

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



JUNE 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.

FACING PROBLEMS 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.

When we face difficulties and problems, we often ask ourselves some questions: Does God care? Does God care about me? Does God care about my situation today? It's very easy to get blinded by the pressure of problems and to fail to see the help and blessing that God is offering us.

Sometimes we respond to problems by complaining and believing the lie that we have been rejected and abandoned by God and others and now we must "figure things out on our own." We blame God and others for not helping us when life is not the way we desire it to be. In challenging moments it's important to remember that God is always with us and not let the emotions of the moment cloud that truth.

God's desire is to help us and if we seek Him, He will act on our behalf to make a way where there seems to be no way. His word says, ***"The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him."*** (2 Chronicles 16:9 NLT)

With God's help, we are responsible to faithfully work on problems until they are resolved. If invited, God will be with us and will give us wisdom to know how to handle each problem. God may also bring a knowledgeable person alongside to help us. Some problems will be resolved quickly and others will take consistent work over a period of time. God will give us the strength we need for today and for each step we need to take in the future. Our challenge is to trust and obey Him as He leads us forward.

So don't get tired of doing what is good. Don't get discouraged and give up, for we will reap a harvest of blessing at the appropriate time ... For I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need. (Galatians 6:9, Philippians 4:13, NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for your promise to never leave me alone. When I face problems, help me to trust You and allow You to show me the way forward. I want to seek Your solutions and not try to force my own. Your ways are always better than mine. Amen

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

JUNE 2

HOPING FOR HELP

NOTES

To some degree all of us rely on ourselves to do those things that are important for life and happiness. That is why we are reluctant to seek help when we are troubled by an event that has caused us pain. We tend to look to our own solutions and unfortunately the pain only increases. When we came into recovery it took a giant step for us to admit that we were powerless over our dependency and that our life had become unmanageable. When we feel powerless we are hopeful that we will find someone who is powerful enough to help us.

We put our hope in the Lord. He is our help and our shield. Let your unfailing love surround us, Lord, for our hope is in you alone. (Psalm 33:20, 22 NLT)

***Why am I discouraged?
Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and my God!***

In our time of need someone may be willing to help us by giving us a bed for the night, or a meal, or valuable counsel, but who, other than God, can give us hope for a new life? We can work on doing a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves but defects are exposed, what hope do we have that the garbage we have uncovered can be removed? We can tell another person about the garbage but what hope do we have that they can do anything about it? A surgeon may be skillful at repairing a broken leg but who can heal a broken spirit?

Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and my God! (Psalm 43:5 NLT)

God wants us to have hope in His ability to restore our fractured spirit. He demonstrated His great love for us by sending Jesus into the world to take our sin and brokenness upon Himself. When our sin is exposed and repented of, we do not keep it. We give it to Jesus who was sentenced to death for its penalty and, in exchange, receive His gift of new life.

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)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You that through Jesus my sins are no longer counted against me. For this I am grateful and have cause to hope in Your unfailing promise of a new life. Amen

SELF-CONTROL

When we give our will and life over to the care of God, we receive the new birth Jesus spoke of. This brings to an end our old way of life which was dominated by sinful thoughts formed in an unspiritual mind. Being born again means we begin a new life in Christ. As our spiritual mind is awakened to the ways of God, new spiritual qualities form in us, and self-control is one of those. As we pray and meditate on God's Word, the Holy Spirit shows us God's ways and, as we trust and obey the Spirit's guidance, we start to live fruitful lives.

God's Spirit makes us loving, happy, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled. There is no law against behaving in any of these ways. (Galatians 5:22-23 CEV)

As we learn new ways of thinking and behaving, our desire will be to please God in all our affairs.

The Bible tells us to consider ourselves dead to sin. We often do not feel dead to sin when we first set out on our spiritual journey in recovery. Old ways and obsessive thoughts keep coming to mind, tempting us to satisfy their desires. This is where we need to exert the discipline of self-control and stand firmly on God's Word, reminding ourselves that we are dead to our old self with its passions and desires, for they have been crucified with Christ.

And because we belong to Christ Jesus, we have killed our selfish feelings and desires. (Galatians 5:24 CEV)

It is in our minds that we need to be renewed and controlled by the truth that we are new creations who do not need to feed our character defects. The way we think impacts our behaviour which is why we daily need to improve our conscious contact with God, praying to know His will and have the power to carry it out. As we learn new ways of thinking and behaving, our desire will be to please God in all our affairs.

Don't be like the people of this world, but let God change the way you think. Then you will know how to do everything that is good and pleasing to him. (Romans 12:2 CEV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is to grow in the truth of who I am in Christ Jesus. Please help me be self-controlled in all my thinking and behaving for I want to follow Your principles in all my affairs. Amen

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)

As we choose for life with God in recovery we will soon come to a place of challenge where, rather than wanting what God wants us to do, we want to do what we want to do. It might be inconvenient for us to stop and listen to a person who needs to share or needs help with something when we are trying to relax and have fun. We want to stay with what we are doing rather than try to meet the other person's need. We hear the quiet voice in our head saying, "Do the right thing." Will we ignore it or respond?

Self-centered ways are childish ways. God invites us to grow up and, as mature adults, make good choices and act responsibly. We have allowed our wants to be our guide for too long, and that has been our downfall. God calls us to live as Jesus did, showing compassion and mercy to others, even when it is inconvenient.

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)

We may not know why it is important to do inconvenient things in order to grow into the person we were created to be, but the principle mentioned above gives us guidance: ***"Be humble as you live in the sight of your God."*** We are the students. God is the teacher. Only God knows the proper sequence of instruction needed to free us from our character defects. God wants us to depend on Him and each object lesson will come at just the right time. He will show us the best way and will strengthen us to be thoroughly equipped for every good work. For our part, it requires humility and surrender to His will.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Teach me to do what is right and help me to be willing to do things Your way and in Your time. Please give me the grace and strength to serve others with kindness even when it may be inconvenient to my own schedule. Amen

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

SUNDAY PSALM – DELIBERATE SINS

Sometimes we have a blind spot to our wrong doing. We have lived and relied on our own understanding for years and now it has become a way of life that we find no fault with. Our lifestyle may even be acceptable to society in general. However, when our behaviour goes against the teaching of the Bible, we need to become willing to change our ways.

**Because
Jesus'
sacrifice on
the cross
paid the
price for all
sin, even
deliberate
sins, we are
assured of
complete
forgiveness
when we
repent.**

How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults. Keep your servant from deliberate sins! Don't let them control me. Then I will be free of guilt and innocent of great sin. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. (Psalm 19:12-14 NLT)

We may make all kinds of excuses to continue our ungodly behaviour, but the Holy Spirit will consistently make us conscious of any behaviour that is not pleasing to God. Then we have to make a choice. If we continue in deliberate sin, we will not prosper, and we will forfeit our claim to the blessing of God. If we choose to surrender to God's way, His Holy Spirit will work in us to keep us from doing wrong. Because Jesus' sacrifice on the cross paid the price for all sin, even deliberate sins, we are assured of complete forgiveness when we repent.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Brothers and sisters let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. (Matthew 5:8; Galatians 3:15 NIV)

As we turn from our stubborn ways and choose to follow God's ways we will begin to experience the blessings God has promised.

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

Prayer: Loving God, Keep me from deliberate sins. I surrender my stubborn will and choose for Your will for my life. Give me the desire and power to honour You in all I say and do. Amen

JESUS TEACHES US HOW TO PRAY

When Jesus was here on earth, He often went off on His own to pray. Jesus knew the value of seeking His Father's direction for the daily events in His earthly life. With His divinity set aside, Jesus was truly a son of man operating in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray and He gave them a prayer that is 65 words long and yet offers wisdom and insight into the most important issues of life.

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. (Matthew 6:9b-13 NKJV)

When we pray, have we considered who God is and the issues we are bringing before Him? Are we inviting His will, not ours, to be done here on earth? Do we believe when we ask Him that He will truly meet our needs? Are we willing to forgive those who have wronged us, as He has forgiven our wrongs? Do we sincerely desire to overcome temptation and be delivered from the evil one? Do we identify as children of God and recognize that we have transferred into the Kingdom of His dear son Jesus in whom all power and glory exist forever?

For he has rescued us out of the darkness and gloom of Satan's kingdom and brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who bought our freedom with his blood and forgave us all our sins. (Colossians 1:13-14 TLB)

When we give our will and life over to the care of God, we move out of Satan's kingdom and enter the Kingdom of God. We must stand firmly on this truth. Through prayer and meditation on God's word, we will increase our conscious contact with God and experience His help in every area of our life.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to stand firm on the truth of Your word and to pray continually for Your guidance in all my affairs. May my words and actions reflect Your Kingdom here on earth. Amen

***I am praying
to you
because I
know you
will answer,
O God.
Bend
down and
listen as I
pray.***

Psalm 17:6 NLT

FURY OR FAITH WHEN FACING FRUSTRATION

Four friends loved a paralyzed man and wanted him to be healed. They heard about Jesus healing the sick and the lame and knew that the only hope their friend had was to get him to Jesus. They worked hard getting their friend to where Jesus was but, when they got there, they were blocked by the crowds.

While he [Jesus] was preaching God’s word to them, four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat. They couldn’t bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above his head. Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “My child, your sins are forgiven.” (Mark 2:3-5 NLT)

These four men and their paralyzed friend were so close to Jesus and yet so frustratingly far off. However, because they trusted completely in Jesus’ ability to heal their friend, they were willing to do the extraordinary. They tore up the roof and let their friend down in front of where Jesus was standing.

How many times have we been angry because we’ve gotten SO close to what we needed, only to bump into some obstacle or wall? Jesus is a kind and loving Saviour and a powerful healer. He knows us. He cares for us. He has the solution for every problem we face. Most of us agree with these statements but when troubles come, when sickness shows up, when loneliness brings tears to our eyes, our faith seems to fail us, and we feel abandoned and alone. Today we are invited to press on and not give up.

Jesus rewards our faith when we walk in difficult circumstances and continue to trust Him.

If we trust who Jesus is and what He has said, and act accordingly, God will do amazing things for us, far beyond all we could ask or imagine. Jesus rewards our faith when we walk in difficult circumstances and continue to trust Him.

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to trust You today no matter what challenges I face. You are there for me and You will meet my deepest needs. Help me to not give up when the going gets tough but to continue to trust You. Amen

IT'S NOT FAIR – OR IS IT?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Sometimes I feel that life isn’t fair, and things never go right for me. Help me to trust Your knowledge of what is best for me and Your Word which says that all things will work together for my good. Please help me focus on knowing You and following Your ways. Amen

It is better to be poor and do right than to be rich and do wrong.
Proverbs 16:8
ERV

ISOLATION VERSUS RELATIONSHIP

In our addiction, long periods of isolation became a way of life for us. We may have been around people while we were using but we didn't trust them, and there was little or no emotional connection between us. We certainly didn't feel cared for or understood by them. Coming out of isolation and having healthy relationships is part of 'leaving behind' a life of addiction. It might be as simple as attending a meeting and just saying "Hello" to a person in the group. It certainly means taking time to get to know others and allowing relationships at various levels to bring richness to our daily life. We also take a step out of isolation when we sincerely pray the Serenity Prayer and little by little come to know God, who has the power to restore us to sanity.

Jesus said: ***"I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.*** (John 15:5 NLT)

Let us consider how we can stir up one another to love.

Hebrews 10:24

We need to form a relationship with our Heavenly Father and learn how to receive and respond to His unfailing love. As we open our hearts to God's kindness, we begin to relax and take the risk of sharing ourselves with others. Often it is through the gentle spirit of another human being that we see God's love and come to believe that there is a God who truly cares for us.

Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. (Philippians 2:4, Galatians 6:2 NLT)

To demonstrate the power of relationship over isolation the Bible uses a picture of the body where every part works together to support the other. Where one part is weak, the other offers strength. As we live with and help each other, we are strengthened and encouraged by all that we can accomplish together.

Let us consider how we can stir up one another to love. Let us help one another to do good works. And let us not give up meeting together. Some are in the habit of doing this. Instead, let us encourage one another with words of hope. (Hebrews 10:24-25 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Give me the courage to reach out and befriend others in my community as we are all parts of the same body of Christ. As You love and encourage me, help me to reach out and encourage others. Amen

REST AND RECREATION

It's summertime – time for rest and recreation and hopefully some quality time with friends and/or family. We have daily rhythms of work and sleep, and weekly calendars that include workdays and weekends. Some of us have at least one annual time of vacation where we take a week or more to really get away from the usual routines and enjoy nature and rest. A time to rest and come away from the daily routine is a need God created in us.

You may work six days a week to do your job. But the seventh day is a day of rest in honor of the Lord your God. So on that day no one should work. (Exodus 20:9-10 ERV)

Whether we are at work or play God wants us to be people who know peace and rest of soul. Knowing God and trusting Him is how we find peace in our souls. Life, even doing well in recovery, is more than we can handle on our own. That's why we make a habit of handing the stress and pressure of daily living over to God, inviting Him to do for us that which we cannot do for ourselves.

It is surely true that I find my rest in God. He is the God who saves me. It is surely true that he is my rock. He is the God who saves me. He is like a fort to me. I will always be secure. (Psalm 62:1-2 NIRV)

When we put our trust in God, confess our sins, and turn away from them, we are forgiven. At times the enemy seeks to rob us of our peace of mind and rest of heart. He'll get us feeling guilty about this or that thing from our past. In those moments, God wants us to find peace by reminding ourselves that God's forgiveness is greater than any wrong we've done. Whatever this day brings for us – work or play – may our hearts be quieted by God's love and care.

This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. (1 John 3:19-20 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of rest. I choose to honour You in both my work and rest. I bring my anxious thoughts and troubled emotions to You, trusting that You will quiet my heart and fill my whole being with Your peace. Amen

A time to rest and come away from the daily routine is a need God created in us.

GRATITUDE AT EVERY STAGE OF THE JOURNEY

In sharing our recovery journey at meetings, we often look to the model of "what life was like in addiction, what happened, and what does life look like now." In each of these stages of our journey it does us good to see God's input into what was and is going on, and thank Him for all He has done and continues to do.

Thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.
(1 Corinthians 15:57 NLT)

It does us good to see God's input into what was, and is going on, and thank Him for all He has done and continues to do.

Only God could have brought us to a place where we recognized that we were powerless and that our lives had become unmanageable. God, in His wisdom, brought someone across our path to share a message of hope with us or He simply stirred a desire in us for something other than what we were living. God gave us the strength and courage to seek help and here we are. One day at a time, one moment at a time God gives us sobriety and a new life worth living. Have we taken time today to thank God for all of this?

But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. Everything you say and everything you do should be done for Jesus your Lord. And in all you do, give thanks to God the Father through Jesus. (Romans 6:17 NIV, Colossians 3:17 ERV)

There's no doubt that the power of our addiction brought us to a place of being a slave to our drug of choice and to a lifestyle of doing whatever was necessary, regardless of the harm we caused others. That slavery was broken by the power of God as we put our trust in the forgiveness and healing that Jesus won for us on the cross.

As we studied God's word and put His principles into practice in all our affairs, we have found freedom to speak and behave in new ways we never would have thought of or imagined. We wake up each day with a heart filled with gratitude and offer our experience, strength, and hope to those around us.

Prayer: Loving God, I can't begin to tell you how grateful I am for what You have done for me. Each breath I take is a gift from You. I don't want to take my sobriety for granted. Today, and every day, I want to thank You for my life and my recovery. Amen

DEVELOPING OPTIMISM THROUGH FAITH

Early, if not the first on the list of qualities we need to build in our new life with God in recovery, is optimism grounded in faith – faith that trusts in God, learns from God, and builds on the promises that God gives in the Bible. We are often encouraged to be optimistic rather than pessimistic. Faith is the key building block in this transition.

When we have faith, we can dare to see a glass half full instead of half empty. We know that while we can't control people, places, or things, God is in control and He will make a way for us to move forward in our recovery. We don't know the future, but we know we are in God's hands and His plans for us are good. How do we get this kind of faith-filled optimism? We don't paste a fake smile on our face but truly expect good things from God to come in this day and in the future.

And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.
(Hebrews 11:6 NLT)

Faith that gives us reason for a positive outlook in life is rooted in the fact that God exists, and that God cares about us. Without faith in God there's no reason to pray or expect to be protected from anything that might happen to us. Thankfully, God does exist and is watching over us each day. As we bring our hearts and the events of our lives before Him in prayer, He responds to our situations with wisdom and understanding far beyond all we could ask for or imagine.

Optimism rooted in faith grows in us as we not only hear but also act on the truth of God's word. Even if we don't understand how it all works together, we can confidently build our lives on the truth of the scriptures.

Jesus said, ***I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible.*** (Matthew 17:20 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to see my life and the circumstances around me with Your eyes. Give me the courage to act on the little faith I have and to look to You to direct my path. As You strengthen and bless me, help me to strengthen and bless others. Amen

We don't know the future, but we know we are in God's hands and His plans for us are good.

DAILY INVENTORY

Some time may have passed since we completed a Step Ten of the 12-Step program and we may now assume we have it all figured out and are well on our way in recovery. Alternatively, we may be so early in recovery that we still feel a bit dazed and confused about what life in recovery looks like on an ongoing basis. Regardless of where we are in our journey, making a regular daily inventory by measuring ourselves against God’s tried and true principles will help us monitor our progress.

Prayerfully making a daily inventory with God helps to maintain our sobriety and supports ongoing spiritual growth.

Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak. I listen carefully to what God the Lord is saying, for he speaks peace to his faithful people. But let them not return to their foolish ways. (Mark 14:38, Psalm 85:8 NLT)

God has given us principles by which His faithful people learn to think, speak, and act. As we begin each day it’s good to ask God to help us live according to His ways. At the end of each day an inventory helps us recognize and give thanks for successes. It also makes us aware of how far we may have fallen short.

The fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself. Always think about what is true. Think about what is noble, right and pure. Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect. If anything is excellent or worthy of praise, think about those kinds of things. (Galatians 5:22-23, Philippians 4:8 NIRV)

God is interested in our thoughts and feelings because He knows they motivate our behaviour. Prayerfully making a daily inventory with God will help us maintain our sobriety, and also support our ongoing spiritual growth. More and more we discover a life that is meaningful, purposeful, and joyful.

Prayer: Gracious God, May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. Amen (Psalm 19:14, Psalm 139:23-24 NLT)

ACCEPTING HARSHIP AS A WAY TO PEACE

When we pray the full version of the Serenity Prayer, what are we asking God to do for us? “... *accepting hardship as a 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...*”

Many of us came into recovery because the hardships of life in addiction became more than we were able to cope with. Getting sober and cleaning up took care of some of the problems but other painful issues we buried a long time ago suddenly became front and center in our thoughts and emotions. Health concerns, money problems, education and employment issues, and relationship breakdowns are all issues that are hard and painful to deal with, especially by those of us who previously chose to bury them in the haze of our addiction.

But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one. He [God] gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. (2 Thessalonians 3:3, Isaiah 40:29 NIV)

Jesus faced hardship in his life. He was persecuted by the evil and sinfulness that brought Him to earth to die on the cross. However, Jesus overcame death and rose to life again. Jesus’ resurrection changes everything for us because we can now have the amazing power that raised Jesus from the dead living in us, strengthening us to be overcomers as we courageously face painful challenges.

As we face the adversity of worry, irritation, stress and anger in our daily living with the God who cares for each of us, we will find that He is always faithful. God gives us everything we need to get through those hardships and what a joy it is to experience the peace that awaits us on the other side.

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (1 John 4:4, Philippians 4:6-7 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I’m through running. I put my trust in You today to help me persevere through whatever comes my way and to have victory over it. Amen

God will give us all we need to face hardship, rather than run away from it.

FIRING “THE COMMITTEE IN MY HEAD”

God’s Word often speaks about our enemies, and these are the “enemies of our soul.” Sometimes we speak about them as “our demons” or “the committee in our head.” We have various descriptions for those powers that seek to steal our recovery and destroy our life. While we have our part to play in choosing to hear God’s voice and staying the course during times of trial and testing, God’s promise to us is that He will bring success to our lives as we trust in Him. Our enemies will be defeated, and God’s good plan for us will move forward one day at a time, one moment at a time.

Don’t let my enemies kill me. Hide me from evil people who talk about how to harm me. Hide me from those people who are planning to do evil. They make their tongues like sharp swords. They aim their mean words like deadly arrows. (Psalm 64:1b-2 NIRV)

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

***Matthew 11:28
NIV***

We often tire of the fight with the “committee in our heads.” Sometimes our head feels like it is pounding from the injustice and meanness of all the harsh words we hear. Thank God that we can come to Him and ask Him to quiet the storms that are raging and bring us to that safe harbour of peace in our soul.

My faithful God, answer me when I call out to you. Give me rest from my trouble. Have mercy on me. Hear my prayer. Remember that the Lord has set apart his faithful servant for himself. The Lord hears me when I call out to him. (Psalm 4: 1, 3 NIRV)

How do we get from the ugliness in our heads to the place of peace and rest? We speak to God. We ask God to help us rest. We affirm that God is with us. We ask for His help and remind ourselves that God is greater than the obsessive voice that is swirling around in our heads. God will do for us what we are powerless to do for ourselves. God has His way of doing that, and we can be assured that God’s way is effective. We just need to call on Him.

But God will shoot my enemies with his arrows. He will suddenly strike them down. He will turn their own words against them. He will destroy them. (Psalm 64:7-8a NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You know when the enemies of my soul turn up the volume of their horrible voices in my head. I put my trust in You to give me rest and peace, and to “fire the committee in my head.” At times like these, help me to focus on Your unfailing love for me. Amen

START AT THE BEGINNING

When a building is at the planning stage, blueprints need to be drawn up and submitted to the local district council for approval permits. As the work proceeds, a building inspector will review the ongoing work at strategic steps to ensure the it adheres to the plans submitted. The inspector will also note any defects in the work done and require that these be put right before the work continues. These inspections are required to ensure that the building is complete and sufficient for its future use.

When we give our will and life over to God’s care, we also need to follow established practices if we are to be complete and sufficient for use in the Kingdom of God.

You accepted Christ Jesus as Lord, so continue to live following him. You must depend on Christ only, drawing life and strength from him. Just as you were taught the truth, continue to grow stronger in your understanding of it. (Colossians 2:6-7a ERV)

The first step in any building process is to clear the land and dig down to the bedrock for the foundation. If this is done properly, the building will be stable. Our bedrock is the written Word of God and Jesus is the cornerstone. When we seek to improve our knowledge of the Scriptures and put the principles we learn into practice then we are building our lives on a solid foundation.

Because of these things, the Lord God says, “I will put a rock—a cornerstone—in the ground in Zion. This will be a very precious stone. Everything will be built on this very important rock. Anyone who trusts in that rock will not be disappointed.” (Isaiah 28:16 ERV)

Being repentant of our sin, not just being remorseful or sad about the consequences of what we have done, is the place where we start to build our solid foundation in Christ. If we leave some of the rubble from our past, then the foundation will not be stable, and the building will not be complete or approved by God.

What people say about themselves means nothing. What counts is whether the Lord says they have done well. (2 Corinthians 10:18 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me lay the foundation of my life on the bedrock of what Jesus has done for me. My desire is to become perfect and complete, ready for Your service. Amen

You accepted Christ Jesus as Lord, so continue to live following him. You must depend on Christ only, drawing life and strength from him

Colossians 2:6 ERV

OLD GROWTH GOODNESS

Across the planet there are discussions about how to protect old growth forests. Wildfires from Australia to California to the Amazon have had a negative impact on these forests that have developed over a long period of time. To be designated as old growth forests they will have developed over a period of at least 120 years and withstood fire, storms, and logging. They are precious because they create amazing conditions for soil nutrition, plant growth, animal life and so on.

God's word uses the picture of old growth trees – trees with deep roots – to give us a picture of the value of experiencing life together with God over a long period of time.

Experience over time is something treasured in recovery circles.

An evil person tries to hide behind evil; good people are like trees with deep roots. God blesses those people who refuse evil advice and won't follow sinners or join in sneering at God. Instead, the Law of the Lord makes them happy, and they think about it day and night. They are like trees growing beside a stream, trees that produce fruit in season and always have leaves. Those people succeed in everything they do. (Proverbs 12:12, Psalm 1:1-3 CEV)

Experience over time is something treasured in recovery circles. We've all been refreshed and encouraged by the stories and advice of old-timers. They've gone through, and seen a lot – both what has worked for them and what has caused them to fail.

The verses above suggest that we spend time following God, reading and thinking about what He says works, and then putting those principles into practice. To achieve "old-growth" status we must stand strong through time. God promises we will become one of those successful old-timers by living life in recovery with Him. God even uses a picture of trees to help us picture how beautiful life in heaven will be. Today's question for all of us is, "What am I putting into practice today so I can become an old-timer blessed by God and able to share His goodness with others?"

On each side of the river are trees that grow a different kind of fruit each month of the year. The fruit gives life, and the leaves are used as medicine to heal the nations. (Revelation 22:2b CEV)

Prayer: Loving God, thank you for being the one in whom I can root my life and persevere through whatever I face in life. Help me to learn from faithful old-timers and make good choices that will build strength and maturity into my life and recovery. Amen

SELF-JUSTIFICATION

In certain situations, when our behaviour is challenged, we are quick to try and justify ourselves. If we are challenged for doing wrong, we justify it by saying, "This is just the way I am." We justify anger by saying "He or she made me mad." We justify being rude by saying "I just speak my mind." Sometimes we are unwilling to see the exact nature of our wrongs.

Suppose we claim we are without sin. Then we are fooling ourselves. The truth is not in us. But God is faithful and fair. If we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins. He will forgive every wrong thing we have done. He will make us pure. (1 John 1:8-9 NIRV)

In our addiction we often lied to others after failing to fulfill the commitments we made. We became experts at making up believable excuses and even justified lying to ourselves. Self-justification is rooted in our thinking that we are better human beings than we truly are. It's time to admit that wrong is wrong and that we are guilty of wrong thinking and wrong behaviour.

I, the Lord, am the one speaking to you. Come, let's discuss this. Even if your sins are as dark as red dye, that stain can be removed and you will be as pure as wool that is as white as snow. (Isaiah 1:18 ERV)

When we acknowledge and repent of the exact nature of our wrongs and accept forgiveness from God for our self-justification, we will be free to become the person God desires us to be. God is with us and will help us change. We can bring every deceptive thought captive to Jesus and be transformed in our thinking. When our thinking is right our behaviour will follow.

God has given me a special gift, and that is why I have something to say to each one of you. Don't think that you are better than you really are. You must see yourself just as you are. Decide what you are by the faith God has given each of us. (Romans 12:3 ERV)

Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to see myself as I truly am and resolve not to justify my wrong behaviour. I want to be transformed in my mind so that I no longer am captive to self-justification. Amen

It's time to admit that wrong is wrong and that we are guilty of wrong thinking and wrong behaviour.

MATURITY – TOOLS AT THE READY

Living life with God in recovery is a learning process. When we give our will and life over to the care of God, the decision we make includes dying to the person we have become and being born again into a new life with God where we grow and mature into the person God has created us to be.

So don't remember what happened in earlier times. Don't think about what happened a long time ago, because I am doing something new! Now you will grow like a new plant. Surely you know this is true. I will even make a road in the desert, and rivers will flow through that dry land. (Isaiah 43:18-19 ERV)

We have humbled ourselves and repented before God of our former ways. The change in our attitude and actions will confirm that we are no longer slaves to our past but are maturing in our love for God and for those around us. We are showing mercy and compassion in our relationships rather than exhibiting self-serving actions and bullying of those who are defenseless against our demands.

Our tools are ready at hand for clearing the ground of every obstruction and building lives of obedience into maturity.

2 Corinthians 10:6 MSG

Change your hearts! And show by your lives that you have changed. The ax is now ready to cut down the trees. Every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. (Luke 3:8a, 9 ERV)

Like any newborn child, growth and maturity in our new life will take time. We will need the sustenance of God's written word and the help of others to grow and mature. On our own we will not survive, but with God, others, and our willingness to persevere, we will grow and produce the fruit of peace and contentment in our lives. As we continue to mature, our desire will grow

to carry this message to others who are still being deceived by their own thinking and who still need to be born again to a new life.

Our tools are ready at hand for clearing the ground of every obstruction and building lives of obedience into maturity. (2 Corinthians 10:6 MSG)

Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to die to my old self and persevere and grow in the gift of the new life I have received from You. My desire is to honour You and walk humbly before You, and to show justice and mercy to everyone I meet. Amen

APPROVAL SEEKING

All of us like to be appreciated when we feel we have acted wisely or done a good job. We know that after Jesus allowed John the Baptist to baptize Him, God spoke and said that He was well pleased with Jesus. God is an encourager and is pleased with us when we choose to follow His principles in all our affairs.

And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. (Matthew 3:17 NIV)

In the above scenario, Jesus did not seek His Father's approval. It was freely given. Often when we have received no encouragement or appreciation for a wise decision we have made or a task we have completed, we are offended that no one took the time to say, "Well done." When our efforts were not acknowledged, we felt the good we did was not valued, and self-pity flooded our thinking. Now we are learning that a job well done is sufficient approval in itself.

Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. (Hebrews 10:35-36 ESV)

In the past we served our own selfish desires until our lives became unmanageable. Now we are beginning to make wise decisions and we want others to notice. We should not be discouraged when we feel this need for approval. Instead we should look to our God who sees everything and tell Him what is going on within us. God will comfort and strengthen us in our time of need, and we will grow stronger in the knowledge of His ways if we do not give up.

He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long. (Psalm 25:9, 5 ESV)

For a time, we acted totally in self-interest. Now we are learning God's ways, and in time, God's approval will be enough for us.

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to recognize and appreciate what others do as they minister in Your name. My desire is that I will be fully satisfied with Your approval alone. Amen

Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.

Matthew 25:23 NIV

AVOIDABLE TROUBLE

Who wants trouble? None of us do and if we listen to God's counsel there is a lot of trouble that we can avoid. A loving and protective parent wants to safeguard their child so they will teach them not to touch a hot stove, not to eat poisonous berries, and not to interact with strangers on their own. God, through His word in the Bible, also provides helpful warnings for us and, if we heed them, we will live safely and avoid any problems that may arise.

Following are some ways we can avoid trouble in our daily lives:

If we listen to God's counsel, there is a lot of trouble that we can avoid.

It's not always convenient to tell the truth but God clearly warns us that harm and trouble will come when we try to sidestep the truth of His Word or hide the truth about ourselves when we lie about our activities.

These people always cause trouble. Their minds are corrupt, and they have turned their backs on the truth. (1 Timothy 6:5 NLT)

How many times did we think we were smart when we got away with something that was dishonest, and it didn't matter whom we hurt as long as we were not caught? To avoid problems in life and in our recovery this kind of thinking and behaving will need to change.

People who wink at wrong cause trouble, but a bold reproof promotes peace. (Proverbs 10:10 NLT)

Sponsors make themselves available to newcomers in a recovery program because newbies need reliable help to move away from causing trouble and into experiencing the peace and blessings of a life with God in recovery. Seeking and following the wisdom of those who are successfully walking with God in recovery is an established way of avoiding unnecessary trouble.

People who despise advice are asking for trouble; those who respect a command will succeed. (Proverbs 13:13 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to set my heart on doing what You say is right and turn away from what You say is harmful. Give me the humility I need as I seek out and follow the wisdom of others who are successfully walking with You. Amen

HOW WE GOT TO WHERE WE ARE

We realized that our life was unmanageable, and we got to where we are at by our own irrational thinking and flawed solutions to life situations. When we choose to allow God's truth to motivate our thinking and daily living, we can have a full life beyond all we could ask for.

It's true that moral guidance and counsel need to be given, but the way you say it and to whom you say it are as important as what you say. It's obvious, isn't it, that the law code isn't primarily for people who live responsibly, but for the irresponsible, who defy all authority, riding roughshod over God, life, sex, truth, whatever! They are contemptuous of this great Message I've been put in charge of by this great God. (1 Timothy 1:8-11 MSG)

Who do the tapes playing in my head say I am? Who does God say I am? What are my felt needs right now? Does God promise to meet those needs? Where do I think my life is headed? What does God say about His plans for me? The answers to these questions show me where I am actually rooting my beliefs and actions today.

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2 NIV)

God offers us a new way of life. It requires that we surrender to the truth. It requires conquering our feelings when they don't line up with truth. It requires that we lay down our familiar self-centered ways and follow God's life-giving ways. Today we have a choice, to live by our unreliable feelings or live according to God's truth. The former leads to disaster. The latter leads to life.

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. (1 Corinthians 13:6 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess and repent of my irrational thoughts and flawed thinking that brought me to where I am today. My self-centered actions are caused by my defective belief system about who You are and who You say I am. Today I choose to walk in the truth of who You are and who You say that I am. Give me a discerning heart to know the plans You have for me. I am forever grateful that You love and care for me. Amen

Today we have a choice, to live by our unreliable feelings or live according to God's truth.

DON'T QUIT BEFORE THE MIRACLE HAPPENS

"Don't quit before the miracle happens" is a slogan that's been around Alcoholics Anonymous for quite a while. Someone has added this phrase to it, "Anything worthwhile takes time and patience." These words apply to more than choosing not to go back to our substance of choice.

Be strong. Don't give up. God will reward you for your work. Let us not become tired of doing good. At the right time we will gather a crop if we don't give up. (2 Chronicles 15:7, Galatians 6:9 NIRV)

Good things take effort and patience. As cute as they are to watch, little ones playing hockey do more falling on the ice than shooting pucks and scoring goals. Some of those little folk will stick with the game, and one day in the future, end up in the NHL. In between, there is lots of practice at the rink in the early morning hours of cold winter days, plus hours of training at a gym, and time watching videos of games, and so on. Everything worth doing takes time and patience.

New healthy behaviours take time to become normal and routine.

Finding the life that God has planned for us is even more important than getting good at a sport. It takes time and practice to recognize what life looks like as a dependable person. We'll try some things and leave them behind. We'll struggle to do other things until we master them, and they become routine. New healthy behaviours take time to become normal actions. In one study it was found that on average it took 66 days for a new habit to become normal. The time could be as short as 18 days and as long as 254 days.

God promises: ***Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.*** (Isaiah 41:10 NIRV)

God is working in us. Step Two reminds us that it is God who is restoring us to sanity. His way is to hold us steady and encourage us while we learn. Let's stick with God until the miracle happens.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me remember that You are with me today supporting and strengthening me as I establish new and healthy ways of living. Please grant me patience with myself and others as I grow and learn. Amen

BEFORE YOU SAY "I CAN'T", SAY "I'LL TRY"

When we are being taught something new, we often feel overwhelmed by the process we must follow. We may shy away from learning about something by telling ourselves or others, "I can't" or, "This or that is impossible for me." Our approach to learning to live a sober life after years in addiction often raises a similar response. We need to remind ourselves that with time and determined effort we can succeed, as many before us have. Sobriety may seem impossible to us if we are solely relying on self-will but, when we put our hand into the hand of God and follow His ways, we will find success.

You can hear the victory celebration in the homes of those who live right. The Lord has shown his great power again! (Psalm 118:15 ERV)

God has made many promises to those who give their will and life over to His care. Success is achieved by following God's ways rather than our limited human ways. God tells us to bring our old thought patterns to Him for renewal. Inviting God to help us and choosing for His direction brings success and this boosts our self-confidence. Choosing to quote God's word over our faulty thinking is one way to bring about change that lasts.

The weapons we use are not human ones. Our weapons have power from God and can destroy the enemy's strong places. We destroy people's arguments, and we tear down every proud idea that raises itself against the knowledge of God. We also capture every thought and make it give up and obey Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:4-5 ERV)

At times we may be tempted to turn back to our old ways but if we call out to God, He will give us the strength to keep moving forward rather than giving in to defeat. Today, before we say, "I can't" let's say, "With God's help, I'll try."

Don't worry—I am with you. Don't be afraid—I am your God. I will make you strong and help you. I will support you with my right hand that brings victory. (Isaiah 41:10 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am weak, but You are strong. Help me choose to walk in Your will and Your ways in all my affairs and to fully rely on Your strength to give me victory over all my dependencies. Amen

Today, before we say, "I can't" let's say, "With God's help, I'll try."

THE WISDOM OF MAKING ONLY A FEW PROMISES

Whether it's a commitment we make to ourselves, to others, or to God, keeping with it until it's completed is tough for most addicts. So, as God's Word teaches us, it's important not to promise too many things.

Be careful when you make promises to God. Be careful about what you say to him. Don't let your feelings cause you to speak too soon. God is in heaven, and you are on the earth. So you need to say only a few things to him. If you make a promise to God, keep your promise. Don't be slow to do what you promised. God is not happy with fools. Give God what you promised to give him. It is better to promise nothing than to promise something and not be able to do it. (Ecclesiastes 5:2,4-5 ERV)

When we make a promise, we need to treat it seriously and step by step do what's necessary to fulfill it.

One day at a time we need to keep things simple and steadily work on what's essential. When we make a promise, we need to treat it seriously and step by step do what is necessary to fulfill it. We may need to learn new things, accept suggestions from others about what will work to help us reach our specified goals, and come to God again and again for wisdom and strength to do what is right. We might even need to ask for comfort and encouragement when it's tough to keep going. When we feel like the finish line is a long way off, we need to stop and take time to review the improvement we have made.

Some of us will struggle to stick with the program of coming to know God and being willing to turn our will and life over to His care each day, in every circumstance. For a long time we have lived on self-will and the lie that we could do "anything we wanted." Therefore, it takes time to root out what's false and stick with what is bringing positive change.

Keeping our word and seeing something through brings dignity, self-respect, and the blessing of God. One success gives us the encouragement and strength to reach out for the next.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to be a person who is known to keep my promises. Help me to keep things simple. Help me to walk with humility and patience. Help me to be willing to learn new things and persevere until I fulfill each of my commitments. Amen

WISDOM FOR THE JOURNEY – PROTECT YOUR EYES

Good eyesight is a great gift. With our eyes we see and admire the beauty that God has put in our natural environment. Sight helps us see what is needed to accomplish our daily tasks. We use our eyes to read and learn, to see love in the eyes of another, and to make necessary changes when we look in a mirror. We use our eyes to read the wisdom sayings in the book of Proverbs which help us understand the treasure of God's truth.

My child, remember what I say and never forget what I tell you to do. Do what I say, and you will live. Be as careful to follow my teaching as you are to protect your eyes. Keep my teaching with you all the time; write it on your heart. Treat wisdom as your sister, and insight as your closest friend. (Proverbs 7:1-4 GNT)

When we cannot see clearly, we get prescription glasses. When the sun is bright, we wear sunglasses. If pressure in our eye is excessive it can destroy our ability to see, so many people put drops in their eyes to relieve the pressure. At times even surgery is required when things like cataracts grow in our eyes or one part of the eye detaches from another part. We do our best to take good care of our eyes because our ability to see is precious to our well-being.

Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. (Psalm 119:97, 119:11 NIV)

What will we do today to welcome God's truth into our lives and let it give us insight for going forward? We are told to "never forget" what we've learned. We do this by asking the Holy Spirit to grow a real love in our hearts for God's truth and then by scheduling time to daily learn from God's Word. But simply learning is not the goal. We must put what we learn into action in all our affairs and rely on the Holy Spirit to give us clear vision and guidance in all we do. We must allow God to remove anything in our lives that is harming our ability to see.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your Word is precious and the wisdom and insight it brings is essential for clear vision as I move forward in my life in recovery. Help me to pay attention to those things You are teaching me and, as the Holy Spirit guides me, help me to apply Your principles in all I say or do. Amen

Give me understanding so that I may keep your law and obey it with all my heart.
Psalm 119:34 NIV

JUST FOR TODAY – ENJOY

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

We are not the only people who failed to trust God and wander into a destructive lifestyle. In the Bible we read stories of human beings to whom God showed amazing grace and patience. Though they struggled with doing the right thing and often failed, God was gracious to forgive them and restore their relationship with Him.

Just like us, when these persons realized what a mess they had made, they felt sad and guilty about their past behaviour and received God's forgiveness. They were then restored to have a joyful relationship with God and with one another. This was the case for the people we find in the book of Nehemiah. For many years the people wandered in ungodly lifestyles of self-centeredness and sin. This resulted in a complete breakdown of community life and a time of captivity and exile to another land. However, God was not finished with the people for He raised up a person who called them to turn away from their sin and come back to Him.

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God helped the people rebuild their lives in an amazing way. At one point during a community gathering the priest, a man named Ezra, stood up and read to the people from God's word. As they heard God's word, the people wept and mourned over how far they had wandered from God's ways. However, the leaders said something amazing to them that can serve as encouragement for us today.

Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. (Nehemiah 8:10 NIV)

We need to take time to read God's word and see all the promises God has made to us. Perhaps it's a time to repent, turn back to God, let guilt go, and welcome forgiveness. God has given us today; why not rejoice and be glad in it?

Prayer: Gracious God, Forgive me for the many times I look past Your gifts and fail to enjoy all that You are giving me. Help me to pause and notice and give thanks for this day. Thank You for filling my life with good things. Amen

IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING TRIGGERS

Emotions, stress, illness, troubles in a relationship, or just talking about the past can trigger an obsession in us to relapse. Even something that is good, giving us a desire to celebrate, can be a challenging trigger. Many of us have learned to be alert to situations that make up the acronym "HALT" (hungry, angry, lonely, tired) as conditions that carry a lot of risk for relapse.

Through Christ we feel sure before God. 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. The Lord is the only one who can save us. Only he can make us strong. (2 Corinthians 3:4-5 ERV, Isaiah 45:24 NIRV))

We should not face triggers and obsessions on our own and hope to overcome them. God wants us to be successful in recovery and, if we ask Him, He will give us what we need to get through each moment of every day. Maintaining communication with God on a regular basis makes it easy for us to call out to Him when a trigger strikes.

God will help us identify triggers and make provision for a future crisis. When a trigger happens, we are then prepared to handle the situation in a healthy way. It's also good to list people that have knowledge of what we are going through and have arranged to call when we are in trouble. It is wise to seek their help while we are in crisis and not wait until our thought patterns change. Some folks memorize one of God's promises and speak it to themselves as often as necessary until the crisis passes.

God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted any more than you can take. But when you are tempted, God will give you a way out. Then you will be able to deal with it. (1 Corinthians 10:13 NIRV)

Learning how to recognize what triggers us, and developing ways to manage the cravings that result, are important parts of living well in recovery each day.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you that I don't have to face challenges alone for You are always with me. Together with you any difficulty can be worked out and overcome. Amen

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HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

Today is a day to honour fathers. Some of us are fathers. All of us have a father. The relationship of a loving father to his child is a picture of God's heart for us.

Nothing stirs a father's heart more than looking at his newborn child. We love to see a dad carrying his little one on his chest in a baby carrier. Squeals of joy come out of the mouth of a toddler as a dad throws them in the air and catches them again in his strong arms. There's a natural God-given desire in a father to care for his child, to protect that child even to the point of laying down his own life on behalf of his little one. This is God's heart for you and me.

The relationship of a loving father to his child is a picture of God's heart for us.

A father is tender and kind to his children. In the same way, the Lord is tender and kind to those who have respect for him. (Psalm 103:13 NIRV)

Sadly, for many who struggle with addiction, the abuse or absence of a father is a significant issue in their healing journey. This is where God makes the gracious offer to be the good father we never had, to care for us and meet our needs for the safety and protection which our earthly father either couldn't or didn't provide. Only a father's love can meet that deep need within us.

Even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will hold me close. (Psalm 27:10 NLT)

Whatever our past, whether it's being well-loved, or wounded and abandoned by our father, or even being disappointed with ourselves as a father, God invites us to make a connection to His family. Our Heavenly Father will receive us as His precious children. He will love and care for us and heal all our wounds.

For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother. (Matthew 12:50 NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for inviting me into Your family. I receive Your love today. I want to live as Your beloved child. In the safety of Your loving care, help me to sort out any issues I may have with my earthly dad and find healing and restoration. Amen

BEING AVAILABLE

One sure sign of growth in our life with God in recovery is making time to serve others and being willing to adjust our schedule or priorities when someone comes to us with a need. Admittedly, we require great wisdom in knowing which needs we are to respond to, so we are not living in rescuing and co-dependent enabling. God desires us to be creative and kind in the service we give to others. This honours God. Are we making ourselves available to fulfill God's agenda? Are we willing to hear the plans He has and follow His directions?

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. (Isaiah 6:8, Romans 12:1 NIV)

It's so easy to get caught up in our own needs and plans and turn God's planned way of living upside down. We don't need to be users of drugs or alcohol for that to happen. All it takes is for us to think we know the needs of the day and then expect God to help us successfully complete our agenda. What actually works? We need to make our schedules available to God and be open to His plans. Anything else and we will end up wasting time and doing things that don't really help us or others.

Instead of blindly rushing through our own agenda, we need to put God's priorities at the top of our "to do" list. We need to make ourselves available to be used as God chooses. Initially it will feel strange and perhaps uncomfortable but, if we make it our habit to seek God's will and follow His ways, He will direct us on a good path.

Jesus said to them, "Come with me! I will teach you how to bring in people instead of fish." Right then the two brothers dropped their nets and went with him. (Mark 1:17-18 CEV)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I want to know Your will and follow Your direction today. You know what's best for me. Help me to be available to You as I go about my work and errands so I honour You and love others as You intend. Amen

Are we making ourselves available to fulfill God's agenda?