

FRIDAY

TRY TO DO GOOD

One of the central pillars of the recovery world is the sharing of our experience, strength, and hope. We're not perfect people. We don't always get it right, but we are willing to learn. We hear the following encouraging words at every AA meeting when someone reads, "How It Works."—*No one among us have been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides in progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.* (page 60 *The Big Book*)

The Lord hates the way evil people live, but he loves those who try to do good. (Proverbs 15:9 ERV)

God hates the way evil people live because it harms both them and others. He loves those of us who try to do His will in all our affairs, not because we are perfect, but because we seek to do what is right by getting rid of our character defects and making amends in our relationship with Him and with others. God wants us to give our best effort in all that we choose to do. We may make mistakes here and there but God's desire is that we be truly grounded in our hope to succeed in our life with Him in recovery. Some of the most encouraging people to listen to are those who have relapsed many times but who never gave up and have now strung together a significant number of days, weeks, or even years of sobriety. Are we willing to stand up after a fall, or do we just give up?

The lips of the wise give good advice; the heart of a fool has none to give. (Proverbs 15:7 NLT)

God loves to increase our understanding of how life works. We affirm that in both Step 2 when we talk about God restoring us to sanity and in Step 11 when we pray for knowledge of God's will and the power to carry it out. Let's do our best today to learn from God, from others, and from our own experience.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is to know You and Your will for my life and to be faithful to practice Your principles in all my affairs. Please help me achieve this! Amen

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Weekend

HOW MANY LIES MAKES A LIAR?

Life with God in recovery is structured around telling the truth in all circumstances. We've heard the slogan, "*You are only as sick as your secrets*" and that's a simple description of a life based on lies. Another AA slogan points us towards the new life we seek in recovery, "*Trust God, clean house, help others.*" God's word makes this principle crystal clear.

Stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. (Ephesians 4:25, 1 Peter 3:10 NLT)

The move from telling lies to telling the truth is often harder than we think. It's so easy to excuse little white lies, half-truths, exaggerations, and lies of convenience where we tell ourselves that it's mostly truth. We live in a society where lying is an accepted way of doing business or doing politics. "Fake news," "alternate facts," and "political spin" are terms that seek to condone lying. To rationalize telling lies we talk about "fudging the truth, bending the truth, or being economical with the truth." How many lies does a person need to tell to be labelled a liar? Sadly, all around us we are seeing the negative impact of a society that has made lying a way of life.

The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in those who tell the truth. I am writing to you not because you don't know the truth but because you know the difference between truth and lies. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. (Proverbs 12:22, 1 John 2:21, John 16:13 NLT)

The only issue that really matters when it comes to truth and lies is our answer to the following questions: What am I truly saying? When I speak, can others trust that I am telling the truth? When we ask Him, God is ready to help us become persons of truth and integrity.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You are the way, the truth, and the life. You have filled me with the Spirit of Truth who will guide me into all truth. Help me to listen well and commit to being truthful in all my affairs. Amen

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 47

Monday

ONGOING PERSONAL INVENTORY

Our old ways of thinking and behaving are being transformed as we journey with God in our new life in recovery. New things bring new challenges as they push against our old ways. Taking regular personal inventory enables us to assess whether the challenges being exposed are just the temporary pain of new muscles being built or are hidden shortcomings being brought to light. It's important that our ongoing daily inventory starts with what is being revealed.

Oh, that we might know the Lord! Let us press on to know Him. He will respond to us as surely as the arrival of dawn or the coming of rains in early spring. (Hosea 6:3 NLT)

What are we doing from day to day to train ourselves to hear and respond to the voice of God? Are we challenging ourselves to pray and read and reflect on God's Word? As we choose to follow this discipline, we will discover that life as God describes it is different from what we have practiced, or what we experience in some of the actions of those around us. Comparing God's ways with our known ways forms the foundation of our ongoing daily inventory. It helps us identify how we are growing in obeying God's Word and putting into practice His principles in all our affairs.

Trust in the Lord and do good; live in the land and be safe. Seek your happiness in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desire. Give yourself to the Lord; trust in him, and he will help you. (Psalm 37:3-5a GNT)

God has a plan for our lives that gives satisfaction, meaning, and joy. As we continue to take personal inventory, and promptly adjust any shortcomings that are evident, we will achieve the desired ease of living at peace with God, with ourselves, and with our neighbour.

Prayer: Loving God, I am thankful that You enrich me with Your goodness and love through each step of my journey. As my thoughts and actions are transformed by following Your principles, I am assured that I will experience more contentment and satisfaction in my daily life. I am grateful that I can trust You to help me turn from my old ways and live my life in the light of Your truth. Amen

God longs for us to experience love and blessing in relationship with others. Sometimes, for various reasons, there are complications in our relationships, and we are unsure how to sort things out. God wants to help us know how to live well, how to interact well with one another, and when to let go and let God.

It's hard to watch a loved one suffer. It's a challenge to stick with a relationship when someone is suffering and acting out of their pain in a way that impacts us. We find it difficult to know how to handle things on a good day let alone deal with these frustrations on a bad day. Hope dwindles. We get discouraged and tempted to give up. As God never gave up on us when we were wandering around trying to find our way on our own, so God encourages us to not give up on others.

Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. (1 Corinthians 13:7 NLT)

We need to pray for wisdom and establish healthy boundaries in all our relationships. Setting boundaries can be a part of walking in love with a person who is struggling. We need to pray for this person trusting that as we pray, God will work on their hearts. We need to keep praying for understanding and healing for ourselves because when those we have a relationship with struggle, we may easily get hurt.

Stay with God! Take heart. Don't quit. I'll say it again: Stay with the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears. (Psalm 27:14; Philippians 1:6 MSG)

God is good. God is with us. Our hope is in God alone. God is making a way where there seems to be no way. Our part is to hang on to hope.

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13 NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to look to You for guidance in all my relationships and have the wisdom to turn over to You those things that are beyond my capability to sort out. Thank You that in all things You work together for the good of those who love You. Amen

Two women who went to a Tim Horton's coffee shop, bought many doughnuts and cups of coffee and began to give them out to people who were coming in as a "random act of kindness." The story made the evening news. Other stories are told of people who have paid for the next person's gas at the gas pump, or of someone who picked up the dinner tab for another table at a restaurant. These are people who are giving just to be generous. In some instances, it is in response to something lovely that has been done for them.

We also, too often, hear stories of people who are complaining and condemning others for what they did or didn't do. Sometimes it seems that no one can get it right. What would happen if each of us were to change our perspective, seek out the good, encourage others and start a cycle of "random acts of encouragement?" What if we were to take the ordinary circumstances of our day and let them be opportunities to encourage others with words of appreciation?

Jesus said: ***"So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."*** If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important. Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith. (John 13:34-35, Galatians 6:3, 10 NLT)

Encouragement can be offered in a variety of ways: a word, a note, a prayer, a phone call, a visit, providing meeting information, or even accompanying the person to a meeting or appointment they may have. We can be a part of a support network for others in the same way that we have been supported in our recovery. We will experience encouragement ourselves as we offer encouragement to others.

Prayer: Gracious God, Thank you for loving and encouraging me. Prompt me to be aware of the helpless and lonely people around me and to tell them how to find new life in You. Amen

How many of us are confident in our decision making? When something feels right, do we just do it or do we stop for a moment and think on the principles contained in the Scriptures that help us make good decisions. Being confidently decisive comes from knowing what God's principles are and practicing them in all our affairs. If we are unsure about anything, we can ask God for direction with whatever is going on and He will graciously give us the instruction we need.

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. (James 1:5 NIV)

Those of us who have had a spiritual awakening will have made a decisive step to be in contact with God by reading the Bible daily. In the past we did not know or chose not to follow the ways of God. Since giving our life over to the care of God we are confident that His principles are the way to a purposeful life. We have found that being decisive about what we will do when temptation comes is vital to maintaining our sobriety. We are certain that temptation will come, and we have a plan for how we will handle it.

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12 NIV)

Being strengthened by our faith in God and His actions on our behalf is a way to prove His favour and presence ever with us. This means that God accompanies us through every life situation we encounter and will strengthen us to choose to do the next right thing. It does not mean we will never have problems. However, with God any problem can be worked out and overcome.

Without faith it is impossible to please God. Those who come to God must believe that he exists. And they must believe that he rewards those who look to him. (Hebrews 11:6 NIV)

Prayer: Loving God, In all my ways I want to be confidently decisive according to Your Word. Please strengthen my faith in the truth of Your Word so I can consistently be an overcomer. Amen