

FRIDAY

ANTIDOTE FOR THE POISON OF ANGER

The only antidote for hurt, frustration, and anger is love and plenty of it. Jesus promises us love that runs deeper than any wound. Will we receive it? Many of us reject Jesus' offer of love. We want love from the people we want love from – whether they are healthy enough to give us love or not. Some of us would rather live in anger and frustration at the lack of another's love for us, than open our hearts to the rich and freely given love of God.

And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:30-32 NLT)

Hanging on to our bitterness and seeking revenge sickens our souls. Outbursts of anger are like poison which, over time, will destroy us and harm our loved ones. Our anger may also cause sickness in our loved ones. Anger can be dealt with by receiving love and forgiveness from God. Jesus took the anger and violence in our hearts to the cross so that we could receive forgiveness and healing in exchange. When we consider and experience the love that Jesus has for us, we'll want to pass it on to others. It's time to let go of everything that hinders our healing and recovery. We need to accept God's forgiveness for the wrongs we have done, and in turn, forgive those who have wronged us.

So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (2 Corinthians 5:16-17 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, I dare to love because You first loved me. Please help me get rid of the resentment and anger that is stored deep in my soul. As You have forgiven me, I choose to forgive those who have harmed me. I am grateful that Your love runs deeper than my wounds. Help me to love and care for others as You love and care for me. Amen

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Weekend

PATIENT ENDURANCE

We lived for so long doing what was right in our own eyes that we may have doubts about being able to live according to God's principles that we are learning about. God's ways are different from our former ways and from the ways of society in general, but with patient endurance and the Power that is greater than ourselves to help us, we can learn to live in ways that please God.

The Lord says: "My thoughts and my ways are not like yours. Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, my thoughts and my ways are higher than yours. (Isaiah 55:8-9 CEV)

A young child needs love and care and time to grow strong. When we are born again to new life, we need God's love and care and time with the Holy Spirit to grow strong in our faith in God. We need to get to know God and trust His word. We need to believe that God exists and that He loves and cares for us. God's character is revealed by the love that Jesus showed when He came to earth to die for our sins.

Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father who created all the lights in the heavens. He is always the same and never makes dark shadows by changing. (James 1:17 CEV)

When we are newly introduced to someone, we only know what we have been told about them or what we have observed. If we desire to get to know the person better, we need to spend time with them. In the same way, this is how we get to know God. Only by patient endurance and seeking God through prayer and meditation in the Scriptures will we get to know and understand God and the wisdom of His ways.

For as you know him better, he will give you, through his great power, everything you need for living a truly good life: he even shares his own glory and his own goodness with us! (2 Peter 1:3 TLB)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am glad that Your ways lead to a fulfilling life. Please give me the will and desire to be patient with myself, so I can endure the ups and downs of learning to practice Your principles in all my affairs. Amen

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 32

Monday

UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS LEAD TO DISAPPOINTMENT

Unrealistic expectations will lead us to disappointment and, if we are not careful, may also lead us to relapse. Recovery is a journey not an event. It takes time to sort out what contributed to our problems and sent us down the path of addiction. We need to understand that challenging issues will arise while we are in the process of change.

I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. (Philippians 1:6 NLT)

One of those unrealistic expectations is the speed with which we want our loved ones to rebuild their trust in us. We repeatedly let people down while in addiction. Even though we may be confident about the changes we will make, our loved ones need time to observe how we will handle the future challenges we will face. They need time to build trust and learn how to safely journey with us. As we are trusting God to work in us, we can ask God to bless and also work in them.

For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland. (Isaiah 43:19 NLT)

It's unrealistic to think we won't feel vulnerable as we seek to maintain our sobriety and repair our relationships. God is aware of all we face. He wants to care for us and give us peace in our hearts. As we bring our worries and anxiety to Him in prayer we will settle down and begin to trust God as we see Him do what He says He will do.

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for my sobriety and the rebuilding that is taking place in many areas of my life. Help me to be patient as You continue Your work to perfect those things which concern me and hopefully, those things which concern my loved ones will disappear. Amen

The Serenity Prayer is the common name for a prayer authored by the American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. The first few lines are the most familiar, as they are regularly spoken at most 12-step meetings, but there are other treasures in how to live well in recovery in the rest of the prayer. After the words "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference" the next phrase in this prayer is "Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time."

The Bible encourages us to commit everything we do to the Lord. This means, daily surrendering our will and our lives into God's care and, with His help, doing those things we have planned to do. Regularly taking personal inventory helps us maintain our recovery and enjoy each day without the burden of yesterday's issues being carried forward.

Trust in the Lord and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you. (Psalm 37:3-5 NLT)

How many times have we watched athletes and marveled at the ease with which they perform their sport? We know their ability was developed through rigorous training one day at a time, over many months and years. The spiritual discipline of a daily inventory, or even a moment-by-moment one, is required if we are to live well each day and grow strong in our life with God in recovery. We need to let the principles of God's word challenge, stretch, and develop us as we draw close to Him and live in the light of His presence.

Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us. (2 Timothy 3:17 MSG)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, as I follow Your principles for healthy living help me to live one day at a time, one moment at a time, in the awareness of Your presence ever with me, as I choose to do those things that please You. Amen

People who wink at wrong cause trouble, but a bold reproof promotes peace. Deceit fills hearts that are plotting evil; joy fills healthy body; jealousy is like cancer in the bones. When people's lives please the Lord, even their enemies are at peace with them. (Proverbs 10:10, 12:20, 14:30, 16:17 NLT)

It's little wonder that while in addition our lives were filled with problems and unrest. How many times did we overlook wrong, plot evil, tell lies, and look with jealousy at what others owned or had accomplished? Now in recovery we say we want the benefits this new life with God has to offer, but sometimes we don't trust that good things will come unless we use some of our old ways to get them.

Health professionals around the world confirm the claim of the above Scripture verses that, as we live peaceful lives we experience health in our bodies, and when we live stressful lives, we tend to get ill.

When we live according to God's principles we have this amazing promise from God:—that even our enemies will be at peace with us. It doesn't happen overnight, but repeatedly old-timers in recovery claim that, as they walk the walk, the promise of restored relationships becomes real and enemies of old, often become friends. These renewed relationships require us to let go of jealousy and grudges against others and simply work on our own shortcomings. We need to accept others who have flaws, just as God and others have accepted us.

And this righteousness will bring peace. Yes, it will bring quietness and confidence forever. (Isaiah 32:7 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your will and Your ways are continually proven to work. Thank You for the peace and stability You give me as I turn my will and life over to Your care and choose to follow You in all my affairs. Amen

Thinking and acting on our own self-centered thoughts often results in confusion and grief. Too often when we choose to follow our familiar selfish ways and ignore the guidance of the Holy Spirit we end up in despair. On the other hand, when we walk surrendered to and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we experience more and more confidence and hope.

Our hope comes from God. May He fill you with joy and peace because of your trust in Him. May your hope grow stronger by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13 NLV)

What steals our joy in recovery and causes us to stumble? The main root cause is pride. We begin to think of ourselves more highly than we ought. We start to find fault in our recovery program, the people around us, and our leaders and mentors. We blame others and our environment for our discontent. We begin to feel confident in our own ability to manage our own recovery. We begin to believe that we could return to our old lifestyle and handle it more successfully than we did in the past. Our prideful thinking makes us feel we can succeed on our own without the help and guidance of God, and that sadly is a deadly error of judgment.

You have felt secure in your evil ways. You have said, 'No one sees what I'm doing.' Your wisdom and knowledge lead you down the wrong path. You say to yourself, 'I am like a god. No one is greater than I am.' (Isaiah 47:10 NIRV)

God is a God of order. He is not a God of confusion. Surrendering our minds to Him brings peace to our whole being. When our hearts are quiet, we begin to notice beauty around us and in us, and in others, and that results in quiet joy deep within.

Prayer: Gracious God, Forgive me for the times I think I can take care of myself. Once again, I admit that I am powerless to live life without You. I turn my will and my life over to Your care. Help me to know the peace and joy that comes from wholeheartedly surrendering to You and Your ways. Amen