

Tuesday

## FIRST THINGS FIRST

One of our first priorities in recovery is sorting our life practices according to the truth. We come into recovery weary, sick, and sinful. We want to feel better right away and get on with life. We think that once we are physically stronger, we can sort everything out. The truth is, God's way of lasting change and improvement in our lives is to change us from the inside out. Our circumstances and relationships will improve when we admit that we are powerless over them and ask God to change our thinking and believing. First things first!

***But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*** (Matthew 6:33 NIV)

We cannot imagine what sanity or goodness is until God works in us to remove the fog, the pain, and the lies we have believed. We must ask God to give us an undivided heart as sincerely as we have asked God to remove the obsession for our substance of choice, or our addictive habits. We must develop a solid foundation of truthful thoughts and healthy desires before we can hope to progressively build our life in recovery.

***For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.*** (Romans 7:18 NIV)

Only God can forgive the sin at the core of our destructive and addictive lifestyle. Our damaging behaviour has been influenced by the hurts we have sustained and hidden deep in our hearts. We need to allow God to bring truth, forgiveness, and healing to our hearts. Doctors and counsellors can then provide the medical help and therapy we need to help our physical well-being.

***Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.*** (1 Timothy 1:15-16 NIV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I need forgiveness, new life, and the power of Your Holy Spirit working in me to heal and change me from the inside out. I invite You into my life to bring me to the knowledge of all truth. Please help me to accept all the help I need. Amen*

Wednesday

## LIVING SOBER – DEVELOPING NEW INTERESTS AND SKILLS

Living in addiction is chaotic. A person is never at peace either in mind or body. Each addict is continuously at work seeking to fulfill the demands of whatever is their master. The Bible tells us there is no peace for those who refuse to follow God's ways.

***But the wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up mire and dirt. "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."*** (Isaiah 57:20-21 ESV)

To be effective in our new life in recovery, we need to choose to follow God's ways. We need to find new sources of interest and a new set of skills to help us stay clean and sober. As we check around, we will find individuals who are willing to share with us what they know about the recovery process, and some will be willing to teach us about things we may never have thought about. Some may share their skills related to employment. Others may share recreational interests such as hiking or sports. Skills and interests are varied but each person can share those things they have learned or enjoy doing. Everyone can contribute in some way, even if it is just taking time to listen to others and explore possibilities with them.

***So get rid of your old self, which made you live as you used to—the old self that was being destroyed by its deceitful desires. Your hearts and minds must be made completely new, and you must put on the new self, which is created in God's likeness and reveals itself in the true life that is upright and holy.*** (Ephesians 4:22-24 GNT)

If we are willing to learn, being in community will teach us a new set of skills. Living sober with selfless love needs to be a priority on our agenda. God is well pleased with us when we are patient and kind toward others, especially those who appear to be disadvantaged. As we seek God and His ways, He will encourage us to be interested in others, and He will supply the skills we need to do whatever He has called us to do.

*Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for giving me new life and bringing me to a place where I want to look out for the interests of others. Please empower me with the skills I need to do the work You have planned for me to do and help me to have much joy in doing it. Amen*

Thursday

## WISDOM – ADOPTING A DIFFERENT MINDSET

Often when we come into recovery, we miss our old way of life and the people we socialized with. They did not contribute much to our well-being, but they were there when we needed them. Mostly their lives were like ours – on a downward spiral – but they did not judge us, and we did not judge them, so we got along in the insanity of our dysfunctional lifestyle.

***Whose heart is filled with anguish and sorrow? Who is always fighting and quarreling? Who is the man with bloodshot eyes and many wounds? It is the one who spends long hours in the taverns, trying out new mixtures.*** (Proverbs 23:29-30 TLB)

Our new life principles require that we leave behind our old way of life. That means staying away from our old haunts and the people who are still there. When we have just recovered from a deadly virus, it would be unwise to go anywhere close to where others still have that virus and expose ourselves to being re-infected. If we want to stay on track in our recovery, we need to have a mindset that reflects our intention to get well and stay well.

***Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think. Then you will learn from your own experience how his ways will really satisfy you.*** (Romans 12:2 TLB)

Rather than allowing ourselves to dwell on whatever we were dependent on, we need to have continuous contact with our Heavenly Father and ask Him to meet our needs. We also need to admit the truth that our dependency is not dependable for it leaves us in want. We must find a reliable sponsor to help us set healthy boundaries and hold us accountable for our actions. This sponsor should be available for contact when temptation raises its ugly head or other problems arise. With help, our new mindset will be established and our life in recovery will have a solid foundation to build on.

***Get the truth and never sell it; also get wisdom, discipline, and good judgment.*** (Proverbs 23:23 NLT)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I admit I cannot live this new life on my own. Please give me the will, the wisdom, and the desire to follow Your principles in all my affairs. Amen*

Friday

## DON'T JUDGE OTHERS

Judging others is a problem area for many of us and something that Jesus tells us needs to change if we are to live well in recovery and in life.

*And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.* (Matthew 7:3-5 NLT)

How we judge others is often a reflection of how we have been judged by others and even by ourselves. Many of us lived in dysfunctional homes that typically used verbal and emotional abuse to force others into subjection. We easily fell into that learned behaviour when we came face-to-face with those whose actions caused us pain and humiliation.

We've all made mistakes, both in addiction and in recovery. We are all learning. Our recovery journey is unique and the same is true for everyone else. Character defects differ among us. We all have some defects that are easier to overcome and others that are more difficult. No one is worse off or better off than us. Their journey of recovery is just different. God is willing to forgive us and remove our defects of character as we humbly acknowledge them before Him and ask for His help. This is true for each of us.

Someone has wisely said: "People who criticize others are unaware of how much pain they themselves are experiencing. Truly happy people don't have the need to bring others down." Instead of judging and condemning others, let's offer encouraging words and loving support to fellow strugglers on the journey.

*Continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.* (1 Peter 4:8, Galatians 6:3 NLT)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for loving me and offering me forgiveness for my sins. When I am tempted to judge or condemn others, please help me to stop and think and choose to be kind. Help me never to look down on another person unless I am helping them up. Amen*

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Weekend

## REPROGRAMMING OUR THOUGHTS FOR GROWTH

Step 10 of the 12-Step program advises us to continue to take personal inventory and, when we are wrong, promptly admit it. All of us have character defects which are clearly observed by others but not so much by ourselves. These may be familiar habits or personality traits that have not been corrected since we gave our will and life over to the care of God. The God we serve is a Holy God and He desires that we obey His Word as we serve Him and others.

***You were getting along so well. Who has interfered with you to hold you back from following the truth? For God is at work within you, helping you want to obey him, and then helping you do what he wants.*** (Galatians 5:7; Philippians 2:13 TLB)

God says we are to get rid of those things that hold us back from following the truth of His Word. If we want to get our body in shape, we go to a physical-fitness gym. The initial physical workouts will be painful as we stretch muscles and tendons that have not been stretched for a while. If we want to get our spirit and soul in shape, we need to read the Bible and learn what God says we are to do. From the principles we learn and obey our minds will be transformed, and we will experience a freshness in all we do and think. Reprogramming our minds may be challenging at first because some of our thinking is hidden in the comfort of the half-truths that we believe. However, when we know the truth, the truth will set us free.

***May kindness and peace be yours from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness. Jesus was the first to conquer death, and he is the ruler of all earthly kings. Christ loves us, and by his blood he set us free from our sins.*** (Revelation 1:5 CEV)

A daily inventory will help us build a deep reverence for God and His ways so our natural response in all we do and say will be guided by His principles.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to continue to take daily personal inventory and when I am wrong, promptly admit it. Give me wisdom in Your Word so that I may obey Your principles in all my affairs. Amen*

## LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY DAILY MEDITATIONS



Week 24

### BENEFITS OF WALKING WITH WISDOM

Employers negotiate work contracts with individuals and unions. The terms and conditions agreed to are then implemented into an agreement between the Employer and Employee. Part of the negotiations will likely include benefits that workers will be entitled to as part of their payment package. These may include medical and dental benefits, childcare benefits or retirement plan benefits. Benefits enhance the life of the employees who receive them.

In the program of A.A. we are told about the benefits of sobriety that those who have walked the road of recovery before us have discovered to be true. In the Bible, God tells us of the benefits of a better life when, rather than trying to do life on our own, we do life His way. Living according to the wisdom of God has more benefits than we would ever have space to list. Following are just a few of those promised benefits:

***JOY: Joyful is the person who finds wisdom, the one who gains understanding.*** (Proverbs 3:13 NLT)

***A GOOD LIFE: Grow a wise heart—you'll do yourself a favor; keep a clear head—you'll find a good life.*** (Proverbs 19:8 MSG)

***STRAIGHT TALKING: Wisdom will save you from evil people, from those whose words are twisted.*** (Proverbs 2:12 NLT)

***SAFE AND SATISFYING WAY OF LIFE: Store my commands in your heart. If you do this, you will live many years, and your life will be satisfying.*** (Proverbs 3:1-2 NLT)

***PROTECTION AND LOVE: Get wisdom; develop good judgment. Don't forget my words or turn away from them. Don't turn your back on wisdom, for she will protect you. Love her, and she will guard you. Getting wisdom is the wisest thing you can do! And whatever else you do, develop good judgment.*** (Proverbs 4:5-7 NLT)

Let's sign up for this benefit package today. It's a good deal!

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for the many benefits You promise me as I choose to wholeheartedly live according to Your principles. Give me the wisdom to daily seek conscious contact with You so that I may honour You in all I say and do. Amen*