

FRIDAY

TIME

Most people have numerous clocks to remind them what time it is and to help with scheduling their day. The time and date of our entrance into this world was recorded, and we celebrate that date as it comes around each year. The Bible tells us that God saw us and knew us even before we were born and that every day of our life was recorded in His Book.

You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. (Psalm 139:16 NLT)

In recovery many of us keep track of our clean time and we often hear the question, "How much clean time do you have?" We all know that every hour and every day of sobriety is an amazing gift to be cherished and celebrated. Following are some encouraging reminders of how God knows and cares about each of us at every time and in every season of our lives.

When we turn our will and life over to the care of God, He helps us defeat those who seek to destroy us. ***My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me.*** (Psalm 31:15 NIV)

Each time we are in trouble help is available. We don't need to face our problems alone. ***The righteous person faces many troubles, but the Lord comes to the rescue each time.*** (Psalm 34:19 NLT)

It's always a good time to express gratitude for all that God has done for us: ***I will praise the Lord at all times. I will constantly speak his praises.*** (Psalm 34:1 NLT)

Living in recovery is about making healthy choices about what we allow our thoughts to focus on and about who we will spend time with each day. ***For I am always aware of your unfailing love, and I have lived according to your truth. I do not spend time with liars or go along with hypocrites.*** (Psalm 26:3-4 NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for always knowing and caring for me. I am thankful that I am alive today and, with Your love, help, and guidance, I am confident of a faith-filled journey with You in recovery, one moment at a time, one day at a time. Amen

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Weekend

CONSEQUENCES

Many of us know from personal experience, and from what we have seen and heard from others, that the consequences of a lifestyle of drug or alcohol misuse are painfully destructive. Throughout North America the toll of death from opioid overdose is sky high. The long-term health effects on users include liver disease, cancer, and heart disease. We know that innocent others are also damaged through crime, violence, and stress. Many of us have a turbulent history with our family and loved ones that we are still trying to sort out.

But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes. (1 John 2:11 ESV)

One of the consequences of living a destructive lifestyle is simply the sense of lostness we experience. We don't know where we are or where we are going. It's like being blinded by darkness. Without the turning of our will and our lives over to the care of God, that darkness will end with us dying and going out to an eternity without God.

He will guard the feet of his faithful servants, but the wicked will be silenced in the place of darkness. It is not by strength that one prevails. (1 Samuel 2:9 NIV)

As clearly as there are horrific consequences to a life of sin and destruction, we can take heart that there are also amazing outcomes when individuals make the choice to surrender their lives to God and live under His care.

It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. (Isaiah 59:2, 1 John 1:9 NLT)

God is ready and willing to work with us as we sort out and deal with our past brokenness. He is ready to bless us with new life, with peace, with strength, with freedom, and with life forever with Him in heaven.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You alone know how I lived in the darkness. I now ask for Your forgiveness and Your help to live my life according to Your principles. Please give me the wisdom and strength that I need to make amends and sort things out with those I have harmed. Amen

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 45

Monday

GROWING WISE

Jesus is our role model for how to live well with God in recovery. The Bible tells us that Jesus grew in wisdom as He studied the scriptures, prayed, and paid attention to what was going on in the world around Him.

Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people. (Luke 2:52 NLT)

Thank goodness we are not expected to know everything the first day we come into recovery. We learn as we go. We do that through studying and observing; through listening to others; through putting healthy principles into action; and even through our mistakes. So, where do we start if we are to grow wise?

Respect and obey the Lord! This is the beginning of knowledge. Only a fool rejects wisdom and good advice. (Proverbs 1:9 CEV)

The founders of the 12 Step program of A.A. got it right when they made Step One an admission that we are powerless on our own and without God our lives are unmanageable. As we learn to respect and obey God in all our affairs the fog starts to lift, and the values we are being taught begin to make sense. Wise people who have walked with God in recovery for a time are valuable sources of wisdom and good advice. We would do well to ask for and put into practice the guidance we receive. This will prove to be wise when some of what we are hearing doesn't seem to make much sense. Sanity will always appear insane to those who are living in insanity.

The foolish things of God are wiser than human wisdom. The weakness of God is stronger than human strength. (1 Corinthians 1:25 NIRV)

Recovery is about growing up, about growing wise, about living in peace with God and others. Am I willing to admit I don't have all the answers? Am I willing to study the Scriptures in the Bible and grow in wisdom as I obey what I am learning?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You know all things and are aware of what is still confusing to me about my past, my present, and my future. Help me to be humble and learn from Your Word, Your Spirit, and from the wise people you have put in my path. Amen

CONFESSING THE ERROR OF OUR WAYS

It's time to confess the error of our ways when we choose to deal with life situations in the isolation of our own minds and hearts. Telling ourselves the truth about our need for relationship with God and with others brings us out of isolation and into the life of freedom and hope we desire.

We have a problem, and it is time to take responsibility for our part in the problem. Telling the truth brings clarity, order, and peace to the situation. There is great power in truthfully acknowledging the things that have gone wrong in our life and asking for help to sort out what needs to change.

People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy. (Proverbs 28:13 NLT)

The exact nature of our wrongs is rooted in the lie we tell ourselves that our problems are caused by what is around us rather than what is within us. Trying to sort things out and solve problems based on our own flawed understanding will create greater problems for us and for those around us.

Coming out of isolation and learning how to live well with other imperfect people will take flexibility and great patience on our part. Many of the problems we encounter with those around us are an expression of our own character defects rather than their attitude. We can grow in our understanding of others by putting into practice the second half of the Serenity Prayer which says, "taking 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."

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path. I've promised it once, and I'll promise it again: I will obey your righteous regulations. I have suffered much, O Lord; restore my life again as you promised. (Psalm 119:105-107 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit that living in isolation while trying to find solutions to my pain and shame has made my life miserable and my problems worse. Teach me to live in peace with You and with others. Please restore me to the life You have promised. Amen

DON'T GIVE UP – HARD WORK PAYS OFF

Growing and being renewed day by day is part of our physical, emotional, and spiritual life. God has provided guidance for us in the Bible, including principles we can learn that will strengthen our desire to move forward and not give up hope.

Do all you can to add to your life these things: to your faith add goodness; to your goodness add knowledge; to your knowledge add self-control; to your self-control add patience; to your patience add devotion to God; to your devotion add kindness toward your brothers and sisters in Christ, and to this kindness add love. (2 Peter 1:5-8 ERV)

The old saying, "Rome wasn't built in a day" is a principle that applies to us in our recovery. We are healed one wound at a time. We learn one lesson at a time and while we wish we could run miles ahead in a day we only achieve an inch at a time. There is a lifetime of lessons to be learned. God encourages us to add new practices and invites us to focus on the next part of the journey we are learning about today. We should not give up if we haven't put into practice everything we have learned, and we should not slow down and be lazy because we have already put into practice some things we have learned.

It's encouraging that God tells us to, "**Do all you can...**" God knows us and knows what we are capable of doing in a day. His expectations are not unrealistic. We may feel stretched, but God will never expect more of us than what we can handle. God will always be near and will strengthen us as we grow in our love for Him and for those around us.

We must keep wanting what God requires even while we struggle to learn and grow in His ways. God knows how to get us to the finish line.

God began a good work in you. And I am sure that he will carry it on until it is completed. That will be on the day Christ Jesus returns. (Philippians 1:6 NIRV)

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for being near to me and for Your continual guidance on my path to new life. Amen

WHAT IS MY HEART LONGING FOR?

As we recover, do we ever stop to consider what the deepest longing of our heart is? Is it for accumulated clean time, money, fame, good friends, a meaningful life, a good job, a home we can call our own? Jesus said the ungodly run after these things and then He tells us that if we seek God's kingdom first, we will have everything we need.

These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. (Matthew 6:32-33 NLT)

Some of us think that if the desires of our own heart were met life would be perfect. When we longed to cover up our fear, we sought a sedative that would make us feel better. For a time, it did, but then the sedative became a dependency that took over our life. Some talented athletes long to reach the top of their sport but when they succeed they discover a feeling of being let down because they still feel empty inside. Longing for the things of this world will never bring contentment.

Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. (1 Timothy 6:6-7 NKJV)

At the beginning of His ministry Jesus fasted for forty days and was very hungry. The devil arrived on the scene and tried to get Jesus to do what he said in order that Jesus' hunger could be satisfied. But Jesus was not fooled by the devil's approach and answered him with a quote from the Scriptures. The devil will try to get us to satisfy our longings in his way, but we need to know the Scriptures so that we can choose to meet our desires according to the way God has directed.

The devil came to tempt him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these rocks to become bread." Jesus answered him, "The Scriptures say, 'It is not just bread that keeps people alive. Their lives depend on what God says.'" (Matthew 4:3-4 ERV)

Prayer: Loving God, Let my greatest longing be to know what You say in the Scriptures and to practice Your principles in all my affairs. Amen