

Are we ready to welcome the gift of God's new way of life for us or are we trying to recycle old thoughts, habits and old program ideas? God's plan for us is good, perfect and pleasing. Our lives in recovery are more than simply sorting out our past. We sort the past only to remove obstacles that hinder us from fully living the new life that God gives us. If we reach out and embrace it, this new life is available to us. Whether we are brand new in recovery or returning after many stumbles, God is with us, and when we call on Him, He will answer us.

I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. (Psalm 34:4-6 NIV)

Today is a new day in recovery for us. Let's determine to go forward with God and rejoice and be glad for all that He has done and will continue to do for us.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Does the thought of a new season bring joy, fear, or a bit of both? What can I do with those thoughts as I enter this new season?
2. Am I trying to recycle thoughts and behaviour patterns from the past rather than trashing them completely and getting something new?
3. Along with sorting my past, how am I exploring God's will and plan for my life today?
4. How am I making a break from "life on my own terms" and moving more and more into "life on God's terms?"
5. Am I fully surrendered to live my life in relationship with God?

Heavenly Father, Thank You for each day You have planned for my life. I repent of my rebellious ways and seek from this day forward to walk in the truth of Your word. Lord, please strengthen me. As I begin this new season I ask You to make straight paths for my feet. Help me to acknowledge you in all my ways so that I may clearly hear Your voice as You direct my path. I acknowledge that each day in relationship with You is truly a day in which I can rejoice. I am forever grateful that You care. AMEN

FRESH START



FRESH START – NEW DAY

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

How many times in the dysfunctional dark days of our addiction did we waken up and wish that we had not. Life seemed tiresome. Problems loomed large in front of us. Circumstances were out of control. We felt abandoned and alone to cope with another day and wondered what might help stop the cycle. God in His grace was drawing near to us and somehow, with His help, we made it into recovery.

I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:19-23 NIV)

What a difference each day is when we walk with God in recovery. We start the day with the promise of God's unfailing love and goodness. We have new life today, a fresh new opportunity from God. We can be ourselves without the mask of addiction. We can explore and build on our loving relationship with God. We can read His word and talk with Him in prayer. Out of the peace and security we experience with God, we can then share with others all that we have received. Our lives begin to reflect the truth of what we say from week to week in our statement of Life Affirmations: *My life is of great beauty and infinite value. God has a plan for my life that is meaningful, purposeful, and joyful. There is a work for me to do today that will bless others and give me deep satisfaction.*

This life we've been given, this new season that is before us, begins with each new day. Yesterday's mistakes, blunders, worries and pains are behind us. We are unable to change what has been said and done. We need to admit that and leave them with God. Worries about tomorrow's potential problems and burdens in addition to today's troubles could overwhelm us. God already knows the beginning and the end of each day. God is with us and will help us face whatever presents itself in our day. As we acknowledge God in the middle of our troubles, we will find that any difficulty can be worked out and overcome.

Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry

about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Jesus said: I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (Matthew 6:33-34, John 16:33 NIV)

Treatment programs, sponsors, counselors, speakers at meetings, and recovery materials can help us identify harmful thoughts and behaviours that are the outcome of an actual problem we have had to deal with. That initial problem needs to be identified and brought into the light of the presence of our Heavenly Father for healing. God alone knows how today fits together with yesterday and tomorrow and we need to turn each day over to His care. A new beginning takes place in our lives when we humbly admit that we are powerless on our own, that our lives are unmanageable, and that we need a life-giving relationship with the God who created us and who cares about us. Other solutions we may try on our own will only return us to the insanity from which we have come.

Throughout the Bible we learn that self-willed, rebellious people are the history of humankind. On the daily news we see the insane actions of people from our own country and from around the world. This kind of behaviour is likely to continue until the end of time. God's plan for our lives and His solution for those who have gone astray is forgiveness and restoration through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. What is the root of all sin: doing things our own way; choosing to live as though God did not exist; running after pleasure; and attempting to solve problems in our own limited way.

What is the solution? By the power of the Holy Spirit of God we need to overcome the rebellious bent of our hearts and respond to God's offer of salvation and a new way of living through Jesus Christ. We need to listen to and surrender to the guidance of the Holy Spirit who comes to live with us and is in us. He will show us behaviour and thoughts based on insanity, brokenness, and character defects. As we turn our will and our lives over to God's care, walk obedient to His ways, and humbly ask Him to remove our defects, He will equip us with everything we need to live life to the full.

Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21 NIV)