

Friday

## UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS – RESPONSIBILITY

People who walk with God in recovery look to Him for wisdom, hope, and direction. They also learn from their past mistakes and are encouraged at meetings by those who courageously share their experience, strength, and hope for a better life. The people in this group are not faultless but have learned to take responsibility for their own behaviour and leave the rest with God. When they do wrong, they trust God for forgiveness. They read God's word, follow His directives, and move steadily forward in the plan God has for them. They have the courage and wisdom to let go of everything else.

***God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus.*** (2 Timothy 1:9 NLT)

Some of us live with the unrealistic expectation that it's our responsibility to fix everything that has gone wrong with us and those around us. Perhaps we think we need to fix the hurt we've caused in the past. Maybe we have a desire to care for and fix the problems of those whose lives impact us. We mistakenly think that we can sort out all kinds of problems. We beat up on ourselves because of thoughts that we haven't done enough or have taken on more than we can handle.

God knows each one of us intimately and is involved in every circumstance of our lives. God is with us when we work hard, do the next right thing, and choose to leave the rest with Him. When we are doing the best we can, God will fill in the gaps and weave all things together for our good.

***Finish what you started in me, God. Your love is eternal—don't quit on me now. Lord, you will give perfect peace to those who commit themselves to be faithful to you. That's because they trust in you.*** (Psalm 138:8 MSG, Isaiah 26:3 NIRV)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Life often seems complicated, and I feel limited in my ability to sort out many things that impact me and those around me. Help me to bring all my problems to You and, with Your help and guidance, change what I can in my own situation, help others as I reasonably can, and leave the rest in Your loving care. Amen***

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Weekend

## MOVING FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING

There will always be things that are right and good in our lives, and other things that are yet to be sorted out. Some days we will wake up feeling energetic and other days we'll wish we could just pull the blanket over our heads and go back to sleep. In every circumstance, God invites us to live in the ultimate security that He provides. Particularly in challenging times, giving up on God should never be an option. We will experience joy when we determine to trust God and follow His instructions, knowing that in His perfect timing things will improve.

***God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. Be still and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world.*** (Psalm 46:1,10 NLT)

We often get discouraged when things do not work out in the time, or the way we think they should. We feel disappointed and our focus shifts. We may become unwilling to communicate with God, to hang in there, to believe God, to trust, to hope, to grow. At times like these we need to stop what we are doing and ask ourselves, "How is God teaching me to thrive in this situation?" When we acknowledge that God is still teaching us, we can be assured that He is at work in the thing that concerns us and our peace will return.

***For God is so wise and so mighty. Who has ever challenged him successfully?*** (Job 9:4 NLT)

In order to move from a lifestyle of surviving to one of thriving we must empty ourselves of all that keeps us from living totally dependent on God. We may need to peel back the layers of familiar traits such as lying, cheating, stealing, anger, impatience, hate, lust, and self-pity. True joy and satisfaction comes when God looks down on us and says: "Well done, my child. You have not just survived but you have thrived."

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I turn my will and my life over to Your care and ask You to show me how to live life to the full. I choose to listen to You. I choose to follow your principles in all I undertake to do. Please give me the desire to welcome success in my life and to thrive in Your grace and truth. Amen***

## LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 21

### OBSTACLES

We all want progress in our life in recovery, but what are the actual goals we want to achieve? Perhaps we want to get training for an employment position, improve our relationships with family or friends, or increase our conscious contact with God. Whatever the goal, the way to success is to plan how we will work to achieve it.

***In everything you do, put God first, and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success.*** (Proverbs 3:6 TLB)

The greatest obstacle to meeting any goal is failing to seek God's guidance. The next obstacle is not scheduling time each day to work towards our goal. Our natural tendency is to do what we like to do, and before we know it, hours have gone by and we've wasted our day on things that are not contributing to our objective.

***A man who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful. But if he confesses and forsakes them, he gets another chance.*** (Proverbs 28:13 TLB)

All of us have 24 hours in a day. If we are not achieving the goals we set, we need to admit that we are allowing obstacles to get in the way of our plans. Each day we need to schedule our time and make a commitment to stay with the plan. We need to schedule time for conscious contact with God; time for work if we have a scheduled job; time for activities related to our goal; and time for necessary activities like eating and sleeping, not forgetting time to relax and have fun.

***Refuse good advice and watch your plans fail; take good counsel and watch them succeed.*** (Proverbs 15:22 MSG)

Finally, many obstacles can be overcome through wise counsel. Seeking advice from others and paying attention to what they have to say can be humbling, but can also be worthwhile if we find the help we need to achieve our goals.

***Prayer: Gracious God, I admit to spending precious time on unproductive activities. Please help me to wisely consider the obstacles I allow to get in the way of my goals and adjust my time accordingly. Please give me guidance and wisdom in the plans I make and let them be in accordance with Your will for my life. Amen***

WHO UNDERSTANDS MY ANGER?

Anger is an involuntary reaction to a displeasing situation or event. When it is a limited reaction it may be considered normal. However, it becomes dangerous when it is stored. Stored anger causes us to be resentful and hostile with the urge to “get even”. The Bible says, *“In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry”*. (Ephesians 4:26 NIV) Inner turmoil is the result of not obeying this counsel.

There is only one person who truly understands who we are and why we do what we do. That person is certainly NOT us. That person is Jesus Christ who died for us, and who waits to be invited into our lives so He can forgive us, heal us, and lead us forward into peace and joy. When we are with someone and are feeling annoyed or threatened, Jesus knows exactly what is going on inside us and, if we ask, He will help us do what is right in that moment. What does God have to say in the Scriptures about us being angry, irritated, frustrated, or annoyed?

ANGER SHOWS FOOLISHNESS: *People with understanding control their anger; a hot temper shows great foolishness.* (Proverbs 14:29 NLT)

BEING ANGRY SAYS YOUR RELIGION IS WORTHLESS: *If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless.* (James 1:26 NLT)

HARBORING ANGER LEADS TO SIN: *An angry person starts fights; a hot-tempered person commits all kinds of sin.* (Proverbs 29:22 NLT)

Only God has the power to help us sort out and deal with the issues that are related to our anger. He wants to heal our pain. The first step we need to take is, admit to God that we have deeply rooted hurt within us, the pain of which shows up in anger and rage. He wants us to forgive those who have harmed us and receive healing for the offences committed against us. God also wants us to forgive ourselves for the offences we have committed against others. Let's admit today that we have stored anger and then learn how the power of God can help us deal with it in a way that brings peace to our soul.

*Prayer: Loving God, I confess my anger has been a way to suppress the pain I feel inside. Please help me to forgive those who have harmed me and to forgive myself for the harm I have caused others. I ask, You to heal me, so that I can live a life of peace and joy in Your presence. Amen*

APPROVAL SEEKING

Those of us who live for the approval of others are not led but driven. We have submitted to our perfectionist demands so that people will like us. Now it is difficult to hear God's Word when He desires to guide us on to the path of truth.

God created us to live for Him and has a specific plan for each of us. When our conscience is shaped by a wounded spirit, we will find we are constantly looking for affirmation and mechanically acting out of people pleasing motives, rather than behaving out of love that pleases God.

*Am I now trying to get people to think well of me? Or do I want God to think well of me? Am I trying to please people? If I were, I would not be serving Christ.* (Galatians 1:10 NIRV).

Here are some things we think or say that indicate people pleasing is likely active in our lives:

1. We try to be who others want us to be.
2. We are afraid to rock the boat by sharing our thoughts.
3. It is hard for us to decide what we want.
4. We avoid speaking our minds.
5. We find it easier to go along with what someone else wants or just agree with their opinion.
6. It is difficult for us to say “No”.
7. We try to be ‘nice’ rather than expressing how we really feel.

The key to living in recovery as God intends rather than being controlled by approval seeking is to get to know and affirm who God says we are regardless of the opinions of others.

*Work at everything you do with all your heart. Work as if you were working for the Lord, not for human masters. Work because you know that you will finally receive as a reward what the Lord wants you to have.* (Colossians 3:23-24 NIRV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, please give me the desire and the will to be a doer of Your word so that my conscience may be reprogrammed with truth. I want to follow Your ways and live by Your principles in all my affairs. Amen*

THE BENEFIT OF EXPERIENCE

One of the promises given to us as we grow in our recovery is: *No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.* (Big Book pages 83-84) Who of us would deny the contribution of sharing our experience, strength, and hope with others, and in return receiving the same gift for ourselves. We are all excited to share what is working for us. This promise reminds us that it is in being vulnerable and willing to share even the lessons from our weakest times and darkest days that others receive benefit. Are we willing to give that gift today?

*Each time he [God] said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.* (2 Corinthians 12:9 NLT)

There's no benefit in sharing “war stories” or wallowing in self-pity about how bad things were. None of us needs the triggering reminders that come from too many details of our experience in the dark days of active addiction. However, what we all need is hope, no matter how far we have fallen. A brief description of our circumstances and the amazing joy of being uplifted by a loving God from there to this day of life in sobriety – now that's a story sure to bring hope to someone else.

*I waited patiently for the Lord to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along. He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what he has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the Lord.* (Psalm 40:1-3 NLT)

We were hopeless and powerless until God stepped in to rescue us. The grateful sharing of our getting on board with God and the stability He brought to our lives is a message others are longing to hear. It brings a spark of hope to the darkness of their own soul.

*Prayer: Loving God, I am thankful for where I am today because You have rescued me and steadied my life. Please give me the willingness, humility, and focus to share how You found me on my darkest day and gave me new life. My desire is that others will be truly amazed at the awesome power You exert to help a hopeless addict. Amen*