

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



AUGUST 2024



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

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JUST FOR TODAY

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

Just for today I will strengthen my mind. I will take a few minutes to read and meditate on God's word, seeking God's perspective for my life today. I will take note of one helpful thing God is saying to me and seek to behave accordingly.

Just for today I will be joyful, optimistic, and grateful. I will take time to notice the gifts in me, in others, and in my surroundings and let the rest go.

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOME AREAS OF ADDICTION AND DEPENDENCY

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



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

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PHOTOS

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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.

GOD'S PLAN

God has a plan for my life that is meaningful, purposeful and joyful. When we read the Bible, we become aware of God's plan for this earth and for the people who inhabit it. The Bible records that throughout time God achieved his purposes through people. The birth of Jesus, His life, His death, and His resurrection were foretold centuries before He was even born into the world.

Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14 NKJV)

Just like God had a plan for Jesus' life He also has a plan for our lives. He knows the beginning and the end. God's desire is that we walk in the plan He has for us, but He will not override our will and force us to do so. That is what is so wonderful about Jesus. Jesus chose to obey God's plan for His life even when it included paying the penalty for the sins of the whole world by dying on a cross. Jesus knew He had a choice whether He would die for our sins or not. As a human Jesus struggled with this part of God's plan but won the victory over His own will. How are we doing that? Are we wrestling with the demands of the world, our flesh, and the devil? Jesus shows us what to do, He prayed: ***"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."*** (Luke 22:42 NIV)

God has a plan for my life that is meaningful purposeful and joyful.

As God's adopted children, we have His protection over every area of our life and the Holy Spirit's wisdom and guidance in all our affairs. All events that we trust God to direct become part of the fulfillment of His good plan for our lives. When we disobey His principles and choose to opt out of His will for us, like any good Father, God will correct us. God is the great weaver of the tapestry of our lives and works every thread together for our good and His glory.

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)

Prayer: Gracious Father, Thank you for adopting me as Your child. Help me to seek Your ways in all my affairs and to quickly follow the way You are leading me. Amen

We are spiritual beings who have a soul and live in a body. God created us to work perfectly only when we are filled with His Spirit. We can't think and choose correctly unless we have the life of God in us. On our own we live stressed and obsessed while trying to experience pleasure or fix something that has gone wrong. Over and over again our efforts end in disaster. Without God, we just don't know how life works.

But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means. (1 Corinthians 2:14 NLT)

But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.
(1 Corinthians 6:17 NLT)

Many cars need a clear fluid (gasoline) in their engines in order to run well and transport people from place to place. While water (a clear fluid) is much cheaper than gasoline and more readily available, if we put it into the gas tank of our car, we will destroy the car's engine and it will not perform as it should. All clear fluids do not have the same purpose.

At our core we are spiritual beings, so in order to live well we need to find a spiritual solution for what's going on in our lives. Trying to fill ourselves up with work, sex, money or pleasure of any kind will only break us down. We need the Spirit of God who alone can fill us with life and give us true understanding of how life works.

Jesus replied, "I assure you no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So, don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.' (John 3:5-7 NLT)

When we invite God into our lives, He makes us alive by the power of His Holy Spirit and fills us with life-giving truth. Only then will we begin to think and feel differently and out of that will flow new ways of choosing and behaving. Everything changes when we become spiritually alive.

Prayer: Loving God, on my own I'm ruining the beautiful life You have created me to live. I need a spiritual solution to solve my addiction issues. Come into my life and make me alive spiritually so that I may know freedom and wholeness through following Your ways. Amen

When the first humans disobeyed God, they alienated themselves from God and were no longer complete as God intended. Having the knowledge of good and evil causes humans to focus on whatever their senses dictate. For instance, when we only focus on staying clean and sober we are less likely to stay clean and sober. The knowledge and wisdom that leads to recovery and a meaningful, purposeful life comes from focusing on God first and then on His gift of recovery to us.

You used to be far from God. Your thoughts made you his enemies, and you did evil things. But his Son became a human and died. So God made peace with you, and now he lets you stand in his presence as people who are holy and faultless and innocent. (Colossians 1:21-23a CEV)

We need to widen our focus from trying to do what is right to include focusing on the God who gives us the wisdom and power to do so. Jesus died as a human to reconcile us with God and through His obedience, restored us to completeness in God. Through prayer and meditation, we can improve our conscious contact with God, and receive the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out. This is the focused way to overcome those things that would keep us in bondage to our former life.

God's children cannot keep on being sinful. His life-giving power lives in them and makes them his children, so that they cannot keep on sinning. (1 John 3:9 CEV)

When we have repented and been completely forgiven of our sin, it no longer exists. God no longer has reason to condemn us, so we can live in the light as He is in the light. God has given us a Power greater than ourselves to guide us in the way we are to go, and Jesus sits at the right hand of God and intercedes on our behalf. What special people we are to God!

You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. (Colossian 2:13 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Jesus who made me complete in You. I am forever grateful that as I stand in Your presence in Christ, I am pure and holy in Your sight. Amen

God's children cannot keep on being sinful. His life-giving power lives in them and makes them his children, so that they cannot keep on sinning.

1 John 3:9 CEV

DON'T JUDGE

We easily object to someone judging us when they think our decisions or actions are unwise. In the past, family and friends made judgments and spoke with us about the chaos of our addictive behaviour only to have us get angry and respond with “Don’t judge me.”

Jesus did say, “Do not judge,” but He said a lot more along with those words which people often fail to pay attention to. We are wise when we make judgment calls about what to do, or not to do. We need to judge whether an activity is right or wrong and then choose to participate, or not.

But, if we sit in self-righteous judgment, we can expect to be judged in the same way. The critical spirit boomerangs, so we all need to be aware of how we treat each other.

We need to have a spirit of humility to see our own defects.

Don’t pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults— unless, of course, you want the same treatment. That critical spirit has a way of boomeranging. (Matthew 7:1-2 MSG)

We need to have a spirit of humility to see our own defects. When we see our lives through the lens of a searching and moral inventory, how can we then criticize and fail to show compassion to others?

Why do you notice the small piece of dust that is in your friend’s eye, but you don’t notice the big piece of wood that is in your own? Why do you say to your friend, ‘Let me take that piece of dust out of your eye’? Look at yourself first! You still have that big piece of wood in your own eye. (Matthew 7:3-4 ERV)

On the last day, every one of us will be judged on our acceptance of Jesus and our obedience to the scriptures. Have we considered if we are ready to be judged?

Jesus said: ***I don’t judge a person who hears my words but does not obey them. I didn’t come to judge the world. I came to save the world. But there is a judge for anyone who does not accept me and my words. These words I have spoken will judge them on the last day. (John 12:47-48 NIRV)***

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to obey Your Word and Your ways in all my affairs. Teach me to be more like Jesus. Amen

JUST FOR TODAY – UNAFRAID

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.

Facing today without fear – that’s a tall order. It is clear from a brief look at slogans and acronyms from AA and NA that FEAR dwells in the minds of many. Here are some examples: **FEAR** = Failure Expected And Received. **FEAR** = Forget Everything And Run. **FEAR** = Frantic Effort to Appear Real.

In our addiction, we cycled around desperation and failure for so long that we lost track of who we were. We forgot what real life was like. Now when we are confronted with the possibility of relationships and intimacy, or meaningful work and growth, we freeze with fear. What are we to do? How can we move forward in these areas which fill us with fear of the unknown?

On our own it is impossible but what we’ve come to know is, when we turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, we are no longer alone. God promises to be with us and show us a way forward even when we don’t see a way. All we need to do is seek His will for us and follow His chosen path.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. (Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT)

There are a couple of positive acronyms for fear that may help us on our journey. **FEAR** = False Evidence Appearing Real. **FEAR** = Face Everything And Recover. When fear tells us we can’t get ahead and be successful, it’s important to remember that this is untrue. God has the power to do more in us than we could ask for or imagine. When we think our past is too much to face, we can reject that thought for the lie that it is. Our past does not define our future. New life in Christ means that the old is gone and the new has come. Just for today I will trust God and not be afraid.

We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. (Romans 6:6 NLT)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank you that my sin is nailed to Your cross. Today I turn my will and life over to Your care. Fill me to overflowing with the power of Your Holy Spirit, so fear loses its power in my life. I will live unafraid today knowing I am Your beloved child. Amen

Just for today I will trust God and be unafraid.

PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS

What do “people, places, and things” have to do with living well with God in recovery today? Our minds remember and associate strong emotions with people, places, and things. These powerful emotions can trigger the obsession to use. It’s not always drug paraphernalia, a drinking buddy, or passing by a familiar bar that triggers these emotions. While it’s important to do what is in our power to limit situations like these that bring triggers, it’s even more important to acknowledge our powerlessness over events around us that will impact us.

The world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever. (1 John 2:16-17 NLT)

***This world
is fading
away,
along with
everything
that
people
crave.***

Each day, it’s important to remind ourselves that God is in control. He has a wonderful day planned for us that is more fulfilling than the temporary feelings we experienced when we were drinking and using.

You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever. (Psalm 16:11 NLT)

1 John 2:17 NLT

Whether it’s anxiety, fear, or stress that is triggering our thoughts of using, we need to bring it all to God and trust God to support us in our journey until a solution is reached. We are powerless over people, places, and things but we are not alone anymore. God is with us. God is for us. God will make a way where there seems to be no way.

I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears. When doubts filled my mind, your comfort gave me renewed hope and cheer. Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. (Psalm 34:4; 94:19; 23:4; NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to live in the conscious awareness of Your compassionate presence with me in every situation. Help me to hear Your voice when people, places, or things trigger me in negative ways. I ask You to keep holding onto my hand as You assure me that “this too shall pass.” Amen

LIVING IN UNITY

How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron’s beard, down on the collar of his robe. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore. (Psalm 133:1-3 NIV)

God says it is pleasant for people to live together in unity, that is, in harmony or agreement with one another. How many of us make an effort to live in unity with family, friends, people in meetings, and others?

The Bible uses the picture of a physical body to represent this unity. When we surrender our will and our lives to the care of God, He brings us together with others to become one body, the body of Christ. This body is meant to work in harmony just like a physical body. Each part of a physical body is different, but every part is carefully placed by God to function for the good of the whole body.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (1 Corinthians 12:27 NIV)

If, for whatever reason, a part of the physical body is unable to perform the function it was created for, or performs more than its purpose, the whole body suffers. A physical body is healthy when each part is doing what it was created to do. In the body of Christ, God’s children are meant to live in harmony, and the blessings of God will flow when each person is doing what God planned for that person to do.

Today let’s consider our part in living in unity with other parts of the body of Christ. Let’s avoid problems caused by not doing those things we ought to do, or by doing those things that we are not called to do. Let’s try to understand God’s purpose for us, even when He places us together with others with whom we seem to have nothing in common. Let’s do everything we can today to live in unity as we function in a way that is kind and considerate towards others.

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to live in unity with others as You have planned so that the many parts of the body of Christ may receive Your abundant blessing. Amen

***How
good and
pleasant
it is when
God’s
people
live
together
in unity!***
Psalm 133:1

FINDING WISDOM IN UNCOMFORTABLE PLACES

Becoming strong and steady in our recovery requires that we keep on listening and learning from God's Word and from the experience, strength, and hope of others. It is easy to be disrespectful of the experiences some share with us because we either dislike their personality or something in their journey differs from our experience. In our arrogance we believe they are wrong in what they are saying and therefore have nothing to teach us. The sad truth is that when we do this, we shut ourselves off from the valuable lessons their life experience could teach us.

Those who make fun of others look for wisdom and don't find it. But knowledge comes easily to those who understand what is right. (Proverbs 14:6 NIRV)

Those who make fun of others look for wisdom and don't find it.

***Proverbs 14:6a
NIRV***

We need humility to listen to those who are newer to recovery than we are. Sometimes the freshness of their message and the description of their struggle can shine a needed light on areas of our own heart that still need attention. Their way of presenting may still be a bit rough around the edges but the truth at the core of their sharing might be just what we need to hear.

We also need to learn from those who offer constructive criticism and challenge the habits or attitudes they observe in us. Stinking thinking creeps up on us in so many areas. The very fact that we are making fun of someone suggests there is some expression of a character defect in us that requires attention.

A good mentor or sponsor will bring things to the conversation that are inconvenient and challenging. Too often we are more ready to "get a new sponsor" than we are to ask God to show us the wisdom we're missing in what our sponsor is saying.

It is never fun to be corrected. In fact, at the time it is always painful. But if we learn to obey by being corrected, we will do right and live at peace. (Hebrews 12:11 CEV)

Today's invitation and challenge is to welcome the inconvenient or uncomfortable truth rather than to scorn it.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I still have so much to learn. Please help me to be teachable every day. Give me eyes to see and ears to hear how You are speaking to me, particularly about things I find difficult to receive. Amen

BEING DILIGENT ABOUT MY RECOVERY TODAY

Those who make steady progress in recovery are those who remain focused and give careful attention each day to what works. One day becomes one week, then one month, one year, and even one decade. We call this being diligent!

Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked so hard to achieve. Be diligent so that you receive your full reward. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. (2 John 1:8, NLT 2 Timothy 4:15 NIV)

Through practice and consistent effort, we get better at living the spiritual practices that are foundational to healthy living. Our conscious awareness of God's presence increases the more we pray and meditate on His Word. Peace and rest in our body and soul develops as we regularly make a moral inventory of what has gone on in our day. We promptly admit anything that has harmed us or someone else and ask God for His forgiveness and a fresh start. Our relationships grow strong as we make the effort to assess what our part was in any tension or hurt and with God's help make amends.

The challenge for each of us is not to slack off or get distracted when things are going well. Where we are today did not come by our own power or smarts. It is God working in us. It is God giving us what we need in each set of circumstances, and us being willing to pay attention to His guidance and follow His direction.

God can bless you with everything you need, and you will always have more than enough to do all kinds of good things for others. (2 Corinthians 9:8 CEV)

We are as reliant on the forgiveness and healing of Jesus as we were when we wrote our first review of our "Last 90 Days" or our first Step 4 inventory of ourselves. Thank God we now have new strength and some stability in our relationships and our recovery, but we must always be mindful and diligent in our efforts to get rid of everything that would distract us from what keeps us strong and free. It is God who does that. May we find Him close today.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am powerless without You. Help me each day to be diligent in the spiritual practices that keep me conscious of Your will for my life and the amazing power that enables me to carry it out. Amen

The challenge for each of us is not to slack off or get distracted when things are going well.

BUILDING UP OUR SELF-ESTEEM

Low self-esteem is a negative sense of one's worth or ability to cope or do well in life. There is a lot of literature around that links substance abuse with low self-esteem. The pity is that substance abuse does not solve the problem but adds to it in a very major way. What does God, who made us and who planned a meaningful and satisfying life for us, have to say about our self-worth?

God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. You are precious to me. You are honored, and I love you. "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. (Genesis 1:27, Isaiah 43:4b, Jeremiah 29:11, Philippians 4:13 NLT)

God's perspective of us is the ONLY correct one.

The evil one loves to tell us lies when we don't feel good about ourselves, our circumstances, or our future. He tells us we're defective and we need something to make us fit in, be accepted, or help us feel better. God's view is different and His perspective of us is the ONLY correct one. We all have strengths and weaknesses. We don't need to fear our weaknesses or try to hide them just because they differ from someone else's. God's promise is that when we feel weak, His power will strengthen us.

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)

In difficult times it's good to change our mind-set and lift our spirit by rejecting negative thinking and instead focusing on what we can do rather than on what we can't do. It's even more important to keep things simple by remembering that our value is not based on our successes or failures, on the opinions of others, or even on our own feelings. The truth is we are who God says we are. We have a wonderful future because God says we do, and God is with us to help us achieve our goals. We can get through whatever difficulties we may face because God will make a way where there seems to be no way.

Prayer: Loving God, help me to live today in the joy of being the person You created me to be, trusting that You are with me and will provide everything I need to live with dignity and honour before You and others. 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 need 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 efforts we made were worth something, even if the result we wanted is 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 times of anger is to offer us healing for our hurts and forgiveness to wash away the destructive forces of resentment and bitterness. In our angry moments we can turn to God who desires to help us use whatever is going on 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 that understands when no one else does and will care for us through every step of our journey. Opening our hearts to receive what God is offering us is an important way to deal with feeling lonely.

The tiredness that results from a hard day's work is a good tired, but it still needs attending to. There is 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 our burdens to Him and find rest for our souls.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to recognize when I am hungry, angry, lonely, or tired and turn to You for help. In these moments, please refresh and care for me. Thank You. Amen

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

REJECTING CONDEMNATION

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

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

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

The Bible is a handbook filled with guidelines for living wisely as our creator intended and though we may faithfully follow God's laws, storms and struggles may still arise. Jesus told us that in this world we will have trouble. So, when trouble arises, we need not do the devil's work for him and blame and accuse ourselves. The devil is a liar. We should not join with him in his condemnation just because we have encountered a problem. God has promised to give us direction in the way we should go, and God's instructions are reliable.

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

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

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

RESCUING IN RELATIONSHIPS

Some of us slid into destructive and addictive lifestyles out of a desire to have friends and companions that made us feel like we belong. Our desire was to have people around us to enrich our lives and to be able to do the same for them. Some of us attempted to support and rescue others from the effects of their dysfunctional lifestyle. In the beginning we were gracious and happy to be a friend and offer our support but, as time moved along and the chaos continued, we became progressively critical and unhappy with our situation.

If someone who is wise tries to settle a problem with a fool, the fool will argue and say stupid things, and they will never agree. (Proverbs 29:9 ERV)

Too many of us remain in unhealthy relationships because we are afraid of the impact our withdrawal may have on the person we are trying to support. We put up with their constant unhappiness, physical or mental abuse, substance abuse, financial chaos, medical issues etc. etc. We ignore the opinion of others that we are powerless in the situation. Perhaps our own identity is in the role of staying connected to their world, and we fear change. Compulsive rescuers, in a roundabout way, may be seeking to support their own shortcomings.

Whoever hides their sins will not be successful, but whoever confesses their sins and stops doing wrong will receive mercy. People who respect others will be blessed, but stubborn people will have plenty of troubles. (Proverbs 28:13-14 ERV)

Through Jesus, God has already made provision to rescue each of us from a life burdened down by sin. By surrendering to God and obeying the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we gain wisdom in all our affairs. If we humbly ask God to remove all our shortcomings, our relationship with others will grow and be healthy.

Let's take a good look at the way we're living and reorder our lives under God. (Lamentations 3:40 MSG)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You alone are the giver of new life. Help me to accept the things I cannot change and change the things I can. I ask You for discernment and wisdom in all my affairs so I may know the difference. Amen

By surrendering to God, we gain wisdom in all our affairs through obeying the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

PRIDE

Our pride often keeps us from asking for what we need. We may have grown up in a family where we were consistently ignored or disappointed. Perhaps our needs were seldom met. Some of us reacted by becoming self-sufficient and determined that we would never ask anyone for help. Jesus, who knows we will not succeed on our own, tells us to not just ask, but to keep on asking for help. Only the work of God's Holy Spirit in us will enable us to become healthy people.

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. (Luke 11:9-10 NIV)

Only the work of God's Holy Spirit in us will enable us to become healthy people.

Pride born out of hurt shows up when we refuse to acknowledge our need for help. Sooner or later the independent road we are choosing will take us back to active addiction. Are we willing to humbly admit that there is another way – a better way – to deal with the brokenness inside us? This way begins with giving our will and life over to the care of God and asking for His help.

Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. Pride leads to conflict; those who take advice are wise. Human pride will be humbled, and human arrogance will be brought down. Only the Lord will be exalted on that day of judgment. (Proverbs 11:2, 13:10, Isaiah 2:17 NLT)

The challenge for us is giving up our prideful effort to be self-sufficient. We really don't know what is best for us. God alone has the solutions we need. These principles are recorded in the Bible. We must be persistent and ask repeatedly for help until all the tangled threads of our problems are sorted. God's promise to us is that everyone who turns from their independent ways and seeks healing and freedom through Jesus' finished work on the cross will find it.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for being prideful and for thinking I could live a joyful life in recovery without You, and without those who counsel and mentor me. Thank You for pursuing me with Your unfailing love. I surrender my will and life to You and choose to follow Your directions in all my affairs. 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 and how can I know it is God speaking? God speaks to us as we read the Bible. It's helpful before we begin to read the Bible to ask God to help us hear what He wants to speak to us through the scriptures we are reading. We can expect a phrase or a sentence to encourage or challenge us. This is God's way of bringing something to our attention that He wants us to take note of.

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 what He 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)

Nature is full of ways that God speaks to us. It doesn't take more than a few minutes of walking, or observing, or listening, to have our hearts drawn to something greater than ourselves. We can simply ask, "God what is it about You that you are showing me in what I'm seeing 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 is speaking to us through what others say, through music we hear or sing, and through circumstances as they unfold. As long as our hearts are open and we are willing to take note, God is willing to speak to us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Open my ears and my heart to recognize when You are speaking to me. Help me to take note of what You are saying and behave accordingly. Amen

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

CLEANSE ME FROM MY SIN

Throughout the Twelve Steps we are brought face to face with the reality that we have struggled and fallen short in the way we have lived before God, others, and ourselves. Foundational to recovery is the decision to repent and invite God to forgive us and cleanse us from all our faults and defects.

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. (Romans 3:23 NLT)

To help us identify what is wrong, the Bible uses lots of different words for our sins and failures. The meaning of the word sin is to "miss the mark" and we've done that by failing to do what we knew was right to do, or by choosing to do something which harmed others, and likely hurt ourselves at the same time.

God offers to forgive us for all the ways that we have fallen short.

Sometimes we deliberately or intentionally decide we are going to do what we want to do, even though we know it's wrong. We break the law. We transgress. For example, we chose to drink excessive amounts of alcohol and then drive thinking we can get away with it just this one time.

Then there is sin referred to in the Bible as iniquity. It is more deeply rooted. Through rebellion, usually motivated by bitterness or hatred, we choose to act in a way that is wrong and evil in its purpose. Iniquity is self-will that just doesn't care about others or how others view what we do.

God offers to forgive us for all the ways that we have fallen short. Let's ask the Holy Spirit to search our hearts and help us acknowledge what we see in the light of God's word. Doing an honest set of steps is a must in this process.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. (Psalm 51:1-4 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I have sinned and need Your forgiveness. Help me to make an honest confession and receive Your forgiveness for the wrongs I have done. Amen

REMOVING ALL MY DEFECTS

God is willing, and more than able, to remove all our defects of character if we humbly ask Him. However, we cannot expect to experience God's transforming power in our lives if we remain proud and unwilling to admit that we are helpless apart from him. If we decide what we think needs to go and tell God how we expect Him to act, God will simply allow us to go forward and find out what happens when we base our life on our own limited understanding.

The Lord is good and does what is right; he shows the proper path to those who go astray. He leads the humble in doing right, teaching them his way. The Lord leads with unfailing love and faithfulness all who keep his covenant and obey his demands. (Psalm 25:8-10 NLT)

Only God, in His infinite wisdom, has correct solutions for dealing with our defects of character. We can't ask for God's help to remove our shortcomings just once and expect to be done with it. We must be persistent and ask repeatedly as the need arises. The work of removing our revealed shortcomings is a process which will continue until we become more like Jesus in all our ways.

The process of having our shortcomings removed will be activated when we admit our dependence on God and become willing to receive ongoing direction from Him as well as feedback from others.

Though the Lord is great, he cares for the humble, but he keeps his distance from the proud. Though I am surrounded by troubles, you will protect me from the anger of my enemies. You reach out your hand, and the power of your right hand saves me. The Lord will work out his plans for my life—for your faithful love, O Lord, endures forever. (Psalm 138:6-8 NLT)

Character flaws are transformed into character strengths as we repeatedly lay down our way of thinking and believing and embrace God's way.

Prayer: Loving Father, Thank you for your commitment to remove all my defects of character as I willingly surrender my will and my life into your care. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit, so that I may rely on His strength and guidance to walk in freedom from my past. Change my thinking and believing until I am secure in Your goodness. Amen

Only God, in His infinite wisdom, has correct solutions for dealing with our defects of character.

CHARACTER STRENGTH – BEING THOROUGH

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely. (How It Works, Big Book)

One of the great indicators of success in maintaining sobriety is being thorough. Old timers in the program tell us that it was the things they failed to deal with that tripped them up. Things changed only when they were willing to come completely clean, became willing to have God remove all their defects of character, and chose to make amends for all the trouble caused in their relationships. It didn't happen in a day but the willingness to be thorough and stick with the job until it was done was key to their sobriety.

***Forgiveness
and
cleansing
from our
sins is
thorough
when we
put our
faith and
trust in***

Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them. (Psalm 119:140 NIV)

God sets the pattern for us by being thorough in what He has done. He gave us His written word of truth in the Bible, and He gave us Jesus, the living truth. Forgiveness and cleansing from our sins is thorough when we put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

He gave himself for us. By doing that, he set us free from all evil. He wanted to make us pure. He wanted us to be his very own people. He wanted us to desire to do what is good. (Titus 2:14 NIRV)

Jesus Christ.

Walking the path of life with God in recovery is clearly laid out for us in God's word, so we are "thoroughly equipped" to be people of integrity and good work.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NIV)

What dark corner of our soul needs the light of God's truth today? What needs sorting out, so we are being thorough in making things right in all our affairs?

Prayer: Gracious Father, I want to be thorough in everything I do. Help me to let go of my old ideas and fix my eyes on Your word and be intent on following You in all my ways. Amen

THE ABILITY TO ENJOY

In the past, one of the lies we bought into was that the party life was where the greatest enjoyment of life was to be found. Later, caught in the slavery of our addiction, we found out just how wrong we had been. The good news is that it is not too late to have a life that gives us joy. In fact, it's the life that God created us to live. As we surrender our will and our life into God's care, we have the assurance of ever-deepening joy and well-being coming alive in us.

And it is a good thing to receive wealth from God and the good health to enjoy it. To enjoy your work and accept your lot in life—this is indeed a gift from God. (Ecclesiastes 5:19 NLT)

This doesn't mean that we won't have problems to face, challenges to overcome, and emotions that go along with that. However, it does mean that on any ordinary day, each of us will find ourselves becoming more and more aware of things we are grateful for. We will recognize beauty in ways we previously missed. We will feel the joy of honouring and being honoured as we notice and celebrate growth in one another. We will laugh at our mistakes instead of being lost in fear and shame because of them. Surrendering to God and receiving forgiveness for our sin and rebellion will bring us relief, freedom, and joy. We will be amazed at what Jesus achieved for us on the cross and through His resurrection. Simple pleasures will bring a smile to our hearts as well as our faces.

For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17 NLT)

As we allow ourselves to be embraced by the love of God throughout each day, fear and insecurity will slip away and the ability to enjoy work, family, nature, and recreation will fill us up. We will have the ability to enjoy life to the full.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for calling me to a life that is filled with goodness, peace, and joy. I surrender my life and this day into Your hands and trust You for ongoing healing. I give thanks for the ability to enjoy all the good gifts You are giving me. Amen

***As we
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in us.***

WHAT GOD DOES LASTS

At most recovery meetings there are lots of handshakes and hugs and "chips" or "fobs" to honour clean time. Once a year a person may take a cake to mark their sobriety date. Whether it is a "Just for Today" chip or a multiple year cake, we all have the desire for a lasting recovery. Those who have some solid clean time will often share their experience, strength, and hope with us.

The founders of AA knew that one of the smartest things we could do is attach ourselves to something that is strong and enduring and so they put together a spiritual program that is focused on God. God created us, watches over us, and offers us forgiveness and new life when we believe in Jesus.

I know that everything God does will last forever. Nothing can be added to it. And nothing can be taken from it.
(Ecc 3:14 NIRV)

I don't mean that we are able to do anything good ourselves. It is God who makes us able to do all that we do. (2 Corinthians 3:5 ERV)

When we do what is right in our own eyes, life quickly becomes messy and unmanageable. Receiving help from others is certainly a step in the right direction but the support is only as strong as the person from whom we seek it. King Solomon was the wisest man of his time and he reminds us that what God brings about in our lives is what will last forever. How comforting is that!!

I know that everything God does will last forever. Nothing can be added to it. And nothing can be taken from it. God does that so people will have respect for him. (Ecclesiastes 3:14 NIRV)

Enduring recovery requires that we follow God's ways in all our affairs. Nothing added and nothing taken away is how we are told it works. How often do we choose to add a bit of self-will into the mix and then find ourselves in trouble?

Today, let's read God's word, seek the wisdom that the Holy Spirit wants to give us, and together with God, build a lasting recovery.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want recovery that lasts. I don't want to stumble around. I want to go forward together with You. Take my hand and lead me on the path that You know will give me life and the peace my heart desires. Amen

REASONABLY HAPPY IN THIS LIFE

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (James 1:2-4 NKJV)

Life in recovery can be challenging at times. We have joy in the fact that we are no longer in the pit of our addiction, but we are on an unfamiliar path and need to learn new ways to cope with what is going on inside us. We have been the "experts" in surviving in our dysfunctional lifestyle, but now we are the "newbies" in coping with life in recovery. Thankfully, God has promised to be with us throughout the transition process.

Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust. You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:1; 11 NKJV)

God called us out of darkness and invites us to walk in the light of His presence. Like any child learning to walk we may stumble as we take steps on this unknown path, but God is with us, and has promised to take us by the hand and guide us. He will never let go. Like a good Father, God rejoices with us when we keep going and, if we stumble and fall, He encourages us to get up and continue our journey.

How happy are the people who know the sound of joy! They walk in the light of Your face, O Lord. They are full of joy in Your name all day long. And by being right with You, they are honored. (Psalm 89:15-16 NLV)

In addiction we were in utter despair. In our new life in recovery, we experience increasing joy as we persist through the trials we encounter. God is always calling us to fullness of joy in Him which is two fold – reasonable happiness in this life and supreme happiness with God forever in the next.

Prayer: God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as the pathway to peace. Taking as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it, trusting that you will make all things right if I surrender to Your will so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with you forever in the next. Amen

In our new life in recovery, we experience increasing joy as we persist through the trials we encounter.

RESENTMENT and BURIED GRUDGES

We feel hurt when another's unkind words or actions cause our self-worth to be devalued. If amends are not made, we often carry a grudge against the offender and this has the effect of causing us further harm. Hanging on to a bitter grudge and seeking revenge only sickens our soul and damages those who are close to us.

Forgiveness is the only way to stop the ongoing pain from buried grudges. For some of us who have been victimized, forgiveness is unthinkable. We still feel the pain of the offence and forgiveness rips at our sense of justice. We want the offender to pay, to suffer in return for the suffering they have inflicted on us. However, until we forgive the offender, the offence he or she committed against us will continue to harm us. Due to our unwillingness to forgive, the occurrence will fester with resentment in our souls and the damaging link between us and the perpetrator will remain. The Bible gives us the following advice:

Forgiveness is the only way to stop the ongoing pain from buried grudges.

Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written, "I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it," says the Lord. Instead, do what the Scriptures say: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink, and they will be ashamed of what they have done to you." (Romans 12:18-20 NLT)

Healing will come if we are willing to let go. Why not take the lingering pain and resentment of offences against us to the cross where Jesus atoned for them? Why not choose to forgive and turn the person who harmed us over to God? Why not be guided in all our ways by the love of God?

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. (1 John 3:1a;3 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to forgive those who have sinned against me as You have graciously forgiven me for my sins against You. I desire to be free from all bitterness and the grudges I have held against others. Please help me to let go of all that keeps me in bondage to my past and allow the healing process to begin. Amen

I AM A WALKING MIRACLE

"I am a walking miracle" is a slogan we often hear said in recovery meetings. It's repeated because we are amazed at the change God has made in our lives. Each of us knows that it is nothing short of a miracle to be who we are today, compared to who we once were.

Many of us can testify that when we came into recovery, we were powerless over our problems and dependencies. Daily living was totally unmanageable. Desperation brought us to recovery and we hoped we would find a power greater than ourselves who could restore us to sanity.

God has sent his special servant Jesus. He sent him to you first. He sent him to bless you by causing each of you to turn away from your evil ways. (Acts 3:26 ERV)

When we were stumbling around in the darkness, we were unaware of the provision God had made for us. We did not know, or chose not to believe, that God desired to have a relationship with us. When we wholeheartedly gave our will and life over to God's care, we came to experience that we had someone to watch over us, someone who really knew us and cared for us. God put His Holy Spirit in us, His guarantee of our inheritance as children of God.

Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22 NKJV)

What a privilege to be in the care of Almighty God. When a child of God considers where they have come from, and who they are right now, no wonder they proclaim, "I am a walking miracle."

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 1:5b-6 NKJV)

Prayer: Gracious Father, I don't know why You love me, but You do. Thank You for raising me to new heights with You. Amen

It is nothing short of a miracle to be who we are today, compared to who we once were.

WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS

Broken relationships are a significant issue in most relapses back into active addiction. We need to invite God to work in us so we can recognize those things that impact how we relate to others. As we look at the past it's important to acknowledge pain in a relationship, accept responsibility for our part in where things went wrong, and become willing to forgive the other person involved. These are important aspects of living out what we began in Step 8, when we became willing to make amends to all those we had harmed.

Make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. (Philippians 2:2-4 NLT)

God not only heals but will make something good out of even the most traumatic event.

God knows completely about each painful and fearful memory we have, whether we are aware that He was with us at the time the incident happened or not. Knowing this makes it easier for us to face those memories. God already knows what happened. He knows the impact it had on us and others and He's longing to help each of us do what is right to get things sorted out and healed. God knows. God cares. God not only heals but will make something good out of even the most traumatic event.

Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us. Let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. (1 John 4:11-12, 1 John 3:18 NLT)

Others have failed us and we have failed others too. As we receive healing and comfort from God, we'll become secure enough to forgive others who have harmed us and acknowledge our own failure to act in loving ways.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for creating me to live in loving relationship with You and others. Thank you for Jesus, whose death on the cross for my sins made loving relationships possible. Your word says there is no fear in love and that Your perfect love casts out all my fear. Help me become willing to make amends to those people I have harmed. Amen

IF GOD SEEMS FAR AWAY WHO MOVED?

Feelings cannot always be trusted. They often point us to an incorrect perception of who we are, who God is, and what is happening in our circumstances. God promises to never leave us and that nothing can separate us from His love.

The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. I keep my eyes always on the Lord. He is at my right hand. So I will always be secure. (Psalm 145:18 NIV, Psalm 16:8 NIRV)

God's word gives us principles around which we can do an inventory to see if we have drifted away from the closeness God is longing for us to experience with Him. Perhaps we've been busy or distracted and it's been a while since we took time to sit down with God and focus on what He wants to say to us. Have we taken time to just be with God as a friend or do we simply reach out to Him in an emergency? Have we strayed into self-will and sinful attitudes or actions and not asked God for forgiveness? Have we been more focused on getting God's help for our agenda rather than taking time to consult God on what His agenda for our day or a particular situation might be? If we are running away from God's will then we will feel more distant from Him.

If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. Before I confessed my sins, my bones felt limp, and I groaned all day long. Then I admitted my sin to you. I didn't cover up the wrong I had done. ... and you forgave the guilt of my sin. (John 15:10 NIV; Psalm 32:3,5 NIRV)

Sometimes we may be doing things right and actively seeking to follow God but still feel distant. In that case the next avenue to consider is whether the evil one is lying to us about God's caring attention to us in all aspects of our affairs. This calls us to affirm in our own hearts what God's word says. Our feelings will catch up with these truths.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for always being close to me. You never stop watching out for me and are ready now, and throughout this day, to lift me up and show me the path You have chosen for me. Help me to remove any obstacles that I may have allowed in our relationship. Help me to take time today to rest and find comfort in You. Amen

God promises to never leave us and that nothing can separate us from His love.

SEEKING PLEASURE

God designed humans with a natural desire to pursue pleasure. Pleasure was to come from our intimate relationship with God and then overflow into our human relationships and experiences.

You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. (Psalm 16:11 NIV)

Seeking pleasure above all else has been described down through the ages as the focus of fools rather than that of the wise.

The problem is, we get consumed with desire for things that only bring temporary satisfaction. Seeking pleasure above all else has been described down through the ages as the focus of fools rather than that of the wise. Whether it is avoiding work, failing to listen to the wisdom of another, or planning and scheming to get ahead, these are described as things that bring temporary pleasure but, in the end, always bring trouble. Our addiction and the chaos of life it brings certainly fits into this category.

A fool finds pleasure in wicked schemes, but a person of understanding delights in wisdom. Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions. Whoever loves pleasure will become poor; whoever loves wine and olive oil will never be rich. (Proverbs 10:23, 18:2, 21:17 NIV)

We often experience pleasure when we are kind to others. God gets great pleasure in adopting us into His family and who of us doesn't find joy in knowing that we are loved and belong.

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 1:5 NLT)

Whether it's tasting that first cup of coffee in the morning or laying our head on the pillow at night, let's be mindful of God's goodness and all the simple pleasures that fill our day.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to listen to Your guidance so I live on the path that leads to joy and satisfaction each day. Help me to live in Your presence and experience pleasure that is so much more fulfilling than anything addiction has to offer. Amen

GRATITUDE – FOR THE SIMPLE/UNCOMPLICATED

Everyday life has its challenges, but each day is also filled with many simple pleasures that often go unappreciated. One of the best and most effective ways to lift our spirits and change our outlook is to focus on positive things and be grateful for them.

Everything that God made is good. Nothing he made should be refused if it is accepted with thanks to him. Everything he created is made holy. (1 Timothy 4:4-5 ERV)

In many parts of the world today people see and hear bombs falling, bullets whistling past, or emergency vehicle sirens blaring. Most of us will not have to face that kind of traumatizing environment today. Statistics tell us that 780 million people do not have access to safe drinking water. Do we? We may not have the body of Superman or Wonder Woman after years of punishing it, but there are things we can do today. We are also fortunate to have support for any area of disability we may be experiencing.

I always thank my God for you because of the grace that he has given you through Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 1:4 ERV)

Recovery is a journey of recognizing our powerlessness, and our character defects. It's about co-operating with God as we experience restoration. When we don't do things perfectly, we admit our failings and seek change. God chooses to pour out His gifts of forgiveness, healing, and guidance on us? God accepts us. God blesses us. This is His amazing grace to us through Jesus Christ. Are we grateful for these things?

Whether it's enjoying a cup of tea or coffee, or a quiet moment of reflection, or the hundred other little gifts that are scattered throughout our day, let's give thanks to God for how He has worked in the complicated chaos we turned over to Him, and how in return we have received a new life of simple grace.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to recognize the many beautiful gifts I have been given. Open my eyes to see and my heart to appreciate the simple pleasures of life that are all around me. Amen

One of the best and most effective ways to lift our spirits and change our outlook is to focus on positive things and be grateful for them.

CHARACTER DEFECT – LYING

The Bible makes it clear that God detests lying. In our addiction, most of the time, we did not speak the truth. We also lied by being silent in some situations and thereby giving false impressions of the truth. There are various reasons why we lied, some of which are: to get what we wanted; to protect ourselves; to protect others; to get out of trouble. There is a slogan that says, “We are most like the devil when we lie.”

Do not steal. Do not tell lies. Do not cheat one another. The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in those who tell the truth. (Leviticus 19:11; Proverbs 12:22 NLT)

It is sad when someone is a compulsive liar. People around them know they cannot be relied on to tell the truth. Some of us were once like that. We tried to paint word pictures of ourselves that were glowing and got angry with others when they saw right through us. Thank God He brought us to the place where we were able to see the truth. We came to acknowledge that we were powerless over our dependencies and that our life had become unmanageable. In recovery we are encouraged to tell the truth even though it can sometimes be painful.

We are most like the devil when we lie.

An honest witness tells the truth; a false witness tells lies. Truthful words stand the test of time, but lies are soon exposed. (Proverbs 12:17, 19 NLT)

Our lives will be transformed if we are willing to truthfully bring all the events of our past into the light of God’s forgiveness and healing grace. Covering up certain incidents is being untruthful and puts us back into the darkness where we are subject to relapse. Why not reveal those things that have the power to oppress us and receive forgiveness and healing? We can then build a new life on the foundation of the truth of God’s word.

And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight. (2 Peter 3:14 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, I have fallen short of speaking the truth in so many ways. Please help me build the new life You have given me on the truth of Your word. Amen

SUSPICIOUS

To be suspicious can be good or bad depending on the circumstances. We are often told to watch out for suspicious behaviour and report it when appropriate. Most of us would be suspicious of a person lurking around in our neighbourhood and who appears to have no motive for being there. Being suspicious, however, becomes a shortcoming when we distrust a person, or a program, simply because the person or event does not meet our expectations.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. (Romans 12:3 NIV)

In addiction it was easy to accuse others of things we suspected they did, whether we had proof or not. Accusing a person without proof causes anger and resentment and perhaps even violence. In an intimate relationship, a person may be suspicious of their partner if they appear to pay extra attention to someone else, and in a volatile relationship, this may even cause the suspicious person to become violent.

So he said to them, “Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages.” (Luke 3:14b NKJV)

There are times when our self-protection and character defects incline us to suspect evil intentions in another person. This can result in us reacting to what we think, rather than to what is true. Someone may have decided to dispose of junk that has been lying around only to have another person accuse them of stealing their belongings. We need to look for good in a person rather than being suspicious of evil intention. Suspicion should be settled by a willingness to speak with the other person and hear truth.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. (Philippians 4:8 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to be more considerate of others and less inclined to self-protection. I ask for the gift of thinking good thoughts about others rather than finding fault. Amen

We need to look for good in a person rather than being suspicious of evil intention.

PAYING IT FORWARD

Living a life of goodness, peace, and joy reflects the Kingdom of God within us. As God pours out His blessings upon us, we need to let those blessings overflow to others. For example, when we encounter someone who is troubled and in need of compassion and encouragement, we are to comfort them with the same comfort we have received. God promises that as we give to others He will pour even more back into our lives.

Give away your life; you'll find life given back, but not merely given back—given back with bonus and blessing. Giving, not getting, is the way. Generosity begets generosity. (Luke 6:38 MSG)

God promises that as we give to others, He will pour even more back into our lives.

A person with goodness in their heart will naturally share that goodness with others. Blessings and curses cannot come from the same heart. When we pray, we often ask God to forgive us our sins as we forgive the sins of others. Whether we choose to forgive others, or not, will have a major impact on our lives. Holding on to grudges is the soil that allows bitterness to grow in our hearts. When we choose to let go of bitterness and resolve to keep ourselves free from this controlling weed, we will be surprised by joy.

Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:31-32 NLT)

As we accept God's amazing grace, and then grace others, we will experience the joy and security of the generous life God always intended us to have.

Make sure no one gets left out of God's generosity. Keep a sharp eye out for weeds of bitter discontent. A thistle or two gone to seed can ruin a whole garden in no time. (Hebrews 12:14 MSG)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You are a God of unfailing love and faithfulness. Help me to follow Your principles in all my affairs and to bless others as I have been blessed by You. Amen

HEALING THE HURT THAT LIES BELOW THE SURFACE

When we think of healing we often look to physical healings recorded in the Bible. Jesus restored sight to several blind people and healed some who were paralyzed so they could walk again. We can see the need for healing of physical conditions but what about a heart that has been broken by harsh and degrading words or actions? Like a hammer drives nails that fasten things together, demeaning words and actions drive hurt deep into our souls and fasten it to the person we come to believe that we are.

I'm heartsick and heartbroken by it all. Their contempt has crushed my soul. I looked for sympathy and compassion but found only empty stares. He (Jesus) heals the wounds of every shattered heart. (Psalms 69:20; 147:3 TPT)

It might help those of us who have suffered from verbal or physical abuse to know that the words from Psalm 69 above speak about Jesus and what He suffered from those who spoke against Him and plotted to have Him killed. They rejected, mocked, flogged, and spit on Jesus, told lies about Him, and had Him flogged and crucified. Do you think that Jesus might understand our pain when we have been devalued by those things said and done to us? Jesus invites us to come to Him with all our inner pain and receive healing.

Are you weary, carrying a heavy burden? Come to me. I will refresh your life, for I am your oasis. Simply join your life with mine. Learn my ways and you'll discover that I'm gentle, humble, easy to please. You will find refreshment and rest in me. (Matthew 11:28-29 TPT)

Jesus made a way for healing for everyone who needs restoration of body, mind, or spirit. Jesus paid with His life for the sin and abuse we have suffered. Why not give our will and life into the care of the One who fully understands our brokenness?

Jesus understands every weakness of ours, because he was tempted in every way that we are. But he did not sin! (Hebrews 4:15 CEV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I come to You for healing and restoration for You know and understand what I have suffered. I am tired and weary of carrying this heavy load. Please help me to believe and receive the new life of love and blessing that You offer me. Amen

Jesus made a way for healing for everyone who needs restoration of body, mind, or spirit.