

## DESIRE TO CHANGE

Tradition 3 of AA says the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking or using.

Jesus tells us: *Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.* (Matthew 26:41 NIV, Philippians 2:13 NLT)

It takes an act of God to remove the desire to use or drink. When the desire pick up arises, we can expect "victory" as we daily invite God to be the source of our strength to say "NO". As we add one day of sobriety to another, we will notice changes around us. Our confidence begins to grow and we will experience success in other areas. Together all these things will support our desire not to drink or use again.

Faithfully making conscious contact with God is a priority. The more we obey what God says works, the more we will experience the peace of God and a sense of well-being deep in our souls. Life with God will always be much sweeter and more fulfilling than a life of drinking or using.

*Find your delight in the Lord. Then he will give you everything your heart really wants. Live by the Holy Spirit's power. Then you will not do what your desires controlled by sin want you to do.* (Psalm 37:4, Galatians 5:16 NIRV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Change me from the inside out. Help me to enjoy the blessings of this life but most of all to enjoy being cared for and loved by You. Help me to experience the promise that life with You is more desirable than a life of drinking or using. Amen*

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## BUILDING A GOOD REPUTATION

We did not have a good reputation when we were living in addiction. In fact, though we tried to hide our struggles we deteriorated even deeper into our addiction. Both our character and reputation were ruined by our continual poor choices. Now as we seek to live well with God in recovery, dealing with our bad reputation is one of the most difficult things to face.

*A good reputation and respect are worth much more than silver and gold. Never let loyalty and kindness leave you! Tie them around your neck as a reminder. Write them deep within your heart. Then you will find favor with both God and people, and you will earn a good reputation. Always let others see you behaving properly, even though they may still accuse you of doing wrong. Then on the day of judgment, they will honor God by telling the good things they saw you do.* (Proverbs 22:1 CEV, Proverbs 3:3-4 NLT, 1 Peter 2:12 CEV)

The principles behind good choices are foundational to good character and are clearly laid out in the above Bible verses: - be loyal; be kind; behave properly; do good. Rebuilding our reputation is about developing positive character qualities: - letting God remove our character defects and being humble in the learning process. We may have blown the trust of others so many times that it will take time for them to trust us. However, when change is consistent, many of us have experienced that people respond with kindness.

Jesus came to earth and laid down His good reputation to die a sinner's death on the cross, so that we might receive forgiveness and a new life with our Heavenly Father. He sacrificed everything for us. As tough as it may be to rebuild our reputation, God will supply everything we need to help us do that.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Jesus came to earth and gave up His good reputation so I could have a new life. Empowered by Your Holy Spirit, help me to do the work required to rebuild my life so that, by the way I live, I can be a person who finds favour with You and with others. Each day please help me to honour You with my thoughts, words, and actions. Amen*



## RELATIONSHIP INVENTORY

Our life in addiction was shaped by a controlling relationship with a destructive substance, a habit, a person, – or a combination of these. At some point we began to believe that we were entitled to whatever would give us pleasure and keep pain at a distance. We focused on ourselves and our needs to the exclusion of others and believed, because of our familiar feelings of self-rejection, we were unlovable.

*Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, Doesn't have a swelled head, Doesn't force itself on others, Isn't always "me first," Doesn't fly off the handle, Doesn't keep score of the sins of others.* (1 Corinthians 13:4-5 MSG)

When we come to God, we must humbly admit that we do not know how to live in relationship with others. Through belief in God's Word, we will come to the knowledge of God's love and truth, and He will teach us how to live in wholesome relationship with others. We need to learn from our past, even those things that caused our brokenness. We need to allow God to take the broken person we have become and change us into the person He created us to be. We need to freely give and receive love.

*No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.* (1 John 4:12 NLT)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, forgive me for living as a self-centered individual. Teach and empower me to live in loving relationship with You, my family, and those in my community. Please help me to love and care for others as You love and care for me. Amen*

**Prayer:** Grace us God, that as you truly Jesus, death on the cross paid for my sorrows and healings. Help me to forgive those who have harmed me so that I may live in peace and bring others to the cross of Jesus. Amen.

Applying God's principles to our thoughts and actions will bring us the healing and the peace we desire.

Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:31-32 NLT)

Good wants us to be at peace rather than harassed by bitterness and resentment. We can experience the peace that results from God's forgiveness of our failures and can know even greater peace when we choose to forgive those who have wronged us.

Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful. (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 NLT)

source of comfort that quietes our souls. When we become children of God, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us and will guide us into all truth. As we follow God's principles in all our affairs, we will experience great peace, and nothing will cause us to stumble.

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)

TOOLS FOR PEACE

Thursday

Pray for Heaven-sent Father, I confess that my thoughts are sometimes  
negative and cause me to fear. Please set me free from stingy  
worrying and help me to uphold the truth of your word. I am forever  
troubled for the truth that you lovingly watch over me and will keep  
me safe. Amen

God invites us to the peace and security of living in the truth that He truly does care. Our part is to acknowledge God's truth and obediently follow His principles in all our affairs. As we do, we will come to experience the peace and security that God promises.

The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm—*he will watch over your life.* (Psalm 121:5-7 NIV)

When we think that God will not help us, we leave ourselves open to negative actions. We are fearful of doing the right thing and experiencing emptiness. We assume that everything depends on us and we get blamed for our frustration. In our frustration we lash out at others. We vent our fears and angry thoughts on who ever is closest to us and end up experiencing loneliness, discouragement and increased pain from the angry conflicts.

Good has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?" Hebrews 13:5b-6 (NIV)

## NEGATIVE THINKING

Wednesday

Player: Loving God, You are good and You are with me. You promise to never leave me nor forsake me. Help me to trust in You, and in Your faithful care, when challenges fill me with worry and anxiety. Amen

God's new life-giving way for us in recovery is to come to believe that He is the power greater than ourselves who will restore us to sanity. Our part is to turn our will and life, including any worrying situation, over to His care. What does this require? We begin to trust that God is good, that God is for us, and that God will give us what we need. More than our need for an instant solution is our need for God to strengthen our character. We may not prefer that gift from God but thankfully God is more interested in our long-term stability than in our demands of the moment.

I give you peace, the kind of peace that only I can give. It isn't like the peace that this world can give. So don't be worried or afraid. (John 14:27 CEV)

Trusting God rather than being filled with worry and anxiety requires that we hold on to what is true even when our circumstances may be challenging. We want instant help and find it hard to wait until the problem is resolved. We need to believe that God is for us and preserve, even when we feel like giving up.

For all of God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding "Yes!" And through Christ, our "Amen" (which means "Yes") ascends to God for his glory. It is God who commissiomed us, and he has identified us as his own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything he has promised us. (2 Corinthians 1:20-22 NLT)

God has told us to give all our anxiety and cares to him because He cares for us. God promises that He won't give us any more than we can handle and will give us grace that is sufficient to meet our every need.

## DEALING WITH WORRY AND ANXIETY

Tuesday