

Tuesday

WHAT IS A FRIEND?

We hang around with all sorts of people in a variety of situations. We “friend” people on social media but what is a true friend? How do we recognize a true friend and how can we be a friend to someone else?

The sweet smell of incense can make you feel good, but true friendship is better still. Just as iron sharpens iron, friends sharpen the minds of each other. (Proverbs 27:9, 17 CEV)

Friends bring colour to our black and white world. They generate a sense of belonging in our daily life and create good memories to look back on. Friends are those we enjoy being with, find ourselves being more truthful with, feel comfortable with most of the time, and want to have around us to share both our joys and sorrows. Friends often share common interests and draw things out of one another that would otherwise remain hidden. With friends we are often more willing to try new things and therefore accomplish more together than we could on our own. True friends watch out for each other, share with each other, and even make sacrifices for each other.

You can trust a friend who corrects you, but kisses from an enemy are nothing but lies. Don't desert an old friend of your family or visit your relatives when you are in trouble. A friend nearby is better than relatives far away. (Proverbs 27:6, 10 CEV)

True friends tell us the truth, not just what we want to hear or what is convenient in the moment. They do not beat up on us with the truth but find the right way, at the right time, to confront us with things we need to hear. There is wisdom and a depth of caring from a friend that is to be valued even though we may at times feel challenged by them. We need to keep true friends close and learn from their honesty and loyalty.

The One who knows us best and loves us most offers us His friendship today. God, who has done more for us than any person could ever do, invites us to an intimate relationship with Him today. To accept His invitation is our choice.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am grateful for friends and all they contribute to the joy and stability of my life. You are the friend who sticks closer than a brother and I want to share my life with You. Help me to improve my conscious contact with You and obey all You have to teach me. Amen

Wednesday

WHO IS THE GOD WHO CAN RESTORE US?

When we think of God, how do we imagine Him to be? Do we see Him as a judge ready to pass sentence on us when we do wrong or, do we see Him as the ever-loving God who has compassion on us and desires to care for us?

The person who wrote the following Psalm saw God as all powerful and praised Him for His majesty and glory. He also saw God with armies of angels who serve Him and do His will and, at His command, are ready to minister to those who trust in Him. Only through prayer and meditation on God's word in the Bible do we begin to see God as He truly is.

Praise the Lord, my soul! O Lord, my God, how great you are! You are clothed with majesty and glory; you cover yourself with light. You have spread out the heavens like a tent and built your home on the waters above. You use the clouds as your chariot and ride on the wings of the wind. You use the winds as your messengers and flashes of lightning as your servants. You have set the earth firmly on its foundations, and it will never be moved. (Psalm 104:1-5 GNT)

The writer of this Psalm describes the movements of God like they are from a sci-fi movie but, the reality is, God moves in ways that are beyond the most incredible things that humans could dream up. God formed those humans whose finite minds conceive fictional space travel. When we study the Bible, we will be amazed at how the earth and the heavens, and even people and the environment, react to the presence of God when He chooses to make Himself known.

Often in life and even in recovery we dwell on our past and allow the evil one to bring guilt and shame over what has already been forgiven. Why not choose to throw off this bondage and focus on getting to know this amazing God to whom we have surrendered our will and our life. Remember, this all-powerful God is our Heavenly Father who takes great delight in us, His precious children.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for rescuing me from the darkness of my soul and bringing me into the light of Your presence. As I meditate on the Scriptures, help me to see You clothed in Majesty and rejoice that You are the amazing God who loves and cares for me. Amen

Thursday

PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES

“Principles before personalities” is one of those sayings we hear at Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. We often repeat these words together, but what do these words actually mean?

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important. (Philippians 2:3-4, Galatians 6:2-3 NLT)

Some of the principles we uphold as we work through the 12-Step Program include:- admitting we are powerless; owning our part in a given situation; surrendering to God's will; being patient and humble; maintaining respect for everyone. These are important principles that are a lot easier to talk about than to put into practice, particularly in dealing with those who are "works in progress" just like us.

Personalities vary greatly. Some personality types fit well with the person we are and are easy for us to get along with. Others provide more of a challenge. In daily life we will certainly encounter people with differing values and beliefs. Some are struggling with their very existence and exhibit toxic behaviours such as:- gossip, blaming, controlling, and/or victimization. How then do we practice putting “principles before personalities”?

Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. We will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ. (Luke 6:28, Ephesians 4:15 NLT)

People are responsible for their own thoughts and actions. We all need to deal with our feelings about a person in a "let go and let God" way. When we disagree with another, we invite God to fill us with peace and show us how to speak and act with respect. We work our own program and leave others to work theirs. As we faithfully practice putting “principles before personalities,” God will strengthen us with the endurance and patience that is required.

Prayer: Loving God, Only by Your work in me can I truly put "principles before personalities." I praise You that Your Power will strengthen me to overcome my weakness in this area. Amen

Friday

THE FREEDOM OF A CLEAN SLATE

We experience true freedom when we have a clean slate before God. As we humbly confess our sins and faults to God with a sincere desire to change our ways, God will be faithful to forgive us.

If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts. (1 John 1:8-10 NLT)

Sometimes we do good things for some people and tell ourselves we are a caring person even though we have a bad attitude or hidden resentment towards others. We list the good things we have done and use that list to excuse ourselves from taking responsibility to right the wrong that remains. The Bible makes a clear distinction between doing good to “look good” and practicing goodness as a character quality.

Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. (Romans 12:9 NLT)

As followers of Jesus, we are required to choose for good regardless of the trials we may face. We are told that evidence of the presence of God within us is a lifestyle of goodness. God created us for a work He has prepared in advance for us to do, a work that flows from a pure heart. The challenging question for us is: are we doing things to make us “look good” or are we loving others because God has transformed us and made us whole?

If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. (John 8:31b – 32 NIV)

Freedom comes when we acknowledge the truth that without Jesus, we can do nothing good, but with Jesus, all things are possible!

Prayer: Gracious God, I acknowledge that freedom to love only comes through my obedience to Your Word. Help me to choose to do what is right, to be merciful in all my encounters with others, and to walk humbly with You as I practice Your principles in all my affairs. Amen

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Weekend

ANGER MANAGEMENT 101

As we sober up in recovery, most of us quickly recognize that we have an anger problem. Losing our temper over something said or done and allowing that anger to control us does great damage. While some may think that expressing anger is a sign of strength, it is actually allowing our weakness to show. For us to get well we need to learn new ways to handle stress or fearful circumstances.

Don't become angry quickly. Anger lives in the hearts of foolish people. (Ecclesiastes 7:9 NIRV)

It is equally damaging to keep anger bottled up inside. Hidden anger continues to hurt us and, if not dealt with, will turn to resentment and bitterness of soul which may lead to emotional or physical illness. The longer we allow anger to live in us, the less effective we will be in the work which we were created to do, that is, the work that will bring us joy and satisfaction.

My dear friends, you should be quick to listen and slow to speak or to get angry. If you are angry, you cannot do any of the good things that God wants done. (James 1:19-20 CEV)

Most anger management programs train us to deal with anger that has risen within us. God wants us to go one level deeper and let Him help us deal with the improper desires that fuel the anger. God's word tells us that selfishness is at the root of much of our anger. God's best anger management tool is prayer – to tell God what is going on and ask God for what we need.

Do you know where your fights and arguments come from? They come from the selfish desires that make war inside you. You want things, but you don't get them. So you kill and are jealous of others. But you still cannot get what you want. So you argue and fight. You don't get what you want because you don't ask God. (James 4:1-2 ERV)

We are too familiar with getting what we want when we want it. With God's help we can learn to be kind and patient with others because we are trusting God to meet all of our needs.

Prayer: Loving God, Forgive me for my selfish and impatient ways which lead to angry outbursts. I bring my problems to You and ask You to give me the help and direction I need. Fill me with Your joy so that peace may reign in my heart. Amen

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 28

HELP FOR THE HOPELESS ADDICT

Do I matter? Does anyone notice me? Does anyone care? These are questions we might ask ourselves and that people who have struggled with hardship and pain have asked for centuries. The longer we have struggled to overcome addiction and have faltered and failed, the harder it is to have hope. The good news is, as long as we are living and breathing there is still hope because God continues to invite us to a new life with Him. We may think that the temptations we struggle with are too much to handle but God says that if we come to Him, He will make a way of escape for us.

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure. (1 Corinthians 10:13 NLT)

What is God's way out?

Look to God for help and saving. **Let all the world look to me for salvation! For I am God; there is no other.** (Isaiah 45:22 NLT)

Welcome the new perspective on life the Holy Spirit will show us. **Let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.** (Ephesians 3:23 NLT)

Make our hearts available to hope: **When doubts filled my mind, your comfort gave me renewed hope and cheer.** (Psalm 94:19 NLT)

Spend time reading and learning God's ways: **I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.** (Psalm 119:11 NLT)

Live in gratitude: **Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. He fills my life with good things.** (Psalm 103:2-5a NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Today I choose to walk in Your ways and surrender my will and life into Your care. My hope for a new life is based on Your power to strengthen me to face those challenges I see ahead and those that are currently evident in my environment. Thank you for a fresh opportunity to learn and grow in relationship with You. Thank You for loving and caring for me. Amen