

FRIDAY

CARING FOR UNEASY FEELINGS

When we live in depression our number one enemy is our emotions. Emotions are unreliable. They change from day to day and feelings often don't convey the truth, or at least the complete truth, of what is going on in our lives. Acknowledging the truth of our emotional state to God, and asking for His help, will bring His wisdom into the situation, together with healing, encouragement, and blessing.

I look to the Lord for help. I wait confidently for God to save me, and my God will certainly hear me. Do not gloat over me, my enemies! For though I fall, I will rise again. Though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be my light. (Micah 7:7-8 NLT)

When we feel tired or discouraged, we should not fall into the trap of telling ourselves "I feel depressed," or, "It's too hard for me to face this day." God invites us to look at the very same feelings and say, "God, I feel tired and discouraged so I place myself in your care. Thank You Lord that Your unfailing love and tender mercy are available to me right now. Show me the way forward. Fill me to overflowing with a sense of Your goodness."

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalm 23:5-6 NIV)

From time to time we all have anxious feelings, but we can choose to make our feelings line up with our decisions. That's why God gave us the fruit of self-control.

The Bible tells us, ***Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*** (James 4:7 NIV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You are a man of sorrows and understand my grief. I am thankful that there is no condemnation from You when I feel sad or discouraged. Please draw me close to Your heart and give me the endurance and strength I need to change my attitude when dark thoughts enter my mind. Fill me with Your peace. I choose to stay close to You and ask You to make me whole. I am grateful that I can confidently rely on You to restore my soul. Amen

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Weekend

I CAN'T. GOD CAN. I THINK I'LL LET HIM.

The familiar slogan "I can't. God can. I think I'll let Him" describes the decisions made in the first three steps of the Twelve Step program of A.A. These guiding words can be applied to many situations we will encounter in our life in recovery.

The story is told of how one rainy afternoon, a father came up with an idea to entertain his bored eight-year-old daughter. He tore a large map of the world into small pieces, mixed them up, and told her to put them back together like a jigsaw puzzle. To her father's surprise, the girl completed the puzzle in just a few minutes. "How did you do it?" the father asked. "It was easy," she said. "At first I couldn't fit all the lines and dots and colors together on the map. Then I saw part of a man's face on the back of one of the pieces, so I turned all the pieces over. When I got the man together, the world map took care of itself."

Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you. He will make your innocence radiate like the dawn, and the justice of your cause will shine like the noonday sun. (Psalms 37:5-6 NLT)

God sent His son Jesus into the world to redeem sinful, broken, screwed-up individuals like us. By dying on the cross, Jesus gave His life for the sin of the whole world. When we believe that Jesus' payment is sufficient to set us free from sin, we will receive the new life that God has promised. Alternatively, we can continue to live in guilt and frustration as we try to sort out our complicated lives by ourselves. When we choose to apply the simple principle, "I can't. God can. I think I'll let Him" we'll experience a new and satisfying life – life with God in recovery.

Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. (James 1:17 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit that I am powerless over people, places, and things. I believe that Jesus' death paid the price for my sin and invite You to live in me and work in me, so I can fulfill Your good plan for my life. Amen

LIFE WITH GOD
IN RECOVERY
DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 38

Monday

REBUILDING SELF-ESTEEM

Some significant events in our life have destroyed our sense of value and punctured holes in our self-esteem. A noteworthy part of living with God in recovery is the restoring of our understanding of our true value which has firmly been established by the God who created us. Regardless of what we have done in our past or for how long we did it, when we accept forgiveness of our sin through Jesus, we become new people and God says to us, "You are forgiven. Nothing can separate you from My love. You are created to do good work. My plan and purpose for your life is to give you a future with hope."

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. (Romans 8:1-2, 38 NLT)

We need to tell our hearts and minds these truths until incorrect thought patterns are transformed and we are resting secure in God's unfailing love and care.

See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows. (1 John 3:1a, Luke 12:7 NLT)

As beloved children of God we need to exchange our self-will for God's will. When we focus on what God says works, and put those things into practice, we will begin to experience a life that is purposeful and satisfying.

Don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up, and be alert to what is going on around Christ—that's where the action is. See things from his perspective. Your old life is dead. Your new life, which is your real life—even though invisible to spectators—is with Christ in God. He is your life. (Colossians 3:2-3 MSG)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to daily focus on Your Word and put it into practice so that I may have wisdom to live this new life You have graciously given me. Amen

We cannot control all our circumstances, but we don't need to let a difficult situation negatively impact our day. When we turn our hearts and minds towards God's generous promise of help to meet our need, we can deal with most incidents that cause discouragement. The Bible tells us how: **"we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."** (2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV)

Sometimes we feel depressed because we think we cannot face the truth, and on our own we probably can't. However, when we seek God, He will give us all the strength we need to face the truth about our circumstances. We will begin to overcome depression when we see things from God's perspective and stop looking for someone to blame for how we are feeling.

Shout for joy, you heavens; rejoice, you earth; burst into song, you mountains! For the Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones. (Isaiah 49:13 NIV)

We are not stuck. We are not damaged for life. We are not broken beyond repair. God offers us a new life as we focus on His love for us rather than on the events that have taken place in our lives. He is ready and willing to fill us with peace of mind and heart regardless of the life-altering things that have happened to us.

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31b-32 NIV)

No harm or injustice is bigger than God's ability to heal and restore. We need to let go of the incorrect beliefs we have held about some situations in our lives and ask God to heal the pain. We need to forgive those who have harmed us and stop blaming them for the problems that life has brought our way. We need to acknowledge that it is God who gives us a future with hope. As we focus on what God says to us, life will improve, and our emotions will be impacted in a positive way.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that I have allowed lies to keep me in bondage to fear. I want the truth of Your Word as written in the Bible to set me free. Please help me to know and speak the truth into each situation that causes me stress. Thank You for loving and caring for me. Amen

Dishonesty is a tool we use to protect ourselves from shame, guilt, or embarrassment. We used this tool a lot in our life in addiction and it enabled us to continue in our dysfunctional lifestyle. We deceived those we came into contact with so we could get what we wanted from them. Addicts lie to themselves and others all the time. They tell themselves they have things under control when they do not. They minimize the problems they are causing. They simply hide from uncomfortable truths.

The reality is that it is only when we come into recovery and start telling the truth that we realize what a huge weight is lifted off our shoulders. We are often surprised by the light-hearted freedom we are experiencing. God is pleased with us and His blessing settles in our hearts. Telling the truth is a wonderful way to experience new life.

The Lord hates people who tell lies, but he is pleased with those who tell the truth. (Proverbs 12:22 ERV)

Stress levels are reduced significantly when we live in the truth. We do not have to worry about the stories we tell and what peoples' reaction will be when something unpleasant is said. We can be ourselves and allow others to do the same. Dishonesty contributes to isolation and loneliness because no matter how much we convince others with our lies, deep down we know we have lied, and we hate ourselves for our ongoing dishonesty.

If you are good, you are guided by honesty. People who can't be trusted are destroyed by their own dishonesty. (Proverbs 11:3 GNT)

The Bible promises that the truth will keep us safe. There may be momentary discomfort if the truth we need to admit is unpleasant, but the long-term benefit of this groundwork will allow us to live with peace of mind and heart.

Honesty will keep you safe, but everyone who is crooked will suddenly fall. (Proverbs 28:18 CEV)

Prayer: Loving God, please lead me by Your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you. Amen (Psalm 25:5 NLT)

We are told in the Bible that love never fails, but in our relationship with others we often fail to love. One day we think our friend is the greatest person in the world and the next day they do something to offend us and they become our enemy. We are fickle in our love for others. The love of God is quite different from the love we have towards one another.

Here is how you can tell the difference between God's children and the devil's children. Anyone who doesn't do what is right isn't God's child. And anyone who doesn't love their brother or sister isn't God's child either. (1 John 3:10 NIRV)

Before we gave our will and life over to the care of God, we were habitual sinners and did not love or care much for those around us. Our dependency became our first love and all our relationships suffered because we gave our all to what helped us exist in our unmanageable lifestyle. In the pit of our addiction, God broke through with His unfailing love. He never gave up on us even when we refused to obey Him or even acknowledge that He existed.

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1 John 3:1a NIV)

Would we care about others if they were not pleasing us? Amazingly, even though we rebelled against Him, God still cared about us, and He gave Jesus His beloved son to redeem us from the sin that held us in bondage to the evil one. God paid a great price for our deliverance. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all would be saved from trying to pay what Jesus has already paid.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to love others with the same love that You have for me. Teach me Your ways and help me to never give up on anyone. Amen