

Tuesday

SAY WHAT WE MEAN AND MEAN WHAT WE SAY

Many of us have been in the company of others who think they know everything, but when they open their mouths very little wisdom is detected. Know-it-alls have very little respect for those around them and lie through their teeth to save face when the truth about a situation is exposed. The Bible describes them this way:

Help, Lord! No one does what is right anymore. Those who are faithful have disappeared from the human race. Everyone tells lies to their neighbors. With their lips they praise others, but they don't really mean it. May the Lord close all lips that don't mean what they say. May he stop every tongue that brags. They say, "What we speak with our tongues will win the battle. What we say with our lips will keep us safe. No one will have victory over us." (Psalm 12:1-4 NIRV)

While living in a dysfunctional lifestyle, we often thought that those who were trying to help us were cramping our style. We decided we knew what was best for us and that was the end of any discussion about the harm we were causing ourselves and our loved ones. We lied to others. We made promises we had no intention of keeping. Our self-will brought us to the place where we didn't know what was right anymore, and our life was totally unmanageable.

In recovery, the only sure way to win the battle is by becoming a person who is faithful to God, to others, and to living as the person God created us to be. We need to learn to "say what we mean and mean what we say." We need to seek God to guide us, and as we do, we will find that He is faithful to keep us safe and give us strength to do that.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I repent of my arrogance in thinking that my ways are better than Your ways. Today I acknowledge that in You are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Help me to seek Your will and to be a person who faithfully does what I say. Amen

Wednesday

FEELINGS OF SADNESS

We are often overwhelmed with feelings of sadness when we first enter recovery. We feel sad because of the road we have travelled and the harmful choices we have made. The guilt we feel contributes to feelings of sadness. We condemn ourselves because we think we should have been stronger. These negative feelings often contribute to our inability to do the daily things we need to do as we stay clean and sober, and unless we are careful, may lead us to relapse. How can God help in these circumstances?

Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly. The Lord is a shelter for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, for you, O Lord, do not abandon those who search for you. (Psalm 5:3, 9:9-10 NLT)

When we accept Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, God totally forgives us all our sins and frees us from all condemnation. To allow self-condemnation or guilt to continue when we have received God's forgiveness conflicts with what God says and what Jesus did for us on the cross. Jesus opened our future and permanently closed our past. We need to renew our minds with these facts and move forward in the lavish grace that God is pouring out on us. We need to fix our thoughts on good things. We need to determine in our hearts to do those things which contribute to our well-being, whether we feel like doing them or not. We need to remember: God is always with us. We need never face our problems alone.

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all the marvelous things you have done. I will be filled with joy because of you. I will sing praises to your name, O Most High. (Romans 8:1; Psalm 9:1-2 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You that through Jesus I am totally forgiven. Help me to live in the peace and joy that freedom from condemnation and guilt brings. Amen

Thursday

HELP FOR THE HOPELESS ADDICT

Do I matter? Does anyone notice me? Does anyone care? The longer we have struggled with addiction, the more times we have faltered and failed, the harder it is to have hope. The good news is that as long as we are living and breathing, there is hope for us today. God is inviting us to a new life with Him. We may think that temptation is too much for us to handle but God says that if we come to Him, he will make a way of escape for us.

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure. (1 Corinthians 10:13 NLT)

What is God's way?

1. Look to God for help and saving: *Let all the world look to me for salvation! For I am God; there is no other.* (Isaiah 45:22 NLT)
2. Spend time reading and learning God's way: *I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.* (Psalm 119:11 NLT)
3. Make our hearts available to hope: *When doubts filled my mind, your comfort gave me renewed hope and cheer.* (Psalm 94:19 NLT)
4. Give it our best effort: *Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.* (2 Corinthians 13:11 NIV)
5. Live in gratitude: *Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He fills my life with good things.* (Psalm 103:1-3, 5a NLT)

Let's choose to give God's way a chance. Remember, with God nothing is impossible.

Prayer: Gracious God, Please give me hope and strength to live according to Your Word. Help me to take practical steps to make room for hope in my heart and mind. Amen

Friday

BUILDING CONFIDENCE FOR SUCCESSFUL RECOVERY

Moving forward in identifying character defects and allowing God to help us develop our true character is no easy process. Few of us are all that confident in our ability to succeed. Many of us slipped into addiction to cover up our lack of confidence and low self-esteem. It's no easy task to look ourselves in the mirror once again and believe that we can be something other than what we have been.

The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you."
(Psalm 32:8 NLT)

God knows us better than we know ourselves. God knows that on our own we will fail but as we surrender our will and life to His care, He will show us a new way. God will support us each step of the way and, as we experience success, our confidence will grow.

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (1 John 5:14, Hebrews 4:16 NIV)

We are not aware of what we really need. Our understanding is too clouded by our pain and the destructive patterns of our life so far. God knows who we are and what we need to succeed. We can be confident of living the wonderful life if we stay close to Him because God will guide us along the good way.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I cannot do this on my own. We both know that. Help me to trust Your view of me and who You say I am. Help me to listen carefully to the voice of Your Spirit in my heart as He teaches me how to apply Your Word to my actions and circumstances. Give me the courage and humility to return to You again and again for help in my time of need. Amen

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Weekend

TURNING FROM WORTHLESS THINGS

Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word. Fulfill your promise to your servant, so that you may be feared. Take away the disgrace I dread, for your laws are good. How I long for your precepts! In your righteousness preserve my life. (Psalm 119:35-40 NIV)

While we operated in the chaos of our addiction all our attention was focused on worthless things. We longed for the good life. We thought that our substance of choice would give us freedom from pain and fill us with pleasure. The insanity of our addiction was that no matter how often we used, we never found complete freedom from pain or the pleasure we sought. All that resulted was increased desperation and suffering. The Bible clearly describes this way of life as seeking after worthless things which put our lives in danger.

By God's grace, in the chaos of our addictive living, we became aware that something better was available – something right and good which leads to a purposeful life. This was the quiet voice of God inviting us to the meaningful, satisfying life He created us to live with the promise to teach us how to live it.

Our old ways are flawed. We have numerous triggers in us related to fear and pain that, left on their own, will have us moving towards unhealthy behaviour before we even think through what we are doing. The God who created us knows exactly what we need. Through His Word God teaches us His principles for a good and pleasing life.

As we leave behind worthless things and begin to put God's principles into action, He will give us the courage and strength to continue to do what is right. We begin to discover that the good life we were always seeking is found in wholeheartedly obeying God's word.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Teach me Your ways that I might delight in You and follow You all the days of my life. Amen

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 6

Monday

THE BENEFIT OF DOING THINGS GOD'S WAY OVER THE LONG HAUL

How many times have we spoken before we thought and, as the saying goes, "put our foot in our mouth?" For too long we've held narrow views of life and our place in it. God created us for community and caring relationships.

God says: If you listen closely to my wisdom and good sense, you will have sound judgment, and you will always know the right thing to say. (Proverbs 5:1-2 CEV)

In Step 11 we are encouraged each day to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out. As we put God's ways into practice, we will have the satisfaction and joy of experiencing how practical God's Word really is.

The Lord watches your ways. He studies all your paths. Sinners are trapped by their own evil acts. They are held tight by the ropes of their sins. They will die because they refused to be corrected. Their sins will capture them because they were very foolish. (Proverbs 5:21-23 NIRV)

The more often we make the choice to do things God's way, the more often we will see that it was exactly the right thing to do at that time. Everyone around us will benefit from our actions and our sense of what is right and good will grow clearer. It becomes part of the message we are to carry to others as we practice God's principles in all our affairs.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to not only meditate and pray for the knowledge of Your will but to have the courage to put it into practice in all my affairs. Help me to trust Your way even when it seems inconvenient or quite different from what I have known in the past. I choose once again to turn my will and my life over to Your care. Please direct me in all my ways. Amen