

Tuesday

MAKING RESTITUTION

When we have hurt someone, we need to take responsibility for the harm we have caused and do all in our power to make things right. This is what we call making restitution. That could mean repaying money for things we have stolen; clearing up an attack on a person's reputation; or owning up to the truth for some action of ours that we previously blamed on others. The list of wrongs needing to be corrected is endless and is unique to each of our life experiences.

Proper restitution to others is challenging to make if we haven't seen our own behaviour in the light of God's love. We broke God's laws. We harmed persons made in God's image. We owed a debt we could never repay. In His foreknowledge of our broken ways, God recognized the need for restitution if our relationship with Him and with others was to be healed. What was God's response? Through Jesus, God chose to pay the debt on our behalf and made restitution for all our wrongs.

Christ carried our sins in his body on the cross. He did this so that we would stop living for sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you were healed. God paid a very high price to make you his. So honor God with your body. Live like free people, but don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. Live as those who are serving God. (1 Peter 2:24; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Peter 2:16 ERV)

A song by Ellis Crum gives meaning to this truth. "He paid a debt He did not owe. I owed a debt I could not pay. I needed someone to wash my sins away. And now I sing a brand new song, Amazing Grace. Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could never pay."

As we acknowledge what God has done for us through the forgiveness of our sins and the restoration of a loving relationship with Him, we will find our attitude towards others has changed. We are so thankful for all that we have received that we want others to receive the same blessings. Although it's never easy to make restitution to another person, we will be motivated to take the necessary steps when we truly exhibit God's work of restitution in us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Jesus who died on the cross for my sins so that I could be reconciled to You. I ask for wisdom and the courage to humbly approach family members and friends and make restitution to them with a heart and mind that both honours them and You. Amen

Wednesday

HAPPY JOYOUS AND FREE

Life in recovery can be challenging at times. We have joy in the fact that we are no longer in the pit of our addiction but are uneasy about living in situations that are unfamiliar to us. People are encouraging us to stay the course, but we are unsure and even fearful about our new environment. This is a natural reaction to changing our lifestyle and learning new ways to cope. We were "experts" in our dysfunctional lifestyle but are "newbies" in our life in recovery. Thankfully, God has promised to help us cope in this process that leads to a life that is happy, joyous, and free.

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. (James 1:2-4 NLT)

The transition from living in self-will to living in God's will is a real test of faith. We may ask ourselves, "Is there truly joy in walking in the ways of God?" Sometimes we can say a definite "Yes" as we experience joy in having made good decisions. Other times we find ourselves in a battle with our will as we are drawn to familiar things of our past. If we seek God during these times of struggle, He will take us by the hand and safely lead us forward on our new path. The struggle will quiet down. Feelings will change. Joy will come when we realize that, together with God, we have faced and overcome a challenge.

Keep me safe, O God, for I have come to you for refuge. You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever. (Psalm 16:1; 11 NLT)

Like any child learning to walk we may stumble and fall but, like any good Father, God will lift us up when we stumble and will rejoice over us when we learn to walk steadily forward. If we wholeheartedly seek Him, God is committed to leading us into a life that is happy, joyous, and free.

Prayer: Loving God, You have called me out of the darkness I was in and now invite me to walk together with You in the light of Your presence. Steady me in times of struggle and help me to take one more step forward today, and in each day ahead. Amen

Thursday

MORAL EXCELLENCE

When we chose to believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we were reconciled to our Heavenly Father. We were born again from above into the family of God and given the will and the desire to live a life of moral excellence that is pleasing to God. We inherited a divine nature and became children of God who have a place in God's kingdom.

Jesus answered: I tell you for certain that before you can get into God's kingdom, you must be born not only by water, but by the Spirit. Humans give life to their children. Yet only God's Spirit can change you into a child of God. (John 3:5-6 CEV)

We were helpless to do anything for ourselves when we were newborn babies in our human family. We relied on our parents or caregivers and teachers to help us grow and mature so we could live effectively in this world. It's much the same when we are born again into the Kingdom of God. We are helpless on our own and need to rely on our gracious God to help us grow and mature so we can live effectively in the Kingdom of God.

I am writing this to you, my children, so that you will not sin; but if anyone does sin, we have someone who pleads with the Father on our behalf—Jesus Christ, the righteous one. (1 John 2:1 GNT)

In the past, we chose to live by what was right in our own eyes and finally ended up in an unmanageable existence which we were powerless to change. Now, as we seek God and practice His principles in all our affairs, the guidance and strength we need to move forward into a life of moral excellence will be there for us. Moral excellence may not happen overnight but, as we persevere, we will be active and effective for the Kingdom of God.

Do your best to improve your faith. You can do this by adding goodness, understanding, self-control, patience, devotion to God, concern for others, and love. (2 Peter 1:5-7 CEV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank You for all You have done, and continue to do for me. Help me to live a life of moral excellence and to carry the message to everyone I meet. Amen

Friday

IRRITABILITY and ANGER

Many of us who are overcoming a lifestyle of addiction will experience irritability and anger in certain situations.

Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. (Ephesians 4:31 NLT)

On any given day we may not be feeling good about who we are. When this happens, it is easy to blame those we believe are contributing to our discontent. An incident may occur and suddenly we find ourselves becoming irritable and angry. We feel justified to lash out at those who have offended us. The person or persons on the receiving end of our behaviour may not even understand what is happening. They may have innocently said or done something that triggered a fuse within us which caused us to explode into a rage. What on earth is going on within us when a situation can arouse this type of behaviour?

Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and my God! (Psalm 42:11 NLT)

Irritability and anger are likely reflective of something going on deep inside us. Our angry response to a situation may even bypass our rational thinking process. However, we still need to bring these behaviours before God and seek His wisdom about the root cause. We need to be willing to expose the underlying reason for our wounded heart. We may be discouraged over things that have happened in our past and have never grieved their impact on us or asked God for His healing. We may even doubt that anyone, including God, could help us. Fortunately, we are reminded in recovery meetings that “God could and would if He were sought.” With God, understanding and even overcoming our deep-rooted anger is possible.

Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me—now let me rejoice. (Psalm 51:7-8 NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, Please reveal the underlying root of my irritability and anger problems and enable my wounded heart to be made whole, so I may find peace and joy in all I do. Amen

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Weekend

KEEPING JOY ALIVE

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous discusses building relationships and how joy will impact our ability to do so. “We aren’t a glum lot. If newcomers could see no joy or fun in our existence, they wouldn’t want it. We absolutely insist on enjoying life.” (Big Book Page 132)

The founders of AA linked misery to self-will and addictive habits and joy to an open loving relationship with God. They followed God’s ways and recognized how it brought joy to their relationship with God and others. Joy is a quality we surely need as we move forward in our life with God in recovery.

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. (James 1:2-4 NLT)

What steals our joy? Very often it is pride. We begin to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to. We start to find faults in our recovery program, in the people around us, and in our leaders and mentors. We blame others and our environment for our discontent.

You have felt secure in your evil ways. You have said, “No one sees what I’m doing.” Your wisdom and knowledge lead you down the wrong path. You say to yourself, “I am like a god. No one is greater than I am.” (Isaiah 47:10 NIRV)

If we desire to be joyful in our recovery, we will need to be mindful of our thoughts and actions. We need to find out what God’s principles are for successful living and reshape our behaviour around them. We need to surrender pride every time it raises its ugly head, remembering that the Holy Spirit is always with us to give us wisdom and guidance as we submit to His ways.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for being prideful and believing that I could live a joyful life in recovery without You and without those who counsel and mentor me. I am forever grateful that You, the God of hope, will fill me with all joy and peace as I trust Your ways to take me forward in my recovery. Amen

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 19

ADMITTING WHAT’S WRONG

Life on God’s terms is the way of living we say we want when we come into recovery. Assessing our lives, based on God’s principles, helps us recognize how far from the way of truth and abundant life we have lived. God created us for relationship with Him and with others. Wrongdoing is sin and not in keeping with God’s original plan for us. To set things right, we admit and repent of all our wrongdoing before God. We ask for and receive God’s forgiveness for our rebellion against Him and for the harm we have caused both to ourselves and others. We then seek His guidance to turn away from our learned behaviour and choose to follow His principles that will lead us to a purposeful life.

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (Psalm 51:4, 1 John 1:9 NLT)

Living with the attitude that we don’t need God in our lives makes us prideful and eventually will leave us without hope for our future. In the past we had our own ideas about why we were in the condition we were in, but our thinking was flawed and now it’s time to admit that we got it wrong. We should ask Jesus to reveal to us the underlying nature of our problems. The truth is we were born with a sin nature that Jesus died to free us from. He wants us to know the truth for the truth will set us free to be the person we were created to be. Jesus will accompany us into those deep places in our souls that we would never dare to venture into on our own. He will reveal what needs to be brought into the light. He’ll tell us the truth about ourselves but will do so with tenderness and grace. He’ll show us the way out of our insanity and into a life that is filled with peace and contentment.

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them. (2 Corinthians 5:17, 19 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to humbly and honestly admit what has gone wrong in my life. Show me the truth about myself. Help me to know and walk in Your ways, and choose to honour You in all I say and do. Amen