

**LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY**

# **Daily Meditations**



**JANUARY 2025**



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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.



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

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**JANUARY 2025**

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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**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.

## ***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.*

## THE FIRST DAY OF THIS NEW YEAR

Happy New Year! This is the first day of the year 2025 and if we want to make a fresh start to the year we can choose to repent of our past sins and give our will and life over to the care of God, or we can just live in the “same old, same old”. Making a choice to live in response to God’s love would be a life-giving start to the year.

***You have now become a new person and are always learning more about Christ. You are being made more like Christ. He is the One Who made you.*** (Colossians 3:10 NLV)

We can enter this new year with joy and hope because God says that when we invite Him into our lives we become new creations. The old goes and the new comes. Prior to God living in us we are like dead people walking around not knowing how to do life. When God makes us alive, He not only shows us how to live but gives us the desire and the power to do things His way.

***God has chosen you and made you his holy people. He loves you. So your new life should be like this: Show mercy to others. Be kind, humble, gentle, and patient. Don't be angry with each other but forgive each other. If you feel someone has wronged you, forgive them. Forgive others because the Lord forgave you. Together with these things, the most important part of your new life is to love each other. Love is what holds everything together in perfect unity.*** (Colossians 3:12-14 ERV)

Can we hope to live like that today and over the course of the following 364 days of this year? Our hope must not be based in our own self-effort to get things right but in the God who chooses us and works powerfully in us to make us His holy people.

This is what we are affirming in Step 2 of the 12-Step program, that a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. This is the humility spoken of in Step 7 when we humbly ask God to remove all our shortcomings. This is the joy we experience in Step 12 as we realize that we have had a spiritual awakening and are not only sharing the good news but are practicing it in all our affairs.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for not only inviting me to a new life with You but for coming to be that life in me today and each day of this new year. You are the love that is always there to take me forward and the hope that lives inside me. One day at a time in this year, help me to live as the person You created me to be. Help me to become more like You in all my ways. Amen***

***When God makes us alive, He not only shows us how to live but gives us the desire and the power to do things His way.***

**ADDICTION OR GRACE**

God created the heavens and the earth and set them to run according to His established laws and boundaries. Gravity is one of those laws. When someone pushes a bag of trash into a garbage chute they can't see the law of gravity, but it is obvious when the bag hits bottom. In the same way, the existence of God's love and grace within us becomes evident when we turn our will and life over to the care of God.

*May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence.* (2 Peter 1:2-3 NLT)

***The existence of God's love and grace within us becomes evident when we turn our will and life over to the care of God.***

God created us in His image and planned for each of us to have a fulfilling relationship with Him and to love and honour one another so we could be at peace with the world around us. When we live with inner chaos and act out of our character defects, it is the outcome of our failure to know and respond to God's unconditional love for us.

*For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross. This includes you who were once far away from God.*

*You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions.* (Colossians 1:19-21 NLT)

We can choose for life with God in recovery and experience the satisfying grace of God as He loves and cares for us or we can choose to live self-destructively in our addictive lifestyle as if God did not exist. It seems to be a no-brainer decision, don't you think?

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I choose for a satisfying life with You. Please fill me to overflowing with Your love and grace so that I display the wonder of Your life in me. Amen*

**KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE ROAD**

Too many of us continue to drive our vehicles while distracted by cell phones or other things that capture our attention. Transport Canada statistics for the year 2021 show that distracted driving accounted for 22.5% of fatal collisions, and 25.5% of crashes causing serious injuries. Distractions take our minds off what we should be focusing on and the road ahead may change very quickly. In our life with God in recovery, we need to stay focused on what's important and put away anything that distracts us.

*Keep your eyes on the path and look straight ahead. Make sure you are going the right way, and nothing will make you fall. Don't go to the right or to the left, and you will stay away from evil. The path of those who live right is like the early morning light. It gets brighter and brighter until the full light of day. But the path of the wicked is like a dark night. They trip and fall over what they cannot see.* (Proverbs 4: 25-27, 18-19 ERV)

So much of life in recovery is new to us. We don't know the way ahead and must trust God to get us to the right destination. The scripture verses above remind us that if we will simply do what is right, our path will become brighter and brighter. The slogan, "Just do the next right thing" reminds us to focus on what is most important. We may not see everything that lies ahead but, one step forward at a time, we can encourage ourselves to do what is right.

*Your word is like a lamp that guides my steps, a light that shows the path I should take.* (Psalm 119:105 ERV)

Reading and meditating on God's Word each day and putting what we read into practice is the way to dependable success in recovery. Getting distracted by our fears, our frustrations, or our obsessions, is as deadly to our life with God in recovery as texting while driving a motor vehicle is.

In my recovery plan, what distraction do I need to let go of so I can stay focused on what truly matters?

*Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your daily guidance. Help me to let go of things that distract me from what is important. At all times, help me to do the next right thing. Amen*

***In our life with God in recovery, we need to stay focused on what's important and put away anything that distracts us.***

## FREE TO LIVE WELL

God invites us to live in freedom. Freedom for us was so important to God that He was willing to give the life of His Son so that we could experience new life and peace.

***Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.***  
(2 Corinthians 3:17 NIV)

Some of us who have lived a lifestyle of “doing as we please” may feel that following Jesus will limit our freedom. However, the limits that God sets for us can be compared to the function of guard rails on a mountain road. They keep us from going over the edge and harming ourselves. As we choose to follow God’s principles in all our affairs, we avoid deceit and shame, and the confusion that often accompanies doing what seems “right in our own eyes.”

***The limits that God sets for us can be compared to the function of guard rails on a mountain road.***

***You’re blessed when you stay on course, walking steadily on the road revealed by God. You’re blessed when you follow his directions, doing your best to find him. That’s right—you don’t go off on your own; you walk straight along the road he set.*** (Psalm 119:1-3 MSG)

A person who chooses a life of self-will and sin is eventually trapped by their own choices. Sin produces evil desires. Initially, when a person gives into temptation, they are deceived into thinking they will always be free to choose. However, sin is not satisfied with just a little bit of our lives. When it has its way with us we are mastered by its bondage and are doomed to obey its evil desires. This is well described in the AA slogan, “One drink is too many and a thousand is never enough.”

Choosing God’s way in every situation helps us to avoid the oppression and destruction that sin brings. The freedom to live well, as revealed to us through the Word of God, is truly worth having.

***Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for the wisdom of Your Word as recorded in the Bible. Help me to follow your directions and walk steadily with You on the road to freedom. Amen***

## THE PROCESS OF GAINING WISDOM

When we begin to reflect on our destructive and addictive lifestyle, we recognize the dumb choices we have chosen to make. For too long we've lived like fools. It's time to learn how to live well. Wisdom is God's gift to us, but it is also the result of our effort to search for it and then put it into practice.

***Listen to wisdom and do your best to understand. Ask for good judgment. Cry out for understanding. Look for wisdom like silver. Search for it like hidden treasure. If you do this, you will understand what it means to respect the Lord, and you will come to know God. The Lord is the source of wisdom; knowledge and understanding come from his mouth.*** (Proverbs 2:2-6 ERV)

What are we to do to gain wisdom? “***Listen. Ask. Cry out. Search.***” This suggests an attitude of humility of being teachable. We need to have our eyes and ears wide open so we can learn some truthful facts. We also need to apply the knowledge we have gained to our everyday situations. We need God's Spirit to show us how it all fits together. He is the power greater than us who can restore us to sanity.

We have long believed that we had all the solutions, and we told both God and others how things needed to work. To become wise and live well requires that each day, in every situation, we pause and seek God’s input on our plans. God promises to guide us if we will persist in seeking Him for His wisdom.

Those who have walked with God for a time can also be sought to provide us with their experience, strength, and hope. Sponsors, pastors, mentors, and those with effective time in recovery are people we should seek to learn from.

***Wisdom will help you follow the example of good people and stay on the right path. Honest people will live in the land, and those who do right will remain there.*** (Proverbs 2:20-21 ERV)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You that all the wisdom I need is available to me today. Help me to make every effort to learn Your ways and put them into practice. Thank You for mentors and friends who have walked this way before me. Help me to humble myself and listen to what You and others have to say, so I grow in wisdom and become more like You. Amen***

***Wisdom is God's gift to us but it is also the result of our effort to search for it and put it into practice.***

RUNNING ON EMPTY

When we get rid of something bad in our lives, we need to fill the vacancy with something good. Failure to fill the vacancy with something good can lead to relapse and even cause a person to be worse off than they were before.

***For it was I, the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it with good things.*** (Psalm 81:10 NLT)

In the past, bad habits and negative attitudes played a significant role in our lives. When we felt vulnerable we used our substance of choice to help cope with the emptiness, the pain, and the loneliness we were experiencing. Our daily agenda was entirely focused on meeting the demands made on us by our substance of choice. In recovery we have become aware that God has promised to meet all our needs. Are we entirely willing to let Him do so?

***When we get rid of something bad in our lives, we need to fill the vacancy with something good.***

***This same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.*** (Philippians 4:19 NLT)

Life in recovery is about living in truth, and the truth is that on our own our hearts are unfulfilled. We struggle with anxiety and fear when we feel vulnerable and powerless. God, through His word in the Bible and trusted people who have been in recovery for a time, assures us that there is a way forward. Step by step we can come to know and believe in a Power greater than ourselves who can restore us to sanity. We are encouraged to turn our will and our lives over to the care of this powerful God. When we choose to do so, God fills our dead hearts with

His Holy Spirit, the power greater than ourselves, who will enable us to do those things that please God.

***It is God who enables us, along with you, to stand firm for Christ. He has commissioned us, and he has identified us as his own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything he has promised us.*** (2 Corinthians 1:21-22 NLT)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, When I am afraid and feel vulnerable, help me to trust that You are always with me and will meet all my needs. Amen*

FORGIVEN MUCH – LOVES MUCH

A well-known sinful woman came to a place where Jesus was eating dinner with some religious leaders of His time. In her gratitude for the forgiveness she had received, she poured precious perfume on Jesus’ feet and washed them with her tears. Simon, the host of the dinner, was shocked that Jesus would allow a woman of her reputation to do what she was doing. Jesus told Simon a story to help Simon understand God’s acceptance and love for broken people

***“Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?” Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.” “You have judged correctly,” Jesus said.*** (Luke 7:39-43 NIV)

Jesus teaches us, as He taught Simon, that we do not need to fear rejection when we bring our moral brokenness before God. When we compose a summary of “our last 90 days” as some treatment programs ask of us, or work on our Step 4 moral inventory, we can easily feel guilt and shame about the ugliness of our past. God invites us to bring all our sinfulness to Him because on the cross Jesus already paid our debt in full.

We could never pay our own debt. We could never fix all that we have broken. However, God through Jesus has already made that provision. As we turn our will and our life over to His care, He will free us from every sin and heal us from every wound. As we become more aware of our freedom through Christ, joy, amazement, and gratitude will grow in us until we sometimes feel like we might burst. This is what it means to be truly “happy, joyous, and free.”

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank You for not giving up on me. I am grateful for the gift of forgiveness that You purchased with Your precious blood for me on the cross. Help me to live in the freedom of Your love and acceptance and share the blessing of it with others who need to hear the Good News. Amen*

***As we become more aware of our freedom through Christ, joy, amazement, and gratitude will grow within us until we sometimes feel like we might burst.***



## FINDING PURPOSE

*“My life is of great beauty and infinite value. God has a plan for my life that is meaningful, purposeful, and joyful.”*

God created us in love for a life of meaning and purpose that is way beyond what we have known so far. Some of us wandered into addiction because life felt empty, and we were looking for something to fill us up. Sadly, we made the wrong choice. Not only were we not filled up, but after a time in addiction, we were empty and in worse shape than when we began. God’s plan for our lives hasn’t changed even though it has taken time to get us to this place where we are actively seeking to know God and do His will in all our affairs.

**God  
created us  
in love for  
a life of  
meaning  
and  
purpose  
that is way  
beyond  
what we  
have  
known so  
far.**

***But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.*** (Exodus 9:16 NIV)

Our lives are meant to reveal to others how wonderful God really is and the amazing things He has done. He created us to be part of a family and of a loving, caring community. In whatever ways we’ve missed this good purpose for our lives, God is ready and willing to guide us along the path of finding it now. God doesn’t give up on us or the plans He has for us. He’s able to use even our blunders in His amazing plan and He will bring goodness into our lives which will affect the lives of others we encounter along the way. Sound unbelievable? Sure does, but God’s word is reliable and that’s what He says. It’s what we can confidently rely on in our new life with Him in recovery.

A man named Job went through hard times where nothing was working and nothing made sense and in the middle of that he said to God, ***“I know you can do everything. You make plans, and nothing can change or stop them.”*** (Job 42:2 ERV) He was right, and in a short time God’s plan for blessing Job was evident to everyone. The same is true for us. All we need to do is ask God to show us, one step at a time, how to live in His good purpose for our life.

*Prayer: Loving God, You have promised to give me the desire for Your will to be done in my life and also the power to carry it out. Today I am asking for both. Wherever I go and in everything I do I ask that You use me to demonstrate Your awesome goodness. Amen*

## PROMISES OF GOD

The Bible is full of God's promises to help us in our time of need. Various people have counted the number of promises recorded in the Bible and say it is somewhere around 8,000. That’s almost 22 different promises for each day of the year. The wonderful thing is that all of God’s promises are true for each day of the year, so we have 8,000 promises available to us today.

***If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.*** (James 1:5 NIV)

One thing it seems most of us lack in our decision-making process is wisdom. In the above scripture God promises that if we ask Him, He will generously give us the wisdom we lack. God is our loving Heavenly Father and He will never accuse us of our past foolishness or find fault with us for asking repeatedly for His wisdom.

As with many promises, there may be a condition attached. We need to be willing to stop for a moment and ask God for wisdom in all that we purpose to do. We are not smart enough to figure things out on our own. Asking another human being for their wisdom is a good thing but it is limited because that person is also human. Only God knows everything. Only God knows what is best.

***Don’t trust in your own wisdom, but fear and respect the Lord and stay away from evil. Knowledge begins with fear and respect for the Lord, but stubborn fools hate wisdom and refuse to learn.*** (Proverbs 3:7, 1:7 ERV)

While we need to make every effort to get information from others and honour their advice, we need to first seek God for His infinite wisdom. Then our challenge is, will we choose for God’s wisdom or just do things our own familiar, self-centered way. If we choose for God’s way and put it into action, then we are honouring God and affirming that He really does know best. That’s wisdom.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I need all the wisdom I can get. I am assured that You know all things and are willing to show me the best path for my life. Help me to humble myself and be willing to seek Your wisdom and put it into action in everything I say and do. Thank you for always speaking the truth in love to me. Amen*

***While we  
need to  
make every  
effort to get  
information  
from others  
and honour  
their advice,  
we need to  
first seek  
God for His  
infinite  
wisdom.***

FACING GUILT

When we turn our will and our life over to God’s care and trust the new life He gives us, does that mean we should never again reflect on guilty feelings? No! There is a valid source of guilt which comes when we fall back into self-will and disobey God’s commands. The Holy Spirit will warn us that we are off track. We call it being convicted of sin. We’ve done wrong and we feel guilty. This is a clear signal from God that we are sliding into dangerous and destructive patterns of doing things. Guilt is our indicator to turn and get back on the right track.

***And when he (the Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment.*** (John 16:8 NLT)

Satan wants us to wallow in our guilt, believing we have pushed God’s grace beyond its limit. However, restoration is the intention of the Holy Spirit’s conviction and our experience of guilt. God’s desire is always to set us free, restore us, and lead us back onto the path of righteousness. We need to promptly recognize and resist condemnation and false guilt from the accuser of God’s people. Similarly, we must acknowledge genuine guilt and promptly surrender to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Our Step 10 daily inventory is a great time to sort through these issues and get back on track with God.

***People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy.*** (Proverbs 28:13 NLT)

The more quickly we confess, repent, and make amends, the more quickly the weight of guilt will be removed from our shoulders. We can then get back to living life to the full, free of all condemnation.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that I have been falling back into self-will in my thoughts, my words, and my deeds. In Your mercy, forgive me and cleanse me from my sin. Thank You for freeing me from all condemnation and restoring me to the blessed life I have received. Amen*

***We must acknowledge genuine guilt and promptly surrender to the conviction of the Holy Spirit.***

UNITY

After living so long in the self-centered world of addiction, it’s not easy to come into recovery and build relationships with other human beings, particularly those who like us have lived in self-centered ways. Relapse is more often the result of stress in relationships than it is in giving into our obsession to use.

***Put up with one another. Forgive one another if you are holding something against someone. Forgive, just as the Lord forgave you. And over all these good things put on love. Love holds them all together perfectly as if they were one.*** (Colossians 3:13-14 NIRV)

We need help to live in unity with others. In the Twelve Traditions of A.A. it’s why the founders made the following principle the very first one: *“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.”* This principle echoes what God has been teaching humans since the beginning of time. To live well individually, we need to live well with each other.

***There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body. It is the same with Christ. So let us do all we can to live in peace. And let us work hard to build up one another.*** (I Corinthians 12:12, Romans 14:19b NIRV)

No one has said that living in a community with others is easy. The Bible verse above tells us we need to work hard to build each other up. We need endurance and encouragement from God if we are going to be able to love one another and socialize in a way that helps us live together in a way that pleases Him.

***May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.*** (Romans 15:5-7 NIV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, It is hard to be together with others when we all have character defects. Please give me the grace to accept others, as I pray You will give them the grace to accept me. Help us all to walk in love and unity and commit to doing it one step at a time, one day at a time. Amen*

***Relapse is more often the result of stress in relationships than it is in giving into our obsession to use.***

## WISDOM AND WEALTH

***To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.***  
(Ecclesiastes 2:26 NIV)

We all want to enjoy life. Some of us fell into addiction because we focused on seeking pleasure. If it made us feel good, we wanted more of whatever that was and were willing to do whatever it took to get more. In recovery, we still listen to the advertising media bombarding us with things they say we need to make us happy. In cities where the cost of living is high, we constantly wonder if we will ever be able to have enough money to live the lifestyle which we believe will make us happy.

***Safe in His love, we will find the satisfaction and contentment we long for whether we are rich or poor.***

From God's perspective, and that's the basis of all healthy recovery, the blessings that money and material things represent are only good for us when we first live in the care of our loving Heavenly Father. Safe in His love, we will find the satisfaction and contentment we long for whether we are rich or poor or have the latest smart phone or not.

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

Giving up an addiction to drugs and alcohol only to pick up an addiction to money and possessions is not the way to abundant life. If we thought we were living meaningless lives under the control of our dependencies, how much more will we experience emptiness if we run after money and possessions? Building a foundation on the love of God through Jesus Christ, is the only way to a good, pleasing, and perfect life.

When material blessings come, we should give thanks to God, receive them with joy and share them with others. When we do this we are acknowledging that we are blessed to be a blessing as God intended.

***Prayer: Loving God, Help me to find joy and satisfaction in my life whether I am blessed with a little or a lot. Protect me from the trap of thinking I need certain things or a given amount of money to be truly happy. I will trust You to provide for my needs. With what You provide, help me be thankful and seek to bless others from Your provision. Amen***

## JUST FOR TODAY – AGREEABLE AND FOCUSED ON BLESSING

*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.*

"I can't control people, places, or things." We hear this saying in meetings and often repeat it to ourselves and yet, unless we feel in control, we struggle. In our addiction we encountered people who acted in unpredictable ways. Our own circumstances were always changing, and we often felt exposed and vulnerable. The cause may have been as simple as a change in the weather or as complex as the sudden breakdown in a close relationship.

The world of recovery is new and undefined for us. At times we will do whatever it takes to avoid that frightening place of exposure and helplessness and so we find fault in our environment and criticize and try to control things around us. God invites us to live a better way. Just as He is gently working with us and teaching us a new way, God asks us to give the same respect and space to others, even when they are being difficult.

***A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will learn the truth. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you.*** (2 Timothy 2:24-25, Luke 6:28 NLT)

What a challenge? Can any of us live up to this? Yes, but only within the safety of God's care. God will show us how to speak the truth in love and leave the responses of others with them. In any group there will always be people with whom we find it difficult to relate. We are called to speak and act in ways that bless and encourage and leave the rest to God.

***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. Amen***

***We are called to speak and act in ways that bless and encourage, and leave the rest to God.***

SPIRITUALLY POOR – I'M NOT GOD

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

Jesus told us we would be blessed if we were “poor in spirit.” What does that mean? Is being “poor in spirit” like being poor by not having enough money or not getting our needs met? If being “poor in spirit” is like that, why would Jesus say we are blessed, and the kingdom of heaven is ours?

When a person is poor in spirit, they have come to God and admitted they are powerless to do life on their own. They have chosen to turn their will and life over to the care of God. They have not denied the things they have done but humbly admitted their sins to God and asked for His forgiveness. They have chosen to wholeheartedly follow the ways of God because they knew God would give them the strength to do so.

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

***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.*** (I John 2:15-17 MSG)

When we are poor in spirit we humbly live in the grace and favour of God. We admit our lives are unmanageable without God. We take responsibility for our character defects and ask God to remove them. We are willing to confess our sin to God, knowing that no condemnation

awaits us, only forgiveness and blessing. We have no fear of failure because we know God is rich in love and slow to anger. We acknowledge that God's strength is greater than that of any human being. We choose to be thankful for who God is and for all He has done for us. We are poor in spirit because we rely entirely on the richness of the favour of our awesome 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 as I live in Your unfailing love and care for me. Amen***

SEARCHING, FEARLESS, AND MORAL

We are not very far into our recovery program when we come face to face with Step Four which asks us to make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. We are asked to look at our thoughts, our motives, and our behaviours, and sort out what was right, what was wrong, and the part we played in it all. It doesn't sound fearless to us. In our society we hear many different messages about what is morally right and wrong and it often leaves us confused. How are we to approach not only this step but our life in the light of moral principles?

Who gets to decide what is right and wrong? The obvious answer would be that the one who knows everything should make that call. God is the one who has set the world in place and has given us life and breath. God knows the end from the beginning, and, in His written Word in the Bible, God has been careful to tell us what is good and what is harmful. Thankfully it's all written down for us. We tend to view things in a short space of time and often our emotions may cloud our judgment. Without a reliable source to help us, we would be in trouble again and again.

***All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.*** (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NLT)

Truthfully, for most of us the real problem is not being fully aware of what is morally right or wrong and just wanting to do things in a way that seems right for us. If we are willing, God is ready to help us want to do what is right according to His Word. God truly is an amazing God into whose care we can trust both our will and our life.

***For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.*** (Philippians 2:13 NLT)

***Prayer: Loving God, Please help me to take an honest look at my life and see where I failed to do what is right and good. Help me to see where my own stubborn self-will caused me problems. Fill me with Your grace so I can begin to live in a new way, starting today. Amen***

***God has been careful to tell us what is good and what is harmful.***

OPTIMISM FUELED BY HOPE

Faith and hope in God are foundational to a positive outlook on life in recovery. Faith is the settled knowledge that God exists, and that God is for us. When we have faith in God’s goodness, hope will automatically follow.

***I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.*** (Romans 15:13 NLT)

Hope is both a desire and an expectation for something to happen. When our hope is grounded in certainty then we can build on it. God is faithful, and all His ways are trustworthy. As we follow God’s ways and meditate on His promises, we will find reason to have hope. The Bible tells us that God is our helper and our protector and He answers our prayers. When we confess we have failed to obey His commands, God forgives, comforts, and restores us. God’s love and compassion for us is unending.

***We put our hope in the Lord. He is our help and our shield. You faithfully answer our prayers with awesome deeds, O God our savior. You are the hope of everyone on earth. When doubts filled my mind, your comfort gave me renewed hope and cheer. Hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is unfailing love.*** (Psalm 33:20, 65:5, 94:19, 130:7 NLT)

We are filled with hope as we listen to others share their experience, strength, and hope in recovery meetings. We are also encouraged when we learn about previous generations who dared to believe and put their hope in God. The Bible is a great place to “have a meeting” with those who have walked the recovery path before us. We will learn from their journey, and faith and hope will grow in us as we come to know how trustworthy God really is.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for the faith and hope that is building in me today. I ask You to strengthen me as I continue to put my trust in Your Word and believe that You will do all that You have promised. Amen***

***The Bible is a great place to “have a meeting” with others who have tread the recovery path before us.***

THE GIFT OF PEACE AND SERENITY

Peace and serenity are gifts to be received. They are treasures to be chosen. To make room for them in our hearts requires surrender on our part, which means not having to be right; not having to look good; not having to be understood; not having everything around us be peaceful and pleasant. When we live for God and our hearts and minds are surrendered to Him, we will experience peace.

It is God’s desire that we live in peace regardless of the circumstances of our lives. In fact, being at peace is one of the ways we will know whether we have truly given our will and our lives over to God’s care and are allowing His Holy Spirit to guide and direct us.

***The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*** (Galatians 5:22-23 NLT)

God is working around us and in us every day of our lives. Not all circumstances change in a moment. God knows that life will feel rich sometimes and empty at other times. When we seek to follow a new healthy way of life, we will even face challenges that seem too much for us to handle. While some effort from us will be required, we can rely on God’s help and encouragement throughout the process. When we make right choices and do the next right thing, we can safely leave all the consequences with God.

***Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.*** (Philippians 4:6-7 NLT)

Peace and contentment are the fruit of making good choices every day.

***Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for the gift of peace that I receive as I choose to surrender my will and life into Your care. When I am not at peace, help me to seek You and determine how I have wandered from Your ways. Please give me the strength to do the next right thing and get back to Your path of peace. Amen***

***Being at peace is one of the ways we know whether we have truly given our lives over to God’s care and are allowing His Holy Spirit to guide and direct us.***

JANUARY 10

## LIVING COMPLETE

To be complete means that nothing is lacking. Some people have health, wealth, possessions, honour and prestige in the community. To the on-looker they seem to lack nothing, yet many lack the ability to enjoy the things they have and their lives are in turmoil. When we give our will and life over to the care of God, the Bible tells us that we will lack no good thing. Contentment, together with thankfulness to God for all He has done for us, will help us mature and be complete.

***For in Christ there is all of God in a human body; so you have everything when you have Christ, and you are filled with God through your union with Christ. He is the highest Ruler, with authority over every other power. (Colossians 2:9-10 TLB)***

***When we give our will and life over to the care of God, the Bible tells us that we will lack no good thing.***

Being complete is not the result of getting the things we feel we lack but in being content with everything we have been given in Christ. When we believed in Jesus and repented of our sins, we were given eternal life and the promise that Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, would guard our hearts and minds. If earthly things begin to trouble us, we can come to Jesus and He will give us rest. Having a thankful heart is a great start to being complete in this life. Looking up at the sky at night can leave us in awe of God's creation and the place He prepared for us within it.

***Since you became alive again, so to speak, when Christ arose from the dead, now set your sights on the rich treasures and joys of heaven where he sits beside God in the place of honor and power. Let heaven fill your thoughts; don't spend your time worrying about things down here. (Colossians 3:1-2 TLB)***

In the Scriptures we are told not to desire the things we can see, but to fix our eyes on the things we cannot see which will last forever. These are the things that will make us complete in being the person God created us to be.

***And now just as you trusted Christ to save you, trust him, too, for each day's problems; live in vital union with him. (Colossians 2:6 TLB)***

***Prayer: Lord Jesus, Help me to fix my eyes on You so that I can be mature and complete, not lacking anything. Amen***

JANUARY 23

## REJECT THE COUNTERFEIT

When making decisions in life, God tells us to first seek His counsel and then do what He says is right. If we obey, we can be assured that the outcome of whatever we are undertaking will turn out well. Satan the deceiver attempts to sway us from what God says and gives us counterfeit solutions which will harm rather than help us.

***Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ. (Colossians 2:8 NLT)***

Through our ignorance and self-will we've welcomed all kinds of dark and evil influences into our lives. Some of the things we have allowed are, mind altering drugs, sexual immorality, heavy metal music, gambling, horror and violent movies, fortune telling and occult practices, gluttony, lies, anger, envy, fear, etc. The Bible warns us about seeking counterfeits of what is the best 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 ... anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21, NLT)***

As we journey with God in recovery, He desires that we recognize what is good and the enticement to the counterfeit of that good. To recognize a counterfeit, one needs to be knowledgeable of the real thing. To be successful in recovery, we need to be able to identify the counterfeit, reject it, and give priority to the trustworthy ways of God.

***When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. (John 16:13 NLT)***

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for choosing counterfeits of what is truly the best way of life. Help me to listen to Your Holy Spirit as He teaches and guides me into the knowledge of all truth. Amen***

***To be successful in recovery, we need to be able to identify the counterfeit, reject it, and give priority to the trustworthy ways of God.***

JUST FOR TODAY – Relax and Enjoy

*Just for today I will take a quiet half hour all by myself to relax, think about, and enjoy all that God has done and continues to do for me.*

In our addiction we lived in a world that kept us on edge. We were frantic each day to find enough money to buy our substance of choice. Every thought of the day was directed at supplying our next fix. Appreciation of nature, the birds and the flowers, hearing the gurgling of water in a stream, or the feeling of warm sunshine on our skin, never even entered our thoughts.

***Just for today I will take a quiet half hour all by myself to relax, think about, and enjoy all that God has done and continues to do for me.***

The life God invites us to recover is one that includes taking time to be quiet and enjoy our natural surroundings. God gives us an example of this by His actions of resting and enjoying His creation.

***Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!*** (Genesis 1:13 NLT)

God took time to reflect on all that He had created. When we take time to relax and enjoy our environment, our emotions will settle down and our thoughts will be free to take notice of the natural loveliness of the world around us. The habit of noticing and giving thanks for all that God has done for us builds optimism and well-being into the deep recesses of our souls. Instead of constantly worrying and being on edge because of what we don't have, and all that isn't right, we will be strengthened and uplifted by the reality of who God is, what He has done, and what He continues to do for us.

***The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need. He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. He renews my strength.*** (Psalm 23:1-3 NLT)

The choice each day is ours: anxiety and stress or confidence and relaxation.

***Only in returning to me and resting in me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength. But you would have none of it.*** (Isaiah 30:15 NLT)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please quiet my heart and mind and help me take time to appreciate and give thanks for Your provision. Amen*

IT'S NOT FAIR – OR IS IT?

It's easy for us to become discouraged and feel sorry for ourselves when life doesn't go the way we think it should. We cry, "It's not fair" when we have troubles; when the system doesn't give us what we need when we think we need it; when our family members don't trust us even though we said we have changed. The fact that we cheated and stole from others and lived for a long time in a destructive way may have something to do with why life right now is not as we want it to be.

Sometimes life seems to get better more quickly for others than it does for us and we feel resentful. We see others get housing, get an opportunity for education, or get a job that we wish we could have. We complain that life is unfair. Where is God in the middle of all of this?

***The Lord is good and does what is right. He shows sinners the right way to live. He teaches his ways to humble people. He leads them with fairness.*** (Psalm 25:8-9 ERV)

God has a good plan for our lives. His priority is that we get to know Him and through obedience to His word, have a loving relationship with Him. God knows what is best for us and will provide those things that are good for us at just the right time. Sometimes that may mean not having as much money or as much independence as quickly as someone else in a similar position. God knows we have certain character defects that would destroy us if we did. God may keep us in our current situation until we are mature and strong enough to live responsibly. In His kindness, God is keeping us from future harm. From our point of view, it seems unfair but from His, it is pure love and protection.

***It is better to be poor and do right than to be rich and do wrong.***

***Proverbs 16:8 ERV***

***God is fair, and he will remember all the work you have done. He will remember that you showed your love to him by helping his people and that you continue to help them.*** (Hebrews 6:10 ERV)

God is generous and kind. When we trust Him, He will make a way forward for us that is good, pleasing, and perfect, and we will praise Him for all that He has done.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Sometimes I feel that life isn't fair, and things never seem to go right for me. Help me to trust Your wisdom in knowing what is best for me and accept that all things are working together for my good. Keep my daily focus on getting to know You and help me accept Your ways as the pathway to peace. Amen*

CHARACTER DEFECT – CO-DEPENDENCY

Contentment in life does not come from trying to control someone so they will meet our needs, or by trying to please someone so they will like us and help us feel secure.

We are living co-dependently when we are looking to others to affirm and maintain our value, however, others have only limited ability or understanding in how to best provide for our needs. The same limitation applies to us when we are dealing with others and their needs. God’s plan for us to have secure and satisfying relationships begins with each person identifying with who God says we are – nothing more and nothing less.

**God’s plan for us to have secure and satisfying relationships begins with each person identifying with who God says we are – nothing more and nothing less.**

***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)

We need to let go of the impossible expectations we put on ourselves and others. People cannot love us enough or touch us deeply enough to satisfy the deep-rooted longings in our heart. Only God can satisfy those longings. We have our own desires and dreams, and we need to let others have theirs. We will make our mistakes and others will make theirs. We need to forgive ourselves for our own mistakes and forgive others for their mistakes that impacted us. With God’s help, we can determine to learn from them.

***Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.*** (Ephesians 1:4-5 NLT)

Fullness of life and freedom from co-dependency can only be found when we are first rooted in a relationship with our Heavenly Father. God made us in His image, and we have great value in His sight. When we base our worth and identity around this truth, rather than on the opinion of others, we will begin to experience security, peace and freedom.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am forever grateful that I am loved and accepted by You. Forgive me for being co-dependent with another rather than fully trusting in You. I ask You to teach me how to live in a way that honours who You are and others for who they are. Amen*

DOORWAY OUT OF DARKNESS

What a refreshing feeling it is to be free from the guilt of our addiction and dependencies. Before we came into recovery we could hardly look up because we were afraid to meet the gaze of someone who cared for us. At other times, we were arrogant and defiant against anyone who brought attention to our dysfunction. To us it is a mystery how we were ever brought to the place of asking God for help.

As we sunk deeper into our chaotic lifestyle perhaps someone noticed and was praying for us and asking God to draw us to Himself. In His amazing grace God brought us out of the darkness of our hopelessness into the light of His glorious presence. Now in recovery we can give thanks to God for His enduring love for us.

***Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let Israel say: “His love endures forever.” Let the house of Aaron say: “His love endures forever.” Let those who fear the Lord say: “His love endures forever.” When hard pressed, I cried to the Lord; he brought me into a spacious place. The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?*** (Psalm 118:1-6 NIV)

When God tenderly brought us up from the pit that we had dug for ourselves, doors that were previously closed, opened up to us and we were able to let go of those events and words that caused us pain and despair. Through repentance of our sin, the doors to healing and restoration and new life were unlocked. The Lord is ever with us, so we need never be afraid of what lies ahead.

***This is the message from the one who is holy and true ...What he opens, no one can close; and what he closes, no one can open: “I know all the things you do, and I have opened a door for you that no one can close. You have little strength, yet you obeyed my word and did not deny me.”*** (Revelation 3:7-8 NLT)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your enduring love for me. Truly Your love, is love at its best. Thank You for giving me the strength to walk out of the darkness of my soul and through the doors You opened for me to receive healing and restoration. Amen*

***In His amazing grace, God brought us out of the darkness of our hopelessness into the light of His glorious presence.***



## MATURE AND COMPLETE

When someone or something is the best that it can be, we say it is mature or complete. Do we consider that we are mature and complete? In the Bible, God gives us principles to follow so we can become the mature person He created us to be. If we obey God and do not allow ourselves to be influenced by others, we will be blessed in all that we do. To be mature is to accept that in this world we will have trouble, just as Jesus said. To persevere through the troubles that come our way, we need to understand the ways of God and be willing to do what He says.

***We will no longer be babies in the faith. We won't be like ships tossed around by the waves. We won't be blown here and there by every new teaching. We won't be blown around by cleverness and tricks. Certain people use them to hide their evil plans.*** (Ephesians 4:14 NIRV)

***God gives us principles to follow so we can grow and become the mature person He created us to be.***

In our unmanageable lifestyle some of us allowed others to get us involved in their evil plans and we suffered the consequences. What enables us to be mature in these situations is to have the will and desire to practice God's principles in all our affairs. Our attitude should be that of improving our conscious contact with God through prayer and meditation, so that He directs us in the way we are to go. We will grow in our faith as we choose to adapt our ways to God's ways, rather than conforming to the ways that are acceptable to our friends or in our culture.

***Don't live the way this world lives. Let your way of thinking be completely changed. Then you will be able to test what God wants for you. And you will agree that what he wants is right. His plan is good and pleasing and perfect.*** (Romans 12:2 NIRV)

As we mature in our faith, we need to be ready to admit to any defects of character that may arise and cause us to stumble. We need to regularly take personal inventory and when we are wrong, promptly admit it.

***So be careful. When you think you are standing firm, you might fall.*** (1 Corinthians 10:12 NIRV)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to set boundaries for myself that are in keeping with Your Word. Please work in me so I can be mature and complete, lacking nothing. Amen***

## STUDYING TO LIVE SECURELY IN RECOVERY

Success in life and in recovery results from giving priority to learning and obeying God's word. When we learn what God's will for our life is, and obey it, life will go well for us.

***How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word. I have tried hard to find you—don't let me wander from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*** (Psalm 119:9-11 NLT)

Even though we experience new life in recovery, many thoughts continue to swirl around in our minds. We have so many memories - some bad and some good. Temptations and obsessions are never that far from our thinking. New schedules, responsibilities and ideas seem to fill our brains until we feel like we might burst. What information is necessary to help us remain secure in our recovery from day to day? How do we keep that information front and center in our thoughts?

It's essential that we read and obey God's word as recorded in the Bible. When our attention wanders, it's a good idea to speak the scriptures we are reading out loud. Not only does this focus our attention, but our heart gets the message from both our eyes and our ears. The learning goes deeper. More clarity will come as we study and reflect on the words we read. Perhaps journaling to gather our thoughts on what we have been reading might also be helpful. The most effective learning though, will come when we put God's words and directions into practice. As we do, we will find that God's ways are good and unfailing, and they bring about the life of joy and purity we have been seeking.

We may tend to fall back into our old self-directed ways unless we prayerfully ask God to give us the strength and courage to not wander from His commands. A meaningful life with God in recovery is worth the effort!

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to take time to study Your commandments and reflect on Your ways. As I go about the activities of my day, help me to remember the principles that I have learned and to put them into practice in all I say and do. Amen***

***The most effective learning though, will come when we put God's words and directions into practice.***

JANUARY 14

## HOW DID I EVER GET TO THIS PLACE?

*My Lord, you heard my groaning. You can hear my sighs. My heart is pounding. My strength is gone, and I am going blind. Because of my sickness, my friends and neighbors will not visit me; my family will not come near me. My enemies say bad things about me. They are spreading lies and rumors. They talk about me all the time. But I am like a deaf man and cannot hear. I am like someone who cannot speak. I am like those who cannot hear what people are saying about them. I cannot answer to prove my enemies wrong. Lord, you must defend me. Lord my God, you must speak for me. That's why I prayed, "Don't let my enemies smile at my pain. Full of pride, they will laugh if I stumble and fall." I know I am guilty of doing wrong. I cannot forget my pain.* (Psalm 38:9-17 ERV)

**When we get to that place where we hate what we are doing and call out to God, He will be there to help us.**

Many of us have come from an environment that is described by the writer of the above Psalm. When we made unwise decisions, we never dreamed they would take us to where they did. We didn't consider how our behaviour might turn our family, friends, and neighbours away from us. We never thought we would get to a place where we could not bear to hear what people were saying about us.

We know that we are not alone. Many people in the world of addiction are like us. Most made foolish choices and were naïve to the way their dependency led them and how far it took them down. That's why the writer of the Psalm turned to God for help. When we get to that place where we hate what we are doing and call out to God, He will be there to help us. The significant question for each of us to ask ourselves is, "Do I really hate what I have been doing or do I just hate the suffering I have to endure?"

Like the Psalmist, we must come to God and admit that we are guilty of wrongdoing. We cannot deal with our pain on our own. Our Heavenly Father waits for us to turn our hearts towards Him. When we do, He will adopt us into His family, and we will have all the power of the Kingdom of Heaven to help us.

*Heavenly Father, I confess that my life is a mess of my own making. I have done wrong things and made poor choices. I turn away from it all and leave it behind. I want to be born again into Your kingdom and follow Your ways as Your precious child. Please help me! Amen*

JANUARY 19

## THE FREEDOM OF A CLEAN SLATE

We experience true freedom when we have a clean slate with God. As we admit our ongoing faults and sins to God with a sincere desire to change, God is faithful to forgive us.

***If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.*** (1 John 1:8-9 NLT)

Sometimes we appear to do good things for others and tell ourselves we are caring people even though we have a bad attitude and hold hidden resentments. We list the things we've done right and use that list to excuse ourselves from taking responsibility when we do wrong. The Bible makes a clear distinction between doing good to "look good" and practicing goodness as a character quality.

***Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good.*** (Romans 12:9 NLT)

As followers of Jesus we are required to choose for good regardless of the trials we may face. We are told that a sign of the presence of God within us is a lifestyle of goodness. God created us for a work He has prepared in advance for us to do, a work that flows from a pure heart. The challenging question for us is: are we doing things to make us "look good" or, are we loving others because God has transformed us and made us whole?

***If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*** (John 8:31b-32 NIV)

Freedom comes when we acknowledge the truth that without Jesus we can do nothing good, but with Jesus, all things are possible!

*Prayer: Gracious God, I acknowledge that freedom to love others comes only through obeying Your Word. Help me to do what is right, to be merciful, and to walk humbly with You in all my ways. Amen*

***Freedom comes when we acknowledge the truth that without Jesus we can do nothing good, but with Jesus, all things are possible!***

## LOVE IS PATIENT

The Bible tells us that love is patient. How many of us would profess to be patient? Do we listen attentively to what another is saying? Do we give up on a program or a project because it requires too much time and is not going as well as we had anticipated? When things do not go our way, are we willing to pause and seek God on how we should proceed? Many of us are aware of the numerous times we have made life altering blunders because of our impatience.

***It's smart to be patient, but it's stupid to lose your temper. Always be humble and gentle. Patiently put up with each other and love each other.*** (Proverbs 14:29; Ephesians 4:2 CEV)

***The Bible tells us that love is patient. How many of us would profess to be patient?***

What causes us to be impatient and lose our temper? Perhaps it stems from our disrespect of people in general. Perhaps we have been conditioned by the environment we grew up in and never learned to wait for things. Perhaps our disappointment with events we expected to happen but never did affected our trust in others and gave us a cynical attitude. How do these things and many others impact our recovery? Do we stay the way we are, or do we seek God to teach us how to love others and be patient with them?

***I am the Lord God. I am merciful and very patient with my people. I show great love, and I can be trusted.*** (Exodus 34 6<sup>b</sup> CEV)

When we became God's children through accepting Jesus as our Saviour, we were born again into a family household that is quite different from any other household. Our Heavenly Father's love for us surpasses that of any earthly parent. God loves us with unending love and is faithful to do what He says. Whatever we are lacking, He is ready to supply. If we need to be filled with His love in order to be patient, He will supply that need.

***My friends, we beg you to warn anyone who isn't living right. Encourage anyone who feels left out, help all who are weak, and be patient with everyone.*** (1 Thessalonians 5:14 CEV)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please fill me with Your unfailing love so that I can love others and be patient with them as You are with me. Amen***

## CAME TO BELIEVE

At some point, in the darkness where we lived, we became aware that we were powerless over our dependencies and that our lives had become unmanageable. By some miracle we found ourselves in a place where we were told that the next step to a health-giving life was, "coming to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." The challenge for us is, how do we come to believe? How long does it take, and what is involved in the healing and restoration process?

God meets us at this place on our journey and reassures us of His love, His care, and that all the help we need is available.

***When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.*** (Romans 5:6-8 NLT)

It is God's desire to restore us to a fulfilling relationship with Him. As we seek God, we can ask Him for His help and direction for the journey of coming to believe that He exists, and will be there for us in our times of trouble and need.

***Without faith it is impossible to please God. Those who come to God must believe that he exists. And they must believe that he rewards those who look to him.*** (Hebrews 11:6 NIRV)

One step at a time God will show us a new life-giving way that will free us from the hatred and victimization we feel. Daily reading the Bible and choosing to behave as God directs is foundational to our progress because it teaches us how merciful and kind God is to those who reach out to Him. As our actions follow God's principles, we notice that our hearts are filled with peace. We come to know this good and caring God is present with us offering us personal and practical help and support. As we begin to know God's true character, we become willing to turn our will and life over to His care.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for living so long in the misery of my own making. I have come to believe that You care for me and that You have the power to do what needs doing to restore me to sanity. Help me to trust in Your unfailing love and in the truth that only in You will I find the peace and security that I desire in my life. Amen***

***We have come to know this good and caring God is present with us offering us personal and practical help and support.***

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 off all his accomplishments. He compared himself to another person near him who was also praying and gave thanks that he was much better than that man since the man was known in the community to be guilty of all sorts of wrong doing.

The other person, who admitted he was guilty of wrong doing, 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 in right relationship with God. (see Luke 18:9-14 for the story)

As we work the 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 them all.

At many places along the way it's easier to make a list of what others did to us and so much more difficult to take responsibility for our part and seek forgiveness for where we went wrong and caused harm to ourselves and others. Comparing our actions with another's actions to minimize our destructive behaviour will never heal our hearts or restore our relationship with God.

**Be  
humble in  
front of  
the Lord  
and he  
will lift  
you up.**

James 4:10

**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 shortcomings before God and asking Him to remove them will get us to the place of peace we long to experience.

*Prayer: Loving God, be merciful to me a sinner and forgive my lawless deeds. With the precious blood of Jesus, 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*

TAKE ACTION NOW

*I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that I am responsible.* (Alcoholics Anonymous)

This "Responsibility Statement." written for the AA international convention in Toronto in 1965 put words together that had long been of significance to AA. Many of the principles in AA are rooted in truths from the Bible practiced by the founders. This willingness to respond to someone in need is one of those.

**Do everything you possibly can for those who need help. If your neighbor needs something you have, don't say, "Come back tomorrow." Give it to him immediately.** (Proverbs 3:27-28 ERV)

Proverbs is a book of wise sayings and in it we are reminded to act for the good of others, to do it now, and not wait for a more convenient moment or another day,. When Jesus spoke of those who showed by their actions that they were right with God, He revealed that the help they had given to others was as if it had been done to Him.

**"Then those that are right with God will say, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You? When did we see You thirsty and give You a drink? When did we see You a stranger and give You a room? When did we see You had no clothes and we gave You clothes? And when did we see You sick or in prison and we came to You?' Then the King will say, 'For sure, I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of My brothers, you have done it to Me.'** (Matthew 25:37-40 NLV)

**It's not our  
job to "fix  
anyone" but  
it is our God  
given  
responsibility  
to look with  
eyes of  
compassion  
on those  
around us  
and to lend a  
hand.**

It's not our job to "fix anyone" but it is our God given responsibility to look with compassion on others and to lend a hand to those in need. As we've been forgiven by God and supported in our journey by others, now it is our turn, whether we are one day in recovery or many decades. The amazing thing is that as we make life a bit easier for someone who is suffering, even though it may inconvenience us, we will find joy and contentment filling our own hearts.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me change my self-centered focus. Today, give me eyes to see and a heart of compassion to take action and respond to someone in need. Amen*