

LIFE WITH GOD
IN RECOVERY
DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 17

LEAVING SHAME BEHIND

God says we are precious in His sight. God, through Jesus, has provided a way for us to leave shame behind and live in honour and dignity, regardless of what has happened in our past. Believing and speaking the truth of God's word to ourselves will break the power of evil to keep us in bondage to the past. This will also open the door to living in the blessing of the good gifts and plans that God has for us. All God's promises are YES for us who belong to Jesus.

Let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water. Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (Hebrews 10:22, 2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT)

It's not easy to let go of lies that have impeded our well-being for some time, but God will give us the power to do so if we will follow His instructions and act on His written Word. If we are holding anything back, it's time to confess it to God and receive His grace and power to overcome.

My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness. So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith. (2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 3:9b NLT)

Those who live with shame often run into isolation when they feel threatened. God calls us to overcome shame by proclaiming the truth that Jesus bore our shame on the cross so we could be free from it. When we want to run away because we feel threatened, our best choice is to stay. The shame we feel because of past events may be blocking us from talking with a trustworthy individual, but the only way to find real freedom is to get it all out and proclaim the truth that will set us free.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for running to isolation, addiction, and destructive actions rather than calling on You for help. Thank You that Jesus died on the cross for me so I could be forgiven, cleansed, healed, and made whole. Help me to focus my thoughts on truth and not react to my feelings. When I feel like running or isolating, please strengthen me to remain and seek out healthy people with whom I can be honest about what is going on. I am forever grateful that You continue to love and care for me. Amen

Tuesday

GAINING AND PRACTICING DISCRETION

In the Big Book of AA, we are advised to use discretion in knowing how much time and attention to give to a situation versus the time that others might benefit from if we give more of our time and support to them. Employers are encouraged to use discretion in how they approach employees they want to help, even by mentioning the Big Book. We are cautioned to use discretion when making our Step 9 amends to people, and to do so only when it would not further injure them or others.

To show discretion is to know the right thing to do in a situation and to behave in such a way that we don't cause offense. Quite the challenge. Thankfully, the Bible is very clear about how we can gain wisdom and practice discretion.

For the Lord grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity. He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him. Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will find the right way to go. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy. Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you. (Proverbs 2:6-10 NLT, Proverbs 2:11 NIV)

We know that on our own we are powerless to maintain healthy boundaries, think before we speak, or know what's best in complicated situations. God's promise is that He will give us common sense, will protect us, will show us the way that is just and fair, and will even fill us with joy as we allow Him to lead us on this journey. We get wisdom and discretion by improving our conscious contact with God through prayer and meditation, and by practicing His principles in all our affairs. In other words, we learn through journeying with God, obeying what He says works, and then benefiting from the lessons we learn as we witness the results. Discretion doesn't come in a moment. It comes from prayer, experience, integrity, and surrender to God's will.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to show wisdom and discretion in all my affairs. Help me practice Your ways in each situation I encounter today. When I should be silent, help me to relinquish the desire to speak. Where I need to practice healthy boundaries, help me to do so. Help me to learn from the lessons You are teaching me as I walk with You each day. Amen

Wednesday

FOLLOWING THROUGH

In "How It Works" we read and hear the following words read regularly at meetings: *Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program.*" (Big Book of AA page 58) Anyone who has made an honest attempt at recovery knows the hard work that is required. What gives us encouragement and hope is that many who have diligently done the required work have succeeded.

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. (Romans 15:4 NIV)

Clearing the wreckage of our past and rebuilding our character and our relationships isn't accomplished in a day. We contribute to that goal every day, for sure, but effort over time is what is required to meet our long-term goals.

We can know all sorts of things about God as we come to believe that He is a power greater than ourselves who can restore us to sanity. We can even decide to turn our will and life over to His care. The real test of our desire for recovery is the follow-through of putting God's Word and the 12 Steps into practice, one day at a time. Some days will be relatively easy, and other days will require every bit of strength and commitment we can master.

Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble and keep on praying. So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. (Romans 12:12, Galatians 6:9 NLT)

Who among us enjoys doing a searching, fearless, and moral inventory and then admitting the exact nature of our wrongs? It's painful to acknowledge our character defects and then ask God to remove them. Making a list of those we have harmed and making amends to them is intimidating for most of us. However, God's promises and the experience, strength, and hope of those who have gone before us tell us that, as we follow this path and do things one step at a time, God will get us to our goal.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I often want the "quick fix" and find it hard to follow through on the challenging parts of becoming the person You created me to be. Help me to fix my eyes on Your principles and strengthen me to do the Step work required of me each day. Amen

Thursday

COURAGE TO CHOOSE CHANGE

We have all sorts of reasons why we think we can't change. We've told ourselves that we've always been this way. We've often tried to change and failed to do so. There's no hope. No one will help us. We have become familiar with our limitations and what is necessary to just get by each day. We are so focused on problems and blaming others that we no longer take time to think about solutions that would give us hope. In fact, we've come to believe that it's impossible to get well and have a good life.

Jesus met a man who had been ill for 38 years. He'd tried many times to get well but there was always some reason why it didn't happen. Over the years he began to believe he couldn't do what was necessary to be healed and that no one would help him. His identity as a powerless victim was rooted firmly in his heart. He believed that his situation was hopeless. Jesus knew this but also knew many other things the man did not know. Jesus asked the man a revealing question, "Would you like to get well?"

When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, "Would you like to get well?" "I can't, sir," the sick man said, "for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me." Jesus told him, "Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!" Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking! (John 5:6-9 NLT)

The courage to change that Jesus offers is the willingness to let go of those things that have kept us in bondage to hopelessness and instead choose to believe in His willingness and ability to heal us. Jesus asks us to do two things – trust Him and obey what He tells us to do. Are we willing to change our thinking and choose for the courage that Jesus is making available to us today?

Prayer: God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen

Friday

OVERLY RESPONSIBLE

As we go forward in recovery, we have come to the realization that we are accountable for the actions we have done, the behaviour that has impacted our relationships, and the problems we created throughout our life in addiction. It's not been an easy process for us to identify and take responsibility for these things, but it has been liberating and life changing as we have done so.

For some of us it's been a balancing act between taking responsibility for our part and, being overly responsible for the actions of others that were beyond our control. While we may have had a part to play in making life difficult for others, their choices remain their responsibility. It is up to each person to identify their own issues and take any necessary action. It's not our job to sort others out and fix their problems.

The Lord will guide you continually, giving you water when you are dry and restoring your strength. You will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring. (Isaiah 58:11 NLT)

It is important that we care for, and support others, assisting them as help is needed. We do a disservice to others when we continually do things for them that, with instruction, they can do for themselves. By being overly responsible we get in God's way because God uses all the circumstances of a person's life to draw them to Himself.

People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy. A person without self-control is like a city with broken-down walls. (Proverbs 28:13, 25:28 NLT)

Boundaries will help us live respectfully and safely in our relationships. When we define and uphold personal boundaries, they contribute to our peace. When we get a clearer picture of what it takes to live in healthy ways, God will be honoured by having first place in all our decisions and actions.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to identify and live within healthy boundaries. I want to be supportive of others but avoid harming them by getting in the way of Your work in their lives. Please help me to be both caring and wise in all my relationships. Amen

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Weekend

GOOD THINGS COME TO THOSE WHO WAIT

Many of us have heard the saying, "Good things come to those who wait." This proverb reminds us that if we are patient and keep on doing what we know is right, we will eventually achieve our goal. God's word has more to say about this.

Good things come to those who do what is right. Joy comes to those whose hearts are honest. You who are godly, be glad because of what the Lord has done. Praise him, because his name is holy. (Psalm 97:11-12 NIRV)

We do not have all the answers for our future and perhaps feel insecure about some of the unknowns. God's promise to us is that if we will follow Him, live with integrity, and do what is right, He will fill our lives with good things and our hearts with joy. Not only that, but in our eternal life with God, after our bodies die and are put in the grave, we will experience wonderful things that are way beyond our ability to even think about or imagine, and we will enjoy these gifts forever.

Some people live for God's glory, for honor, and for life that cannot be destroyed. They live for those things by always continuing to do good. God will give eternal life to them. (Romans 2:7 ERV)

The best news for all of us is that God knows we are unable to constantly live good lives on our own and so He encourages us to receive the gift of His Holy Spirit who will fill us with power and give us the wisdom to overcome our weakness and the temptations that we encounter along the way.

Even though you are evil, you know how to give good gifts to your children. How much more will your Father who is in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him! (Luke 11:13 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that I am weak when it comes to temptation. Please fill me with Your Holy Spirit so I have the wisdom to wait patiently for things to change and have the power to do what is right regardless of the circumstances I encounter. I want to live for Your honour and continue to do good each day. Please help me! Amen