

FRIDAY

HOLDING ON TO HOPE

Last Sunday the season of Advent began. The word Advent means “Coming” and is a season in the church year when many Christians look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus at Christmas plus look forward to His promised second coming. The first Sunday in Advent focuses on the quality of having Hope. We are assured by people who have given their will and life over to the care of God, that when we focus our Hope on God, we will have a wonderful future together with Him.

No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame.
(Psalm 25:3 NIV)

No matter where we find ourselves in life today, we are encouraged to open our hearts and minds to remember and celebrate that Jesus truly is the reason for the Christmas season. We need to invite Him to work in our hearts to get us ready to see Him face to face and to spend eternity with Him in His Father’s House.

Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited and redeemed his people. He has sent us a mighty Savior from the royal line of his servant David, just as he promised through his holy prophets long ago. (Luke 1:68-70 NLT)

Whether in addiction or recovery, we don’t have to reflect on our lives for too long before we realize that we are in desperate need of help. The founders of A.A. recognized that, and this is the reason the first three steps of the 12-Step Program remind us that: 1) we are powerless; 2) that there is a power greater than ourselves in whom we should believe; and 3) we need to decide to turn our will and our lives over to His care.

We have been rescued from our enemies so we can serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness for as long as we live. (Luke 1:74-75 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You that I do not have to live in the shame of my past. I am also thankful for the Hope I have today because Jesus Christ came to earth to be my Saviour. Thank You for rescuing me from my enemies so I can serve you without fear, in holiness and righteousness, for as long as I live. Amen

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Weekend

JUST FOR TODAY – I Will Pray Blessing

Just for today I will be agreeable. I will not criticize, not find fault, and not try to improve or control anybody except myself. I will pray blessing on one person with whom I struggle to relate.

We may find it easy to bless some people but today we are asked to be agreeable and bless someone with whom we struggle to relate. How do we do that? If we’re honest most of us would like to avoid those with whom we struggle to relate. How and where do we find the desire and willingness to bless them? Generally, our desire is that the person who did us harm would acknowledge what they did to us and be sorry for what happened. We may be waiting for them to make the first move. To bless someone with whom we struggle to relate might mean reflecting on our part in whatever went wrong and taking responsibility for it. Making amends for our part may also be how we bless that person. Depending on the incident, sometimes the best way to bless someone we are having a problem with is to forgive them and let go of the issue. Life is too short to hold onto every single wrong word or bad attitude we have experienced or are personally responsible for.

The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. (Proverb 11:25, Luke 6:28 NLT)

We are not familiar with what is happening in another person’s life. When we are upset about what someone said or did, perhaps we should first seek to bless that person with kind words so they might be encouraged. Just offering a listening ear or a helping hand may lessen the weight of pressure a person is under. Encouragement is never wasted. Even if a person’s efforts fall short of our standard, giving thanks for a work they have done may provide a beautiful bridge to healing.

Share each other’s burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. (Gal. 6:2 NLT)

Finally, it is important to be generous without keeping score of “who owes who” and “whose turn it is.” If a score were kept on how many times God has blessed us and how many times we have given thanks, who would win?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, As You have unconditionally loved and blessed me, help me to be kind and to bless any person with whom I struggle to relate. Amen

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 49

Monday

PUTTING GENEROSITY INTO ACTION

If someone were to choose 3 words to describe us, would generous be one of them? We are encouraged from God’s word today to develop this character strength.

I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ.
(Philemon 1:6 NLT)

Many of us think we are more generous than we actually are. We give when it is convenient. We give when we are hoping to get something in return. Sometimes, we give without considering the consequences and then struggle because we haven’t used well what we’ve been entrusted with. It’s quite a different story to be generous when it is inconvenient, when we don’t particularly like the person in need, or when there is no possibility of any return benefit.

But generous people plan to do what is generous, and they stand firm in their generosity. (Isaiah 32:8 NLT)

We can pray for wisdom to put generosity into action. This should be rooted in our thankfulness to God for all the good things we have received from Him. When we operate out of this motivation, we are more likely to make correct and generous choices. We need to decide to responsibly share what has been entrusted to us. We need to stick with the plan even if it might suddenly seem inconvenient. God wants us to pray about our giving so we will be wise as well as generous.

Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything. The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed. (Proverbs 11:24-25 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to plan all of my actions including my giving with You. I want to be wise as well as generous in sharing what You have so generously given to me. Amen

One day when Jesus was at a dinner party given by a religious leader an uninvited woman with a bad reputation in the community entered the room. The woman was weeping as she stood behind Jesus. Her tears wet Jesus' feet and she dried them with her hair. She then proceeded to anoint Jesus' feet with fragrant oil.

In those days it was customary for a host to provide water to wash the dusty feet of guests who came into their home. This was a sign of respect and honour. Simon had neglected to do this for Jesus and the other guests. With self-righteousness, pride and arrogance, Simon judged what this woman was doing for Jesus. He also judged Jesus for allowing her to touch Him.

Jesus said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little." Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." (Luke 7:44b-48 NIV)

The woman's sins were widely known in the community. Simon's sins were hidden. One of the mistakes we often make is assuming that we are okay when we are living in a socially acceptable way. The truth is, we need to assess our lives based on what the Bible says. In recovery, as in active addiction, we need to recognize our sinful ways and acknowledge our powerlessness to fix ourselves. We also need to repent of our self-righteousness, pride, and arrogance, in our judgement of others and turn to God for forgiveness and healing.

Jesus gave Simon another chance that day to judge correctly. Today, God is giving us another chance to humbly acknowledge our shortcomings and ask Him to remove them.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me to acknowledge my sin before You so I can be forgiven. Thank you for Jesus who went to the cross and paid the price for all sin so that I might be free from all condemnation and live my life to the full. Amen

The hustle and bustle of Christmas shopping and related events is in full swing. With all the busyness some of us hardly have time to stop and think and are grateful at the end of a busy day that we can sit down, put our feet up, and rest for a while. On the night Jesus was born shepherds who had been busy caring for their sheep all day long, were finally sitting down to rest. Suddenly angels appeared in the sky, and their ordinary lives were changed forever.

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger." (Luke 2:8-12 NLT)

The shepherds took the angels at their word and went to find this baby. We don't know everything they communicated with Mary and Joseph, but we do know that they took time to tell others about the amazing truth that God had come to be with them.

After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished ... The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them. (Luke 2:17-20 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am so grateful that Jesus came to earth to be with us. I want to pause in this moment to remember the helplessness of the Baby Jesus and let the wonder of this season fill my heart once again. Amen

A mature person is productive and effective and, with the knowledge they have gained, they keep on improving their standing in the community while growing closer to God. Many of us have been called immature in the past because any knowledge we may have had did not lead us to do anything that improved our lives, or make a positive contribution to the lives of others. If we are to become mature, we need to faithfully follow God's principles in all our affairs.

I am the vine. You are the branches. If you remain joined to me, and I to you, you will bear a lot of fruit. You can't do anything without me. If you don't remain joined to me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and dries up. (John 15:5-6a NIRV)

A gardener will prune the branches of a grapevine so that the vine will not develop more grape clusters than it can feed. Pruning also forces the vine to grow in a shape that is helpful when harvesting. When we ask God to remove our defects of character we are cutting away those things that will hinder the growth of our new nature. As we put God's principles into effect we will grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus. This is the route to maturity and producing much fruit for the kingdom of God.

You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain joined to me, just as I also remain joined to you. No branch can bear fruit by itself. It must remain joined to the vine. In the same way, you can't bear fruit unless you remain joined to me. (John 15:3-4 NIRV)

Those of us who have had a spiritual awakening know that we must grow in the knowledge of God's Word and continue to obey what it says. To help us do that we must have conscious contact with God through prayer and meditation on the Scriptures. We must seek God's will for our lives and ask Him for the power to carry it out. This is the way to maturity and God's blessing in our lives.

All these things should describe you more and more. They will make you useful and fruitful as you know our Lord Jesus Christ better. (2 Peter 1:8 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to let go of anything that would hinder my growth or impede my desire to know You more. I want to bear much fruit for Your Kingdom. Amen