

Tuesday

FINDING THE STRENGTH AND HOPE WE NEED

When we were in our addiction we didn't take care of ourselves, and now we realize our need for getting healthy and emotionally strong. Some of us have diseases and wounds that still need healing. Others are suffering from poor eating habits and need proper nutrition to strengthen their bodies. Often, we feel worn out. Our minds are easily confused, and our emotions are ultra-sensitive. Early recovery is a time to rest and allow God to help.

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matt. 11:28-29 NLT)

In the beginning of our recovery, we often comply with program guidelines simply because we believe that there has to be a better life than the one we have been living. We are willing to learn from the experience of others who have walked the path before us. We focus on simple things. We sleep and eat, read and pray. We exercise, go to meetings, and serve. Little by little we start to look better and feel stronger.

The sad truth is, at this point we can easily fall into the snare of forgetting that we are powerless over our addiction and begin to believe we got this far by our own efforts. We need to remind ourselves that it is only God's strength that sustains us. It's in the turning of our will and our life over to God, on a moment by moment, day by day basis, that we are safe under the protection of God. As soon as we take things back into our own hands and try to use our own solutions, we'll quickly slide into troubled waters again.

Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for bringing me out of the darkness and pain of my addiction. I am confident that, as I remain in You and You remain in me, the good work You have begun in me will be perfected. Amen

Wednesday

ASKING NOT TELLING

We came into recovery because we knew life wasn't working. Our lives were unmanageable, and we were powerless to change them. At many points we were aware of our character defects and the impact of our behaviour on ourselves, our loved ones, and even strangers. We wanted change but were not always willing to humbly ask God to make those changes in us.

So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. (Luke 11:9, John 16:24 NIV)

The structure for our new life with God in recovery is that we should come humbly before Him and ask Him to provide for our needs. However, some of us are more familiar with getting what we want when we want it. We tell God what we need rather than reverently asking Him to provide for us. We then wonder why we feel pressure and have little joy in our recovery. God promises that if we ask, we will receive, and our joy will be complete.

God has the solutions to our problems and knows the order they will follow for healing to come. A willingness to surrender to God's will at every point, in every circumstance, can only be attained if we have first asked for the knowledge of God's will and the power to carry it out. It's not a one-time "ask" in our morning prayers but a continuous invitation to God at points throughout the day to consciously know and welcome His input for each event.

Prayer: Loving God, Forgive me for trying to fix my own life, for trying to tell You what to do, and for blaming You when things didn't work out. Today I come and humbly ask You, by the power of Your Holy Spirit who lives in me, to show me Your will for my life, Your view of my character defects, and Your plan for removing them from my thoughts and interactions with others. Please help me stay close to You and give me the will and desire to do what honours You in all my ways. Amen

Thursday

EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE

He [God] gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:29-31 NIV)

We learn from the experience of others who have been in similar circumstances to us. We listen. We share. We hear and observe what is working for others. We learn from the wisdom gained by old-timers. We want to know what has helped others get strong and stay strong in life in recovery. As we move forward in our recovery, we may be asked to share what has brought us strength and hope.

Let your unfailing love surround us, Lord, for our hope is in you alone. (Psalm 33:22 NLT)

Many of us were physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually weak when we first came into recovery. We were running on empty, just limping along and feeling weak and weary. What better help could we find than that of an all-knowing God who is completely committed to helping us have a meaningful and purposeful life? Only God, with His infinite wisdom, can give us the experience, strength, and hope we need to be successful.

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires (James 1:19 NIV)

In the past we may have treated the Bible like we would treat a motor vehicle manual, only consulting it when something goes wrong. However, today is an opportunity to take time to become familiar with God's principles as recorded in the Bible, and by practicing what we learn find the strength and hope for our on-going journey.

Prayer: Loving God, I humbly admit that Your wisdom is superior to mine. Help me to be a good listener and a willing learner and faithfully put into practice the wise principles I learn from reading Your Word. Amen

Friday

GOD GRANT ME THE SERENITY

What comes to mind when we say or hear the word "serenity?" A smile? A longing? A regret? Serenity speaks of a sense of tranquility or inner calm. How do we find and maintain inner calm in the ups and downs of life? The serenity prayer suggests that we learn to be content with things that cannot be changed and take responsibility for change where it is possible.

For even if the mountains walk away and the hills fall to pieces, My love won't walk away from you, my covenant commitment of peace won't fall apart." The God who has compassion on you says so. (Isaiah 54:10 MSG)

Give your burdens to the LORD, and he will take care of you. The Lord gives his people strength. The Lord blesses them with peace. (Psalm 55:22, 29:11 NLT)

Recovery is a time of learning to find serenity in our healing, and blessing God while also accepting life as it is, not as we would have it. Life often isn't fair. What happened in the past cannot be changed. However, God cares for us and will use even our most difficult experiences to enrich our lives today and in the future. Our part? Surrender to God, receive healing and blessing, and live in faith that God is making all things right as we draw closer to Him.

Prayer: God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as a pathway to peace; taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen

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Weekend

LIVING SOBER: WATCHING OUT FOR COMPLACENCY

As our time increases in recovery, one of the enemies we need to be aware of and guard against is becoming complacent. We think we are doing okay, so we skip doing those things that helped us get sober and find new life. We busy ourselves with earning money, and don't take time to go to church or meetings anymore. We think we have got recovery because we are feeling fine. It's when we think like this that we are most vulnerable to relapse to our substance of choice, or habit, or of sliding into other unhealthy behaviours.

They have lost all feeling for what is right. So they have given themselves over to all kinds of evil pleasures. They take part in every kind of unclean act. And they are full of greed. (Ephesians 4:19 NIRV)

Sometimes, the signal that we've become complacent, shows in an attitude. We get irritated and find ourselves reacting negatively towards others. We excuse our attitude and blame it on annoyance with those newer in recovery than ourselves. Perhaps we begin to isolate and find ourselves sleeping more or vegging out in front of a screen at a time when we usually got in touch with friends. We begin to tell ourselves that maybe we could have one drink or hang out at a bar with friends and just not drink. It's time to take an inventory and check in with someone who can speak the truth to us, whether it is convenient or not.

We need to be alert because our enemy is just waiting for an opportunity to get at us when we are vulnerable.

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I need You just like I needed You the first day I came into recovery. Help me to reestablish my personal relationship with You today and get back on track with prayer and meditation, seeking only to know Your will for my life and have the power to carry it out. Amen

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 8

Monday

WISDOM FOR THE JOURNEY: PROTECT YOUR EYES

Good eyesight is a great gift. With our eyes we can see and admire the beauty that God has put in our natural environment. Sight helps us see what is needed to accomplish our daily tasks. We use our eyes to read and learn, to see love in the eyes of another, to make necessary changes when we look in a mirror.

My child, remember what I say and never forget what I tell you to do. Do what I say, and you will live. Be as careful to follow my teaching as you are to protect your eyes. Keep my teaching with you all the time; write it on your heart. Treat wisdom as your sister, and insight as your closest friend. (Proverbs 7:1-4 GNT)

When we can't see clearly, we get prescription glasses. When the sun is bright, we wear sunglasses. We do our best to take good care of our eyes because our ability to see is precious.

What will we do today to welcome God's truth into our lives and allow it to give us insight for moving forward? We schedule time to read from the Bible and ask the Holy Spirit to grow a love in our hearts for God's Word. We listen and learn from the experience, strength, and hope that others share. We listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit who gives us a clear vision of what is right or wrong. We come to God for His comfort when we feel pressured. We ask God to remove anything from our lives that is harming our ability to act on those things we are learning.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your Word is precious and the wisdom and insight it brings to my life is essential. Help me to pay attention to what You are teaching me and to what I see around me. As the Holy Spirit shows me, help me to apply Your principles in every event in my day. Amen