

LIFE WITH GOD
IN RECOVERY
DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 18

A PERSON OF INTEGRITY

Integrity is one of the most valued character qualities a person can have. A person of integrity has strong moral and ethical principles. They are honest regardless of their circumstances, or the company they keep. What you see on the outside is the same person they are on the inside. People of integrity keep their word even when it is inconvenient. They are honest in all their dealings, personal as well as professional. They practice morality in their sexual life, both in mind and body. They are not perfect. They make mistakes and occasionally sin, but they do not cover up their faults. They confess them, and deal with any consequences.

Righteousness guards the person of integrity, but wickedness overthrows the sinner. (Proverbs 13:6 NIV)

Integrity is not a character quality any of us would claim to have when we lived in addiction. It's also not something that automatically appears when we come into recovery. However, integrity can and will be developed in a person who lives according to the Word of God and whose confidence is in God alone.

I know that you are pleased with me, for my enemy does not triumph over me. Because of my integrity you uphold me and set me in your presence forever. (Psalm 41:11-12 NIV)

People of integrity have the peace of a clear conscience. As each of us live according to the Word of God we experience a deep inner peace because we know that we have not violated our conscience or harmed someone else. In contrast, when our lives lack moral wholeness, we live in constant fear of being "found out" as frauds.

Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out. (Proverbs 10:9 NIV)

If our activities, thoughts, and desires were exposed today, would we be considered a person of integrity?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is to love and care for others as You have faithfully loved and cared for me. As I walk in Your ways, help me to become a person of integrity. Amen

Tuesday

EXCHANGING OUR WILL
FOR GOD'S WILL

God teaches us to know His will through the Bible and through following good counsel from pastors, sponsors, and Christian friends who have been faithfully walking with God for some time. As we regularly replace our will with God's will and plan for our lives, our life will take on new meaning and will be satisfying.

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. (Jeremiah 29:11; 31:3 NIV)

Turning our will and our life over to the care of God is not simply asking God to bless us in what we believe and determine we should do. It is actively researching the Bible for what God says brings satisfaction in life. Because of His love for us, God warns us to stay away from those things that He knows will injure us. God's principles for living are not twisted by wounds and resentments and shame and fear. His desire for us is to know a satisfying way of life and to live it well. As we submit to building on that foundation, life will change and become more fulfilling.

Christ has brought us into this place of highest privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory. We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us – they help us learn to endure. And endurance develops strength of character in us, and character strengthens our confident expectation of salvation. And this expectation will not disappoint us. (Romans 5:2-4 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I often feel irritated and stretched by the unfamiliar ways in which You are leading me. However, I humbly admit, "Your wisdom and Your ways are superior to mine." Though I may not feel like doing what you say, I will trust You and adjust my life according to Your word. Today, I invite You to continue to lead and guide me in all my ways for You truly are my rock, and my fortress, my strength, and my deliverer. Amen

Wednesday

WHO PUSHES MY BUTTON?

The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace. (Psalm 29:11 NIV)

How often have we found ourselves in conversation with someone and a remark is made that "pushes our button?" The next thing we know, a stream of bitter words flows from somewhere inside us. The volume of our voice increases, or we go silent and distance ourselves from that person. When something like this happens, we need to consider the cause. We are clearly not at peace with something inside us and whatever that is, it needs to be brought to light so that we can be healed.

"Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you. (Isaiah 54:10 NIV)

We live in an angry world with people who are sensitive and easily upset. Both in addiction and in recovery we can experience physical and emotional pain that results from someone else's harshness. When someone "pushes our button", God invites us to first take the problem to Him. God will calm the inner turmoil we are experiencing and bring peace to our souls. We can then take the appropriate action for the situation. Perhaps we need to ask God for the courage to speak quietly with the person who stirred us up, so that we might sort out what happened. Other actions may be to simply "live and let live" or, we may be guided to establish healthy boundaries with that person.

Work at getting along with each other and with God. Otherwise you'll never get so much as a glimpse of God. Make sure no one gets left out of God's generosity. Keep a sharp eye out for weeds of bitter discontent. A thistle or two gone to seed can ruin a whole garden in no time. (Hebrews 12:14-15 MSG)

Prayer: Almighty God, To You all hearts are open, I ask that You reveal the source of my anger when certain situations arise, and someone has the power to push my button. Please heal me of any underlying root of bitterness that may be lurking in my soul and fill me with Your joy and peace. Amen

Thursday

PRACTICAL WISDOM – PRACTICE BEING CHEERFUL

Scientific evidence suggests that being cheerful seems to have positive benefits on our over-all health. There are studies that suggest being cheerful and optimistic limits stress, reduces pain, supports our immune system, and even helps to protect our heart. Is it any wonder that long before there were tests to prove it, the Bible already had this important information available?

A cheerful heart makes you healthy. But a broken spirit dries you up. Worry weighs us down; a cheerful word picks us up. (Proverbs 17:22 NIRV, Proverbs 12:25 MSG)

Studies have shown that those who live with joy and cheerfulness are better positioned to fight off seasonal bugs like cold and flu. Older people who reported feeling happy lived longer than those who were less happy. This should motivate us to be thankful for who we are, and to choose to be cheerful today.

A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit. All the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast. (Proverbs 15:13, 15 NIV)

We tend to be more creative and to solve problems better when we are happy and optimistic rather than living in fear and worry, supposing the problems before us are bigger than God's ability to make a way through for us. God does not want us to pretend that problems don't exist. Denial didn't fix our problems with addiction, and it won't solve the challenges we face in recovery. Our part is to pray often, work hard, and trust God in all circumstances. When we do, God's faithful promise is that he will be with us always.

Be cheerful. Keep things in good repair. Keep your spirits up. Think in harmony. Be agreeable. Do all that, and the God of love and peace will be with you for sure. (2 Corinthians 13:11 MSG)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to live with joy in my heart and be cheerful no matter what challenges I face. I ask for Your wisdom as I choose to do the right thing and face my problems head-on rather than avoiding or denying them. I trust that You will help and strengthen me as I move forward. Thank You for Your unfailing love and care for me. Amen

Friday

LIVING IN VICTORY RATHER THAN AS A VICTIM

A person with a victim mentality has learned to focus on suffering while trying to avoid it at any cost. Some are isolated and live behind high walls. They complain and blame and are easily angered. Some bury their feelings, opinions and desires and just do what they are told, believing they are powerless. They believe that life can only improve if someone else fixes what is wrong.

God says, ***I have swept away your sins like a cloud. I have scattered your offenses like the morning mist. Oh, return to me, for I have paid the price to set you free.*** (Isaiah 44:22 NLT)

God promises that regardless of what has happened to us, we can have victory over it by trusting Him and following His direction. God also assures us that nothing in heaven or on earth can separate us from His love.

Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep." No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. (Romans 8:35-37 NLT)

While our specific experience of pain might not be mentioned in the above verses, the intent of the writer is to tell us that whatever injustice and trouble we have suffered, God's word remains true in our situation. God promises us that we can live victoriously. We don't need to just survive and cope with what life has handed us. Our future has not been stolen by the abusive person in our past. God wants to pour out His grace upon us and give us new life. Are we willing to let go of the old and embrace the new?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to let go of the insanity of my past that continues to fill my heart and mind. Help me to embrace your love and healing. Fill me with your grace and teach me how to live well and establish healthy relationships. Amen

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Weekend

IT'S TIME TO TAKE A BREAK

Some sentences in the Bible are so meaningful to our situation that we just want to read them over and over again. Jesus' invitation to us today is one of those. We live in a world of busyness and stress where the challenges we face are discouraging and cause us to fear for the future. At the time we are most weary, how comforting to hear the words of Jesus inviting us to come to Him so He can give us rest.

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. (Matthew 11:28-29 NLT)

Some days it's difficult to watch the newscast and listen to more bad news. Financial problems, protests, disease, natural disasters, global warming, and on and on and on it goes. We get weary hearing it all. We feel like we've been given a heavy burden to carry. Jesus doesn't wave a magic wand to rid us of the burdens we are carrying, nor does He encourage us to deny that problems exist. Rather, He invites us to live in the truth that He is in control. He has a way for us to do what is right and find rest for our soul at the same time. Who wouldn't want that?

Lord, you will give perfect peace to those who commit themselves to be faithful to you. That's because they trust in you. It is useless to get up early and stay up late in order to earn a living. God takes care of his own, even while they sleep. (Isaiah 26:3 NIRV; Psalm 127:2 CEV)

Jesus invites us to come to Him and listen for His tender voice as He encourages us to move forward. It won't be more than we can handle nor less than we can carry. He wants to bless us with gifts of joy and peace that will build us up and help us support others who are also weary and in need of care.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You have not lost control of things even when it might appear that many unsolvable situations exist. Help me to come to You with all my problems. I invite You to show me what I should undertake to do and what I should let go of; what I should attempt to resolve and what I should entrust into Your care. Give me the strength and ability to do the work You have prepared for me to do today. I choose to rest in the sure knowledge that You are at work in me and in the world You created. Amen