

Tuesday

DETOXING SPIRITUAL POISON

We have many misguided desires and false ideas about life. The most toxic spiritual poison we have fed ourselves is the belief that we know how to live life on our own without God.

Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy, and we hated each other. But, when God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. (Titus 3:3-6 NLT)

The truth is, we were created for a relationship with God. While trying to gratify our desire for inner fulfillment, we have used relationships that have proven to be as defective and destructive as the use of alcohol and drugs. Like harmful substances, these relationships and activities did not fulfill our desire for a meaningful life and our souls need to be cleansed from the false hope that we have attached to them.

God created us to live in relationship with Him, submitted to His ways. That's why the founders of A.A. framed the 12 steps to begin with admitting our powerlessness to face life on our own and the need to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God. These first steps are the foundation that life recovery is built on. The Bible confirms these teachings.

There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death. Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. (Proverbs 14:12, John 14:6 NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, I admit that I am powerless on my own and my life has become unmanageable. Please strengthen me as I choose to turn my will and life over to Your care. I want to know You more and experience the truth of Your Word to guide me on the path to new life. Amen

Wednesday

OPTIMISTIC AND JOYFUL

When we begin the recovery process we are often overwhelmed by the guilt and shame of the mess we have made of our lives. The 12-Step program encourages us to admit what we have done, repent, and where possible make amends to those we have harmed. If we sincerely want to change our ways, giving our will and life over to the care of God will make a difference in how we proceed. Because of what Jesus has done for us, God will forgive our sin and fill us with His Holy Spirit who strengthens us to walk in unfamiliar paths which lead to a life of joy and peace.

We don't enjoy discipline when we get it. It is painful. But later, after we have learned our lesson from it, we will enjoy the peace that comes from doing what is right. (Hebrews 12:11 ERV)

Being confident in our minds that we can live a positive and joyful life is half the battle. Often, we are unable to picture life without our dependency. The Bible gives us assurance that the God who created the universe has become our Heavenly Father and He declares in His word that ***"No weapon formed against you shall prosper."*** (Isaiah 54:17 NKJV) We need to believe and receive this truth and allow our minds to be transformed by standing firm on this promise that God has made to us.

But let those who trust in you be happy forever. Protect and strengthen those who love your name. The Father has loved us so much! This shows how much he loved us: We are called children of God. (Psalm 5:11; 1 John 3:1a ERV)

The love and mercy God has shown to us is the foundation for our hope and joy. He is the one who initiated our salvation so we could become His precious children and live with Him forever. Some of us cause ourselves needless worry about the future because we forget that Jesus said, if we seek God first, God will meet our needs.

What you should be thinking about is God's kingdom. Then he will give you all these other things you need. (Luke 12:31 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am thankful that through Jesus I am Your adopted child. Please help me to live a positive, joyful life based on the truth that You are ever with me and therefore, I will never face my problems alone. Amen

Thursday

LIVING FREE FROM SEXUAL SIN

In Proverbs chapter 5 we read words of warning to young men about avoiding people and places where they might be led into sexual sin. These are warnings not just for young men but also for all of us.

You will lose your self-respect and end up in debt to some cruel person for the rest of your life. When it's all over, your body will waste away, as you groan and shout, "I hated advice and correction! I paid no attention to my teachers, and now I am disgraced in front of everyone." (Proverbs 5:9, 11-14 CEV)

The effects of dishonouring our bodies for short term pleasure include losing our self-respect and living in shame. The emotional toll on us is like being in debt to a cruel person for the rest of our life. There are far too many reports of the impact of sexually transmitted diseases not just on the individual themselves but also further transmission to their partners and even their children. A huge price is paid in our relationships when we live immoral lives. This however, is not the message we receive from the media and elsewhere in our society. "Practice safe sex" is what we hear most. In God's eyes there is no casual sex that is safe. In our highly sexualized society, these are challenging words to hear and heed but nevertheless it is God's holy and life-giving standard.

Sinners are trapped and caught by their own evil deeds. They get lost and die because of their foolishness and lack of self-control. (Proverbs 5:22-23 CEV)

We would be wise each day to follow God's instructions and live within the boundaries God shows us to be healthy and life giving. If we do not heed what God says, we risk becoming trapped by our own foolishness and lack of self-control. God wants us to have a rich and satisfying life. The evil one seeks to harm and destroy us as effectively as he can. Living free from sexual sin is a wonderful way to enter the life of dignity, respect, and blessing that God has prepared for us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You created me, including my sex drive. Help me to honour You with my body and honour those with whom I have a relationship in this important area of self-control. Amen

FRIDAY

SECURITY

We tend to base our security on the experience of our personal relationship with others. If we have grown up with attentive loving parents, we likely learned to trust others and have a good sense of healthy boundaries. If we were raised in dysfunctional families, we tend to be wary of others because we experienced or witnessed violations of personal boundaries in our homes. As children some of us also had to deal with unmet needs. Now, as responsible adults, we need to assess and recognize those people we can truly trust.

Keep me safe, O God, I've run for dear life to you. I say to God, "Be my Lord!" Without you, nothing makes sense. And these God-chosen lives all around—what splendid friends they make! Don't just go shopping for a god. Gods are not for sale. I swear I'll never treat god-names like brand-names. My choice is you, God, first and only. And now I find I'm your choice! You set me up with a house and yard. And then you made me your heir! (Psalm 16:1-6 MSG)

When we admitted that we were powerless over our dependency and our dysfunctional lifestyle, we looked for a secure place where we could be restored to sanity. Some of us chose for a place where there were God inspired people all around. These people became our friends. Their desire for us is to turn our will and our life over to the God they know can be trusted. Some of these friends may also share their experience, strength, and hope with us of how they learned to trust God and discovered the security they found in being part of His family. The person writing the above Psalm discovered that when he chose to trust God, he was actually God's choice. He is amazed that being in relationship with God makes him a child of God, and an heir of all God's promises.

Today, let's consider if we have found our security in the God who loves and cares for us or are we still shopping for an alternate god. Without the living God in our lives, nothing in life will really make sense.

Prayer: Loving God, I confess that at times I still seek my security in people and things. Help me to choose You alone, first and only for You alone are the author of life. Amen

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Weekend

CONTROL

Control is a relationship problem which is common in addiction. Control issues in a person's life may result from traumatic or abusive life experiences. The fear of painful emotions due to change may cause a person to cling tightly to familiar circumstances, regardless of the effect on themselves or another person. Often drug addiction is rooted in the control of fears that we think can be calmed by use of a substance. Using does seem to make life better for a time, but that time gets shorter and shorter, and chaos and turmoil return quicker and quicker.

There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life—fear of death, fear of judgment—is one not yet fully formed in love. (1 John 4:18 MSG)

Controlling people want life to be the way they see it rather than the way it is. A person involved with a controlling person may not measure up to the standard set by the controller. Because of this they are judged and criticized for who they are and what they do. The abused person may start to feel confused, frustrated, or resentful and think they are the problem, especially when the controller throws an angry fit over something they have said or done. Manipulation is what is actually happening and if any of us fit into this category, we need to deal with it.

You will call out to me for help. And I will answer you. You will cry out. And I will say, "Here I am." "Get rid of the chains you use to hold others down. Stop pointing your finger at others as if they had done something wrong. Stop saying harmful things about them. (Isaiah 58:9 NIRV)

When we are lacking in self-esteem for whatever reason, we often feel vulnerable and try to eliminate what we are feeling by managing our lives in a way that makes us feel in control. Sadly, this often includes attempting to manage others to fit into our plan. God's way of dealing with this type of control is to encourage us to give our will and life over to His care and then follow His principles for living without fear. With God as our Father, we will begin to feel secure in His perfect love.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You know why I feel insecure and seek to control my life and others. Please heal me of my insecurities and allow Your perfect love to make me secure in the life that You have planned for me. Amen

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 37

Monday

LABOUR DAY

Today in North America we honour and give thanks for the collective labour-force of people within our families, our communities, and our nation. The gift of work is first seen with God. God created the earth and its inhabitants in six days and then rested on the seventh day. What beauty there is in this world to admire and enjoy because of God's creative nature displayed in our environment, in the night sky, in animal life, and in those around us.

Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. (Genesis 1:31, 2:2 NLT)

God has given skills and talents to each of us to enable us to work and provide for ourselves and our families and to take care of the environment in which we live. We are instructed to work hard, to give our work the best effort we can, and to be content with what we have.

Lazy people want much but get little, but those who work hard will prosper. Work brings profit, but mere talk leads to poverty. Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you." (Proverbs 13:4, 14:23, Hebrews 13:5 NLT)

Too many of us have lived between the extremes of working too much or working too little. God doesn't want us to run after money as the ultimate source of our security. He advises us to work hard and not squander the time and talents He has given us.

Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans. (Colossians 3:23 NLT, Proverbs 16:3 NIV)

As we celebrate Labour Day, let's offer our work – studies, paid employment, volunteer work, recovery work etc. – to the Lord, and ask His blessings on all that we do so that our labour may contribute to honouring God and building up our community.

Prayer: May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us — yes, establish the work of our hands. Amen (Psalm 90:17 NIV)