

LIFE WITH GOD
IN RECOVERY
DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 15

Monday

THE EASTER QUESTION

Most of Jesus' friends abandoned Him before He died on the cross. After His death they huddled together in a locked room wondering what to do next. In their grief and sorrow, they were sure that the troubles that awaited them outside the room were more than they could endure. They didn't know how to go forward because Jesus was dead and they had no hope -- or so they thought. While they sat in that room, an incredible thing happened. Jesus appeared to them.

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. (John 20:19-20)

Jesus gave them convincing proof that He was truly alive. He wasn't just a ghost or a delusion, but a person in a body they could feel and touch. He was alive! Wonder, joy and peace filled their hearts. However, one of Jesus' disciples named Thomas wasn't with the others when Jesus first made an appearance to them. When Thomas was told they had seen Jesus, he doubted that it was true. Like Thomas, some of us have experienced hopes dashed and the despair of lost opportunities. In our broken fearful lives, we doubt the presence of God with us to help.

Later when they were all together, including Thomas, Jesus came again. Jesus did not judge Thomas for having doubts but invited Him to, *"Stop doubting and believe."* Jesus also told Thomas, *"Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."* (John 20:29 NIV)

Will we, like Thomas, truly believe that something incredible happens when we meet Jesus and He shows us who He truly is?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Forgive me for doubting who You truly are and what You have done for me. Help me to be like Thomas who stopped doubting and believed. Amen

Tuesday

LOVING OTHERS – MAKING AMENDS

As we recover from addiction, it is emotionally draining when we come to the place of acknowledging and dealing with the harm we have caused. We've lived for a long time blaming others for the way they treated us. What we fail to acknowledge is how our actions, resulting from the fear and anger bottled up inside us, caused harm to others. Regardless of the reason for our behaviour, we are encouraged to make a list of those we have harmed and become willing to make amends to all of them.

You're familiar with the command to the ancients, 'Do not murder.' I'm telling you that anyone who is so much as angry with a brother or sister is guilty of murder. Carelessly call a brother 'idiot!' and you just might find yourself hauled into court. Thoughtlessly yell 'stupid!' at a sister and you are on the brink of hellfire. The simple moral fact is that words kill. (Matthew 5:22-23 MSG)

Deep rooted unforgiveness results in angry outbursts and rage towards others. Sometimes even those who genuinely love us suffer because of what is going on at a deep level within us. We may feel sorry for what we did or said to a person after an abusive outburst, and perhaps have apologized, but to fully make amends we need to understand what causes us to behave as we do. Unless we come to terms with the root of our problem we will again behave in the same way and cause even more harm.

One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:35-40 NIV)

Making amends is a test of our integrity to honour others above ourselves. Let's consider who we truly are today and to whom we need to make amends.

Prayer: Gracious God, I ask that You heal me from the burden of the wounds and the guilt that I have carried for so long. Help me to forgive those who have harmed me and help me make amends to those I have harmed. Amen

Wednesday

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As we recover from addiction, it is emotionally draining to acknowledge and deal with the harm we have caused. For a long time, we blamed our problems on the way others treated us. What we failed to acknowledge is how our actions, resulting from the fear and anger bottled up inside us, caused harm to others. Regardless of the reason for our behaviour, we are encouraged to make a list of those we have harmed and become willing to make amends to all of them.

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Thursday

DOING ALL WE CAN TO HAVE FAITH

Few people are more aware of their need for God's help to restore them to sanity than recovering addicts. We know how unmanageable our life has been and how powerless we were to stop the suffering and chaos. What a relief it was to turn to God who was ready, willing, and able to receive and restore us.

Do all you can to add to your life these things: to your faith add goodness; to your goodness add knowledge. (2 Peter 1:5b ERV)

There is a "God's part" and "our part" to this new life we have. God sent Jesus into the world to die for our sins so that we might be free from the penalty of sin, which is death. Our part is to repent of our wrongs and receive forgiveness and the new life God is offering us. God has established principles for a life that is good, pleasing and perfect. Our part is to get to know those principles and obey them. When our character defects cause us to stumble, we ask God to forgive us and help us change.

It is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him. Faith comes from hearing the message. And the message that is heard is the message about Christ. (Hebrews 11:6 NLT, Romans 10:17 NIRV)

Our part in the recovery process is that with God's help we learn to have faith. How do we do that? We take time, at least daily, to learn what God is saying through reading the Bible. There are also many printed devotionals, apps, audio podcasts, teachings on YouTube and elsewhere to help us to know and understand God's Word in the Bible. God's help is as near to us as our phone or tablet.

At the heart of all our practices is to have faith:--faith in God that He is good; faith in God's direction for our lives; faith in God's principles as the best path for us to follow; faith in God's power to help us take the next right step and do the next right thing; faith to put what we learn into practice in all our affairs.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You are always with me and willing to provide what I need for a successful day. Help me to trust Your Presence ever with me, Your Power to change me, and Your Wisdom to guide me. Amen

Friday

COMING TO TERMS WITH OUR LIFESTYLE

Coming to terms with our lifestyle in addiction requires us to admit that we have zero self-control where our dependencies are involved. Our self-will is not enough to stop us from continuing on a dark path. The demon inside our heads is insistent that we do whatever is necessary to fulfill its demands or suffer the consequences. Our bodies follow through and give in to its demands. Recovery begins when we admit that the power behind our addiction is beyond our control.

You followed the ways of this world and obeyed the devil. He rules the world, and his spirit has power over everyone who doesn't obey God. Once we were also ruled by the selfish desires of our bodies and minds. We had made God angry, and we were going to be punished like everyone else. (Ephesians 2:2-3)

Friends and family members may have spoken to us about our lifestyle and suggested we need to get help. Because we thought we were in control, we paid no attention to their concerns. But, when we tried to stop what we were doing, it was evident that we were not in control. We were ruled by the selfish desires of our bodies and minds. There are two powers at work in this world. One wants to destroy us and the other wants to give us eternal life. Which power will we choose to obey?

This is what I told them: Obey me, and I will be your God, and you will be my people. Do everything as I say, and all will be well! But my people would not listen to me. They kept doing whatever they wanted, following the stubborn desires of their evil hearts. They went backward instead of forward. (Jeremiah 7:23-24 NLT)

When we admit that we are "powerless over our dependencies" we are making a true statement. Thankfully, there is a power greater than ourselves and if we obey Him, "all will be well". Today is another opportunity to turn our will and life over to God's care and experience His life-changing power at work in us.

Prayer: Gracious God, I need a Power greater than myself to restore me to sanity and to give me a meaningful life. Please strengthen me to follow Your ways for I know I am powerless to help myself. Amen

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Weekend

OUR BEST THINKING GOT US HERE

When we admitted our lives had become unmanageable, many of us entered into detox and then treatment programs where we found support. Each day we grew stronger. We began to attend 12-step recovery meetings and in many of those meetings often heard the words, "Our best thinking got us here." With the clarity that time in recovery brings, we are now able to admit that our self-centered thinking and actions got us into the mess we were in.

Christ is the mighty power of God and the wisdom of God. This "foolish" plan of God is far wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God's weakness is far stronger than the greatest of human strength (1 Corinthians 1:24b-25 NLT)

Many of us have also discovered that no matter how strong we might be feeling, or how smart we think we are, it's not enough to bring us through to sustained recovery. We will tire out and give up the struggle if we think any physical or mental strength we feel is enough. Strength and wisdom are gifts. They are the result of an ongoing relationship with God. They come from trusting God, waiting for God to act, following God's word, and seeking His plan for our lives. This will give us joy, keep us safe, and help us respond with humility to people and circumstances around us. This is the sure foundation on which to build our new life in recovery. Outside of God, we can't even maintain the desire to do what is right let alone find the strength to act on what we know we ought to do.

For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him. (Philippians 2:13 NLT)

It is the experience of those who walk with God that we can rely on His power when we feel weak, and that faith in Him is what makes us strong.

God says, "***My gracious favor is all you need. My power works best in your weakness.***" (2 Corinthians 12:9 NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, Thank you for giving me new life, new thoughts, and new strength, as I choose to daily surrender my life to You and live in the power of Your Holy Spirit. Amen