

FRIDAY

## THE RICH RETURN FROM BEING GENEROUS

God has made many promises, some of which are conditional on our obedience to do what He says. One of God's promises tells us that, as we bless others, He will give us back abundantly above all that we have given. Some of us are afraid to share or give to others fearing we will not have enough left over for ourselves. In God's Kingdom the opposite is true. He says the more we give, the more we will receive.

***Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*** (2 Corinthians 9:7-8 NIV)

When we were living a destructive lifestyle, some of us benefited from the generosity of others. People helped us through monetary contributions to charities which prepared meals or maintained shelters. Some donated clothing to help keep us warm. God returns excessive interest on what is given to help others so we should all be seeking to give more rather than stockpiling what we have.

***Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*** (Luke 6:38 NIV)

Some of us get caught up in putting our trust in gambling rather than God. We hand over our money in the hope of winning an amount that is significantly more than the wager we contribute. Statistics tell us the odds of winning are limited, and most of us lose what we put in. This, however, does not stop people gambling. God's promises on the other hand are trustworthy. The way to having more than enough for all our needs is to trust God's word and act on it.

***Riches and honor come from you alone, and you are the ruler of all mankind.*** (1 Chronicles 29:12a TLB)

***Prayer: Loving God, Protect me from a poverty mentality that keeps me from sharing what I have with others. Please give me a generous heart and help me to trust You for the abundant blessings You promise when I do things Your way. Amen***

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Weekend

## LIVING SOBER – FACING PEER PRESSURE

At one time or another all of us have surrendered to peer pressure. We may not have wanted to do what our peers were planning to do, but went along with them because we did not want to cause a fuss or be ridiculed. To take a stand on moral grounds, or for the sake of our own well-being, is usually frowned on by peers who want us to join them in doing what they want to do. How do we handle a situation like this when we are trying to stay clean and sober?

***Stay away from the evil things a young person like you typically wants to do. Do your best to live right and to have faith, love, and peace, together with others who trust in the Lord with pure hearts.*** (2 Timothy 2:22 ERV)

When a person wants to become competent or professional in a sport they enjoy, they need to plan how they are going to achieve their goal. Training in the art of the sport and physical fitness together with a strict meal regime, will all be part of their scheduled program. If they allow peer pressure to mess up their training, then the person is giving up their goal to please their peers. Life is all about choices and we all need to plan how we will handle opposition to the principles we have set for our life.

***Dear friend, listen well to my words; tune your ears to my voice. Keep my message in plain view at all times. Concentrate! Learn it by heart! Those who discover these words live, really live; body and soul, they're bursting with health. Keep vigilant watch over your heart; that's where life starts.*** (Proverbs 4:20-23 MSG)

Sometimes peer pressure can be good for us. We have peers who are qualified to coach us in the best path for our life. They will encourage us to do the right thing by sharing their experience, strength, and hope with us. Together, with God's Word as our guide, we cannot fail.

***How can a young person live a clean life? By carefully reading the map of your Word.*** (Psalm 119:9 MSG)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to keep the good plans I make for my life and not to be swayed by peer pressure to mess up. Help me to set a good example with my choices and behaviour, even in a moment of pressure, so that others may see a better way forward. Amen***

## LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 34

Monday

### WHO HAS AUTHORITY IN MY LIFE?

God's purpose in creating humans in His likeness was that they would live in loving relationship with Him and with each other. He formed the earth for humans to dwell in and wanted them to live well and have fullness of life in the beautiful environment He created. However, through Satan's lies and scheming, he managed to make the first humans believe that God was withholding something good from them.

***God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*** (Genesis 1:27 NIV)

Satan, a created angel, was once in a place of great importance before the throne of God but because he became prideful and wanted to elevate himself to having similar authority to that which God has, he was cast out of heaven.

***"I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."*** (Isaiah 14:14 NIV)

Now Satan roams the earth seeking to deceive and destroy humans who are made in the image of God. When we follow the desires of our own heart, whether in an addictive lifestyle or just ignoring the God who created us, we are allowing Satan to have authority in our lives. We are saying by our actions that we have found a person, a substance, or a thing that is better than what God has generously provided for us.

***Pride ends in humiliation, while humility brings honor. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.*** (Proverbs 29:23, Philippians 2:3 NLT)

Today, let's reflect on the God who created us and loves and cares for us, and then purposefully decide who we really want to have authority over our lives.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want Your plans and purposes to shape my life and how I live today, and every day. Give me understanding of Your Word as recorded in the Bible and reveal to me Your plan and purpose for my life so I may follow Your principles in all I do or say. Amen***

The way we think has the most powerful impact on how we face each day. If we think we will have a stressful day then we probably will, because our thoughts feed our feelings and our feelings usually determine how we behave. We are not shaped by our environment as much as we are by our perception of our environment. Beginning our day with God and thinking right thoughts, even amid turmoil, will have a major impact on how the events of our day will go. If we think God will bless our day, then we are on the right track to having a good day. God knows the end of this day from the beginning, so we have nothing to fear if we walk with Him.

***This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.*** (Psalm 118:24 NLT)

When we choose to handle the pressures of each day on our own, excluding God from the process, then we will have very little control over our feelings. As we face the difficulties the day brings, our emotional stability will come and go like the crashing waves of the sea, removing all peace.

If, however, we begin the day by asking for God's help, He will give us the wisdom to find a reasonable response to any difficulties. In addition, He will stay close to us as we navigate through each challenge we encounter.

***If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind.*** (James 1:5-6 NLT)

Thinking right will have a major impact on our emotions and on our general well-being. Life's events don't determine who we are, God our creator, determines who we are, and He will hold us steady with His righteous right hand.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, When challenges come, help me to prayerfully seek Your input. Help me to uphold the truth of Your word in every situation I encounter so that my thinking starts on the right track. Amen*

We all need time to relax and unwind from the responsibilities of a busy day. Our hearts need a chance to quiet down and be at peace. In recovery meetings we say the Serenity Prayer and invite God to bring peace to our hearts. The good news is that the peace of God is available to people like us – people who have lived in darkness and the shadow of death. God knows we are unable to find the way of peace on our own, so He accompanies us and guides us to it.

***Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace.*** (Luke 1:78-79 NLT)

What we could not do for ourselves, Jesus came to earth to do for us. Through Jesus death on the cross the price of our sin was paid for. God offers us forgiveness and peace of mind and heart. What do we need to do to obtain this gift? Repent and turn away from our dark deeds, turn to God, receive His forgiveness, and give our will and our life over to His care.

***Jesus said: I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid. I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.*** (John 14:27, 16:33 NLT)

Seeking to live in the peace that God gives may be challenging when circumstances or people are difficult to deal with. Jesus tells us the truth about these life situations – you *will* have troubles – but He tells us to take heart because we have His power within us to overcome all our troubles and be at peace.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to be conscious of Your tender mercy as You accompany me through difficulties and lead me to the pathway of peace. Help me to make the effort required to build peace into all my relationships. Thank You for caring and giving light to us who once sat in darkness and in the shadow of death. Amen*

It is so much easier to name ways that others irritate us than to accept there are ways we irritate others. It may even be harder for us to admit that the real source of our irritability comes from deep inside us. God's Word is clear on this:-that we cannot live as loving people and remain irritable or easily angered.

***Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged.*** (1 Corinthians 13:5 NLT)

Many factors can cause or contribute to irritability, including stress, disappointment, hormonal changes, lack of sleep, and low blood sugar. When things are not going our way and we feel others are blocking us from accomplishing what needs doing, we easily complain and become irritable. Depression may be an off shoot of irritability. When we are feeling a bit low the behaviour or personality of another person may begin to irritate us. The other person may or may not be doing something wrong, but our inner pain is simply working out in us.

***Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. A patient person is very smart. A quick-tempered person makes stupid mistakes. An angry person stirs up fights. And a person with a bad temper commits many sins.*** (Romans 6:12 NLT, Proverbs 14:29 ERV, Proverbs 29:22 NIRV)

If we ask Him, God will show us the truth about what is going on, give us comfort and healing for the pain we are experiencing, and show us a way forward. He will also provide everything we need to complete the tasks He assigns us. Will we choose to live in the care and guidance of God or remain as irritable people?

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Often I feel irritated and stretched by what is going on around me and inside me. Help me to look to You for help when my short fuse is about to blow and allow Your comfort and peace to work in me, so that the underlying problems related to my irritability may be resolved. Thank You for caring. Amen*