

Friday

SELF – CONTROL

The new birth we receive when we give our will and life over to the care of God is the end of our old life that was dominated by sinful thoughts which were formed in an unspiritual mind. Being born again means we begin a new life in Christ. As our spiritual mind is awakened to the ways of God, new spiritual values form in us, and self-control is one of those qualities.

God's Spirit makes us loving, happy, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled. There is no law against behaving in any of these ways. (Galatians 5:22-23 CEV)

The Bible tells us to consider ourselves dead to sin. When we set out on our spiritual journey in recovery, we often do not feel dead to sin. Our old ways and obsessive thoughts keep coming to mind tempting us to satisfy their desires. This is where we need to exert the discipline of self-control and stand firm on God's Word, reminding ourselves that we are dead to our old self with its passions and desires, for they have been crucified with Christ.

And because we belong to Christ Jesus, we have killed our selfish feelings and desires. (Galatians 5:24 CEV)

It is our minds that need to be controlled and renewed by the truth. We are new creations in Christ and do not need to feed our former character defects. The way we think impacts our behaviour which is why we need to improve our daily conscious contact with God, praying to know His will and have the power to carry it out. As we learn new ways of thinking and behaving, our desire will be to please God in all our affairs. This is the way we develop long-lasting self-control.

Don't be like the people of this world, but let God change the way you think. Then you will know how to do everything that is good and pleasing to him. (Romans 12:2 CEV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is to grow in the truth of who I am in Christ Jesus. Please help me to have self-control over my thoughts and actions for I want to follow Your principles in all my affairs. Please strengthen me by Your power to do so. Amen

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Weekend

REPRESS AND DENY

To cope with living an addictive lifestyle we often repressed our moral thinking and denied the downward trend we were on. We made excuses for our behavior and convinced ourselves that we were not as bad as others made out. Our dependency enabled us to selectively forget our responsibilities, and we lived in an unreal world where we refused to admit the changes in our personality.

You have heard my predictions and seen them fulfilled, but you refuse to admit it. Oh, that you had listened to my commands! Then you would have had peace flowing like a gentle river and righteousness rolling over you like waves in the sea. (Isaiah 48:6a, 18 NLT)

In recovery, avoiding reality will hinder us from having the meaningful, purposeful life that we desire. Feelings of anxiety about our former lifestyle will surface and we need to be willing to set aside our learned defense mechanisms and be honest about what is truly going on inside us. The road to addiction is paved with dishonesty about events that negatively impacted our lives. The truth is, God made us and knows us, and nothing is hidden from His sight.

You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. (Psalm 139:2-3 NLT)

To survive in our home environment, we may have avoided things we were unable to cope with and were afraid that our peers might find out about. The result of this situation may have caused us to become violent towards others or retreat from them. Whichever way we reacted, we were repressing and denying our true self. Letting ourselves be known as the person God created us to be, and not hiding from our fears, will enable us to live the fulfilling life God intended.

My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body. (Proverbs 4:20-22 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You made me and You know me. Please give me understanding of Your Word and help me to be a doer of what it says, so I can truly be the person You created. Amen

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 27

NO SHORTCUTS

The 12-Step Road often seems a long and winding one to us and some of us think we can reach the same destination by taking shortcuts that are more agreeable. Those persons who have walked this road before us will warn of the danger of these shortcuts because they have tried them and found them to be treacherous. What makes us think that we could do any better than they?

Nothing in all the world can be hidden from God. He can clearly see all things. Everything is open before him. And to him we must explain the way we have lived. (Hebrews 4:13 ERV)

Some of us make an inventory of some facts from our past and keep others hidden. We believe that revealing everything will require us to face guilt and shame that will be overwhelming when we admit the exact nature of our wrongs. A fearless moral inventory requires the recording of everything that can be counted as a contributing factor to how we got to where we are. Taking shortcuts means we are not willing to reveal all. What we don't realize is that whatever we leave out is information that is essential to our long term recovery. We need to ask ourselves the question that Jesus asked a man who had the same complaint for 38 years, "Do you want to get well?"

Christ carried our sins in his body on the cross. He did this so that we would stop living for sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you were healed. So now anyone who is in Christ Jesus is not judged guilty. (1 Peter 2:24; Romans 8:1 ERV)

If we decide that we want to shortcut those things that cause us the most pain, then we are just adding to our burden of deceit and will miss the joy of being set free that results from telling the truth. Choosing the road that has proven trustworthy to many in the past and staying away from shortcuts will bring us to our desired destination of a meaningful new life.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please keep me safe from taking shortcuts and help me choose the well-trodden road that leads to abundant life. Amen

Just for today I will strengthen my mind. I will take a few minutes to read and meditate on God's word, seeking God's perspective for my life today. I will take note of one helpful thing God is saying to me and seek to behave accordingly.

There are many ways we can interact with God's word on a regular basis. Most individuals in recovery start their day early with a bit of quiet time and read a selection from the Bible, from the Big Book, or from a meditation book – often a combination. It doesn't matter if the words are from a traditional book or from an App on our smart phone, these truths can help us focus on a positive agenda for the day.

Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me ... Then the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:9 NLT)

Our minds have long been patterned on the negative and the self-centered. By starting the day with a desire to hear from God, we give ourselves the opportunity to have fresh eyes with which God has plans for us to have a meaningful day and have a positive influence on every person and situation we encounter. We read God's Word to get to know God, and to follow His good plans. Spending time with God also helps us learn His principles for life and relationship and to understand how He acts on our behalf.

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. Jesus said: ***"Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."*** (James 1:22 NLT, Matthew 7:24 NIV)

Real change happens for us when we don't just get to know God's will but actually put it into practice. Each time we read God's Word it's important to ask Him to show us what He wants us to know and what He wants us to do with what He is teaching us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for taking time to meet with me today as I read Your Word. Help me to understand what You are saying to me. Fill me with courage and power to put into practice what I have read. Amen

God created us to be in relationship with Him and also with each other. This is the fulfilling life of belonging that God desires us to recover. God wants human beings to know that they never have to be alone. In our relationship with God, we are wrapped in the love He has for us, and in turn, that love becomes the motivation which helps us to love others.

When asked by an expert in religious law, which is the most important commandment? Jesus replied: ***"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself"***. (Matthew 22:37-39 NLT)

If we are being unkind to our neighbor we are saying by our actions that this is the way we want to be treated. If we treat our neighbour kindly it says we desire to be treated kindly. God's desire is that we encourage each other rather than be critical, judgmental, and seeking to find fault. When we are wronged, we are to forgive as God has forgiven us. It's a tough order to follow but we have been called out of darkness into light. In our new life with God in recovery, we are to reflect the light of Christ to everyone around us.

So roll up your sleeves, put your mind in gear, be totally ready to receive the gift that's coming when Jesus arrives. Don't lazily slip back into those old grooves of evil, doing just what you feel like doing. You didn't know any better then, you do now. As obedient children, let yourselves be pulled into a way of life shaped by God's life, a life energetic and blazing with holiness. (1 Peter 1:14-16 MSG)

Today, let's reflect on how we have been behaving towards family and friends. If we find it hard to love those around us, let's ask God to fill us with His love and goodness so we can love others as He loves us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for helping me to recover a meaningful life of belonging in my relationship with You and with others. Please fill me with your love and goodness so I will easily love and care for others as You love and care for me. Amen

Our formerly destructive lifestyle was harsh and filled with many problems. We functioned in an environment of chaos, angry words, and bullying. The new life in recovery to which God invites us, is one of gentleness and speaking the truth in love to those around us.

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. (Colossians 3:12 NLT)

Gentleness is normally observed in a kind gesture or action. We hear it in the tone of voice of a person offering encouragement with comforting words to someone who is troubled. We can see the quality of gentleness in the way a little baby is held or when we see a parent or grandparent kissed on the cheek by a beloved relative. To be present with love and compassion for someone in distress, particularly when that person is frail or vulnerable, is a tender expression of gentleness.

A person who is speaking and acting in a gentle way appears safe and we tend to relax and feel at ease in their presence. When meeting with a person with a gentle disposition, we observe that they do not bring their own agenda but are attentive to those things we are sharing with them. God has a gentle nature. His desire is that the gentleness He shows towards us will be passed on through us to others with whom we have a relationship.

We need to let go of the fearful, angry, impatient way of life that was familiar to us in addiction because it hinders our relationship with Him and with others. Jesus wants us to be kind and compassionate towards one another, so we reflect His Spirit living in us.

Jesus said: ***Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*** (Matthew 11:29 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me reflect the nature of Jesus in me and be a humble and gentle person at heart. My desire is to be loving and compassionate towards others as I choose to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with You my God. Amen