

LIFE WITH GOD
IN RECOVERY
DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 31

Monday

FORGIVING AS WE HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN

Jesus said that the greatest commandment is, to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind. And the second is like it, to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. When we accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour, God forgave all our wrongdoing. Through prayer and reading the Scriptures, we begin to grow in our loving relationship with God, and our hearts were filled with thanks for all that He had done for us.

Then he (Jesus) took a cup, gave thanks to God, and gave it to them. "Drink it, all of you," he said; "this is my blood, which seals God's covenant, my blood poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (Matthew 26:27-28 GNT)

We know about God's great love for us and our love for Him, but how do we feel about loving our neighbour, especially a person who has harmed us? To teach us about forgiving as we have been forgiven, Jesus told a story about an unforgiving servant. This story tells of a servant who was unable to pay a huge debt he owed to the king and the king generously forgave the debt he owed. Then he went out and met a fellow servant who owed him a small debt in comparison. This servant who was forgiven was unwilling to forgive his fellow servant and had him put in prison. The king was not happy when he heard this and had the servant who would not forgive put in prison where he was turned over to the torturers.

And Jesus concluded, "That is how my Father in heaven will treat every one of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart." (Matthew 18:35 GNT)

Because of God's great love for us Jesus came into the world to pay our sin debt and restore our relationship with God. Jesus taught that we are to ask God to forgive our wrongs as we forgive those who have wronged us. If we are unwilling to forgive those who have wronged us, how can we expect God to forgive us?

And when you stand and pray, forgive anything you may have against anyone, so that your Father in heaven will forgive the wrongs you have done. (Mark 11:25 GNT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that I struggle to forgive those who have harmed me. In Your mercy, fill me with the grace to forgive others as I have been forgiven by You. Amen

Tuesday

JUSTICE AND MERCY AND RECOVERY

Depending on a given situation, we often find ourselves caught up in the conflict of our desire for justice or mercy. For those who wrong us, we lean towards the desire for justice. When we assess our own failures, we long for mercy.

He [God] loves whatever is just and good; the unfailing love of the Lord fills the earth. (Psalm 33:5 NLT)

Justice and mercy are both aspects of God's character. For justice to be justice the guilty must be punished. We are all sinners. We have all broken God's laws. We all stand guilty. God cannot ignore our wrongdoing. We have harmed ourselves, others, and our relationship with God. We have trampled carelessly over precious things that matter to God. Our sin must be punished with its stated penalty which is death. Jesus mercifully paid the debt we owed by dying on the cross in our place and gave us life with Him forevermore.

When people sin, they earn what sin pays—death. But God gives his people a free gift—eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23 ERV)

Without a clear picture of our own sinfulness and its awful consequences we will never find it in our hearts to be merciful to others. It is only because of our deep gratitude for God's forgiveness of our sin that we can forgive others as we have been forgiven.

As those who live with God in recovery, we now take a daily inventory of the days happenings to check if we are doing what is right, if we are showing mercy, and if we are walking humbly with God. Where we have done wrong, we promptly admit it, allow God to show mercy to us, and grant us His forgiveness.

The Lord has shown you what is good. He has told you what he requires of you. You must act with justice. You must love to show mercy and you must be humble as you live in the sight of your God. (Micah 6:8 NIRV)

Prayer: Loving God, No one knows about justice and mercy like You do. Thank You for taking care of the just requirements for my sin by giving Jesus in my place to pay in full all that I owe. The love and mercy You have for me is amazing. Please help me to show to others the same love and mercy I have received. Amen

Wednesday

PEACE OR - "PICKING UP"

God's kingdom runs on the laws of love and peace. It really does! Whatever is broken around us, or in us, is not of God. It is the failure of humans to know and respond to God's foundational laws.

For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. (Romans 14:17, 8:6 NLT)

Some of us never knew or simply didn't believe that God had prepared a plan for our lives. We believed our dysfunctional circumstances were the controlling factor of our destiny. We longed for peace and went to great lengths to find it. We believed things like money, food, sex, and power would meet the need within us. However, we soon found out that not only were we wrong about trying to meet our needs our way, but the path we chose led us into the bondage of addiction.

As we make the effort to navigate the road to recovery, we may again seek to meet our own needs. While it is important to "not pick up" our drug or habit of choice, it is even more important to seek the path to a new and sustainable life. We do not have sufficient strength in ourselves to sustain changed behaviour and always do the next right thing, but God offers us new life through faith in Jesus Christ. When our hearts are surrendered to God, we will desire to choose God's way rather than our own flawed way.

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13 NLT)

We need to be filled with an ongoing supply of the power of God which he will generously give to those who are committed to live a life of love, joy, and peace.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please fill me again with the power of Your Holy Spirit so I can stand strong with confident hope and peace in a world of change and challenge. Thank you for giving me everything I need to live a Godly life in recovery. Amen

Thursday

GOD'S WILL NO MATTER WHAT

When we say we have given our will and life over to the care of God, what does that mean to us? It means that in every situation we may encounter we have decided that we will obey the principles God has established for the guidance of our behaviour. Many of us suffer because it is often easier, in the moment, to follow self-will rather than follow God's will. The Bible is full of accounts of people who prospered when they followed the ways of God even when it was not convenient. Daniel and his friends are examples. They were young captives taken from their own land to the land of their conquerors where they were confronted with several challenges to the practice of their faith in God.

Daniel made up his mind to eat and drink only what God had approved for his people to eat. And he asked the king's chief official for permission not to eat the food and wine served in the royal palace. (Daniel 1:8 CEV)

When we read the story of Daniel in the Bible, we find that God moved in miraculous ways to prosper him and his three friends even while great persecution was plotted against them. What would we do if someone asked us to do something which was contrary to the will of God? Are our minds already made up that we will serve God regardless of what may be asked of us? To whom is our heart fully committed?

Your heart will be where your treasure is. You cannot serve two masters at the same time. You will hate one and love the other, or you will be loyal to one and not care about the other. (Matthew 6:21, 25a ERV)

Recovery is the time to get to know about the wisdom, power, and goodness of God to those who believe in Him. None of us can trust someone we do not know. God has revealed Himself to us through the Scriptures and the best course of action we can take is to believe God's Word and obey it no matter what.

So remember that the Lord your God is the only God, and you can trust him! He keeps his agreement. He shows his love and kindness to all people who love him and obey his commands. (Deuteronomy 7:9a ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to trust You and be fully committed to obey Your principles in all my affairs regardless of what others might think. Amen

FRIDAY

FEARLESSLY BRINGING EVERYTHING TO THE LIGHT

When we begin a searching and fearless moral inventory, we often list the obvious things we know that are not in keeping with God's will. If the inventory is to be a fearless and moral one, we need to allow ourselves to look at those events in our life which we have chosen to keep hidden in the darkness of our soul. These are usually events that caused us to feel guilt and shame and which we want to keep hidden from others.

Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief. Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you. (Psalm 143:1-2 NIV)

Because of our fear of Step 5, completing an all-inclusive moral inventory is intimidating, for it means revealing those things we have kept hidden to another human being. As fear overwhelms us, we often choose to do a partial inventory rather than bring to light those things that cause us guilt and shame. We forget the importance of the first three steps which brought the power of God into our lives. If we believe God is who He says He is, and that through Jesus all our sins have been forgiven, and that the Holy Spirit of God now lives within us, then we need not fear a human being.

The enemy pursues me, he crushes me to the ground; he makes me dwell in the darkness like those long dead. So my spirit grows faint within me; my heart within me is dismayed. (Psalm 143:3-4 NIV)

The enemy of our soul wants us to live in fear and keep the things that cause us pain hidden. We will sink under the weight of guilt if we choose to allow these events to remain in the darkness of our soul. Jesus came into the world as a light so that those who believe in Him will not stay in darkness.

I came into this world as a light. I came so that everyone who believes in me will not stay in darkness. (John 12:46 ERV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Please help me to make a truthful moral inventory so I can be free from the accusations of the evil one. I believe that You are the light of the world and I want to walk in the light as You are in the light. Amen

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Weekend

HUMILITY

When we notice the shortcomings in our character, do we immediately have a sense of remorse or are we more likely to try to justify them? Some of us attribute our shortcomings to the impact of our harmful life experiences. We believe we are this way because others injured us or did not meet our needs. We play the blame game and allow ourselves to act in irresponsible ways. To truthfully identify our shortcomings, we need to humble ourselves and see our behaviour in the light of God's principles for living life to the full.

The Lord is good and does what is right; he shows the proper path to those who go astray. He leads the humble in doing right, teaching them his way. The Lord leads with unfailing love and faithfulness all who keep his covenant and obey his demands. (Psalm 25:8-10 NLT)

To humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings we must first be aware of how different our behaviour is from God's principles for experiencing life to the full. Whether we have done a formal inventory or have just reviewed our day, we need to admit that our shortcomings are negatively impacting us and those we encounter on our journey. Only the power of the Holy Spirit working in us will enable us to change our ways and help us become the person that God created us to be.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9 NIV)

Without God we can do nothing. We need God's help to identify our shortcomings and the power of the Holy Spirit to give us the will and the courage to remove them. To experience life as God intends, we need to leave behind our flawed knowledge and stubborn pride. It's time to view our life through the lens of truth. God's way will be different from what we have known and acted on in the past but, as we humbly submit to it, it is the sure way to victory over our harmful self-absorption.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Without You I can do nothing. I humbly ask You to remove my character defects and help me live in a way that honours You and others I come into contact with. Amen