

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

GUILT THROUGH CONDEMNATION

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1 NLT)

When we permit our thoughts to be controlled by any power other than the Holy Spirit, we give permission to that power to accuse and condemn us for our past misdeeds and fill us with endless guilt. Condemning thoughts flood our minds such as, "You will never be free from those sins. You will never be what God created you to be. God is disappointed in you. You are weak-willed. How long can you expect God to put up with you?" These assaults are vicious attacks on our minds from Satan the one whom Jesus says seeks to destroy us.

When we were controlled by our old nature, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires that produced a harvest of sinful deeds, resulting in death. But now we have been released from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its power. Now we can serve God, not in the old way of obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way of living in the Spirit. (Romans 7:5-6 NLT)

We need to encourage ourselves with the truth of God's Word rather than allow feelings of inadequacy and lingering guilt to control us. When we accept Jesus' death as payment for our sins, we are freed from all condemnation and empowered by the Holy Spirit to live our lives according to the written words of God contained in the Bible. Taking time to pray and meditate on the Scriptures will grow our faith and produce strength in us to live in the freedom we have in Christ. We seek progress each day, not perfection. Slogans such as, "Let go and let God" remind us that God seeks a heart that is fully surrendered to Him.

Jesus prayed for us who would believe in Him, ***"Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth"***. (John 17:17 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, Thank you for being merciful to me, rather than condemning me for my sinful ways. Today I choose to let go of the guilt I carry about my past sins and proclaim the truth of Your Word that, through Jesus, I have been set free from all condemnation. Hallelujah! Amen

LIFE WITH GOD
IN RECOVERY
DAILY MEDITATIONS

Week 36

Monday

STORED ANGER – UNWANTED BAGGAGE

Unkind words said about us, or unresolved hurtful events cause us to store anger which, if not dealt with, will turn into frustration, anxiety, hatred, despair, rage, and hopelessness. The effect of these feelings carried forward from childhood into adulthood causes us to seek out ways to control each situation we encounter. Often, that positions us to hurt others before they hurt us. Alternatively, we may become people pleasers. In our desire to fit in with the crowd we may enter into unhealthy relationships which we believe will help fill the emptiness inside us.

Unfortunately, all the baggage we have not dealt with in life continues to accompany us. Stored anger will erupt and spew over into our current relationships causing frustration and pain to those who are close to us. At some point we must admit that we need help to deal with what's going on inside. When we come to know Jesus and accept salvation through His death on the cross, we become new creations. The old goes and the new comes. We are challenged by God to demonstrate this transformation by acting and reacting in new ways.

"... now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator." (Colossians 3:8-10 NIV)

Anger can be a cover for fear, unmet needs, offenses against us, and an unwillingness to change. If we ask God, He will reveal to us the root cause of our anger and will give us the grace to forgive those who harmed us. God will also forgive us for the harmful influence we have had on others as we lived an angry lifestyle.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to live in Your love today. When I have angry outbursts, help me to discern what is really going on. I want to be free from all that hinders my relationship with You and others. Please help me live in the love, joy and peace that comes from obeying Your principles in everything I say and do. Amen

WILLING TO BE CORRECTED

We all know that children need to be disciplined by wise guidance they receive from caring parents. We may assume that when we are grown, that stage of life is finished. However, from a spiritual point of view, there is no time in our life when we don't need correcting because circumstances keep changing and we have limited understanding and often get used to bad habits. There's always more we need to learn about some issues and then be willing to receive correction when we are in error.

My child, listen when your father corrects you. Don't neglect your mother's instruction. What you learn from them will crown you with grace and be a chain of honor around your neck. (Proverbs 1:8-9 NLT)

Something was wrong in our lives when we followed foolish thinking or incorrect advice and got tangled up in addiction and destructive life habits. Life with God in recovery is a season where we need to be humble about receiving correction so we can move safely forward on a new life path.

People who accept discipline are on the pathway to life, but those who ignore correction will go astray. (Proverbs 10:17 NLT)

Whether we like it or not or whether it is comfortable in the beginning or not, correction is an essential part of growth. Some thoughts and behaviours must be stopped. Others need to be practiced until we are good at them. No one ever wants to admit they have been mistaken, but truthfully, we all have been wrong at some point. Now we have a wonderful opportunity to learn how to get things right.

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. (2 Timothy 3:16 NLT)

God has kindly given us a detailed handbook which helps us to know what needs correcting in our attitudes, words, and actions. We can always depend on what we read in the Bible and if we are wise, when what we are thinking or doing conflicts with Bible principles, we need to make the necessary changes.

Creator: Heavenly Father, Help me to pay attention to Your Words of Life and humbly make any necessary corrections to my attitude and behaviour. Amen

JUST FOR TODAY – I WILL TRY TO LIVE IN CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD

Just for today I will try to live in conscious contact with God praying only for knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out.

What daily decisions have we made and continue to make that enable us to live in conscious contact with God?

People who love each other spend as much time together as possible. Because of God's love for us, God desires to spend time with us. When we love God in return, we will want to spend time with Him. Those who are in love want to share with each other all of who they are and what they experience. Shared experiences help build the memories that nourish the life they share with each other. Each one gets to know the likes and dislikes of the other. Each one marvels at what their loved one does while alone and each delights in what they share and achieve together.

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:16-19 NIV)

As men and women who are learning to live in a loving relationship with God and have a desire to know His will, it is important to speak with God through prayer. We honour God by expressing our joy and thanksgiving about what He is doing in our lives. We can ask God for wisdom and guidance as we share our plans with Him. As we walk in conscious contact with God, He is faithful to complete what He has begun in us. God is always present with us and will tenderly direct and encourage us when we bring our plans to Him and are willing to respond to His input.

Prayer: Loving God, I want to live in conscious contact with You. Help me to recognize Your presence with me and Your will for my life. Fill me with Your power and grace to carry out those things You have planned for me to do. Amen

THE WILL TO MAKE AMENDS

Making amends requires a will to do so. Some of us struggle to be sorry for our harmful actions towards another and want to justify ourselves for what we did. The goal of Step 9 is that wherever possible we are to make amends to people we have harmed, except when to do so would injure them or others.

You were dead in sins, and your sinful desires were not yet cut away. Then he gave you a share in the very life of Christ, for he forgave all your sins, and blotted out the charges proved against you, the list of his commandments which you had not obeyed. He took this list of sins and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross. (Colossians 2:13-14 TLB)

The above scripture says God forgave us all our sins and blotted out the charges proved against us. We know what we have done and yet God was willing to have Jesus pay the penalty for our sin so we could be set free. Some people we have harmed may also have harmed us or others known to us, and we may be hesitant to take the first step to make direct amends to them. We may believe their sin is greater than ours, so they deserve what we did to them. This is not God's way of dealing with sin.

Christ had no sin, but God made him become sin so that in Christ we could be right with God. (2 Corinthians 5:21 ERV)

When we are selective about making amends, it may indicate that there is a lack of repentance for the sins we have committed, or we may simply be unwilling to love a person because of the harm they have caused us or those dear to us. As we see this person in the light of God's love for us and decide to treat them as God has treated us, making amends will become easier.

We love because God first loved us. God gave us this command: If we love God, we must also love each other as brothers and sisters. (1 John 4:19, 21 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to make direct amends to everyone I have harmed and ask that You fill me with Your love so that I may do so with a willing heart. Amen