

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

## SARCASM – HUMOUR OR HOSTILITY?

One of the ways many of us try to hide our hurt and anger is through sarcasm. We say something nasty about someone which makes them feel or look stupid before others, and then try to get away with it by saying “I was just joking.” If someone is hurt by what we say, we need to consider what we have said and expose the motive behind it.

*Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing.* (Proverbs 12:18 NLT)

Why do we feel we need to make spiteful comments about others? Do we think it makes us look smarter or better than the other person? Are we hoping that people will find us witty and appealing by speaking this way? Do we care about how someone might feel about what we say or are we just interested in being entertaining?

Much of the so called humour we see on TV talk shows or comedy sit-coms is filled with sarcasm. Everyday relationships are often damaged by its cunning use. Professionals describe sarcasm as “hostility disguised as humour.” When we speak sarcastically about others, some of the things going on in our own hearts are: feelings of inferiority; a desire for something to happen but we are afraid to ask directly for it; fear of being not good enough; passive-aggressive anger; and attention seeking.

*Enemies disguise themselves with their lips, but in their hearts they harbor deceit. Though their speech is charming, do not believe them.* (Proverbs 26:24-25a NIV)

To encourage one another, we need to speak in a way that uplifts a person rather than tears them down. As followers of Jesus, we represent God in all our interactions. How would Jesus speak or behave towards another person? That answer should be our guide.

*If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God.* (1 Peter 4:11a NIV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for the times I’ve hidden my anger and hurt behind sarcasm. Help me to speak as You would speak and build others up with my words and actions. Amen*

## LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 22

### A BLAMELESS CONSCIENCE

As we seek to restore a clear conscience before God we need to examine the truthfulness of our society’s values. The beliefs we form need to be compared with what God says is right and good and not by what is acceptable in our culture.

*Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.* (Romans 12:2 NLT)

Many people whom society considers “normies” are those with addictive and destructive habits that are socially acceptable but just as destructive as any drug addiction. We don’t want to trade addictions. We want to live free. We need to observe and learn the difference between acceptable values in our culture and God’s values.

God defines sin this way: *When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these.* (Galatians 5:19-21 NLT)

From God’s viewpoint, sex outside of marriage is wrong even though our culture leaves that decision to personal choice. Terminating life is wrong even when society gives us the right to choose. Anger and rage are wrong even though we excuse our outbursts by blaming others for injustice done to us. Our conscience will be reprogrammed as we read and apply the truth of God’s word. In every situation where we need discernment the Holy Spirit will bring truth to us and our renewed conscience will guide us to make the right choice.

*The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.* (Romans 14:22 NASB)

*Prayer: Teach me your ways, O Lord, that I may live according to your truth! Grant me purity of heart, so that I may honor you. (Psalm 86:11 NLT) Amen*

## WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND

A saying we often hear is, "What goes around comes around." It is usually said with reference to how a person treats others. It means that if we treat someone badly today, that's what we can expect to experience from others in the future. "God's word brings a positive truth to this saying. His promise is that as we bless others, we can expect God to bless us.

*Happy are those who are concerned for the poor; the Lord will help them when they are in trouble. The Lord will protect them and preserve their lives; he will make them happy in the land; he will not abandon them to the power of their enemies.* (Psalm 41:1-2 GNT)

God loves to pour goodness into our lives and one of the ways we open the door to that is by being kind and helpful to others. This is different from the co-dependent way we often have of doing something nice for someone so they in return will do something nice for us. We need to be attentive to what is going on in the lives of others, and like God, respond with compassion whether it is convenient or not. The person needing our help may be someone we genuinely care about or someone that easily gets under our skin. Whatever the case, we can be assured that as we bless that person God will surely bless us.

*Give to others, and God will give to you. Indeed, you will receive a full measure, a generous helping, poured into your hands—all that you can hold. The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you.* (Luke 6:38 GNT)

God's antidote to co-dependence in these situations is to turn the focus from the "You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" way of operating, to acting from a higher standard – the standard of love and compassion. God is love. God loves us. God cares for those who suffer. We can also love and care for those who suffer. We can reach out and support others without wanting anything in return. God may use that person to bless us in the future, or He may bless us by some other means. The choice is up to Him. We just know that when we serve God by loving others, He will be there for us in our time of need. God's Word is our guarantee.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I love how You love and care for me. I want to love motivated by love rather than by co-dependency and selfish motives. Open my eyes each day to see people in need and show me the way to take care of them as You would take care of me. Amen*

## LOVE IS NOT RUDE

Rudeness shows itself in our speech and actions towards others. It consists of inappropriate words spoken or disrespectful behavior. Rudeness may show itself in a person's unwillingness to accept tradition or appropriate dress when invited to an event. No thought is given to offending others. It also shows itself in selfish ambition and a disinterest in helping others. Some of us, when we are not at ease in a given situation, may unintentionally be rude or even deliberately offensive to others who are familiar with known procedures.

*Be sincere in your love for others. Hate everything that is evil and hold tight to everything that is good. Love each other as brothers and sisters and honor others more than you do yourself.* (Romans 12:9-10 CEV)

In recovery we are meant to focus our minds on those things that will help us develop healthy relationships with one another. Rather than isolating ourselves from people or events where we feel awkward, we should seek to learn what is expected of us. Where we are willing to comply, we can then become supportive. We will need to let go of offhand remarks and gossip about those who follow traditions we are not familiar with. Consideration and kindness in all our words and actions will go a long way to helping us establish lasting friendships.

*Don't mistreat someone who has mistreated you. But try to earn the respect of others, and do your best to live at peace with everyone.* (Romans 12:17-18 CEV)

*My prayer for you is that you will overflow more and more with love for others, and at the same time keep on growing in spiritual knowledge and insight.* (Philippians 1:9 TLB)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me to let go of those things that are part of my corrupt nature, especially rudeness. Help me to treat my friends and neighbours with respect and compassion and truly love and care for them as You love and care for me. Amen*

FINDING RELIABLE EVIDENCE  
AS I COME TO BELIEVE

Creation suggests that there is an intelligent creator. The laws of gravity, the dependence of earth's ecosystems on one another, and the planetary systems in the sky give us proof that there is an amazing designer behind life here on earth. We see a code of morals and values that points us to a higher power who establishes boundaries and helps us identify evil when individuals and groups go beyond the set boundaries. Our own bodies are intricate and function with amazing complexity. We are not just a body but have a soul and a spirit as well.

The following statement is a quote by Albert Einstein: "There is a real external world that is orderly and knowable, and the trustworthiness of our minds to grasp that world – science cannot proceed apart from these assumptions."

*For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.* (Romans 1:20 NLT)

Step 2 of the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous invites us to "come to believe that a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity." The good news is, the all-powerful God who created us and the amazing world in which we live, loves and cares about each one of us. If He is sought, He promises to help us. Let's determine today to get to know this amazing God so that we may overflow with hope for our future.

*When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you set in place—what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them?* (Psalm 8:3-4 NLT)

*Prayer: Gracious God, The evidence in what I see all around me confirms that You truly are an amazing creator. I want to get to know You more. Help me to come to believe that You are a power greater than myself who can restore me to sanity. Amen*