

**LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY**

# **Daily Meditations**



**SEPTEMBER 2024**



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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.*



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SEPTEMBER 2024

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***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***

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## 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 style="text-align: center;"><b>SUBSTANCE ADDICTIONS:</b></p> <p><b>Alcohol</b>  <b>Caffeine</b>  <b>Injected or smoked substances such as:</b>              Crack, Crystal Meth, Heroin  <b>Marijuana</b>  <b>Prescription Medications</b>  <b>Sugar</b>  <b>Tobacco</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><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 style="text-align: center;"><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 style="text-align: center;"><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>

### 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.*

**TOGETHER WITH GOD**

*God is always with me. I need never face my problems alone. Together with God, any difficulty can be worked out and overcome.*

For too long we've tried to overcome and deal with problems on our own. We were being truthful when we admitted that what was going on in us and around us was too complicated for us to sort out. Where we went wrong was to allow fear and insecurity to overwhelm us and, to ease the pain of the problems we were encountering, we turned to our addictive substance. Our new life with God in recovery offers us hope that, together with God, any difficulty can be worked out and overcome. That's the key – with God. How do we put this principle into practice in all our affairs?

***The Lord himself will go ahead of you. He will be with you. He will never leave you. He'll never desert you. So, don't be afraid. Don't lose hope.*** (Deuteronomy 31:8 NIRV)

God has unlimited power, and He makes it available to us. Before the world was created God had each of us in mind with a good plan for our lives. As we make ourselves available to God's will, He is ready to show us His good and perfect plan for us. As we seek to live out His plan in all our affairs, God will help us overcome any obstacles. We may not know all the details of the plan, but God does. We may think our problems will never end, but God will not allow us to go through trials one moment longer than necessary to fulfill His purposes. Can we trust His good heart towards us?

***God, you are the one who saves us. We will trust in you. Then we won't be afraid. Lord, you are the one who gives us strength. You are the one who keeps us safe. Lord, you have saved us.*** (Isaiah 12:2 NIRV)

With God's help we are responsible to faithfully work on problems until we see the work is complete. Some problems will be resolved quickly, and others will take consistent work over a period of time. God will continue to give us strength and direction for each step. Our challenge is to trust Him and obey.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I don't like problems and I quickly get fearful when I face challenges. Help me to put my trust in the truth of Your Word so that together with You, any difficulty can be worked out and overcome. Amen***

***Together with God, any difficulty can be worked out and overcome.***

SEPTEMBER 2

## LEARNING HOW TO GIVE UP HARD LABOUR

Today is Labour Day and tomorrow many students, including some of us, return to their places of education for a new season of learning and maturing. Coming out of addiction is like coming out of hard labour in the school of “hard knocks.” Trouble found us, and then we added to it by our own doings.

Thank God for these new days of work and learning which may be challenging but will not be overwhelming. Jesus used a farming picture to help people understand what this means.

***Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*** (Matthew 11:28-30 NIV)

***Thank God for these new days of work and learning which may be challenging but will not be overwhelming.***

In the same way that an ox doesn't just graze in the fields, we do not enter recovery to do nothing. Oxen perform many tasks such as: plowing, hauling, tramping seed to thresh it, turning a wheel to grind grain or to send water along irrigation lines. The food supply of many is reliant on the good work of oxen.

God created us for good work, and He knew that just like the oxen we need to learn and do various things we are not familiar with. When plowing, two oxen are fitted with a heavy wooden yoke on their necks and then a plough is attached to the yoke. A mature ox that is familiar with the job is paired with an immature one so that together they can pull a heavy load. The mature ox does most of the pulling while keeping the immature ox in line. In this way the job gets done efficiently and the immature ox learns the set task from the mature one.

Jesus takes the heavy burden of sin from us and guides us into a wonderful life of purpose and meaning. We need to be united with Jesus so that when He moves, we move. When He stops, we stop. Jesus promises that if we stay close to Him we will know a gentle and humble way and even though it may be hard work it will be restful rather than overwhelming. This is life as God intended.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for the times I have made life more difficult by trying to do things my own way. Thank You for this new season of working and learning. Help me to move at Your pace and follow Your directions in every task I undertake to do. Amen*

# NOTES

WORKING FOR RECONCILIATION WITH CARE

Honesty, balance, and realism are essential tools to keep at hand as we sort out and rebuild relationships.

***She [Wisdom] will guide you down delightful paths; all her ways are satisfying. Wisdom is a tree of life to those who embrace her; happy are those who hold her tightly.*** (Proverbs 3:17-18 NLT)

Nothing takes more sensitivity and care than dealing with people with whom we have had a painful experience. It doesn't matter if the person is a close family member or acquaintance, whether the injury happened a decade ago or ten minutes ago, we still need to take great care and walk with humility as we work towards reconciliation.

***Honesty, balance, and realism are essential tools to keep at hand as we sort out and rebuild relationships.***

If we find ourselves leaning towards self-justification, we may find it useful to remember ***“Do to others as you would like them to do to you.”*** (Luke 6:31 NLT)

As we seek Him, God will teach us the truth about our lives - past, present, and future. Humility says we have much to learn. Our part is to identify and do the work of cleaning our side of the street and then patiently live in forgiveness until the other party is ready to deal with the issue. This is the willingness to take responsibility for the harm we have caused and the desire to make amends to which the steps call us.

***Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace.*** (Luke 1:78-79 NLT)

When the time is right, and with a prayerful attitude of seeking God to heal the people we have harmed, we can be confident that God will guide us safely to the pathway of peace and restoration with others.

*Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for your unending love and forgiveness. Please help me to sort my motives as well as my actions as I do the work of restoring relationships with those I have harmed. Help me to be teachable and humble. Holy Spirit, I ask for courage and discernment as, step by step, You guide me on the pathway of peace. Amen*

A SOLUTION FOR OUR GUILT

We feel guilty for all sorts of reasons. When we were running wild in our addiction we were not even aware of the harm we were causing. It was only when we woke up in recovery and began to look at our lives that we saw and understood how destructive our way of living had been. This awareness often fills us with overwhelming guilt. When we have been disobeying God's principles and harming ourselves and others we should feel guilt, but God has a solution for the guilt we feel.

***God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through him. Christ didn't have any sin. But God made him become sin for us. So we can be made right with God because of what Christ has done for us.*** (John 3:17, 2 Corinthians 5:21 NIRV)

God wants us to be honest about the wreck we've made of our lives, but because of His great love and forgiveness, is waiting for us to turn away from the continuing harm. God wants us to repent of our rebellion and live free from sin. God forgives. God washes clean. God brings about restoration. This is the only way to properly deal with guilt. We are wise if we stop and consider what the Holy Spirit says about the consequences of continuing in our rebellious actions.

***God has a solution for the guilt we feel.***

***We have been set free because of what Christ has done. Because he bled and died our sins have been forgiven. We have been set free because God's grace is so rich.*** (Ephesians 1:7 NIRV)

The evil one will try to tell us that we can't be forgiven for some of the things we have done. That's a lie! We may set our recovery expectations to some unrealistic standard that we are incapable of attaining. We then miss that impossible goal and guilt and doubt set in and cause us to crumble. God knows we are frail humans. God wants us to become new creations as He journeys with us. He will teach us how to live life to the full. We have a wonderful opportunity today to acknowledge our guilt and accept the forgiveness freely given us through Jesus. We are then accepted into God's family and are strengthened and built up in Him to be a blessing to others.

*Prayer: Gracious God, When I do wrong, help me to quickly repent and receive forgiveness. When the evil one seeks to discourage me by false accusation, help me to stand firm on Your Word and challenge my thoughts with the truth that, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. Amen*

TAKE NOTE AND BEHAVE ACCORDINGLY

*Just for today I will take note of one helpful thing God is saying to me and seek to behave accordingly.*

What is God saying to me and how can I know it is God speaking? God speaks to us through the Scriptures. Before we begin to read the Bible we should pray that God will help us hear what He wants to share with us. We can expect a phrase or sentence in what we are reading to encourage or challenge us. This is God's way of bringing to our attention something He wants to teach us.

***As long as our heart is open and we are willing to take note, God is willing to speak to us.***

***God has breathed life into all Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right.*** (2 Timothy 3:16 NIRV)

God reveals Himself to us through Jesus, so it's important to regularly look at what Jesus said and did.

***In the past, God spoke to our people through the prophets. He spoke at many times. He spoke in different ways. But in these last days, he has spoken to us through his Son.*** (Hebrews 1:1-2 NIRV)

Our natural environment is full of ways that God speaks to us. While out walking, it doesn't take long before our eyes are drawn to greater things than ourselves as we observe life in our surroundings of land, sea, and sky. We can simply ask God, "What are You teaching me through what I am observing right now?"

***God's eternal power and character cannot be seen. But from the beginning of creation, God has shown what these are like by all he has made.*** (Romans 1:20 CEV)

God speaks to us through others, through music we hear or sing, and through circumstances as they unfold. If our hearts are open and we are willing to take note, God is willing to teach us more about Himself and about His creation.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Open my eyes and ears and heart to recognize when You are speaking to me. Help me learn what truth is and what is useful for correcting my errors. Amen*

FACING TRAUMA – STAYING SOBER

We are exposed to traumatic events in the world by the 24-hour news cycle on television and on our digital devices. Whether it is the devastation of an event in a community, or something inflicted on one person by another, we feel traumatized by the knowledge of these horrible events. News reports may also trigger memories in our own hearts of past happenings that caused us to suffer. How do we get relief from the experience of this deep grief and pain within us?

What has been done cannot be undone. However, God can help us navigate through today by giving us peace and healing in our souls and in our bodies. Our first act must be to turn our hearts and thoughts towards God and allow Him to love and encourage us as we listen to what He has to say through the Scriptures as recorded in the Bible.

***Whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm. So do not be afraid. I am with you. Do not be terrified. I am your God. I will make you strong and help you. I will hold you safe in my hands. I always do what is right.*** (Proverbs 1:33 NIV, Isaiah 41:10 NIRV)

While healing of the mind and soul is a process that takes time, we don't need to hide from the past by pushing painful memories into the dark recesses of our soul. In God's presence, and often with the assistance of safe helpers, we can find ways to live well today. We can be set free from the traumas of our past. Jesus died on the cross for all sin and was resurrected from the dead proving the power of God over all evil – and that includes the evil traumas inflicted on us. Today is a new opportunity to reach out to this amazing God who promises to provide healing from our suffering.

***The Spirit of the God who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you. So the God who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your bodies. He will do this because of his Spirit who lives in you. God saves suffering people while they suffer. He speaks to them while they are hurting.*** (Romans 8:11, Job 36:15 NIRV)

*Prayer: Loving God, It is difficult to face the pain buried deep in my soul. Help me to believe that You are the Power greater than myself who will heal and restore me from the trauma. Come and be with me in those dark and fearful memories and help me to know peace in those places where I hurt. Thank you for caring for me. Amen*

***God saves suffering people while they suffer. He speaks to them while they are hurting.***

*Job 36:15 NIRV*



ANGER

Anger in our society is rampant. Most of us have a hard time dealing with anger. Some of us may have a history of rage. Others of us learned early in life to smother our feelings to help control anger. Anger will harm our relationships whether we explode, clam up, hold a grudge, or simply let bitterness take root in us and fill us with self-pity.

The Bible has much to say about an out-of-control angry person. Not much of it is good.

**What's the real root of my anger? Do I want to get rid of anger? What am I willing to do to be free from destructive anger?**

**Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools. If you stay calm, you are wise, but if you have a hot temper, you only show how stupid you are.** (Ecclesiastes 7:9, NIV, Proverbs 14:29 GNB)

For most of us the question is not "Do I get angry?" We know that we do. Some questions we need to ask ourselves about anger include: "What's the real root of my anger?" "Do I want to get rid of anger?" "What am I willing to do to be free from destructive anger?"

Anger can only be dealt with by receiving love and forgiveness from God and in turn choosing to love and forgive others. The foundation for anger management is having an active loving relationship with God and choosing to surrender all our interactions to His wisdom and guidance. Anything less will result in fear and frustration, and we will remain in the anger cycle.

**Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.** (Ephesians 4:31-32 NIV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me identify and deal with the root of my anger. You know the situations in my life where I have felt helpless and just stuffed my feelings. Help me to grieve, in a healthy way, all the events that contributed to my dysfunctional way of thinking and behaving. Help me to forgive others in the same way You have forgiven me. I choose to let go of my old way of handling troublesome events. With Your help, I choose to live a life of self-control in the power of Your Holy Spirit. Amen*

REACTING TO STRESS

Stress has become a universal problem, and many medical professionals consider it an underlying cause of numerous health issues. In our personal lives pressure and stress can come from a variety of sources such as family trouble, financial difficulty, job pressure, health issues and other factors.

**Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.** (2 Corinthians 1:3-4 NIV)

There are many reactions to everyday stress. Some people try to flee the problem in the hope that the irritation will go away. Some internalize the pressure, seeking to suppress it. Others crumble emotionally, giving way to despair and depression or addictive behaviour.

One of the best responses we can have to stress is to pray. This may seem obvious, but sometimes it's harder than it seems. Praying requires us to focus on who God is and what God is doing rather than obsessing on the problem.

**Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done.** (Philippians 4:6 NLT)

God will never permit circumstances to break or shatter us. He knows our limitations and will not allow us to be overloaded beyond what we can bear. Rather, He seeks to use our stressful times as opportunities for us to gain His perspective, lean on His strength, and develop perseverance with which to endure life's ups and downs.

**Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.** (James 1:12 NIV)

*Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for always being there. When my life is stressful, I invite You to come and strengthen me to endure whatever is happening. Help me to see things from Your perspective. Help me to rest on Your promise to make a way even when I think there is no way. Lord, in my stressful times, please help me to draw close to You and choose to trust and honour You in all that I say and do. Amen*

**One of the best responses we can have to stress is to pray.**

WHAT AM I DOING WITH WHAT I HAVE?

In the Bible Jesus compared the Kingdom of Heaven to a man going on a journey to a far country. Before he left, he entrusted what he owned to his servants according to their abilities. He gave one servant five talents, another two talents and another one talent. While the master was away the servant with five talents traded and made five more talents. The one with two talents made two more. The servant who was given one talent dug a hole and buried it. Upon his return the master praised the first two servants for what they had done. The third servant made excuses for why he had not used his one talent. The master called him a wicked and lazy servant and took the one talent away from him. *(Read: Matthew 25:14-30)*

***For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.*** (Matthew 25:29 NKJV)

***God judges on what we have done with what we have been given.***

God has given talents to each of us. We may be someone with five talents, someone with two talents, or someone to whom God has chosen to give one talent. God never judges on the number of talents we have. God judges on what we have done with what we have been given. Some of us think that our past will limit our usefulness to God so we hide our talent so no one can see it. God has entrusted us with His precious word and the ability to invest in telling the good news to others. Are we willing to open our mouths and speak of what God has done for us? If we are, God will give us the words to say.

***My mouth will tell of your righteous deeds, of your saving acts all day long—though I know not how to relate them all.*** (Psalm 71:15 NIV)

Today, let's consider how we can invest in the Kingdom of God all that we have been given by Him.

*Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for giving me new life and hope for the future. Forgive me for being fearful of speaking about You to others. I ask You to give me the courage to tell others about Your forgiveness and saving grace. I am forever grateful that You love and care for me. Amen*

EXPRESSING APPRECIATION

When we tell someone how much we appreciate who they are or what they have done, we are lifting them up and valuing their service. This can't help but work towards ongoing co-operation and the strengthening of the relationship we have. When we are encouraging others, we build ourselves up in the process.

***It is good to praise the Lord. God Most High, it is good to praise your name. It is good to sing about your love in the morning and about your faithfulness at night. Lord, you make us very happy because of what you did. I gladly sing about it.*** (Psalm 92:1-2, 4 ERV)

Expressing appreciation begins with our relationship with God. All we are and have comes from Him alone. The day before us is a fresh opportunity to experience all the good things God has planned for us. Beginning the day in God's presence, remembering His love and forgiveness and His promises to us, is a strong foundation on which to build a successful day. It also puts us in a positive mindset as we focus on God rather than on ourselves. We are then ready to be guided by Him.

We also know that being with others in this life is better than being alone. How much do we appreciate someone who notices what we do and compliments us and thanks us for our time and effort? Most of us find this very encouraging and heart-warming. One of the most valued gifts we can give someone is to take time to be aware of what they do for us, or on behalf of others, and let them know how much we appreciate them and their efforts.

***Love each other in a way that makes you feel close like brothers and sisters. And give each other more honor than you give yourself. .... Recognize the value of those who work hard among you—those who, as followers of the Lord, care for you and tell you how to live. Show them the highest respect and love because of the work they do.*** (Romans 12:10, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 ERV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for this day and for the people who walk alongside me. Help me to have eyes to see and a heart to appreciate what You and they are doing for me and with me. Help me to build others up by taking time to express my appreciation. Amen*

***When we tell someone how much we appreciate who they are or what they have done, we are lifting them up and valuing their service.***

THE BEAUTY OF A QUIET AND GENTLE SPIRIT

God invites us to a life of gentleness where we honour speaking the truth in love and respect the dignity of everyone, including ourselves. We will then delight in the joy and wonder of each new day.

***Surround me with your tender mercies so I may live, for your instructions are my delight.*** (Psalm 119:77 NLT)

***God invites us to a life of gentleness where we honour speaking the truth in love and respect the dignity of everyone, including ourselves.***

To be gentle with ourselves and with others doesn't mean that we look for "easy ways" to avoid dealing with issues and continue in whatever is familiar but harmful. Gentleness means we approach life with quiet honesty, admitting the truth that we need help when we are struggling to cope.

We make space for gentleness in our lives by setting safe boundaries in relationships. We experience gentleness of spirit when we take the time to slow down and notice good things around us such as: a baby in a stroller; the aroma of food; the beautiful colours in the sky as the sun goes down.

***Lord, don't hold back your tender mercies from me. Let your unfailing love and faithfulness always protect me.*** (Psalm 40:11 NLT)

Gentleness will grow in us, and flow from us, as we sit quietly and have a conversation with God. Just reading the Bible often brings peace and gentleness to our soul. When we speak to God in response to what He is teaching us, a gentle spirit seems to wrap itself around our hearts and our souls feel comforted.

***Let my teaching fall on you like rain; let my speech settle like dew. Let my words fall like rain on tender grass, like gentle showers on young plants.*** (Deuteronomy 32:2 NLT)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to live in the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit which is precious in Your sight. Amen***

THE WAY TO BECOME MATURE

The way to become mature in our recovery and in life in general is through prayer and meditation on what we read in the Bible. We need to daily seek conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for our lives and the power to carry it out. As we read the Scriptures, we become knowledgeable of God's character and, by obeying His principles, we learn how to live life to the full. Being able to quote the Scriptures is good, but it does not bring maturity. Maturity comes from obeying what the Scriptures say.

***I have written to you who are God's children because you know the Father. I have written to you who are mature in the faith because you know Christ, who existed from the beginning. I have written to you who are young in the faith because you are strong. God's word lives in your hearts, and you have won your battle with the evil one.*** (1 John 2:14 NLT)

The philosophy and mentality of this world is vastly different from what God says in His Word. We know the trouble and heartache our chaotic lifestyle brought us but are now learning a more excellent way. We were once foolish, disobedient, hateful towards others, and sought pleasure in whatever our immoral minds desired. We were like immature children seeking every candy in the store. Now our life is being impacted by the love of God for us and we are learning to love others as ourselves.

***Joyful are people of integrity, who follow the instructions of the Lord. Joyful are those who obey his laws and search for him with all their hearts. They do not compromise with evil, and they walk only in his paths.*** (Psalm 119:1-3 NLT)

As we follow the ways of God and faithfully obey His principles, we will become the mature person that God created us to be. We know that God has a plan for us that will prosper us and give us hope and a future, and we know that if we seek Him in all our ways, His plan will succeed.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to grow and mature in my faith in You and in the knowledge of Your Word and Your ways. Help me to challenge any accusations, temptations, and lies of the evil one with the truth of Your Word. Jesus won the battle over all evil, help me to stand firm in His victory. Amen***

***As we follow the ways of God and faithfully obey His principles, we will become the mature person that God created us to be.***

BALANCING WORK AND REST

Life in recovery without God is not worth the effort. The Bible speaks truthfully about this. It says we are "wasting our time." No matter how hard we work at it, if we are not building this new life in recovery with God, we will weaken, and things will fall apart.

*If it is not the Lord who builds a house, the builders are wasting their time. If it is not the Lord who watches over the city, the guards are wasting their time. It is a waste of time to get up early and stay up late, trying to make a living. The Lord provides for those he loves, even while they are sleeping.* (Psalm 127:1-2 ERV)

***If we are not building this new life in recovery with God, we will weaken, and things will fall apart.***

God is not against us doing our part to rebuild. He's not encouraging us to be lazy and neglectful of daily responsibilities. God has given us many gifts and abilities and He delights in us developing and using them for creative and productive purposes. But we all need proper rest and times of relaxing and letting go of the work of the day. Recovery is about maintaining a healthy balance in life while trusting that God is with us, watching over us, and doing those things that we cannot do for ourselves.

The forces of evil and addiction that are seeking to destroy us are far more powerful than we are. For example, the Big Book reminds us that *"we deal with alcohol — cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power — that One is God. May you find Him now!"* (How It Works) We cannot prepare for every challenge that will come our way and every trigger that appears from seemingly out of nowhere, but we can get in the habit of living one moment at a time with God, seeking His guidance, receiving His peace, and trusting His protection as we go about our daily activities and as we lie down to sleep at night.

The amazing promise God makes to us in today's Bible verses is that He provides for us even while we are sleeping. God knows our limits, plans for our rest, and gets everything ready for a fresh new day while we sleep. We are loved. We are cared for. Today, we have everything we need to succeed in recovery and in life.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to have faith in the truth of Your Word and trust You to help me live a healthy balanced life of work and rest. Amen*

RATIONALIZING

We are experts at rationalizing – attempting to excuse, minimize, or justify our bad behaviour. We rationalize because we don't want the inconvenience or embarrassment the truth might bring. We rationalize when we are still angry with someone and want to justify our resentment. God's word paints a very clear picture about this poisonous mixture of truth and lies.

*If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar. His word is not in us. Suppose someone claims to love God but hates a brother or sister. Then they are a liar. They don't love their brother or sister, whom they have seen. So they can't love God, whom they haven't seen.* (1 John 1:10, 4:20 NIRV)

We need to ask God to awaken us to the harmful choices we are making. He knows the poison that is stored at the root of our damaging actions and reactions. He knows and understands the actual impact of all the events that make up our lives – good and bad. There may be traumatic events in our past to which we still have emotional links, and the resulting fear translates into our rationalization. God wants to heal our wounds and set us free from the false beliefs attached to those memories. Are we willing to be healed?

God's love goes deeper than any painful, shameful action in our past. Through Jesus, He has provided undeserved forgiveness for all the sin that has resulted from our rationalizing it. This is the way God's truth begins to come alive in us – we speak truth to our hearts and minds and choose for truth over rationalization. When we surrender our imperfect understanding of ourselves and our past behaviour and ask God for help, He will reveal the root cause of our confused conduct and show us the best way forward.

*...Don't let anyone lead you astray. The person who does what is right is holy, just as Christ is holy. The person who does what is sinful belongs to the devil.* (1 John 3:7-8a NIRV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for the times I have rationalized my thoughts in order to excuse my unwillingness to do what is right. I ask You for wisdom and the courage to examine my thoughts and actions in accordance with Your Word. Help me to get rid of the roots of bitterness and fear which support my rebellion. Help me to walk in truth and in the light of Your presence ever with me. Amen*

***God's love goes deeper than any painful, shameful action in our past.***

STEP SIX - DESIRING CHANGE

SEEING OUR TRUE VALUE

We will experience freedom and fulfillment in life only when God’s desires become our desires, God’s way becomes our way, and God’s word becomes our action plan.

Self-worth is the value we put on ourselves and our role in life. Some of us will overrate ourselves and some of us will undervalue ourselves according to our own estimate of our position in life. What is the right approach to assessing our self-worth? When selling a house, the asking price is not the true value of that house. Its value is the price the buyer is willing to pay. God was willing to pay a high price to buy us back from the broken, isolated condition we found ourselves in because of our sin and rebellion against Him.

**Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart’s desires. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.** (Psalm 37:4, Matthew 16:25, Matthew 6:33 NLT)

**When people sin, they earn what sin pays—death. But God gives his people a free gift—eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.** (Romans 6:23 ERV)

We are of great value to God because Jesus came into the world to pay the price for our sin so we could be free from its penalty. How do we value what Jesus has done for us? If we refuse to accept what Jesus has done for us, then we are assessing no worth to the plan of God for our deliverance from the penalty of sin. Our self-worth is then determined by us or by the value others place on us.

**Our worth to God is more than we could ever imagine.**

**For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.** (2 Corinthians 5:21 NLT)

Jesus came into the world not to judge the world but to save it. Unwillingness to receive this precious gift of new life through Jesus is what will judge us in the last day. Our true value is already settled by who we become when we accept the finished work of Jesus on our behalf. Through Jesus we become children of our Heavenly Father. Our worth to God is more than we could ever imagine. We are God’s masterpieces created in Christ Jesus to do good works.

**God rescued us from dead-end alleys and dark dungeons. He’s set us up in the kingdom of the Son he loves so much, the Son who got us out of the pit we were in, got rid of the sins we were doomed to keep repeating.** (Colossians 1:13-14 MSG)

*Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to base my self-worth on the truth of who You say I am. Through acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus as payment for my sin, I have been reconciled with You and am grateful that You have become my Heavenly Father, and I am Your precious child. Amen*

**We will experience freedom and fulfillment in life only when God’s desires become our desires, God’s way becomes our way, and God’s word becomes our action plan.**

All of us have long established patterns of behaviour that remain a challenge. We tend to hang onto harmful activities because they meet a need in us or help us avoid pain. Those who have a positive recovery experience are those who surrender their faulty beliefs and behaviours to God. They desire that God remove the underlying causes of their sinful behaviour and the woundedness buried deep inside.

God says: **“My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.** (2 Corinthians 12:9 NLT)

We have all become familiar with the devastating outcome of individuals who choose to live self-centered lives. Jesus taught and demonstrated that the key to a life that is truly happy, joyous and free is the choosing of God’s will over our own will. When our goal in life is to be ‘happy’, we will fall into destructive self-centered life patterns. When our goal is to love God, and have a relationship with Him, joy will be a natural outflowing of that relationship. A healthy foundation on which to

build a joy filled life is the willingness to let God’s principles re-shape our thinking and behaving.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I need You. Every day, every hour I need you. My request and desire is that You help me recognize my weaknesses and come to You for healing. I want to be free from the bondage that holds me captive to my past. I want to live for You and honour You in all my ways. Amen*

BRING ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS TO GOD

Physical or emotional abuse often exists in relationships where one or both parties are in some form of addiction. In some instances, abuse may not be recognized because the abuser strengthens his or her power over the abused by telling them that they “love” them. The abused person then becomes confused and is often made to think that they are the cause of the problem.

***Don't envy evil people or desire their company. For their hearts plot violence, and their words always stir up trouble.*** (Proverbs 24:1-2 NLT)

***Like any addiction, it takes time to understand why we allow ourselves to be enslaved by what is harmful to us.***

All abuse has a major impact on both the abuser and the person being abused. Both parties will have good times and bad times as they stay in the toxic relationship. The relationship, however, will not get better, it will only get worse, because both are captive to the evil that surrounds them.

***Do you think that I like to see wicked people die? says the Sovereign Lord. Of course not! I want them to turn from their wicked ways and live.*** (Ezekiel 18:23 NLT)

When we come into recovery and admit that we are powerless over our dependencies, these dependencies may include attachment to an abusive person or being the one who is powerless to stop abuse. Like any addiction, it takes time to understand why we allow ourselves to be enslaved by what is harmful to us.

As we walk in God's ways and seek help to break the chains that have bound us to the evils of abuse, we will be strengthened by God's love and comfort and all that He provides to help us move away from its bondage.

***Don't offer the parts of your body to serve sin. Don't use your bodies to do evil, but offer yourselves to God, as people who have died and now live. Offer the parts of your body to God to be used for doing good.*** (Romans 6:13 ERV)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that I have been enslaved by the corruption associated with abuse. Help me to turn away from this evil and get the help I need. I receive Your healing love and care and give every part of myself to You to do what is right. Amen***

BEING SENSITIVE TO OTHERS

In the Bible we read many stories of how Jesus was sensitive to people and to what they were going through, and how He reached out to them with compassion. Recovering the life that God intends for us to live is learning how to move from being overly sensitive about our own needs and feelings to becoming aware of what others are going through and truly care about them.

***Don't be jealous or proud but be humble and consider others more important than yourselves. Care about them as much as you care about yourselves.*** (Philippians 2:3-4 CEV)

It's important to be sensitive about what we say, when we say it, and how we say it. We need to learn to be compassionate but honest when we are speaking with others. This goes together with truth telling.

***...Everyone should be quick to listen. But they should be slow to speak. They should be slow to get angry. ...Say only what will help to build others up and meet their needs. Then what you say will help those who listen.*** (James 1:19, Ephesians 4:29 NIRV)

God's word instructs us to be careful and sensitive about what we do or say so we don't harm others. When we insensitively say or do "as we want when we want," we may injure those who are seeking recovery from hurtful situations.

***You say, "I have the right to do anything." But not everything is helpful. Again you say, "I have the right to do anything." But not everything builds us up. No one should look out for their own interests. Instead, they should look out for the interests of others.*** (1 Corinthians 10:23-24 NIRV)

God desires us to have confidence in being the person He created us to be. He longs for us to leave behind our feelings of inferiority which may contribute to us being over-sensitive to the words and actions of others. God encourages each of us to stand strong in His love and acceptance.

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to always speak and behave with wisdom and compassion. Help me to be gentle and kind in all my dealings with others. Amen***

***Jesus was sensitive to people and what they were going through, and He reached out to them with compassion.***

JUST FOR TODAY – WALK HUMBLY

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

***The Lord has shown you what is good. He has told you what he requires of you. You must act with justice. You must love to show mercy and you must be humble as you live in the sight of your God.*** (Micah 6:8 NIRV)

Often, when we have chosen for life with God in recovery, we will come to a place of challenge where we still want our own way rather than what God would have us do. When we are having fun with others, it may be inconvenient to stop

and focus our attention on a person who needs to share or needs help with something. We would rather someone else do that. A quiet voice in our head says, “Do the right thing.” Will we respond to that voice or ignore it?

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

Self-centered ways are childish ways. God invites us to grow up, make mature choices, and act responsibly. For too long we have let our feelings be our guide and that has been our downfall. God calls us to live as Jesus did, showing compassion and mercy where we can, even when it is inconvenient, and we don’t feel like doing it.

***He makes the whole body grow and build itself up in love. Under the control of Christ, each part of the body does its work.*** (Ephesians 4:16a NIRV)

It’s important to do inconvenient things rather than just focus on what we want to do when we think we are ready. This will free us from some character defects and help us grow into the person we were created to be. That’s where

the principle mentioned above gives us guidance: ***“be humble as you live in the sight of your God.”*** We are students. God is the teacher. Only God knows the proper sequence for lessons to be learnt. God wants us to depend on Him and then each lesson will be learned in God’s perfect timing. God is willing to show us the way forward and strengthen us to be thoroughly equipped for every good work but, on our part, it requires humility and surrender to His ways.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, give me the grace and strength to serve others with kindness. Teach me to do what is right when it is right to do it. Help me to be willing to do things Your way and not mine. Amen*

RELYING ON GOD’S PROMISES

To succeed in living well in recovery with God, we need to rely on His promises. His comforting words will help us persevere through the trials and the pain that we experience. Some of us thought that when we gave our will and life over to the care of God we would automatically be exempt from the troubles of this world. Jesus did not tell us that and He is the one who should know.

***I have told you these things, so that you can have peace because of me. In this world you will have trouble. But be encouraged! I have won the battle over the world.*** (John 16:33 NIRV)

The promise Jesus made was that we could have peace because of Him. How can we experience that peace when sin and sickness and death are all around us? Jesus has already won the battle over all those things. Jesus is always with us. This should encourage us because no matter what happens we never have to face life’s circumstances alone. If God is our helper in times of trouble, why should we fear anything that might come our way?

***For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we may boldly say: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”*** (Hebrews 13:5b-6 NKJV)

God promises to strengthen those whose hearts are turned towards Him. When we are in trouble, is God the first person we turn to? Do we truly believe that He exists and rewards those who seek Him? God has made numerous promises to us, but faith to believe that He exists is required to activate His promises. If we truly believe God is our higher power, let’s confidently stand on His promises today.

***God looks down from heaven to see if there is anyone who is wise, anyone who looks to him for help.*** (Psalm 53:2 ERV)

*Prayer: Almighty God, To You all hearts are open, and all desires known. Cleanse my heart of everything that would doubt Your word and help me to stand firm on Your promises. Amen*

***Then they cried out to the Lord because of their problems and he saved them from their troubles. He brought them out of the deepest darkness. He broke their chains off.***

*Psalm 107:13-14 NIRV*

To live with wisdom in recovery requires humility. We need to acknowledge, “I don’t really know what is best for me but I’m willing to try new ways and learn from the experience of others.” God is the source of all wisdom and His principles for life can be found in the Bible. People who have walked this path before us may also have helpful experiences to share. The wisdom we retain and act on will be determined by our choice of following either the instructions in God’s Word and the advice of a friend or mentor, or by choosing to operate on our own self-will and limited knowledge.

***A solid life in recovery requires that we develop a willing heart to learn new ways and thereby become wise in how we think and act.***

***The Lord is the source of wisdom; knowledge and understanding come from his mouth. If you listen to him, you will understand what is just and fair and how to do what is right. You will gain wisdom, and knowledge will bring you joy.*** (Proverbs 2:6, 9 ERV)

We are wise people when we desire to put God’s principles into effect in every aspect of our daily life and follow the advice of those who are walking with God. We do not need advice from people who act like us and speak the things we want to hear. We need to listen to people who are not afraid to contradict our dysfunctional thinking and tell us the truth, even though it may be difficult for us to hear.

***Become wise by walking with the wise; hang out with fools and watch your life fall to pieces.*** (Proverbs 13:20 ERV)

Familiar thoughts often roll around in our heads challenging the truth of what we are being taught. If we dwell on our old thought patterns, we will soon find ourselves feeling discontented. A solid life in recovery requires that we develop a willing heart to learn new ways and in so doing become wise in how we think and act.

***Dear friend, take my advice; it will add years to your life. I’m writing out clear directions to Wisdom Way, I’m drawing a map to Righteous Road. I don’t want you ending up in blind alleys, or wasting time making wrong turns. Hold tight to good advice; don’t relax your grip. Guard it well—your life is at stake!*** (Proverbs 4:10-13 MSG)

***Prayer: Loving God, I ask You to help me make wise choices on my way forward with You. Give me the wisdom to stay close to You and trust Your guidance in all my affairs. Amen***

## COMING BACK

In the Bible Jesus told a story about a father and two sons. (Luke 15:11-31) The younger of the two boys became dissatisfied with life in his father’s household and believed life away from home was more desirable. He asked for his inheritance before it was due to him, and then went out and squandered all he had on wild living. While he had money, he had friends, but his money soon ran out and he found himself alone.

Often when we come into recovery, we find ourselves where the prodigal son was at, alone, worn out by sin, and living an unmanageable life.

God offers us a purposeful life, but we want our own way and think that God’s way is restrictive rather than protective. We want to have fun without considering the consequences of the choices we make. The sad truth is, we end up broken and needy by following self-will rather than God’s will.

***Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live.*** (Isaiah 55:2-3 NKJV)

The father of this boy continued to wait for the return of his son and when he saw him coming back, he ran to meet him. God is always pursuing us with His love, and when we turn to Him, He welcomes us with open arms and gives us the privilege of being called His precious child.

***See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!*** (1 John 3:1 NIV)

***Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for the times I have rejected You in favour of my own self-centeredness. I repent of my ways and ask for Your forgiveness. Thank You for adopting me into Your family and proclaiming me to be Your precious child. Please help me to follow Your ways in all my affairs. Amen***

***Often when we come into recovery, we find ourselves where the prodigal son was at, alone and worn out by sin and living an unmanageable life.***



AVOIDING PAIN

We don't need to be told that emotional trauma is painful. We've given lots of time and effort to ignoring, avoiding, and denying the pain we feel. We've used anger, addictive substances, and even self-harm to try to reduce our pain. While we think we are reducing pain with our coping mechanisms, we are in fact increasing it. God has a better way of dealing with pain and He offers it to us.

When we invite Him, God will come and be with us in our pain. God is always with us. We will never again be alone. God will watch over and care for us and, as we open our hearts to Him, will heal our pain. His promise is that He will give us the grace we need to persevere until we are fully restored.

**We need to admit that we are in pain and become willing to submit to the treatment process required to bring healing.**

*The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. God always gives you all the grace you need. So, you will only have to suffer for a little while. Then God himself will build you up again. He will make you strong and steady.* (Psalm 34:18 NIV, 1 Peter 5:10 NIRV)

God will do for us that which we cannot do for ourselves, but we need to admit that we are in pain and become willing to submit to the treatment process required to bring healing. No matter what got us to this place, God has a solution for our problem. Are we willing to surrender our will and our life into His care, have Him remove our defects of character, sort out our chaotic relationships, and base the direction for our daily living on His principles as recorded in the Bible?

*But I never really left you, and you hold my right hand. Your advice has been my guide ... and on this earth you are all I want. My body and mind may fail, but you are my strength and my choice forever.* (Psalm 73:23-26 CEV)

Thankfully we have people in our families, in meetings, in churches and in treatment centers who will help support us. Our part is to stay real and be honest about our pain. God cares. Others care. We don't need to avoid our pain any longer. With God's help and that of others we will find healing and freedom.

*Prayer: Loving God, I give thanks that as I face my pain You are with me, and You care. I ask You to give me the courage to go forward in recovery, trusting that You will make all things right as I surrender to Your will and Your ways. Amen*

NOT AS I WOULD HAVE IT

The full version of the Serenity Prayer said at most recovery gatherings contains the words, *"Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it"*. Jesus left heaven where He was known, affirmed, and praised, and came to earth in human flesh to save the world from the power of sin. His environment here was certainly not as He would have it. Jesus was despised and rejected by those who ought to have known who He was. To protect their status and way of living, these people bore false witness against Jesus and handed Him over to be mocked, tortured, and killed by oppressive rulers.

*People looked down on him. They didn't accept him. He knew all about pain and suffering. He was like someone people turn their faces away from. We looked down on him. We didn't have any respect for him.* (Isaiah 53:3 NIRV)

Even though Jesus suffered many things, He chose not to judge the people who treated Him harshly. He knew everyone was in bondage – not just those suffering from addiction – and He had come to set them free. How do we respond to those who are rude to us and do not treat us kindly? Do we see them, as Jesus does, as people God loves who have not yet been set free?

This world may not be as we would like it and people may not treat us as we think they should but we can make it better by telling others – “normies” as well as fellow addicts – about Jesus, His love for them, and His power and willingness to set them free, just like He did for us.

*I'm sending you off to open the eyes of the outsiders so they can see the difference between dark and light, and choose light, see the difference between Satan and God, and choose God. I'm sending you off to present my offer of sins forgiven, and a place in the family, inviting them into the company of those who begin real living by believing in me.* (Acts 26:17-18 MSG)

Next time we pray the Serenity Prayer, let's truly desire to be more like Jesus in the way we respond to others.

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, I want to be like You and take this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it. Help me to accept the things I cannot change and please give me the courage to change the things I can. Amen*

***“Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it.”***

THE BENEFIT OF EXPERIENCE

One of the promises given to us as we grow in our recovery is: *No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.* (Big Book pages 83-84) Who of us would deny the value of sharing our experience, strength, and hope with others, and in return being given the same gift? We are excited to share what is working for us. This promise reminds us, it is in being vulnerable and willing to share even those lessons from our darkest days and weakest times that may benefit others. Are we willing to give that gift to someone today?

**No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.**

*Each time he [God] said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.* (2 Corinthians 12:9 NLT)

There is no benefit in sharing our "war stories" or wallowing in self-pity about how bad things were. None of us needs the triggering reminders that come from too many details of what we experienced in active addiction. However, what is needed is hope, no matter how far we have fallen. A brief description of circumstances at the time and the amazing joy we experienced in being uplifted by a loving God from the place we were at to this day of life in sobriety – now that is a story sure to bring hope to another person.

*I waited patiently for the Lord to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along. He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what he has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the Lord.* (Psalm 40:1-3 NLT)

We were in a hopeless state and powerless until God stepped in to rescue us. The sharing of our getting on board with God and the stability He brought to our lives is the message other strugglers are longing to hear. This will surely spark hope in the darkness of their own struggle.

*Prayer: Loving God, I am thankful for where I am today because You rescued and steadied me. Please give me the willingness, humility, and focus to share how You found me in my darkest days and gave me new life so that others may be truly amazed at the awesome power You have to help a hopeless addict. Amen*

HUNGRY ANGRY LONELY TIRED

Across recovery circles we've been exposed to the word "HALT" (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired) and its significance in our recovery. The ability to take care of these powerful feelings will lessen our vulnerability to relapse.

***The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.*** (Psalm 23:1-3 NIV)

Being hungry can express itself in many ways. Besides being hungry for food, we can be hungry for companionship or for simple recognition of our personhood. We can be hungry for affirmation that the effort we made was worthwhile even if the result we wanted was not possible at this time.

We cannot expect to go through life without feeling angry. Unfair and unjust things take place in life. God's way of helping us approach bursts of anger is to offer us healing for our hurts and forgiveness for the destructive forces of resentment and bitterness we hold. As we repent of destructive anger, God will bring peace to our souls and in the future may use what has caused us pain for something good.

***Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.*** (Acts 3:19 NIV)

Closely related to the feeling of hunger identified above is loneliness. God promises to be the friend who understands when no one else does and will care for us through every step of our journey. Opening our hearts to receive all that God is offering us is an important way to deal with feeling lonely.

The tiredness that results from a hard day's work is earned tiredness, but it still needs attending to. There is also tiredness that results from demands that seem never-ending or challenges that don't seem to be working out. Whatever our source of tiredness, God wants us to bring all our burdens to Him and find rest for our souls. Are we willing to do that?

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to recognize when I am hungry, angry, lonely, or tired and stop and turn to You, so that I may receive Your love and refreshment for my soul. Amen*

***I will give rest to those who are tired. I will satisfy those who are weak.***  
(Jeremiah 31:25 NIRV)

FOCUSED AND EFFICIENT

Years of aimless living in addiction kept us from becoming focused, well-organized, and productive. As we move forward, we will need to be humble enough to admit that we have efficiency gaps in our current way of living, and we need to let God and others teach us new skills.

**Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.** (Ephesians 5:15-16 NIV)

**Jesus kept a focused agenda ... we are encouraged today to follow His example.**

Our attention runs in many directions. We've lived with distractions for years and now it takes effort to set an agenda for each day and prioritize each item on our list. As we focus on doing the most important things first, then one at a time each item on the list will be accomplished. We need to pay less attention to our phones and let others take care of their own responsibilities. Also, we need to keep our attention focused on the task at hand. In the same way we push through pain and sweat at the gym to build stronger muscles, we will have to "push through" and keep working on important things even when we are tired and don't really feel like continuing. If we pray and ask God, He will help us in these practical things.

Our daily priority is to give focused time to God so we can communicate with Him and allow Him to encourage and guide us to the best path for each day. Spending time with God, reading the Bible, and praying may be challenging for us, but it truly is the first step to becoming more efficient.

Jesus kept a focused agenda, even when He was heading to painful suffering and death on the cross. We are encouraged to follow His example in our daily routine even when we are not looking forward to facing our assignments for the day.

**... fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.** (Hebrews 12:2 NIV)

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, You had many distractions to deal with each day but You stayed focused on what Your Father had planned for You to do. Please intercede for me as I seek Your Father's will for my life and help me stay focused on what He has planned for me to do. Amen*

A GOOD REPUTATION

Just seeing the words "good reputation" brings a wry smile to those of us who have lived with something quite different in various stages of our life. A life in addiction gives us a reputation, for sure, but it's usually not a good one.

**A good reputation is better than expensive pleasures. Choose a good reputation over great riches; being held in high esteem is better than silver or gold.** (Ecclesiastes 7:1 ERV; Proverbs 22:1 NLT)

Life with God in recovery brings the amazing gifts of being at peace with ourselves and of living in a way that others are blessed by our presence in their life. Some individuals share stories about the good example we set for others and the support we have shown to them. Others hear the stories, form a favorable impression of us, and we become a person who has a good reputation.

What does it take to be a person with a good reputation? We need to be people of our word. When we make a promise, we need to keep it, even when it is inconvenient. When we say we'll be somewhere, we need to get there. When we say we'll do it, we need to follow through.

**Lord, who can live in your sacred tent? Who can stay on your holy mountain? Anyone who lives without blame and does what is right. They speak the truth from their heart. They keep their promises even when it hurts. They do not change their mind.** (Psalm 15:1-2, 4b NIRV)

In the past we were willing to ignore many rules of conduct and did whatever we thought it took to be accepted and admired by those in similar positions to us. Now we are choosing to live as a person who follows God's standards and does what is right regardless of popular opinion. When people know our principles and that we hold consistently to them, we become safe and steady people to be around. We are respected and trusted – people with a good reputation.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You that I can leave my past reputation behind me and, one day at a time, build a new life of integrity and faithfulness. Help me to speak and make promises carefully and to be a person of my word. Help me to be more like Jesus in all my ways. Amen*

**To be a person of good reputation we follow God's standards and do what is right regardless of popular opinion.**

WOUNDS

Part of being human is experiencing some wounding. It may be a scraped knee from falling, a burned finger from touching something hot, or a variety of other things that injure us. Skin wounds often need cleaning, an application of a medicinal salve, maybe a bandage, but always time to heal.

In our souls we may have experienced wounding that comes from betrayal, rejection, abuse, sin, disappointment, and regret. Although we might tell others and try to convince ourselves that we are not wounded, fear and anger, addiction and anxiety, self-hatred and the inability to forgive are all evidence of hidden wounds in our soul. Living successfully in recovery has a lot to do with identifying and taking care of our wounds.

**Heal me,  
Lord,  
and I  
will be  
healed;  
save me  
and I  
will be  
saved.  
(Jeremiah  
17:14 NIV)**

**He himself [Jesus] bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.** (1 Peter 2:24 NIV)

Jesus cared so much about our wounds that He suffered and died on the cross. His death and resurrection offer us new life and healing for our woundedness

Physical wounds need to be cleansed and our hearts also need cleansing from the sin that resides within. If we repent of our sin and turn our lives over to God, He will purify all our wounds. After a skin wound is cleansed, it may require an antiseptic salve to be applied to help with healing and to protect the wound from further damage by any remaining germs. When we read the Bible and fill our hearts with who God says we are, our souls will find protection from damage

from the lies of the evil one. We put a bandage on a wound to protect it, changing it as often as necessary until new skin covers the wound. Similarly, as we heal we must look after our souls because the devil will seek to harm us with more lies.

**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. He sent out his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.** (1 John 1:9; Psalm 107:20; 1 Peter 5:8 NIV)

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for caring about my wounds. Cleanse me, heal me, and protect me from the evil one. My trust is in You to make me whole. Amen*

PURE IN HEART

When we come into recovery one of our priorities must be sorting life according to what is true. We are sick and in need of healing, and that is the truth. We are weak, sinful, and sometimes crazy. That is also true. We need to be forgiven, cleansed, and enlightened by the truth of God’s word. If we are to live from a pure heart, we need to let the Bible be our handbook and do what it says without any compromise.

**Blessed are those whose hearts are pure. They will see God. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.** (Matthew 5:8 NIRV, Psalm 119:105 NKJV)

God sent His son Jesus into the world to take on human flesh. Jesus, who never sinned, died for our sin so that we might have a new life purified from all sin by His blood. When we admit and confess our sin, and accept what Jesus did for us, His Holy Spirit comes to live within us. He is the “Higher Power” who will give us the will and desire to live in a way that is right and good.

**He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.** (2 Corinthians 5:21 NASB)

God’s way of life and His agenda need to become our priority if we are to live life from a pure heart. We need to guard what we have been given. The evil one will prowl around seeking to turn our hearts away from God. Through prayer and meditation, we can be in conscious contact with God, praying for the knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out.

**Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.** (Philippians 4:6-7 NKJV)

*Prayer: Loving God, I repent of my past sins and want my life from this day forward to reflect the truth that the blood of Jesus has purified me from all sin. Help me to prioritize my relationship with You and to live my life guided by Your Word as recorded in the Bible. Amen*

**If we are to  
live from a  
pure heart,  
we need to  
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