrow. Now that God is with us, we need never face our problems alone. God may not be physically visible, but we have His Word that He watches over us and will keep us from harm.

I am GOD, your God, who teaches you how to live right and well. I show you what to do, where to go. If you had listened all along to what I told you, your life would have flowed full like a river, blessings rolling in like waves from the sea. (Isaiah 48:17-18 MSG)

As Christmas lights need to be plugged in and turned on so their beauty can be seen, so we need to be connected to God through faith in Jesus so that the truth and light within us can be seen. As we obey God's principles and are plugged into the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, we will shine brightly through any darkness we may encounter.

Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace." (Luke 1:78-79 NLT)

Prayer: Light of the World, please guide me out of darkness and lead me into Your glorious light and peace. Amen

GET EVEN OR GET AHEAD

Time wasted in getting even will never assist us in getting ahead.

We feel hurt and violated when someone's unkind words or actions take away our dignity and leave us scared, and in need of healing. We want that person to admit to the harm they have caused us. We want them to make amends. If they don't, something arises within us and makes us want to "get even with them."

When a person verbally abuses us, we may think we will feel better if we yell back at that person or retaliate by publicly shaming them in some way. Research tells us we are no better off even as five or fifteen minutes later. We violate our own soul and our own standards of right and wrong when we shout and behave badly in pursuing revenge. God has a better plan.

Don't do wrong to anyone to pay them back for doing wrong to you. Or don't insult anyone to pay them back for insulting you. But ask God to bless them. Do this because you yourselves were chosen to receive a blessing. A gentle answer makes anger disappear, but a rough answer makes it grow. (1 Peter 3:9, Proverbs 15:1 ERV)

The bottom line is, each one of us has done many wrong things over the course of our lives. We come to God and seek His forgiveness for what we have done, and we should. But God links our forgiveness of what we have done to our willingness to forgive others for the wrongs they have done to us. Let's not waste time by trying to get even and instead co-operate with God and really get ahead.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, it's so hard to not seek revenge when I have been wronged. I lay this desire to "get even" aside and ask You to fill my heart with the higher good of forgiving others for their wrongs as I have been forgiven for the wrongs I have done. Amen