

Friday

COMPASSION

When we observe someone in need of help what is our first reaction? Are we a person with genuine compassion who seeks to help another, or do we just want to know what is going on with no sincere interest in helping? In the Bible we are told many times that Jesus had compassion on the crowds or on a person in need and He stopped to help them.

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. (Matthew 9:35-36 NIV)

Jesus told a story about a person who was robbed and injured on a dangerous road. Two people looked at his near dead body lying on the roadside but went on their way without doing anything to help. Then a person who was not of the same ethnic background of the man came by and took care of him. He even put the injured man on his own donkey and took him to an inn where he paid the innkeeper to take care of him until the man was well.

By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. (Luke 10:31-33 NLT)

When Jesus looked on us in our life in addiction, He had compassion on us, pursued us with His love and brought us to our Heavenly Father. Now it is time for us to do as Jesus says, "Go and do the same."

Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. (1 Peter 3:8 NIV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Please help me to love and be compassionate to those I meet along the way, just as You and others have loved, helped, and shown compassion to me. Amen

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Weekend

SPEAKING WITH HONOUR: NO MORE SWEARING

What does speaking honourably have to do with recovery? So, what if I swear? So, what if I tell off-colour jokes? To live in recovery is to live as respectful people, honouring God and those God loves. How does my speech reflect this?

You must not misuse the name of the Lord your God. The Lord will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name. Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored. (Deuteronomy 5:11, Matthew 6:9 NLT)

When they don't like what is happening around them many people will react with words such as, "Oh for God's sake" or "Jesus Christ". When these words are spoken, there really isn't a desire for God or His will, or to honour Jesus' name above all names. It is a disrespectful misuse of these names. The names of God reflect His reputation and demonstrate His character in what He says and does. Each time we pray the Lord's Prayer we are committing ourselves to upholding God's name with reverence and using it with respect. In the same way that we would not appreciate people saying and doing things in our name, especially things we do not approve of, we should not invoke God's name in things He would not approve of.

I bow before your holy Temple as I worship. I praise your name for your unending love and faithfulness; for your promises are backed by all the honor of your name. Psalm 138:2 NLT)

Many of us would rather not swear but we get careless and the words are out of our mouth before we even think. It's time to both think and speak with honour about the God who loved and cared for us even when we didn't care for ourselves. God sent His beloved son Jesus into the world to die for our sins so that we might be made right with Him and live forever with Him in heaven. We need to think about what causes us to carelessly misuse the name of this awesome God of unending love.

Prayer: Our Father in Heaven, may your name be honored on my lips today and every day. Help me to cease speaking careless words and instead honour You in all my ways. Amen

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 16

Monday

WISDOM FOR THE RECOVERY JOURNEY

The Bible is filled with wisdom and good direction for living a good life. As we obey God's Word, we will experience a meaningful, purposeful life. This is what Step 11 speaks to when it reminds us, "we sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out."

The wise are mightier than the strong, and those with knowledge grow stronger and stronger. If you really want to become wise, you must begin by having respect for the Lord. All those who follow his rules have good understanding. (Proverbs 24:5 NLT, Psalm 111:10 NIRV)

God wants to help us know what is right and good. All we have to do is ask Him to teach us. ***If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.*** (James 1:5 NLT)

When we surrender our lives to God and invite Him to be Lord over our lives, God doesn't just give us words and instructions. God's Spirit comes to live within us. He will teach us about God's will for our lives and will give us the power to carry it out. When we put God's principles into practice, we will see that what God says really does work. We will grow stronger as our actions reflect the wisdom that is filling our hearts.

But when the Friend comes, the Spirit of the Truth, he will take you by the hand and guide you into all the truth there is. He won't draw attention to himself but will make sense out of what is about to happen and, indeed, out of all that I have done and said. (John 16:13 MSG)

Not only do we gain wisdom as we seek God's direction and practice His principles in all our affairs, but we enjoy the safety, peace and guidance of the Spirit of Truth.

Prayer: Loving God, My desire is that You would grant me a willing heart to follow You. Give me understanding of Your word and help me to obey what You say, so I may have wisdom in all I say and do. Amen

On a regular basis, when you climb into bed at night do you sleep soundly, or do you count sheep? Do you feel at peace, or do you worry about the problems tomorrow may bring? Jesus often told stories about everyday life to help us understand spiritual principles. One day Jesus spoke about a secure sheep pen where sheep were held. This sheep pen provided shelter against thieves, wild animals, and the weather. In telling the story Jesus wanted us to understand how we can find security and belonging.

Anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice. (John 10:1-5 NIV)

The sheep pen that Jesus refers to appears to be a safe place in this world. Jesus is the entry gate by which the sheep enter the safe place. He is also the Good Shepherd who cares for the sheep. Who are the sheep who are cared for by the Good Shepherd? They are the ones who have accepted Jesus' death on the cross as payment for their sins. Jesus is the only gateway to God's promised care and protection. If sheep remain outside the sheep pen, they are vulnerable to enemies. Predators may be lurking. Sheep stealers may try to steal, kill and destroy the helpless sheep. However, when sheep are under the care of the Good Shepherd they can lie down and know they are safe in His care.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to be safe and secure in Your care. I am thankful for Jesus who gave His life that I might be Your precious child and live with You forever. Help me to listen to Your voice and to follow You only. I am forever grateful for the peace and protection You provide for the sheep in Your care. Amen

God wants us to be successful in recovery and in life. One of the truths that God shares with us is that Satan's mission is to find ways to cause us to doubt the forgiveness we received when we chose to have faith in Jesus' death as payment for our sin. The Bible warns us that our enemy is prowling around looking for ways to deceive us.

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. (1 Peter 5:8-9 NIV)

The devil uses whatever he can to accuse and condemn us. If we are doing well, he'll remind us of times in the past when we did poorly. If we experience joy in following the ways of God, he'll attempt to steal our joy by making us believe we are proud and self-righteous. We need to believe what God says about us and be conscious of the fact that the devil is a liar.

He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44b NLT)

No matter how well we are doing, the evil one's tactic is to eat away at our confidence through accusing us of how imperfect we are. He will remind us of a time in the past when we relapsed. He will tell us that we should have done more, or still could do more, to withstand temptation. While we can't justify a bad choice based on several good ones, it is important not to focus on failure when we've had successes in the same period. God is more patient with us than we are with ourselves. We need to discipline ourselves to rejoice in the encouragement that God's Word brings and embrace the unfailing love of God for us.

And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight. And remember, our Lord's patience gives people time to be saved. (2 Peter 3:14-15a NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, I am thankful that Your mercy is new every morning and that Your love and compassion never cease towards Your children. I am grateful that Your word leads me in the path of right living. Thank You that I am pure and blameless in Your sight. Amen

Many of the events in our lives contributed to us becoming dependent on substances and/or unhealthy relationships which were traumatic and caused us to retreat into hiding. We were not prepared to discuss these events with others, so we buried them deep in our soul. We then sought other means to help us deal with the intense pain. However, covering up traumatic events with painkillers does not make them go away. In fact, as so many of us can testify, the memories cause fear and shame to grow and become like mountains that block and confuse our thinking and behaviour. God invites us to bring both the trauma we have suffered and its impact to Him for comfort and healing.

God is our mighty fortress, always ready to help in times of trouble. And so, we won't be afraid! Let the earth tremble and the mountains tumble into the deepest sea. Pray to me in time of trouble. I will rescue you, and you will honor me. (Psalm 46:1-2, 50:15 CEV)

When a ship is tossed about on an angry sea the captain will seek a safe harbour where the ship can anchor and wait for the storm to pass. If the ship has sustained damage, it can be repaired while resting in the harbour. Some of us have been through many storms in our lives and are battered and broken because we have not found a safe harbour where we could rest. God offers that to us. All we need to do is to come to Him. When we come, we can allow Him to comfort us and heal the pain we have endured. He will lead us to quiet waters; He will restore our soul.

The Lord your God wins victory after victory and is always with you. He celebrates and sings because of you, and he will refresh your life with his love. The Lord has promised: Your sorrow has ended, and you can celebrate. (Zephaniah 3:17-18 CEV)

Prayer: Loving God, I come to You because You invite me, and I need Your help. I choose to release to You all the baggage I have been carrying and the associated pain. I want to be free from these burdens so I can enter into a new life with You. Please help me! Amen