

Friday

A NAGGING SENSE OF GUILT

Many of us are plagued throughout the day with a nagging sense of guilt. Where do these feelings come from? What should we do with them? Guilt feels like a shadow that has settled on our hearts. We long for the sunshine and joy of freedom but, each time we think we are approaching that state, guilt seems to cast a shadow over our thoughts and emotions and drags us down. Sometimes the guilt comes because of things we have done that we know we should not have done. The Bible tells us that all of us have done things we ought not to have done and have failed to do things which we should have done.

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. If we claim to be without sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. (Romans 3:23 NLT, 1 John 1:8 NIV)

Each person has their own set of wrongs, and one sin is not more difficult for God to forgive than another. Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for all sin.

If you kept a record of our sins, who could escape being condemned? But you forgive us so that we should stand in awe of you. (Psalm 130:3-4 GNB)

God's desire is that we admit we did wrong, be sorry for the wrong we have done, and desire to change our ways. The path forward is to ask for God's forgiveness, receive it, and then move ahead. Any lingering guilt we feel over issues which God has forgiven is false guilt which comes from condemnation that the devil tries to entrap us with. When Jesus says our wrongs are forgiven, they are truly forgiven. We need to agree with God that we are forgiven and re-align our thoughts and emotions with God's assurance that the debt for our sin has been paid-in-full.

Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. (Psalm 32:5 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I have done wrong. I admit I have harmed others and lived in my own self-will rather than following Your will and Your ways. Please forgive me and wash me clean from all my offences. Today I put my trust in what Jesus has done for me on the cross and receive forgiveness and a fresh start to my life. Amen

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Weekend

WHAT A RELIEF!

We feel many things in recovery. Some negative and others positive. There are feelings of fear and uncertainty about our future, and guilt and shame over things done wrong in the past. If we pay attention, we will also notice feelings of joy and relief that we have finally escaped from the bondage of our addiction, and recognized that we truly do need help.

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 5:17 NLT)

What a relief to know that we do not have to pretend we are OK. Now we can acknowledge there were happenings in our life that caused us pain. Now we can speak about that pain and share with those who have experienced similar issues and understand what we are going through. Now we don't have to hide from the situations we did not honestly understand or the circumstances we were challenged with and unable to cope with. We can admit we are human and need the support of others who are willing to share their experience, strength, and hope with us. What a relief!

God assures us: ***"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)***

The God who called out to us until we heard His voice and responded to Him will be with us every day as we move ahead. It is certain that along the way we will make mistakes, but God's love for us is everlasting and His kindness is unfailing. What a relief!

The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. (Jeremiah 31:3 NIV)

We do not know what the future holds, but God does. He has a good plan for our lives and will reveal it to us one day at a time. What a relief!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I reject my tendency to try to do life on my own. I know I can't and I know that I need you. Thank you for being there for me, for accepting me in my weakness, and for taking me forward in Your good plan for my life. Amen

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 23

TO YOUR FAITH ADD KNOWLEDGE

Steps 1, 2, and 3 of the 12-Step Program help us develop faith in Jesus Christ, a power greater than ourselves who can restore us to sanity. The Bible tells us that one of the characteristics we are to add to our faith is knowledge. Is faith in the finished work of Jesus not enough? Yes and no. When we give our will and life over to the care of God our sins are forgiven, and we are guaranteed life forevermore with our Heavenly Father. What we need to develop is, knowledge of the wonderful plan God has for our lives and understanding of how we are to put that plan into action.

I want you to open their eyes, so that they will turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then their sins will be forgiven, and by faith in me they will become part of God's holy people. (Acts 26:18 CEV)

Jesus said the above words to Saul of Tarsus when he revealed Himself to Saul on the road to Damascus. Saul, who later changed His name to Paul, was a persecutor of those who believed in Jesus. Saul read the scriptures but lacked knowledge of God's plan of redemption until Jesus enlightened him. Jesus also spoke to Saul of the plan God had for his life. If we add knowledge to our faith, we will become aware of God's plan for our lives.

My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:2-3 NIV)

Before we came to faith in Jesus, we lived in the darkness of our own limited understanding. We did not have much knowledge about God or of how Jesus came into the world to pay the penalty for our sins. As we meditate on the scriptures, we will come to know God's plan for our lives and increase in the knowledge of how we are to carry it out.

Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions. (Psalm 119:18 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for the Bible which contains the wisdom and knowledge of all of Your ways. Through the Power of Your Holy Spirit, and prayer and meditation, give me understanding of Your Word and of Your will for my life, and empower me to carry it out. Amen

FACING THE STORM AS WE MAKE AMENDS

Seeking out those to whom we need to make amends can do not know where the person we hurt is, or what the impact of hearing from us might be. However, Jesus said if someone has something against us, we are to go and be reconciled with that person.

.....no weapon will be able to hurt you; you will have an answer for all who accuse you. I will defend my servants and give them victory. The Lord has spoken. (Isaiah 54:17 GNT)

After feeding 5000 people in a remote place, Jesus insisted that his disciples get into a boat and cross to the other side of the lake while He dismissed the crowd. The disciples obeyed Jesus. As they were crossing the lake strong winds arose and they had to fight heavy waves to stay afloat while trying to get to the place where Jesus had told them to go. We may experience similar storms in our hearts when we come to make amends. We feel unsettled and we wonder what trauma will happen when we approach a person to whom we are seeking to make amends.

In view of all this, what can we say? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31 GNT)

When the boat was a considerable distance from the land, Jesus came to the disciples walking on the water. When Peter knew it was Jesus, he asked to come to Him on the water and Jesus agreed. Peter got out of the boat, took a few steps, looked at the wind and the waves, was terrified, and began to sink. Some of us are like Peter, we have taken some steps and have made a list, but when we look at the list, we are terrified and start to doubt. As we work through our list of needed amends, we should remember that we need not be troubled or allow doubts to sink us. Jesus is always with us, ready to reach out and help us.

Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. "You have so little faith," Jesus said, "Why did you doubt me?" (Matthew 14:31 NLT)

Prayer: Dear Jesus, The list of people I have harmed is intimidating but I choose to trust You and make the effort to be reconciled with each person. Please help me! Amen

PERSISTENT PROBLEM SOLVING

Powerful people harass me without cause, but my heart trembles only at your word. I rejoice in your word like one who discovers a great treasure. I hate and abhor all falsehood, but I love your instructions. I will praise you seven times a day because all your regulations are just. Those who love your instructions have great peace and do not stumble. I long for your rescue, Lord, so I have obeyed your commands. I have obeyed your laws, for I love them very much. Yes, I obey your commands and laws because you know everything I do. (Psalm 119:161-168 NLT)

We may become discouraged and question God's principles when we face conflict and challenges for choosing to do the right thing. We feel harassed without cause when people who differ with God's principles confront us. We may experience fear and insecurity or feel confused and irritated. It's so easy to feel sorry for ourselves. We think it's not fair that we have troubles. Sometimes we are tempted to lie and scheme to avoid our problems. We certainly know how to do that. We had years of practicing deception in our time in addition. It is difficult for us to believe and admit that our familiar defective way of handling challenging situations is not superior to God's way.

When we persevere in practicing God's principles in all our affairs, we will discover that we are experiencing positive change in our hearts and minds, in addition to having our problems sorted. What an unexpected blessing!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Even though my circumstances may not always be as I would want them to be, help me to persevere and put Your principles into practice in all my affairs. Help me to stop doubting and believe that Your way is the best way. Amen

JUST FOR TODAY – I Will Be Joyful, Optimistic, and Grateful

Just for today I will be joyful, optimistic, and grateful. I will take time to notice the gifts in me, in others, and in my surroundings and let the rest go.

Early in recovery "JUST FOR TODAY" principles may help us maintain sobriety. While we are not sure we can stay sober for the rest of our lives, we realize we can make a choice that, today we will have a sober and meaningful day. As we grow in both our sobriety and our relationship with God, we will come to realize that "today" is a gift from God. We are blessed to enjoy this gift and use it in ways that will encourage and bless others. As we take the opportunity to use the talents and abilities that God has given us, we will find joy and fulfillment in communicating with others and in helping them.

This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24 NLT)

It takes time for us to believe that all our bridges are not burned and there is hope for a meaningful life. With some help we can get the necessary training to be involved in satisfying work. We will never navigate safely through today's situations on our own. God goes ahead of us and prepares the way. God directs our activities as we listen for His guidance. God empowers us to do what needs doing as we stretch and learn and develop new abilities.

I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:12-13 NLT)

What a relief it is to know that God has a plan for each day of our lives and that He is willing to show it to us, one step at a time. Regardless of the obstacles that we may encounter along the way, God will provide everything we need to be successful in His plan. Just for today each one of us has every reason to be joyful, optimistic, and grateful.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I put my hope in you. You've brought me out of the darkness of addiction to love successfully in Your plan for my life. Help me to keep my focus on what You are doing in me and through me. Please help me to trust You in every situation regardless of how I feel. Today I am joyful, optimistic, and grateful for all You have done for me. Amen