

LIFE WITH GOD
IN RECOVERY
DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 5

Monday

SELF-CENTEREDNESS

A character defect that most of us have is self-centeredness. Sometimes we are not aware of it, but it is evident in how we behave and in what we say. A lot of our communication with others is about ourselves and what we think or do. We often brag about how we outwitted someone to get what we wanted. We boast about our activities. It seems we just want others to know how clever we really are. Some of us are so concerned about promoting ourselves that we seldom stop to think of how we are relating to others.

In whatever you do, don't let selfishness or pride be your guide. Be humble, and honor others more than yourselves. Don't be interested only in your own life, but care about the lives of others too. (Philippians 2:3-4 ERV)

Impatience with a person or an event is another way we show our self-centeredness. Complaining because our expectations are not met is evidence of our self-centered attitude. How often do we stop and think about the well-being of the other person in the situations we complain about?

An unfriendly person pursues selfish ends and against all sound judgment starts quarrels. (Proverbs 18:1 NIV)

In our new life with God in recovery we are learning new ways of thinking and behaving. God calls us to love our neighbour as ourselves. Our neighbours shouldn't suffer because all our love is centered on ourselves.

Prayer: Gracious God, I find it hard to take my eyes off my own agenda and look out for the interest of others. Please help me to do so. Amen

Tuesday

PRIDE GOES BEFORE A FALL

When we reached the bottom in our addiction we knew we needed help to get ourselves out of our tangled mess. We came into recovery and asked Jesus and others to help us. However, once we gained a little strength, it didn't take long for that "I can do it on my own" voice to return.

If you are proud, you will be destroyed. If you are proud, you will fall. Because he is proud, that evil person doesn't turn to the Lord. There is no room for God in any of his thoughts. (Proverbs 16:18, Psalm 10:4 NIRV)

In the past we believed that no one cared enough to try and understand us or meet our needs. We questioned why things would be any different in recovery. We reasoned, wouldn't it be better to just keep quiet, keep it simple, and work it out on our own? According to Jesus, NO! Independent thinking got us into addiction because independence is based on pride of self which is born out of hurt. Following our self-centered practices instead of Jesus' instructions will hold us back from seeking and receiving the wisdom and provision of God and of friends.

God's word tells us clearly that to be wise we need to learn from God and others. We're not stupid because of something we don't know, we're simply human in need of teaching and encouragement.

Fools think their own way is right, but the wise listen to others. If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. O people, the Lord has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. (Proverbs 12:15, James 1:5, Micah 6:8 NLT)

Pride keeps us on an independent and isolated road that sooner or later will take us back to active addiction. Humbly walking with God and asking for His guidance along the way is the sure path to a new life.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with You. Amen

Wednesday

HALF MEASURES AVOID US NOTHING

There is no satisfaction in a partially committed life in recovery. Fulfillment does not come from picking and choosing what we will have, and what we will not have. Fulfillment comes from a God-directed life where His commandments are obeyed wholeheartedly. The consequences of disobedience are clearly outlined in the Bible. Failure to stay away from all types of harmful behaviour weakens us spiritually and makes us vulnerable to attacks that keep us from experiencing the freedom that God intends for us to have. New life comes when we willingly let go of our old ways.

The founders of AA who wrote "The Big Book" understood this when they wrote: *"Half measures avoided us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His (God's) protection and care with complete abandon We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely."* (Big Book p.58)

The Bible describes this same principle this way: ***Love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law. The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living.*** (Romans 13:10, 12 NLT)

Life with God in recovery requires an individual to be thorough in both their willingness to change and in their actions. At all times, with family members and friends, in all our affairs, we must strive to obey God and consistently practice recovery principles. This includes dealing with the issues of our heart as well as our visible behaviour. Half measures lead to relapse and more suffering for ourselves and those who care for us. Let us be fearless and thorough today.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is to make healthy choices that will result in a purposeful life. Help me to wholeheartedly live in the way that pleases you. Amen

Thursday

PRAYER

Some people who have no relationship with God will pray when they are in trouble or when they really need help in a time of great distress. Does God hear their prayer? Yes, He does. Will He answer their prayer? Yes, He will. How God answers that prayer is up to God for He knows each person's heart and knows what is best for each of us. God is much more generous than any human being and He alone knows the end from the beginning. However, when we have given our will and life over to the care of God, we are assured that His eyes always watch over us and His ears are open to all our prayers.

The Lord watches over everyone who obeys him, and he listens to their prayers. But he opposes everyone who does evil. Ask me, and I will tell you things that you don't know and can't find out. (1 Peter 3:12; Jeremiah 33:3 CEV)

We who have accepted Jesus as our Saviour are God's beloved children. Like any good parent, God is aware of His children's needs. The closer we get to our Heavenly Father the more He will speak with us. God's desire is that we grow in wisdom by reading and obeying His word. He gives us His Holy Spirit to help us understand the principles of His Word. He also empowers us to love and care for others as He loves and cares for us.

But I tell you to love your enemies and pray for anyone who mistreats you. Then you will be acting like your Father in heaven. He makes the sun rise on both good and bad people. And he sends rain for the ones who do right and for the ones who do wrong. (Matthew 5:44-45 CEV)

God cares about His creation and each of us is benefitting from His goodness in the world today. Can anyone imagine living in a place without God in it?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for being aware of all my needs and for making help and guidance available to me every moment of every day. Forgive me for the times I have not bothered to consult with You or have failed to surrender my will and my life to Your care. Today, I choose to surrender my will to You. Please help me walk in Your ways and obey You in all my affairs. Amen

Friday

MAKING SENSE OF LIFE AND RECOVERY

Only after a time of living in recovery with God do we realize how ridiculous we must have sounded when "we told God our plans." How little we knew of the patience of God as we went on and on about what would fix us, what we needed in order to have a good life, and how God could make that happen for us.

I lie in the dust; revive me by your word. I told you my plans, and you answered. Now teach me your decrees. Help me understand the meaning of your commandments, and I will meditate on your wonderful deeds. (Psalm 119:25-27NLT)

Who were we to think we had any knowledge about what would make life work? Our best plans got us to places we never want to be in again. We fell down so many times we ended up just lying in the dust without the ability to get up. Our thoughts were filled with shame and our hearts with sorrow. We lied to ourselves and others about how bad things were and to what depths we had sunk.

Thank God that He is willing to expand our understanding of life with His truth. He gives us trustworthy instructions that get us on the path to new life. He accompanies us on the journey and brings joy and peace as we travel together. When we get tired and weary, He refreshes and strengthens us to keep going. God helps us understand what we need to know as we need to know it, and He encourages us each step of the way.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for your patience with me as I learn to surrender my plans in favour of Yours. Help me understand what I need to know as I need to know it. Give me ears to hear Your voice of encouragement as we journey together along the way. Amen

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Weekend

EMBARRASSMENT

Who among us enjoys doing a Step Four inventory or writing out the last 90 days of our addiction? Part of the reluctance so many of us experience when we make an appointment with someone to confess the exact nature of our wrongs, is the shame and embarrassment we feel over past events. It's not easy to admit our faults, and there is a huge stigma attached to the circumstances of our life in addiction that took many of us to prison, psych wards, or to life under a bridge etc. None of us like admitting to the mistakes we made but the sooner we do, the quicker we can learn from them and start to grow.

Good people might fall again and again, but they always get up. It is the wicked who are defeated by their troubles. (Proverbs 24:16 ERV)

The embarrassment of needing to ask for help is the next hurdle to overcome. It's hard to admit that life is out of control and at the same time recognize ourselves as persons of dignity and value beyond our addiction. The truth is, we were created by a loving God to do good and make a positive difference in our community. We need to own that and affirm that until it sets the foundation of who we are and why we are living and breathing. We ask for help in order to get rid of anything that keeps us from living in the dignity of being who God says we are.

You are the one who put me together inside my mother's body, and I praise you because of the wonderful way you created me. Everything you do is marvelous! Of this, I have no doubt. (Psalm 139:13-14 CEV)

Sometimes the baggage others carry results in them trying to embarrass and humiliate us in order to feel better about themselves. We need to refuse the lies while blessing the person who is spewing them.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am who You say I am, and I'm created in your image. No one is more beautiful and worthy of honour than You, so I turn from the guilt and shame of my rebellious ways and accept what You have done for me through Jesus. Help me to let the shame and embarrassment go. Help me to live in response to Your great love for me. Amen