

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



MAY 2025



These meditations are available online
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*Partners in Hope Recovery Society
is a Christian community
outreach organization
offering hope, support, and healing
through Jesus Christ
to victims of
harmful circumstances and dependencies,
as they reclaim the gift of their life.*

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JUST FOR TODAY

Just for today I will try to live in conscious contact with God praying only for knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out.

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.

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.

Just for today I will adjust myself to what is and not try to adjust everything else to my desires. I will trust that God is working all things for good in my life.

Just for today I will be agreeable. I will not criticize, not find fault, and not try to improve or control anybody except myself. I will pray blessing on one person with whom I struggle to relate.

Just for today I will have a quiet half hour all by myself to relax and enjoy all that God is giving me.

Just for today I will be unafraid, believing that as I trust in God with all my heart and lean not on my own understanding, He will lead me along a good path.

Just for today I will seek to serve others with kindness, doing what is right, and walking humbly with God.

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. Ephesians 2:10 NLT

SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

For a variety of reasons, many of us have an underlying structure of disorder that is damaging us and others. We invite God to show us the truth about ourselves so we can personally receive God's forgiveness to set us free and healing to make us strong.

SUBSTANCE ADDICTIONS:	BEHAVIOUR ADDICTIONS:
Alcohol Caffeine Injected or smoked substances such as: Crack, Crystal Meth, Heroin Marijuana Prescription Medications Sugar Tobacco	Anger/Rage/Bullying Cutting Crime Eating Disorders: Bulimia, Anorexia, Binging, Obesity Gambling Hoarding Sex/Pornography Verbal Abuse: Gossip, Lying, Accusing Blaming, Condemning Violence (physical, verbal, cyber)
SOFT ADDICTIONS:	RELATIONSHIP ADDICTIONS:
Digital Use: (Time or Content) TV/Phone/Tablet; video games, Social Networking; Cyber-bullying; Online shopping; Gambling, Pornography Exercise Food (See Eating Disorders) Isolating/Sleep Money: Debt/Fraud Religion Shopping Sports Work/Achievement	Abusive Relationships: Includes: Intimidation, Isolation, Domination, Blaming, Humiliation, Withholding, Forcing acts against one's will Approval dependency Attention Seeking Codependence/Rescuing Power/Control

PRAYER: FOR HEALING AND RESTORATION

Loving God, Thank You for rescuing us from the dark power of Satan and bringing us into loving relationship with Your Son, Jesus. We ask for wisdom and understanding from Your Spirit in order to live as people who honour You. Heal us. Make us new. Make us strong followers of Christ. Root us deeply in Your love. We place our trust in Your power that can do far more in us than we dare ask or imagine. Amen.



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How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery

God created us to have a wonderful life. In love, God planned for us and carefully put us together. God has always been calling out to us to enter into a relationship of love with Him. He doesn't force us but He invites us. Many of us have learned what a painful and confusing wreck our lives become when we try to live independently from God. Today is a good day to begin to live the full and rich life God intended for us. Nothing in our past can keep us from this life, if we want it and choose for it.

The 12-Steps remind us that our lives are unmanageable without the loving care of God and that we can get to know and come to believe that He is a power greater than ourselves. As we turn our will and our lives over to God's care, we find a solid foundation upon which to build a new life.

When we confess our sin and brokenness to God, repent and turn towards God, He gives us new life. When we invite God to come into our lives we find that He is ready and waiting for us. A simple prayer like the following, offered sincerely, establishes this new relationship with God that will last forever.

God, my life is unmanageable without you. You created me to live in relationship with you. There really is no good way to live on my own. Forgive me for not including you. I turn from my independent ways and surrender my will and my life to you. Thank you Jesus for dying on the cross for my sins and making a way for me to have new life and be filled up with Your Holy Spirit. Come into my heart and wash me clean. Teach me to do your will. Transform my way of thinking. Strengthen me to obey You in all I do. Amen

If you prayed that prayer sincerely from your heart, God forgives you and receives you. God makes you His son or daughter. God wants to show you how to live well and give you strength to do that every day. We would love to provide you with some information to support you as you move forward in your journey with God. Please contact us. You'll find our contact information on the front cover of this booklet.

LIVING ONE DAY AT A TIME

A saying we often hear in turbulent life circumstances and in recovery circles is "Live one day at a time." In many meetings someone will read "Just for Today" – a list of positive actions that offer focused attention to each day. When we pray the full version of the Serenity Prayer, we quickly come to a line that says, "Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time." God's Word encourages us to daily surrender our will and our life into His care.

Trust in the Lord and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you. (Psalm 37:3-5 NLT)

To live one day at a time it's essential that we continue to come to God with a willingness and intention to surrender our will and our life into His care. What does that mean? What does a life surrendered to God look like? What steps can we take to implement what God says in our daily lives? We confess our known sins daily and receive God's forgiveness and mercy and restoration as He cleanses us from our confessed sin. Each day we have a fresh opportunity to make God's priorities our priorities.

More than anything else, put God's work first and do what he wants. Then the other things will be yours as well. (Matthew 6:33 CEV)

There is a possibility that on any day we might bring something into our lives that we are personally unable to change. We need to come to terms with the limitations of our humanity. We are human beings confined within the slice of time we call today. God has promised to take care of all our yesterdays and tomorrows. We simply need to live one day at a time under God's guidance and care. If we do this, we are assured that God will work all things together for our good, and according to His plan for our lives.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for the gift of this day. I choose to make Your agenda my priority today. Help me to live one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time, trusting that You will make all things right as I surrender to Your will. Amen

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RENEWING OUR MINDS

When we lived in the chaos of our addictive lifestyle we were ruled by the obsession for our drug of choice or our dependency of the day. We thought we were in charge of our own lives but in reality, we were under the tyranny of whatever was controlling us. This tyrant was dictating to us what we needed so we could feel some comfort. When we pursued the object of our obsession, we gave up our freedom. We were prisoners of whatever controlled us and even though we tried to convince ourselves that we were in control, in truth, we were powerless over its demands.

Only in Jesus can we truly be free from the powerful lies associated with obsessions, addictions, and dependencies, and only in the freedom that Jesus provides will our lives be happy, joyous, and free.

Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace. (Romans 6:13-14 NLT)

When we came into recovery and accepted Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, God set us free from the power of sin and death. Recovery is the process of sorting out truth from lies. The Bible calls it "renewing our minds." In the past we thought we were free, when in fact we were slaves to our fleshly desires. Now we can joyfully believe and affirm the truth that Jesus sets us free. If any part of our thinking claims that we set ourselves free by our own effort, then we are not acknowledging the truth and are therefore not truly free.

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (Galatians 5:1 NIV)

Only in Jesus can we truly be free from the powerful lies associated with obsessions, addictions, and dependencies, and only in the freedom that Jesus provides will our lives be happy, joyous, and free.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank You for rescuing me from the deceit of darkness and bringing me into the light of Your truth. I am so thankful that You set me free to live my life to the full. Amen

LOVED THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES

When problems arise it's easy to forget that God cares. We often feel alone and helpless. Daily life continues regardless of the heartache we are feeling and somehow, we must cope. We feel like struggling orphans with no one to care for us. We forget God's instruction to call on Him for help and assume He also has abandoned us. However, God does not forget His beloved. We just need to call on Him and He will answer us.

The Lord says, "I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them." (Psalm 91:14-15 NLT)

In difficult times, rather than running from God, we need to draw closer to Him and let His unfailing love ease the pain we are feeling. We live in a broken world where sin and sorrow abound and no person escapes its ravages. Perhaps we've wondered where God was when bad things happened to us. Perhaps we were unaware that God was nearby, ready to provide comfort and help.

Jesus took upon himself all sin, suffering, and sorrow when He died in our place on the cross. As we put our trust in God's unfailing love for us, He makes forgiveness, healing, and comfort available to us. Regardless of our circumstances, God promises that He will never leave us and will hold us steady until we can effectively stand strong in the power of His love.

The eternal God is your refuge, and his everlasting arms are under you. Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down, and we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. (Deuteronomy 33:27, Isaiah 53:4-5 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I don't understand suffering, but I know that You do. Because of Your great love for me You offer forgiveness for my wrong doing and wrong thinking. Thank You for the healing and comfort You provide in my times of need. Hold me close today. Steady me with Your everlasting arms until I can stand strong in Your power. Amen

In difficult times rather than running from God, we need to draw closer to Him and let His unfailing love ease the pain we are feeling.

MORAL EXCELLENCE

When we chose to believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we were reconciled to our Heavenly Father. We were born again from above into the family of God and given the will and desire to live a life of moral excellence that is pleasing to God. We inherited a divine nature. We became children of God who belong in God's kingdom.

Jesus answered: I tell you for certain that before you can get into God's kingdom, you must be born not only by water, but by the Spirit. Humans give life to their children. Yet only God's Spirit can change you into a child of God. (John 3:5-6 CEV)

We were born again from above into the family of God and given the will and desire to live a life of moral excellence.

As new-born babies in our human family, we were helpless to do anything for ourselves. We relied on our parents or caregivers and teachers to help us grow and mature so we could live effectively in this world. It's much the same when we are born again into the Kingdom of God. We are helpless on our own and need to rely on our gracious God to help us grow and mature so we can live effectively in the Kingdom of God.

I am writing this to you, my children, so that you will not sin; but if anyone does sin, we have someone who pleads with the Father on our behalf—Jesus Christ, the righteous one. (1 John 2:1 GNT)

While living according to what was right in our own eyes, we ended up in an unmanageable existence which we were powerless to change. As we seek God and practice His principles in all our affairs, the strength and guidance we need to move forward into a life of moral excellence is there for us. Moral excellence may not happen overnight but, as we persevere, we will become active and effective for the Kingdom of God.

Do your best to improve your faith. You can do this by adding goodness, understanding, self-control, patience, devotion to God, concern for others, and love. (2 Peter 1:5-7 CEV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank You for all You have done, and continue to do for me. Help me to live a life of moral excellence and to uphold and carry the message of redemption from dead works to everyone I meet. Amen

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, whom society considers "normies" are those with addictive and destructive habits which are socially accepted but just as destructive as street 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 of 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 the injustice we have suffered.

Our conscience will be reprogrammed as we read and apply the truth of God's Word as recorded in the Bible. In every situation where we need discernment the Holy Spirit will give us knowledge of the truth and our conscience, which is being renewed, will guide us to make the right choices.

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. Amen (Psalm 86:11 NLT)

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.

Your laws are wonderful. No wonder I obey them! The teaching of your word gives light, so even the simple can understand. I pant with expectation, longing for your commands. Come and show me your mercy, as you do for all who love your name. Guide my steps by your word, so I will not be overcome by evil. Ransom me from the oppression of evil people; then I can obey your commandments. Look upon me with love; teach me your decrees. Rivers of tears gush from my eyes because people disobey your instructions. (Psalm 119:129-136 NLT)

***When we
make a
choice to
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In our lifetime we have likely bounced around from one place to another and from one broken relationship to another. We have felt the pain of disconnectedness and the insecurity of not feeling like we belonged anywhere. The above Psalm reminds us that where we have been in the past is no surprise to God. He knows the oppression we have felt, the tears we have wept, and the injustice that we have seen or experienced.

It is God's desire to rescue us and set us on a path of life that is filled with truth. When we make a choice to walk with God, choosing to follow His ways, we will not be overcome by evil. Life isn't perfect and people around us won't suddenly become perfect either, but God has a plan for us and His instructions are clear, so clear that even the simple minded can understand what He is saying. God's plan can be found in the Bible.

We begin to learn the truth about what God says works when we regularly read the Bible and apply what we learn to our daily lives. As we put God's directives into action, we recognize how well they work and the longer we continue to obey His Word as recorded in the Bible, the more life will change. God's Word has stood the test of time. We will have a "Spiritual Awakening" as we practice God's principles in all our affairs.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for the witness of many people who, by obeying Your principles for living, have experienced a good, pleasing, and perfect life. Strengthen me to follow Your directives in all I say and do, so I may experience the fullness of life that comes from You alone. Amen

Self-deception is another way of explaining a lifestyle of denial. The more we argue, rationalize, minimize, excuse, blame, bargain, and engage in the many forms of denial, the harder it is for us to recognize what a true assessment of our situation really is. There comes a time when our ability to know and respond truthfully in a given situation is compromised.

The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? But I, the Lord, search all hearts and examine secret motives. (Jeremiah 17:9-10a NLT)

One of the reasons we surround ourselves with healthy people and good sponsors is that we need help to recognize the unconscious lies we continue to tell ourselves. We conveniently forget truthful facts that go against what we are choosing to believe. In this process of letting go of self-deception we need to read God's Word and adjust our thoughts, will, and desires to obey what we learn.

For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. (Hebrews 4:12 NLT)

Procrastination and perfectionism are two enemies of honest self-assessment. We easily tell ourselves that we will do what we know we need to do, but not just yet. Perfectionism keeps us focused on only one viewpoint which means we neglect a balanced approach to life and recovery. It also leads to disappointment and discouragement and fuels the emotions which lead to relapse. If either of these two are not deceiving us, then simple busyness can be an obstacle to an accurate assessment of where things are at and any action that might be required. We need to review what we should be doing, what we need to be learning, what part of recovery we need to be focusing on, and give priority time to those things.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that many times I have sought to escape responsibility for my actions through denial and other ways of deceiving myself. Please give me the courage and strength to do whatever is necessary so that I may live with a clear and honest perception of the reality of life and who I am. I want to turn my will and life over to Your care. Amen

***If we
claim to
be
without
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truth is
not in us.***

1 John 1:8 NIV

FACING TODAY WITH COURAGE

It takes courage to live in recovery. It took great courage to admit that our lives were unmanageable, and we were powerless to sort ourselves out. Asking for help also took an enormous amount of courage as we turned our will and life over to the care of God.

Be strong! Be fearless! Don't be afraid and don't be scared by your enemies, because the Lord your God is the one who marches with you. He won't let you down, and he won't abandon you. (Deuteronomy 31:6 CEB)

***Knowing
God is with
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When we know that our will and our lives are secure in God's care, we no longer need to fear confronting our problems. God is with us and will enable us to cope with whatever happens today in the absence of mood-altering substances or harmful habits. We can look at what it means to take responsibility for ourselves and stop blaming others for where we find ourselves today. We can face feelings of weakness and insecurity in sorting out our hearts and our circumstances, no matter how many challenges are involved. Do we feel like we can do this today? Probably not on our own!

Feeling strong is not essential to action. Knowing God is with us and promises us victory will steady us and give us the courage to do the next right thing, even in our weakest moments. If we are feeling fear, or guilt, or shame, we can immediately hand those emotions over to God who promises us forgiveness and healing for all our wounds. We can face and overcome anything, not on our own but when God lives in us. The Big Book of AA reminds us: *We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.*

Through you [God] we push down our foes; through your name we tread down those who rise up against us. (Psalm 44:5 ESV)

Prayer: Loving God, Live in me today. Remind me in my weakest moments that You are with me and that You will never leave me. You are so much stronger than anything that comes against me. I stand with You today and trust that You are standing with me. Amen

TWO ARE BETTER THAN ONE

Leaving behind a lifestyle of self-centered isolation and coming into community with others is both a gift and a challenge.

Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 NLT)

Clearly God knows that we need one another to successfully get ahead. We need to be encouraged by one another's experience, strength, and hope and learn from each other. We need the mentoring and challenging of sponsors and the assistance of those who have walked this path before us and picked up useful lessons that we can learn from. When times are tough, we need the strength that comes from both giving and receiving comfort and understanding. We need to hear warnings when we're going astray and affirmation when we have achieved tough goals.

***God knows
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Carry one another's heavy loads. If you do, you will fulfill the law of Christ. A friend loves at all times. They are there to help when trouble comes. We are many persons. But in Christ we are one body and each part of the body belongs to all the other parts. (Galatians 6:2, Proverbs 17:17, Romans 12:5 NIRV)

God's view is that we need one another just like a body needs each of its parts. We are called to work, pray, and worship together. If we try to live distant or disconnected, we harm not only ourselves but others. While we are all growing and learning how to let go of character defects, it's difficult to tolerate each other, but God will certainly help us. We will grow stronger more quickly as together with others we do our part in the community as God planned.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your gift of my brothers and sisters in recovery. Help me to see where I fit in with my recovery family and subsequently become a useful member of the community. Amen

WHEN TO SPEAK AND WHEN TO BE SILENT

How many times did people try to help us see the truth about our problem when we were in active addiction? How many times did we ignore what they said and just continue in our rebellious ways? As we share the message of life with God in recovery with others, we need to pray for wisdom to know when to speak and when to simply pray and leave people until they are ready.

Never correct conceited people; they will hate you for it. But if you correct the wise, they will respect you. Anything you say to the wise will make them wiser. Whatever you tell the righteous will add to their knowledge. (Proverbs 9:8-9 GNT)

It's a good idea to first share with others in a measured way and watch their reaction. This is particularly true for those who see us now living in recovery but are not yet willing to admit their own difficulties and need for change. We may not agree with everything a person says when we share, but it is not necessary to always confront it. Silence has its place. Every conversation with others can lead us to a conversation with God and He will show us when and what we are to say.

We are to be those with stories of hope and comfort.

The right word at the right time is like precious gold set in silver. It makes a lot of sense to be a person of few words and to stay calm. (Proverbs 25:11, 17:27 CEV)

When we are with people who are longing to have hope for their future, we need to honour God by telling the story of His work in us that has given us life in recovery and hope. We need to simply share what effect responding to God's word, or at times rejecting it, had in our own lives. We are a witness, not a judge. We are to be those with stories of hope and comfort. God's Holy Spirit will do the rest.

To be wise you must first have reverence for the Lord. If you know the Holy One, you have understanding. Wisdom will add years to your life. You are the one who will profit if you have wisdom, and if you reject it, you are the one who will suffer. (Proverbs 9:10-12 GNT)

Prayer: Loving God, You have made so many wonderful changes in my life that I am eager to share my experience, strength, and hope with others. Help me to be wise and know when to speak and when to listen with respectful silence. Please help me see opportunities to share Your Good News and, as I open my mouth, fill it with Your words of hope. Amen

THE POWER OF GRATITUDE

We will come to experience a secure and happy life in recovery as we learn to be grateful and appreciate the smallest blessing of each day. Being grateful and taking time to give God thanks for all He has done for us, will sustain healthy growth in our recovery. No successful recovery is built while we are irritable and focusing on our problems. Strength comes as we learn to give thanks to our gracious God who is good, and whose love is available to us 24/7.

Give a lot of time and effort to prayer. Always be watchful and thankful. Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus. Give thanks to the only one who can do great miracles. His faithful love continues forever. (Colossians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Psalm 136:4 NIRV)

The miracle of being sober today is a gift from God. Have we given God thanks for our sobriety? Jesus died for our sins and offers us forgiveness for all the wrongs we have done. Have we accepted His offer and given thanks for the clean slate we have today?

Since the practice of gratitude is so powerful, how can we make it an intentional part of our daily living? At the top of our "To Do" list each day, why not put "Take time to be grateful." What a burst of energy and joy we receive when we take time to give thanks. Perhaps we might benefit from making a gratitude list in our daily journal or writing notes of appreciation to those who have helped us. As we make a phone call or send a text to thank them it might brighten an otherwise dull or difficult day that they might be experiencing. For centuries individuals and families have gathered around a table to eat a meal and first give thanks to God for the food before they begin to eat. Maybe it's time for us to add a moment of gratitude at our mealtimes.

However we choose to do it, it's important to give thanks for the blessings that we receive each day. There is great power in the ongoing practice of gratitude.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You have given me so many gifts for which I am thankful. I take this moment to remember and give You thanks for Your unfailing love and care for me. Amen

Strength comes as we learn to give thanks to God, who is good, and whose love is available to us 24/7.

WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS

Making a list of people we have harmed is intimidating enough, and becoming willing to make amends to all of them often seems too much to ask. This step is challenging because we must look at the harm we have caused, and it generally involves family members and others who have been close to us. Without God in our lives, we will struggle to be willing to complete this step, but with God all things are possible.

So, if you are about to place your gift on the altar and remember that someone is angry with you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. Make peace with that person, then come back and offer your gift to God. (Matthew 5:23-24 CEV)

Be kind and merciful, and forgive others, just as God forgave you because of Christ.

Ephesians 4:32 CEV

Jesus taught the above principle long before the 12-Step program was founded. He knew that to be completely free of our past we needed to make amends to those we had harmed. When Jesus went to the house of Zacchaeus the tax collector, many people who had been harmed by Zacchaeus murmured against Jesus because they said He had gone to be the guest of a sinner. Zacchaeus, however, was a changed man when He met Jesus, and he volunteered to make amends to those he had harmed.

Later that day Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "I will give half of my property to the poor. And I will now pay back four times as much to everyone I have ever cheated". (Luke 19:8 CEV)

There is no doubt that when we gave our will and life over to the care of God and accepted Jesus as our Saviour, all our sins were forgiven. As children of God who have been freed from the control of the evil one and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can humbly allow others to see how regretfully we view our past actions towards them, and desire to make amends.

Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. (Philippians 2:12b-13 NLT)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Please give me the desire and power to complete this Step and, according to Your Word and where possible, help me make peace with those I have harmed. Amen

DEALING WITH PRESSURE

Who among us hasn't felt pressured recently – maybe even today? There are so many demands on our time and attention, so many uncertainties in our world, and so much we don't know about what we need to do to be safe and positive. Sometimes the pressure comes from having all kinds of opportunities and feeling overwhelmed by the decisions we need to make. We want what is best. We want what will work. While it's important to not passively let life just happen, it is also important each day to find time and a secure place where we can deal with whatever we need to face, and then wisely leave the rest with God.

Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way. (James 1:2-4 MSG)

God has a good plan for us, is willing to help us find out what that plan is, and to help us work at it successfully. God knows we will face pressures and He has promised to be with us. The lessons we learn, even in these times of challenge and pressure, will help us develop confidence and faith in God's goodness and constant support.

Happy are those who remain faithful under trials, because when they succeed in passing such a test, they will receive as their reward the life which God has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12 GNT)

One of the greatest pressures we put on ourselves is the fear of making a mistake when part of the learning process is doing exactly that. No one is perfect. Everyone is learning. Those who learn the most are those who are willing to stay focused on what they can do today, and one step at a time, celebrate progress with the good they see in each situation they encounter.

Feeling pressure is a great signal to remind us to talk to God about what is going on and remember His promise to never leave us to face anything alone.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, When I feel pressured and overwhelmed, help me to remember that You are with me and will guide me on the right path forward. Show me what I need to hold on to and what I need to let go of. Help me to fully trust Your wisdom and then relax, Amen

In my distress I prayed to the Lord, and the Lord answered me and set me free.

Psalms 118:5 NLT

THE PRAYER THAT MAKES IT ALL RIGHT

Jesus told the story of two men who went to church to pray. One stood proud and named all his accomplishments. He then compared himself to the other person who was praying and gave thanks that he was much better than that person since the other man was known in the community to be guilty of all sorts of wrongdoing. The other man who was praying confessed to God that he was guilty of wrongdoing. He hung his head in shame, opened his heart to God and confessed His sin asking God for mercy and forgiveness. Jesus said it was the person who knew He had sinned and asked for forgiveness that went home that day in right relationship with God. (see Luke 18:9-14 for the story)

**Get down on
your knees
before the
Master; it's
the only way
you'll get on
your feet.**

(James 4:10
MSG)

As we work our 12-step program we are asked to do things like: make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves; become willing to have God remove our defects of character; make a list of all persons we have harmed and become willing to make amends to each of them. For many of us it is easier to make a list of those who harmed us and much more difficult to take responsibility and seek forgiveness for our part in actions that hurt others. Comparing our actions with those of another while seeking to minimize our damaging behaviour will never heal our hearts nor restore our relationship with God.

Be humble in front of the Lord and he will lift you up. Pride brings a person low. But those whose spirits are low will be honored. The Lord is honest and good. He teaches sinners to walk in his ways. He shows those who aren't proud how to do what is right. He teaches them his ways. (James 4:10, Proverbs 29:23, Psalm 25:8-9 NIRV)

Only a humble acknowledgement of our own shortcomings before God and asking Him for His help to remove them will get us to the place of peace we long to experience. We also need to pray and ask God to help us forgive those who have harmed us and then release those persons to God asking Him to work in their lives to bring them to the pathway of peace.

Prayer: Loving God, Be merciful to me a sinner and forgive my lawless deeds. With Your precious blood, wash me clean from every evil thing I have done. Make me pure as the driven snow. Bring me joy and gladness as I stand on the truth of Your word that says my sins and my lawless deeds You will remember no more. Amen

CHARACTER DEFECT: FEAR

Fear is a disturbing emotion which is triggered by the expectation that something unpleasant is about to happen. The threat may be real or imagined. We often cover up our fears because we do not want others to know what is going on inside us or in our lives. We put on a happy face or act with bravado to appear fearless and to cover up the fear that is stirring within us.

Covering up our fears may have led some of us along the path to a dysfunctional lifestyle and subsequently into addiction. God wants us to bring all our anxieties and fears to Him, so that we can be set free to live our lives to the full.

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. (1 Peter 5:7 NLT)

Fear keeps us from being fully honest about our feelings and prompts us to project false or only partially true images of who we really are. Fear makes us deny – either consciously or unconsciously – that anything is wrong. “It’s all good” is a sure sign that it is not. As we choose to believe that we are loved and treasured by God, we are then able to know and give thanks that God is working all things together for our good. We can then overcome fear even when life is not perfect.

There is no fear in love. Instead, perfect love drives away fear. That's because fear has to do with being punished. The one who fears does not have perfect love. (1 John 4:18 NIRV)

We know we are moving forward in recovery when we focus on God's love and kindness and reject any pessimism we are feeling about life in the future. We just need to see ourselves in God's care and, from that viewpoint, have faith in the future He has prepared for us.

As we experience the unfailing love and care that God has for us, we can put our trust in His goodness and not fear anything.

Prayer: Gracious God, I confess that my fears have kept me in bondage to negativity. Please help me to affirm and proclaim that I will not fear the future because Your goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. Amen

**As we
experience
the
unfailing
love and
care that
God has for
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put our trust
in His
goodness
and not fear
anything.**

LIVING UP TO OUR FULL POTENTIAL

In the Bible Jesus told a story of three servants who were given various amounts of money to use or invest on behalf of their master. Two of the servants doubled the amount they were given and the third did nothing. We don't know if he was jealous of the others who were given more than he received or if he held resentment against the master because of his high expectations, or a bit of both. The bottom line is, he didn't do anything with what he had been given. When the master came back, his condemnation of the man was not that he hadn't earned as much as the others but that he was lazy and had not done anything with what he had been given. (Matthew 25)

What are we going to do with the gift of today that God has given us?

We may compare ourselves with others who had a better life, a better education, or better prospects than we ever had when we were growing up. In comparing our circumstances with theirs, we may feel sorry for ourselves and angry at the world that seems to have deprived us of a good life. God has given each of us gifts and opportunities that we can use to serve one another and experience a fulfilled life. What have we chosen to do with what we have been given?

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly but understand what the Lord wants you to do. (1 Peter 4:10 NIRV, Ephesians 5:16-17 NLT)

Some people compare themselves with others and because they easily manage to do more than what they see others do, they choose not to do all that they could. God knows what each of us is capable of. To do less than we can is to be guilty of being lazy. God made us to experience satisfaction when we fully use the gifts and opportunities we have been given. Each of us will be accountable for what we have been given.

Much will be required of everyone who has been given much. Even more will be asked of the person who is supposed to take care of much. (Luke 12:48 NIRV)

Each day is a gift and an opportunity. What are we going to do with the gift of today that God has given us?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for the gift of my life and for the opportunities I have been given. Each day help me to do all I can to faithfully serve You and others. Amen

UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS – PERSONAL FAILURE

There is often a strong desire in us to succeed! To win! To excel! To be successful! Yet sometimes we feel like a failure. These feelings of failure can terrify us and take our hope away. We have all failed to meet our own expectations as well as those that others have of us. How can we face failure in a healthy way?

This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:21-23 ESV)

One form of failure we often walk with each day is the failure that comes from human limitation. We set our goals too high. We compete. We compare ourselves with others. When we can't measure up to our own expectations or the expectations of others, we often end up feeling inadequate and disappointed in ourselves. This can be painful and embarrassing.

God knows our abilities and our limits. God invites us to live as the person He created us to be. His expectation of us is that we will use what we have been given and do the very best we can within those limits. When we try to be like someone else or live up to someone else's standards we are not pursuing the plan that God has for our life.

We were created to be a part of the community around us so it's unrealistic to try and sort everything out on our own and try to make our own way in life. No matter how hard we try we will fail because it is not good for us to be alone. We need the wisdom and power of God to live a fulfilling life. We also need to cooperate with others to achieve the work God has planned for each of us to do, for the benefit of all.

There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. (1 Corinthians 12:5-7 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I accept Your good, pleasing and perfect plan for my life and desire to thrive in the giftings that You have given me. Strengthen and help me to do only those things that You have prepared in advance for me to do. Amen

God invites us to live as the person He created us to be. His expectation of us is that we will use what we have been given and do the very best we can.

COMING CLEAN ABOUT IT ALL

All of us wrestle with our conscience in situations where we struggle. We may lie to ourselves and pretend that what we have done is not as bad as what others have done. Sometimes to offset our wrongs we work hard to appear to be good. To be at peace with ourselves we must stop rationalizing our past behaviour, acknowledge the harm we have caused and turn away from our destructive way of life.

Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Proverbs 28:13 NIV)

Failure to reach out to God for help and guidance is the root cause of all relationship problems.

In the past we were captive to those who treated us harshly and were wounded and frightened by their offenses against us. Instead of turning to God for help we tried to fix the problem ourselves and ended up in a worse condition than before. In some situations, we sought to protect ourselves from further harm by using anger to establish a safe distance between ourselves and those who inflicted the hurt. All this contributed to the loneliness that resulted from not having a trustworthy, intimate relationship with anyone. Failure to reach out to God for help and guidance is the root cause of all our relationship problems.

For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge. (Psalm 51:3-4 NKJV)

In the healing process, when it's time to admit to God the ugly events of our past life, we are afraid He will condemn us for those things we know we need to confess. However, God already knows everything about us and the good news is that when we confess our known faults to God, He hears our cry for help and releases us from the pain we have carried for so long.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to assess my wrongdoing in the light of Your Word and admit my rebellious ways to You. You are a God of wisdom and understanding. You know what is best for me. I choose to trust Your plan for my life because it gives me hope and a future. Amen

BEAUTY FOR ASHES

When we unreservedly give our will and life over to the care of God, our lives are positively changed. God raises us up to new heights that we never thought possible. As we spend time with Jesus, the Prince of Peace, we acquire qualities that make us more like Him.

He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes, with the princes of his people. He settles the childless woman in her home as a happy mother of children. Praise the Lord. (Psalm 113:7-9 NIV)

Addiction brought us to a low, needy place where our lives were totally unmanageable. We were existing in what we could only describe as “an ash heap” and were like the dust that could be blown away at any time. But God, who is rich in mercy, lifted us out of that place and set us among those who permanently live in the care of our Heavenly Father who is always present with each one of us. We have been given beauty in place of ashes and are now living in the inheritance of the goodness of God instead of living in the pit of despair.

It's a wonder God didn't lose his temper and do away with the whole lot of us. Instead, immense in mercy and with an incredible love, he embraced us. He took our sin-dead lives and made us alive in Christ. He did all this on his own, with no help from us! Then he picked us up and set us down in highest heaven in company with Jesus, our Messiah. (Ephesians 2:3-5 MSG)

As we continue to trust God's Word and follow His chosen path for our lives, we will not only experience great blessing but will be able to bless others as well.

Our former life may have been unproductive but now we can bloom in the environment of God's love and protective care.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for bringing me out of the ash heap and setting my feet on solid ground. I ask that You give me the strength to follow Your principles in all my affairs. I am forever thankful and praise You for Your unfailing love and care for me. Amen

As we spend time with Jesus, the Prince of Peace, we acquire qualities that make us more like Him.

HOW CAN CHARACTER DEFECTS BE REMOVED?

When we plan a time and place to bring our inventory of character defects before God, we can ask Him to do in us whatever is necessary so they can be removed. When we ask with sincerity, God will do as we ask.

He has not punished us as we deserve for all our sins, for his mercy toward those who fear and honor him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our sins as far away from us as the east is from the west. (Psalm 103:10-12 TLB)

Unfortunately for us the evil one, who has been our master for years, wants us to remain in bondage. He will challenge us about who we are in Christ Jesus, just like he challenged Jesus about being the Son of God. On our own we are vulnerable, but God has given us a Power greater than ourselves to enable us to stop chasing after our evil desires and instead do what pleases Him. God faithfully does His part. He gives us the will and desire to let go of practices that are harmful to us and empowers us to walk in new ways. Our part is to trust and obey God's principles and to live our lives doing those things that please God.

**We were
entirely
ready to
have God
remove
all these
defects of
character.**

*Step 6 of AA Big
Book*

Never give up. Eagerly follow the Holy Spirit and serve the Lord. Let your hope make you glad. Be patient in time of trouble and never stop praying. (Romans 12:11-12 CEV)

Victory over Satan will be achieved as we put on the armor of God and stand firm on God's word. From the Scriptures as recorded in the Bible, we will learn new ways of doing things. Our character defects will be replaced by honorable living and our faith will increase as we recognize God's Power to change us.

So stand strong with the belt of truth tied around your waist, and on your chest wear the protection of right living. On your feet wear the Good News of peace to help you stand strong. And also use the shield of faith with which you can stop all the burning arrows that come from the Evil One. Accept God's salvation as your helmet. And take the sword of the Spirit—that sword is the teaching of God. (Ephesians 6:14-17 ERV)

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for being willing to remove all my character defects. Please increase my hope in Your Power to help me change for I know my spirit is willing, but my flesh is weak, Amen

THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Hunger and thirst are basic human needs. When basic needs are not met it's difficult or impossible to give ourselves to other tasks. For example, it's hard for children to study at school when they have had no breakfast, or for recovering addicts to focus on work when they have no safe housing to return to at night.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. (Matthew 5:6 NIV)

Jesus teaches that the foundation of life is the need to know and live as God intends. Whether we admit it or not, the guilt and shame that comes from living life out of sync with God's purposes leaves us feeling edgy and dissatisfied. We know something is wrong but we're not precisely sure what that is. We've told ourselves we need more money, sexual gratification, a new toy, or our drug of choice. The hunger within us is God given, but we have been trying to feed it with the things that do not satisfy.

Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. (Isaiah 55:2 NV)

The recovery journey of seeking God, getting to know His will, letting go of our character defects, building respectful and loving relationships, and coming more and more into conscious contact with Him, is the only way we will truly be filled up and satisfied.

It all sounds like a long and difficult challenge, and we wonder if we are up to the task. Fortunately, we don't have to wait to be satisfied until we are successful in all these areas. Each step of the way we simply need to stay hungry and thirsty for what is right. To be physically healthy, we need to drink several glasses of water and eat three healthy meals each day. To be spiritually healthy, we need to be in conscious contact with God each day through prayer and meditation on His Word. How hungry and thirsty for righteousness are we today?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I have sought after many things to satisfy my aching heart. Please help me to seek conscious contact with You each day and to live filled up on You. Amen

**Each step
of the way
we simply
need to
stay
hungry
and thirsty
for what is
right.**

ACCEPTING HARDSHIP AS THE PATHWAY TO PEACE

Everyone faces unwanted hardship and troubles. Often hardship comes because we act in ways that are unwise and end up in circumstances we did not anticipate. Hardship also comes from living in a broken world with people who are struggling and making mistakes just as we are. During those times, it's important to face the following questions: Does God know what is going on? Does God care? Is God making a way for me through these problems or do I just have to sort them out on my own?

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. The Lord hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles. (Psalm 46:1; 34:17 NLT)

It's not easy, but "accepting hardship as the pathway to peace" can be life changing.

As those who are seeking to live with God in recovery, we have an enormous advantage over many others. We can turn to God in our moments of frustration and uncertainty and find His help in our time of need. Instead of being frustrated and overwhelmed by a problem, we can focus our attention on our caring God who promises stability, peace, and a way forward.

You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you! Trust in the Lord always, for the Lord God is the eternal Rock. (Isaiah 26:3-4 NLT)

Panic within often blocks helpful thoughts and solutions to problems. When we face hardship with peace, it's amazing how much clearer the guidance of God's Holy Spirit can be understood. That is why in every situation it is wise to turn our will and our life over to the care of God.

Obstacles and problems, even failures, can be opportunities for learning and growth as we experience God's faithfulness. It's not easy, but "accepting hardship as the pathway to peace" can be life changing when our faith and trust grow in the knowledge of our gracious God and eternal Rock.

Prayer: God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference, living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time, accepting hardship as the pathway to peace trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will. Amen

GOD IN MY PAIN

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3 NIV)

How many of us are poor in spirit? If being poor in spirit is like being financially poor as when we do not have enough money to meet our needs, then how can Jesus encourage us to become that way and promise us that "the kingdom of heaven is ours?" If we are blessed because we are "poor in spirit" it must be something good that we should desire.

To be "poor in spirit" means we have come to an honest understanding of who we are when we invite God into our lives. We recognize that we are powerless to do life on our own. We no longer deny our past offenses but choose to humbly admit the exact nature of our wrongs and ask God for His forgiveness. We then turn our will and life over to the care of God and wholeheartedly follow Him, trusting that He will provide the strength we need to seek Him in all our ways.

Don't love the world's ways. Don't love the world's goods. Love of the world squeezes out love for the Father. Practically everything that goes on in the world—wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important—has nothing to do with the Father. It just isolates you from him. The world and all its wanting, wanting, wanting is on the way out—but whoever does what God wants is set for eternity. (1 John 2:15-17 MSG)

When we are "poor in spirit" we will humbly live in the grace and favour of God. We will be thankful for all that God has done for us. When we fail, we will not be fearful to come to Him because we know that God is slow to anger and rich in love. If we are truly sorry for the wrongs we have done and confess our sin before Him, we will receive God's forgiveness and never condemnation. We are truly "poor in spirit" when we admit that if any weakness existed in God, it would still be stronger than our human strength. We are "poor in spirit" when we remember that every breath we take comes from our awesome God and choose to live gratefully in His presence. We know we are "poor in spirit" when every moment of every day we rely on the goodness of God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I acknowledge that without You I can do nothing. I desire to be poor in spirit so that I can be rich in Your unfailing love and care for me. May my life be changed and renewed as I represent my birthright as a child of my Abba Father. Amen

When we are "poor in spirit" we will humbly live in the grace and favour of God.

REJECTING CONDEMNATION

Steadily moving forward in recovery is not easy. As we awaken out of the haze of our addiction, our minds are often filled with memories of things done to us and things we have done to others. We tend to live in self-condemnation and the disapproval of those we have harmed. Sleepless nights and restless days challenge us. Painful memories often surface when we write out an honest moral inventory. However, if we will give our will and life over to the care of God, there is hope for each of us to leave the past behind and move forward to become the person we were created to be.

Remember your promise to me, your servant. It gives me hope. You comfort me in my suffering, because your promise gives me new life. (Psalm 119:49-50 ERV)

There is hope for each of us to leave the past behind and move forward to become the person we were created to be.

The Bible is a handbook filled with guidelines for living wisely as our creator intended, and though we may be faithfully following God's laws sometimes storms will arise. Jesus told us that in this world we will have trouble. So, when trouble does arise, we need not do the devil's work for him and blame ourselves for the situation. The devil constantly lies. Jesus even said there is no truth in him. Just because we have encountered a problem, we should not be upset and join our enemy in condemning ourselves. If we ask Him, God has promised to give us direction in the way we should go, and God's instructions are always and forever reliable.

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1 NKJV)

God's words of comfort and His faithful promise of forgiveness and restoration are the foundation of our hope and strength as we move forward in our life in recovery. We need to encourage ourselves with the truth that God will work all things together for our good. God is the one who opens the way before us. His endless love and guidance will bring us to a safe and successful destination.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is to follow You in all my affairs. When the devil taunts me with condemning accusations and tries to disturb my life, I will refuse His lies and trust You to lead me forward in the truth of who You say I am in Jesus. Amen

WORK FROM THE HEART

Many years ago, a list was prepared of seven things that are death to living a good life. First on the list is lust – not surprising because we know the harm unfaithfulness brings to a relationship. Right in the middle of the list is laziness, or in the language used in those days, being slothful.

A lazy person is simply someone who is unwilling to work to get something done. There is a lack of energy or activity contributed by that person to an assigned task they simply don't care about doing. The Bible uses a stark picture to help us understand laziness.

Some people are too lazy to take care of themselves. They will not even lift the food from their plate to their mouth. (Proverbs 19:24 ERV)

Each of us was created to do good work and making an honest effort to do so will bring us satisfaction. When we are too lazy to bother our world becomes confused and we feel less able to cope, plus our ability to do so declines accordingly.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. (Genesis 2:15 NIV)

We are instructed to do the best we can with what we have been given. We don't have to be more than we are, but we are responsible for giving a task all that we can contribute. God's promise to us is, when we serve others in the best way we can, we will find ourselves receiving back much more than we ever gave out. This isn't just limited to doing jobs but has to do with making space for others in our lives, even when they are strugglers and perhaps have attitudes and practices that irritate us.

Don't just do the minimum that will get you by. Do your best. Work from the heart for your real Master, for God, confident that you'll get paid in full when you come into your inheritance. (Colossians 3:23 MSG)

Prayer: Loving God, You created me to bless and take care of Your creation. Forgive me for the many times it seemed too much for me to bother with what needed doing. Help me to mature and become a person useful in Your service and to work from a heart of gratitude for all that You have done for me. Amen

Lazy people want much but get little, but those who work hard will prosper.

***Proverbs 13:4
NIRV***

RECEIVING MORE BY GIVING UP MORE

One day Jesus and his followers were discussing the challenges that people experience when they choose to give up self-will and follow God's will. In this world we are told to pursue things like pleasure, popularity, power, and money. These are held out as necessary to have if we are to experience satisfaction and happiness. Too many of us have pursued one or more of those ways and found addiction and suffering at the end of the road. Jesus reminds His followers that even if we give up some things in the short term to follow Him, we will receive much more in return than we could ever imagine.

Who then can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible but with God all things are possible.

Matthew 19:25b-26 NIV

Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" Jesus said to them, "Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first." (Matthew 19:23, 27, 29-30 NIV)

We can hang onto these promises from God as we let go of those things that cause us to stumble. When we choose to enter an addiction treatment facility and step away from people, places, and things that are familiar, we may feel challenged. Pulling away may come when the busyness of a job and earning money doesn't leave time for God or meetings. With each pay cheque, we drift further and further away from fellowship with God and others, and too many of us have let sobriety slip away. The desire for sex and companionship also takes many of us away from God's plan for our lives.

All of us need to ask ourselves if there is anything we need to leave behind so that we can follow God with all our heart. God assures us that when we choose to put Him first in our lives, we will experience His promise of great blessings in return.

Prayer: Loving God, I confess my heart is so easily pulled in different directions. Help me to honour You with my time and to give priority to those things that keep me alive and alert to Your presence in my life. Give me the courage to leave behind anything that hinders Your purpose and will for my life. Amen

DISCRETION

We are not always the best judge of those confidences we need to hold, or which need to be disclosed. Most things shared in confidence need to be kept close to one's heart and shared only with our Heavenly Father as we pray for the good of the person who shared with us. Some things are required to be disclosed to the appropriate authorities, particularly if a person's life is in any danger. When a friend shares their character defects with us, although they may not have specifically stated that they are sharing in confidence, we should use our discretion and keep that information to ourselves, leaving it up to our friend to disclose their shortcomings with whom they choose.

Discretion is a life-giving fountain to those who possess it, but discipline is wasted on fools. From a wise mind comes wise speech; the words of the wise are persuasive. (Proverbs 16:22-23 ERV)

We have not always behaved wisely when we have shared about others. Often, we threw discretion to the wind to feed our own pride as "someone in the know." Sometimes when asked about another person, we set aside sound judgment and disclose things which would enable others to use the revealed information for harm against the person we are discussing.

Who may worship in your sanctuary, Lord? Who may enter your presence on your holy hill? Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts. Those who refuse to gossip or harm their neighbors or speak evil of their friends. (Psalms 15:1-3 NLT)

We need to ask ourselves about our motivation when we share things that we ought not to. We need to think about the consequences of our actions and the harm we may cause. To be kind to our neighbours, we need to be discreet in the way we speak about them.

Lord, guard my mouth. Keep watch over the door of my lips. (Psalm 141:3 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I ask You to help me have discretion in sharing what I know about others. Forgive me for any harm I may have caused others by my thoughtlessness. Help me to be more like Jesus whose words are full of compassion and give life. Amen

To be kind to our neighbours, we need to be discreet in the way we speak about them.

WHAT MATTERS TO GOD MATTERS TO US

Making a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves – sorting out right from wrong, good from bad, and our part in past events – is an important foundation for building our life in recovery. God's Word as recorded in the Bible is the standard against which all of us must measure our behaviour. Reviewing our thoughts, actions, and deeds against God's standards will show us where we have gone our own way rather than following God's way.

Don't love the world's ways. Don't love the world's goods. Love of the world squeezes out love for the Father. Practically everything that goes on in the

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world—wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important—has nothing to do with the Father. It just isolates you from him. The world and all its wanting, wanting, wanting is on the way out—but whoever does what God wants is set for eternity. (1 John 2:15-17 MSG)

In our addiction, we participated in habits and lifestyles that were destructive because we either didn't know, or didn't want to obey God's principles for life. We feared pain, craved pleasure, desired power, and simply wanted to have our own way in whatever we chose to do. We tried whatever we thought would bring us satisfaction and joy. Nothing we tried brought us lasting fulfillment.

A fearless and moral inventory of ourselves requires honest asking, honest reflecting, and honest assessment, of the values we currently hold compared with God's principles. We review how our thinking and actions fell short of God's standards. God sent Jesus into the world not to condemn

us for what we have done, but to save us from it. We truly matter to God! As we practice God's principles in all our affairs, we will build a meaningful and contented life with God's blessing upon us.

Prayer: Investigate my life, O God, find out everything about me; Cross-examine and test me, get a clear picture of what I'm about; See for yourself whether I've done anything wrong—then guide me on the road to eternal life. Amen (Psalm 139:23-24 MSG)

WHO SAYS I'M DEFECTIVE?

God knows each one of us. We are the masterpiece of His creative hands. This knowledge should fill us with great joy and a real sense of personal worth. Why then do we struggle with fear, self-rejection, and shame? When we live in rebellion against God and are not who He planned for us to be, we will experience separation from God and lack of self-worth. The first human beings chose to believe what Satan said and disobeyed God's instructions. Since that time all humans have experienced the negative consequences of trying to be a person that they were never meant to be.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." (Genesis 3:8-10 NIV)

God, our Creator, wants us to experience the loving relationship with Him that we were meant to have. Jesus died on the cross to pay the price of our sin and rebellion. He then overcame death and made a way for us to be reconciled to God and have eternal life. When we accept the provision Jesus made for us, we become cherished children of a loving God. Our restored self-worth is not based on what we may feel or what others say about us, but rather on what God says.

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To all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (John 1:12-13, 10:10 NIV)

We need to listen to God rather than the deceiver who is purposefully trying to steal, kill, and destroy the life that Jesus bought for us with His precious blood.

Prayer – Lord Jesus, Thank You for paying the price that gave me the right to become a child of God. Remind me often of who I am. Help me to open my heart and receive the abundant provision of Your grace that is being poured out on me. Amen

REDUCING SELF-CENTEREDNESS

The Big Book of AA describes the significance of our problem with selfishness in this way: *"There often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His [God's] aid. Many of us had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but we could not live up to them even though we would have liked to. Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God's help."* (Big Book pages 62-63)

The Bible confirms what the Big Book says about needing God to help us deal with the destructive problem of selfishness and other shortcomings we have.

"Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God's help."

(Big Book of AA)

By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life ... because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires. (2 Peter 1:3-4 NLT)

God is God and we are not God. Trying to be God and run our own affairs didn't work in addiction and it won't work in recovery. God must be the one in charge. The more often we choose for God's principles in our daily activities, the less self-obsessed we will be and the more fulfilling our work and relationships will become.

In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. (2 Peter 1:5-7 NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for helping me deal with my self-centered ways. I surrender. Be the director of my life. Work in me so I choose Your principles for life and share in Your divine nature and by so doing escape this world's corruption. Amen

FACING FALSE ACCUSATION

How are we to deal with a person who falsely accuses us of something we did not do? We may react in anger, use strong language, or just mutter something under our breath and angrily walk away. Sometimes we counter a false accusation with an accusation of our own or spread gossip about the person involved. We may also stay silent but hold resentment. What would be God's way of handling this situation so that we may keep moving forward on our healing journey?

Give a kind and respectful answer and keep your conscience clear. This way you will make people ashamed for saying bad things about your good conduct as a follower of Christ. You are better off to obey God and suffer for doing right than to suffer for doing wrong. (1 Peter 3:16-17 CEV)

Our priority must be to live in a way that honours God and others. When we are accused of something, there may be a "kernel of truth" in what the person is saying. We may need to take ownership of the fact that we have wounded others and resolve to make amends for the hurt we have caused.

God's word instructs us to give an answer with gentleness and respect. We need to take time to settle down and truthfully explain to the person where we are at. They should also be given the opportunity to respectfully explain how they formed the opinion that caused the accusation.

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. (Proverbs 15:1 NIV)

Even if the one accusing us refuses to accept the truth, we are encouraged to stay in obedience to God in both our attitude and our actions. If we react according to God's principles, God will bring comfort and healing, and the truth that we know in our hearts will set us free. In the end, we need to leave what others mistakenly believe about us in God's care and watch Him work to bring light into the situation.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I know I am sensitive to the criticism and accusation of others especially when they judge me based on my past behaviour. Forgive me for any resentment that I may hold against another and help me to forgive as You have forgiven me. Help me to be kind to others and to treat everyone with gentleness and respect. Amen

How are we to deal with a person when they falsely accuse us of something we did not do?