

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



NOVEMBER 2024



These meditations are available online
for computer, tablets, and smart phones
at:

www.pihtoday.blogspot.com

View our daily video blog at:

www.pihprayer.blogspot.com

*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.*

For your personal print copy send your request to:

Visit us at www.partnersinhope.ca or write to us at:

Partners in Hope Recovery Society
1906 – 615 Belmont Street, New Westminster, BC V3M 6A1

Email: pihrecovery@gmail.com

Phone or text: 604-215-0335

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>

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY Daily Meditations

NOVEMBER 2024

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Evelyn Leeburn, Elsie Quick

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Scriptures taken from:

Holy Bible, Contemporary English Version (CEV), Copyright © 1995 by American Bible Society
 Holy Bible, Easy-to-Read Version (ERV), Copyright © 2006 by Bible League International
 Good News Translation (GNT), Copyright © 1992 by American Bible Society
 The Living Bible copyright © 1971 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.
 New American Standard Bible (NASB), Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation
 New King James Version® (NKJV), Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
 Holy Bible, New International Version®(NIV),® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.
 New International Reader’s Version (NIRV), Copyright © 1995, 1996, 1998, 2014 by Biblica, Inc.®. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.
 Holy Bible. New Living Translation (NLT) copyright© 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.
 New Life Version (NLV), Copyright © 1969, 2003 by Barbour Publishing, Inc.
 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
 The Message (MSG), Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002 by Eugene H. Peterson

PHOTOS

Elsie Quick, Evelyn Leeburn, Linnea Groom, Ruth Kimber © 2024 Partners in Hope Recovery Society

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.

NOTES

HOPE IN GOD

Some of us say we have hope in God, but what does that mean? Many of us make a list of what we would like for Christmas gifts and then hope that someone will get us what we want. Is this how we approach God, with a list of what we hope for? When we give our will and life over to the care of God, we become His adopted children and, through Jesus, we have a vast inheritance of rich and glorious things that belong to us.

I pray that God will open your minds to see his truth. Then you will know the hope that he has chosen us to have. You will know that the blessings God has promised his holy people are rich and glorious. And you will know that God's power is very great for us who believe. (Ephesians 1:18-19a ERV)

When we have repented of our rebellious ways, we are forgiven for our sins and they are removed from us as far as the east is from the west. When we enter the waters of baptism, our old self dies with Christ and as we come up out of the water we are raised to a new life with Christ. The Holy Spirit then comes to live in us and He is the power greater than ourselves who will lead and guide us into the knowledge of all truth.

So when we were baptized, we were buried with Christ and took part in his death. And just as Christ was raised from death by the wonderful power of the Father, so we can now live a new life. (Romans 6:4 ERV)

I pray that the God who gives hope will fill you with much joy and peace as you trust in him.

Romans 15:13a ERV

God is both the object of our hope and the author of it. God's Word, as written in the Bible, is the foundation on which our hope is built. There is no hope for a person who, in their own mind, thinks they are wise. As we trust in God and obey Him in all our ways, we will have more and more hope in God and joy and peace will fill our soul.

I pray that the God who gives hope will fill you with much joy and peace as you trust in him. Then you will have more and more hope, and it will flow out of you by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13 ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your unending faithfulness to me. May my hope be strengthened as I seek Your wisdom and follow Your principles in all my ways. Amen

NOVEMBER 2

BLESSING OTHERS BRINGS DEEP SATISFACTION

Sometimes we choose not to bless someone because we judge them as unworthy. They may be in a lifestyle which does not meet with our approval or may have different opinions than us on religion, politics, cultural matters, or whatever we see as not meeting the criteria that we want to bless. Instead of judging others blessings should flow from hearts that have been changed by the generous love of God for all people, including us.

Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud, or rude. Love isn't selfish or quick tempered. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do. Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil. Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7 CEV)

Blessings will flow automatically from a heart that is filled with the love and kindness of God.

Accepting and receiving the love that God has for us will help us overcome our reluctance to be a blessing to others. If we feel we are lacking in love, we need to ask God to teach us how to love like He does. Blessings will flow automatically from a heart that is filled with the love and kindness of God. Blessing others brings peace and deep satisfaction to our own soul.

By everything I did, I showed how you should work to help everyone who is weak. Remember that our Lord Jesus said, "More blessings come from giving than from receiving." (Acts 20:35 CEV)

The Lord is well pleased with us when we seek to help others who are less fortunate than ourselves. When we lived a dysfunctional lifestyle in addiction, we were blessed by others who supplied us with food and shelter. These people did not know us but they cared about our needs. Now it is our turn to bless others. A gentle smile can lift someone's spirit. An encouraging word may make someone's day. Helping someone may lessen their load. Praying for someone's concerns will show we care. There are so many ways we can bless others. Today, let's look around and take notice of a person we can bless. As we lay on our beds this evening we can then reflect on, and perhaps pray for those we have blessed and allow the deep satisfaction of helping someone fill our souls.

Prayer: Gracious God, Please help me to be less concerned with my own needs and agenda. Teach me how to love and bless others as You have greatly loved and blessed me. Amen

NOTES

SUPPORTIVE

When we are not feeling good about ourselves or our performance and someone takes the time to encourage us with kind words, we immediately begin to feel better. Kind words are like scaffolding that helps support our confidence as we keep moving forward. Early recovery is not easy and requires patience amid the chaos. If we have been in recovery for a time, we need to continue to be patient with ourselves and supportive of those who are just newbies on the path. "Rome was not built in a day" is a true saying.

Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.
(Proverbs 16:24 NKJV)

Kind words are like scaffolding that helps support our confidence as we keep moving forward.

Attending recovery meetings is a way to be supported and to give support to others. Being truthful about where we are at or what we have learned may help another person. Honouring each person's role is important as well as following the principle of "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Doing our best not to provoke anger in another is one way we can be supportive. We need to bless and pray for each other. God wants us to be supportive and bless others with the following words:

May the Lord bless you and take good care of you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26 NIRV)

When we pray for discernment in how to bless a person, God will give us the appropriate words to say. If we follow the path of seeking God's input, all our words will be supportive and an encouragement to those who hear them.

Let us stop judging one another. Instead, decide not to put anything in the way of a brother or sister. Don't put anything in their way that would make them trip and fall. (Romans 14:13 NIRV)

Prayer: Loving God, Please keep me from causing a person to stumble by the words I speak. Set a watch over my mouth so that my words are always sweet to another's soul and health to their whole body. Help me to be like scaffolding, supportive in all my ways. Amen

SHOWING RESPECT

Showing respect and being worthy of respect matters to God. All persons have value as human beings, regardless of their status or behaviour. We show respect by treating others as we want them to treat us. The "Ten Commandments", (Exodus 20:3-17) given by God to His people, are instructions which taught the people how to honour God and live respectfully with each other. The first four commandments were given to help people know how to honour and respect God, their creator. The following six were given to help them show respect to their parents and to live morally in peaceful harmony with their neighbours.

Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12 NLT)

It is God's will that we be respectful of our parents, of people in authority, of people around us, and of their property. This is particularly difficult when we face those who have harmed us. No matter how badly others have treated us, God's command does not change about the attitude we are to have towards them. It is God's standard that as we forgive those who have been disrespectful towards us, God will forgive us when we confess the ways we have spoken and acted disrespectfully towards others. Forgiveness eliminates our bondage to the events that caused us to stray from being the person God created us to be. God is a righteous judge, and He can be trusted to judge the harmful actions of any person. Every person is accountable to God for their actions towards others.

Showing respect and being worthy of respect matters to God.

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. People who despise advice are asking for trouble; those who respect a command will succeed. (Luke 6:27 NIV, Proverbs 13:13 NLT)

As people of God we should be committed to showing respect to everyone. May we seek God each day for the grace to do that.

Prayer: Gracious God, I am thankful that You love and care for me. Help me to honour and respect You in all my thoughts and desires and in all I say and do. Strengthen me to live by Your commandments and help me show respect to each person I meet, even when I may disagree with their ways. Help me to leave all judgment of others with You. Amen

DEVELOPING INTEGRITY

Integrity is one of the most valued character qualities a person can have. A person of integrity has strong moral and ethical principles. They are known to be honest regardless of the circumstances they are in, the company they are with, or when they are alone with no one watching. What you see on the outside is the same person they are on the inside.

May integrity and honesty protect me, for I put my hope in you. (Psalm 25:21 NLT)

Integrity is a character quality developed in a person who has been living according to the Word of God. A person with integrity can stand before God with confidence.

Integrity is built over time by diligently applying God's teachings to each life situation we encounter.

I know that you are pleased with me, for my enemy does not triumph over me. Because of my integrity you uphold me and set me in your presence forever. (Psalm 41:11-12 NIV)

As people of integrity, we can enjoy the peace of a clear conscience. When we live according to the Word of God, we experience a deep inner peace knowing that we have not violated our conscience by doing wrong. We become confident that when someone examines us we will be proven innocent. In contrast, when our lives lack moral wholeness, we live in constant fear of being "found out". People of integrity are not perfect. They occasionally make mistakes and sin, but they do not cover up their offences. They confess them and deal with any consequences.

Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out. (Proverbs 10:9 NIV)

Men and women of integrity can be depended upon. People look up to them with trust and respect. Neighbours speak highly of them. They are helpful in their community and in their workplace. Integrity is built over time by diligently applying God's teachings to each life situation we encounter.

Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to consider the impact of my actions and behaviour on those around me. My desire is to love and care for others as You faithfully love and care for me. Help me to follow Your principles in all my affairs and to become a person of integrity. Amen

AM I LIVING WITH PEACE AND CONTENTMENT TODAY?

There are many items to think about when we are compiling a daily inventory of how we are doing in life and recovery. One of them could well be, "Am I living with peace and contentment today or with fear, irritation, and worry?" Each day our prayer is to become more conscious of God's will and have the power to carry it out. It is God's will for us to be content no matter what our circumstances are. That's not easy but God will show us how to improve our outlook as we go forward with Him.

Having respect for the Lord leads to life. Then you will be content and free from trouble. (Proverbs 19:23 NIRV)

The foundation of contentment comes from knowing that God is the one who gives us life and the one who promises to meet our needs each day. A lovely picture from the Psalms is that of a baby lying quiet and contented safe in its mother's arms after being fully provided for. This is how we need to see ourselves when our lives are in God's care.

Lord, my heart isn't proud. My eyes aren't proud either. I don't concern myself with important matters. I don't concern myself with things that are too wonderful for me. I have made myself calm and content like a young child in its mother's arms. Deep down inside me, I am as content as a young child. (Psalm 131:1-2 NIRV)

To live contented is not to pretend that circumstances are perfect when they are not. Rather we find contentment in the knowledge that God loves and cares for us. Living contented doesn't mean that we have everything we want but rather that we are thankful for what we have and confident in God that all our needs will be met.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to affirm with confidence, "I have learned the secret of being content no matter what happens. I am content whether I am well fed or hungry. I am content whether I have more than enough or not enough. I can do all this by the power of Christ. He gives me strength." (Philippians 4:12-13 NIRV) Where these words may differ from my experience, help me to trust You and develop the character strength of contentment. Amen

We find contentment in the knowledge that God loves and cares for us.

ACKNOWLEDGING BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

God's heart for us is that we enjoy caring and loving relationships with others. We have much to learn in this area. For a long time, we have blamed others for the way they treated us. However, we have not been mindful of how our behaviour harmed others. Transformation in our lives only comes when our words and actions conform to the principles contained in God's word.

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23-24 NIV)

We must receive love and comfort and healing from God, or we'll never feel secure enough to forgive others or ourselves for failure to act in a loving way.

It's challenging to write down the name of each person with whom we have had a painful relationship and seek to own our part in whatever happened. To become truly willing to make amends for any harm we have caused in the relationship, we must look for God in the middle of each circumstance or memory. We must intentionally connect with God who knows, who cares, who heals, and who can even make something good out of the hurtful events of our past. We must receive love and comfort and healing from God or we'll never feel secure enough to forgive others or ourselves for failure to act in a loving way.

Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? (1 John 4:7-8, 20 NLT)

It's time to turn from the wounding and the blaming and look to God for His guidance in the rebuilding of loving healthy relationships.

Prayer: Loving God, I humbly acknowledge my inability to give and receive love. I believe You care for me and have pursued me with Your unfailing love. Show me the changes I need to make in order that I may become willing to make amends. As I go forward, help me to build my relationships on the firm foundation of love. Amen

SEEKING APPROVAL

Deep within each person is the desire for approval from others – particularly from those we consider significant in our lives. This need for approval is even deeper in those who have been misunderstood, hurt, or rejected by others. Often it produces in the person a drivenness for approval from others, in order to feel good about themselves. They may co-dependently try to meet the needs of others and do things others desire, even though they know it will harm their own self-worth.

God wants to help us find a new way forward. It begins with knowing that our deepest need for approval is met by God, and not by others who can be fickle or uncaring.

God was pleased to trust us with his message. We didn't speak to please people, but to please God who knows our motives. (1 Thessalonians 2:4, CEV)

God has chosen us, given us life, and called us back from the dark and unhealthy places we once existed in. God has given us a story to tell which illustrates what a powerful God He is and the dramatic changes He makes in the lives of those He has rescued. We share our stories, not because we are perfect, but because we are loved by the God who created us and made us feel more secure than we ever thought possible. God has work for each of us to do today that will bless others and give us deep satisfaction. God created us for this. God wants us to tell others of the love and grace that we have found in Him.

Do your best to win God's approval as a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed and who teaches only the true message. When you do good deeds, don't try to show off. If you do, you won't get a reward from your Father in heaven. (2 Timothy 2:15, Matthew 6:1 CEV)

As we serve God according to His plan and purpose, He will affirm us in what we are doing, regardless of whether others notice, or how they may respond.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I know I have nothing to prove in order to receive from You. I belong to You. You are my Abba Father. You love me. You accept me. Help me to become more conscious of Your love and affirmation for me and to seek Your approval only. Amen

As we serve God according to His plan and purpose, He will affirm us in what we are doing, regardless of whether others notice, or how they may respond.

MARKING MILESTONES

Recognizing and marking milestones (clean time in recovery) is a way to celebrate our sobriety and to give hope to those involved in our daily lives as well as those who attend recovery meetings with us. Milestone celebrations help us remember the impact on our lives when we turned away from our destructive lifestyle and sought God, finding in Him the new life we could not find elsewhere.

The Lord is my strength and shield. I trusted him with all my heart. He helped me, so I am happy. I sing songs of praise to him. (Psalm 28:7 ERV)

We celebrate belly-button birthdays because we are thankful for another year of shared life with family and friends. We celebrate sobriety milestones to give thanks to God for His lavish love and grace poured out on us when we turned our will and life over to His care. God enabled us to see life with meaning and purpose. How else could we remain sober for even one day, let alone months or years?

Recognizing and marking milestones (clean time in recovery) is a way to celebrate sobriety and give hope to others.

He remembered us when we were defeated. His faithful love will last forever. He saved us from our enemies. His faithful love will last forever. (Psalm 136:23-24 ERV)

Every day of sobriety is worth celebrating which is why we celebrate with chips, key fobs, medallions, and cakes which are related to time periods from one day, to multiple years.

This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be happy today! (Psalm 118:24 ERV)

Registering our clean date and preparing to mark the milestones as we achieve them, is a helpful tool in keeping us sober. Remembering our journey of one day at a time with God, and celebrating how one day became one week, one month, one year, etc., is a great source of motivation to keep us learning and growing in this new life with God.

Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible." (Matthew 19:26 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, I thank You for this day of sobriety and each day linked to it. You've been with me through thick and thin and You will never leave me nor forsake me. I face each day with confidence because of Your unfailing love and care for me. Amen

FIRING THE COMMITTEE IN MY HEAD

We've all done things we are not proud of. Some of us feel like we have done more wrong than others or have been doing wrong much longer than others. Shame is an overwhelming emotion that the evil one encourages us to wallow in. The many voices of shame are relentless in their accusations against us. The committee in our head starts up as soon as we wake up in the morning and doesn't shut up until we manage to get to sleep again. When we proclaim that God is in charge, one of the first things God will do is fire the committee in our head.

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. (Ephesians 2:4-5 NIV)

God has given us a new start in life because He loves us. He's been waiting for us to turn away from our destructive habits and bad attitudes and, when we turn to Him for forgiveness and saving, He's eager to get on with the job. He knows we've been a wreck. As the verse says, we were "dead in our transgressions." But, God's grace is greater than our sin – by far!!

I have been crucified with Christ. I don't live any longer, but Christ lives in me. Now I live my life in my body by faith in the Son of God. He loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20 NIRV)

When God says we are saved, we are saved. When God forgives, we are forgiven. When God heals, we are made completely whole. It's not something we have to produce in ourselves, it is God's gift to us. The greater the wreck we are, the more brilliantly God's love will shine on us and through us when we have accepted and been saved by His amazing grace.

So, the next time the committee in our head tries to speak, we get to hold our head high and turn off the noise by saying, "Because of God's great love for me, I've been made alive in Christ. I'm washed clean. I'm a new creation. That old me is gone and this new me is the beloved son/daughter of God."

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I am so grateful to live in Your love today and to hold my head high remembering that my old self is DEAD. I am a new person because of Your finished work on my behalf. Please help me live my new life in the joy of Your salvation. Amen

It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God

Ephesians 2:8 NIV

WHAT DO I DO WITH THIS SADNESS?

When we wake up from the haze of our addiction and reflect on the harm we have caused in our relationships or when we make an inventory of our character defects and deep sorrow overwhelms us because of what we have done, the question to ask ourselves is, “Am I saddened enough by the painful mess I am in to be willing to come to God and admit that I am powerless over my self-willed ways?” If we are willing to repent and follow God’s ways, He will forgive us for our past sins and lead us forward to a new life with Him in recovery.

Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. (Luke 6:21b, 2 Corinthians 7:9b-10 NIV)

Let’s allow our sorrow to move us closer to God and, with His help, live a life of doing what is right and good.

God anticipates that we will feel sorrow about what has gone wrong in our lives and He wants us to use that sorrow as motivation to turn our hearts towards Him. Wrong is wrong. Harm is harm. We can’t escape the reality of the harm we have caused but we can offer it, together with ourselves and our future, to the God who created us and who will bring new life out of the ashes of our past.

It’s not enough to regret the past. Godly sorrow that the Bible speaks of is the kind that brings us to our knees in repentance before God. We own up to having lived a self-obsessed life with no consideration of the impact it had on others. Godly sorrow also appreciates that Jesus came to earth to suffer and die so that we could be free from the penalty of our sins. It’s the type of sorrow that fills our hearts with gratitude as we realize how much Jesus has done for us. Let’s not wallow in regret and shame. Let’s allow our sorrow to move us closer to God and, with His help, live a life of doing what is right and good.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for my attitude and actions that brought hurt into my life and into the lives of those who cared about me. Without You, I know I am powerless to live a satisfying life. Help me not to wallow in regret and despair over my past life but to live according to Your principles and, going forward, share Your goodness with others. Amen

INFIDELITY

Infidelity in a relationship has harmed many of us. It doesn’t matter if we are the unfaithful partner, the uninvolved partner, a child of parents experiencing infidelity, or even an extended family member, infidelity harms all of us in ways that we never anticipated. Even after a divorce agreement between two partners has been agreed, in many instances the hurt continues. What would God say to any one of us who has suffered the pain of infidelity?

I have swept away your sins like a cloud. I have scattered your offenses like the morning mist. Oh, return to me, for I have paid the price to set you free. (Isaiah 44:22 NLT)

Often our emotional response to infidelity causes us to add to the harm we have already sustained. Hate rises in our hearts, and we determine never to forgive the unfaithful person. Resentment and malice disturb our sleep. Our thoughts are obsessed with the situation, and we are filled with resentment and bitterness. Previously we might have tried to cover up the pain and trauma with our medication of choice. How can we get relief from this situation and remain faithful to life with God in recovery?

Don’t let me do what I know is wrong. Don’t let sin control me. If you help me, I can be pure and free from sin. (Psalm 19:13 ERV)

Our God is a redeeming God and whatever painful circumstances we may endure, His love and comfort will sustain us. Infidelity in a relationship will harm many people and we will need to make amends if we have been an unfaithful partner. If we are a victim of infidelity, we need to bring our hurts before God, repent of our unforgiveness, and seek His healing for all our woundedness.

Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight. (Romans 4:7 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for Your love and care for me. I repent of the harm I have caused others due to infidelity. Help me to live in the joy that my sin record has been cleared by the blood of Jesus. In all my ways help me to be faithful to You and to those I care for. Amen

What would God say to any one of us who has suffered the pain of infidelity?

MATURING THROUGH PERSEVERING

When we admitted we were powerless over our dependencies and our lives had become unmanageable, we were in a sense, like the man who was robbed and beaten in the parable of the good Samaritan. (Luke 10: 25-37) The traveller was rendered powerless by robbers, and we were rendered powerless by Satan whom Jesus said is a thief who wants to steal, kill, and destroy us.

By sending Jesus into the world to die for our sins and resurrecting Him from the dead, God has shown that He has all power over sin and Satan, and His will is to restore us to new life.

He (God) heals their broken hearts and bandages their wounds. (Psalm 147:3 ERV)

God has shown that He has all power over sin and Satan, and His will is to restore us to new life.

The man broken and beaten in the parable that Jesus told was rendered powerless. He was even unaware that someone came along and did what was required to restore him to health. Some of us never knew about Jesus who came into the world to take our sin and brokenness upon himself. Jesus died in our place so we could be born again to a new life. Jesus did this so we could grow and mature as blessed children of our Heavenly Father and live in His favour forever.

But he was being punished for what we did. He was crushed because of our guilt. He took the punishment we deserved, and this brought us peace. We were healed because of his pain. (Isaiah 53:5 ERV)

We may not understand God's ways at first for they are different from the ways of the world. Through prayer and meditation, we need to persevere and bring our actions into line with what God says. We need a Power greater than ourselves to help us stay the course, and the Holy Spirit is that Power. He will help us mature and lead us into all truth.

Jesus said, **"Let me assure you, it is better for you that I go away. I say this because when I go away I will send the Helper to you. But when the Spirit of truth comes, he will lead you into all truth"**. (John 16: 7a, 13a ERV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for sending Jesus into the world to save powerless people like me. I invite Your Holy Spirit to lead me into the knowledge of all truth. Amen

EXPRESSING APPRECIATION

We are lifting others up and valuing their kindness when we tell them how much we appreciate their support. Being thankful for what others do for us will help strengthen those relationships and work towards ongoing co-operation. When we encourage others, it has the positive effect of also building ourselves up.

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

Expressing appreciation begins with our relationship with God. All we are and have comes directly from Him. The day before us is a fresh opportunity to experience all the good things God has planned for us. Beginning the day in God's presence, remembering His love and forgiveness and His promises to us, is a strong foundation on which to build a successful day. As we focus on God rather than ourselves, it puts us in an enlightened mindset and encourages us to continually seek Him for guidance.

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

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

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for today and for the people who walk alongside me. Help me to have eyes to see and a heart to appreciate all that You do for me. Help me also to express my appreciation for others by often saying "Thank You" to them for their help. Amen

We are lifting others up and valuing their kindness when we tell them how much we appreciate their support.

HIDING BEHIND THE LIES

We started lying a long time ago to cover up and hide from the truth. Now we find it almost impossible to tell the complete truth in any situation. We often want to run and hide from others rather than tell them the whole truth about what is going on inside us. However, the road to recovery which God offers us is based on truth telling and integrity. What are we going to do?

Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out. (Proverbs 10:9 NIV)

Are we willing to learn about the truth of God's principles as recorded in the Bible and apply these truths in all our affairs?

We all know we've been dishonest at times but, are we willing to admit to ourselves the truth about why we lied? Some of our core beliefs are lies that we used to prop up our sin and addiction. For those of us who have cycled in and out of recovery, it's almost certain we have been living under the power of deception and require God's help to recognize and live in the truth. Perhaps it's time to start acknowledging the underlying lies that our beliefs are based on. To leave them untouched will impact our recovery and contribute to future relapse.

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth." (John 8:31b-32 NIV, John 16:13 NLT)

How willing are we to make a fresh start and finally be free from the deceit that keeps us lying in our thoughts, speaking lies out of our mouths, and implementing lies with our actions? God desires that we know the truth and that we recognize and reject untruthful ways. Are we willing to learn about the truth of God's principles as recorded in the Bible and apply these truths in all our affairs?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that I have found it more self-serving to act on my own faulty beliefs rather than be guided by the truth of Your Word as recorded in the Bible. I've lied to myself and to others. Today, I confess that I've been wrong. I turn away from telling lies and ask You to forgive me. Please work in me and change me so that telling the truth, regardless of any consequences, becomes my way of life. Amen

IT'S IN THE BOOK

Members of Alcoholics Anonymous are encouraged to regularly read "The Big Book" which gives a helpful foundation for living sober. Some have suggested that the book got its name because of its size and content (over 400 pages long). It is a bestselling book and has had a powerful influence on many who have taken the time to read it and apply its principles in their daily living. Its content is based on the bestselling book of all time – another big book, The Holy Bible.

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. (Matthew 4:4; Psalm 119:9, 11 NIV)

Even more than Bill W. and Dr. Bob wanted to help individuals recover from the chaos of their alcoholism, God's desire for us is to have a life of purpose and live well with Him and with others. We do well when we consult God's book, the ultimate Big Book, get to know what is in it, and follow the principles that God says will work.

...When you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever. (1 Thessalonians 2:13, Isaiah 40:8 NIV)

The Big Book of AA shares stories of alcoholics and their recovery as well as teaching principles for us to put into practice in our daily lives. The Bible tells the story of God's creation and His plan for restoration of our relationship with Him after things went wrong. It tells of Jesus coming to earth to show the extravagant love of God for us. It tells how Jesus, who knew no sin, humbled Himself to die on a cross for our sins so we could be right with God regardless of how long we have stumbled in addiction and brokenness. Let's take time today to read and learn and put the truth of God's Word into practice.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for the truth contained in The Bible and its application in The Big Book of AA. Help me to read and learn and put Your principles for life into practice in all my affairs today and every day. Amen

We do well when we consult God's book, the ultimate Big Book, get to know what is in it, and follow what God says works.

SURRENDER TO YOUR WILL

As we begin to follow God's principles in all our affairs, we may have questions about the future and how God is going to work everything together for our good and His glory. God will give us unlimited power to help us leave behind those things we are in bondage to and which hinder our life and relationship with Him. Our part is to trust God and persevere through the obstacles we may encounter on our journey.

Commit your life to the Lord. Here is what he will do if you trust in him. He will make the reward for your godly life shine like the dawn. He will make the proof of your honest life shine like the sun at noon. (Psalm 37:5-6 NIRV)

Getting to know the richness of God's love for us will help us trust Him and surrender to His will.

Will God make all things right if we surrender to Him? Are we willing to trust God with our future? Asking questions like these is part of our decision-making process. To put our trust in God we need to know Him and know that He is trustworthy. Reading the Bible will give us knowledge of the character of God and how He acts on behalf of those who trust in Him. If we decide to trust Him, are we committed to obeying the guidance that God gives us through His word and in answer to our prayers?

God is not a man; he will not lie. God is not a human being; his decisions will not change. If he says he will do something, then he will do it. If he makes a promise, then he will do what he promised. (Numbers 23:19 ERV)

Getting to know the richness of God's love for us will help us trust Him and surrender to His will. Jesus knew of our Heavenly Father's love for us, and because of that great love, He was willing to come to earth to die for our sins. Jesus did not come to judge us but to save us. Are we willing to trust and surrender our will to this God of infinite love and mercy?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to improve my conscious contact with You and get to know You and Your will for my life. Please give me the will and desire to rely on You for the power to change and to bring my thoughts and actions into obedience to Your Word as recorded in the Bible. Amen

IMPATIENCE

For some of us, a lifestyle in addiction grew out of our frustration with negative events in our life. The absence of another's care for our well-being made us feel vulnerable in our social life and in our community. We became impatient and rebellious because of the way we were treated, and when things were not as we would have them, we either stuffed our feelings or became angry and exploded.

Don't say, "I'll get even with you for the wrong you did to me!" Wait for the Lord, and he will make things right for you. (Proverbs 20:22 NIRV)

When we gave our will and life over to the care of God, we learned that God loved us so much that He gave His son Jesus to pay the debt we deserved for our sin. Our relationship with God was restored and we were adopted as His beloved children. The Bible tells us that God is love, and that love is patient and kind. As we experience the undeserved love of God for us, we will repent and get rid of all the bitterness and resentment that is fueling our impatience with ourselves and with those around us.

We get our new life from the Spirit, so we should follow the Spirit. We must not feel proud and boast about ourselves. We must not cause trouble for each other or be jealous of each other. (Galatians 5:25-26 ERV)

Pride also fuels our impatience. We think others should respect us as we believe we deserve, and yet we often do not treat others with the respect they deserve. We get impatient with those who are seeking to help us when they do not meet the time schedule we have set. We get impatient with God when He does not immediately answer our prayers and then we begin to obsess on going back to our old ways. We stress and complain because we consider our needs are more important than the needs of anyone else.

God has a plan for us that is meaningful, purposeful and joyful. Let's get rid of our impatience and trust that God's timing is perfect, and that He will do for us, and through us, those good things He has planned.

Prayer: Loving God, Forgive me for my impatience with people and events. Help me to see You at work in my life so I can fulfill the good and perfect plans You have for me. Amen

A patient person is very smart. A quick-tempered person makes stupid mistakes.

**Proverbs 14:29
ERV**

THE POWER THAT BRINGS HEALING

After we courageously admitted that our lives were unmanageable, we then came to believe that we needed a power greater than ourselves to restore us to sanity. People around us began to talk about this God who desired to care for us, and we were amazed that He would take time to notice us let alone care for us. In the past we avoided anything to do with God and only used His name in anger or to blaspheme anything or anyone who got in our way. But, even in our rebellion, God was looking down on us with loving kindness and tender mercy for He saw us as wandering sheep without a shepherd.

Jesus saw the many people and felt sorry for them because they were worried and helpless—like sheep without a shepherd to lead them. But I was the one who taught Ephraim to walk. I took the Israelites in my arms. I healed them, but they don't know that. I led them with ropes, but they were ropes of love. I was like a person who set them free. I bent down and fed them. (Matthew 9:36; Hosea 11:3-4 ERV)

When we accept Jesus as our Saviour, we have all of heaven's power to bring healing and restoration to our lives.

God will never overrule our will for He freely gave it to us when He made us in His image. God waits for us to come to Him and when we do, He shows us compassion and tender mercy. When we accept Jesus as our Saviour, we have all of heaven's power to bring healing and restoration to our lives. In the past we have experienced turbulent times, but God will bring peace to our lives as we seek to know His will for us and the Holy Spirit will empower us to carry it out.

"I have seen their way of life, but I will heal them. I will guide and comfort them and those who mourn for them. I will teach them a new word: peace. I will give peace to those who are near and to those who are far away. I will heal them." *The Lord himself said this.* (Isaiah 57:18-19 ERV)

As we repent of our former ways, seek God, and commit to practicing His principles in all our affairs, God will forgive our sins and bring peace and healing to those places within us where trauma and pain may have taken up root.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for remembering me even when I did not know You or Your ways. Today, I ask You to bring peace and healing to my body, mind and spirit. Amen

REMEMBER GOD'S HELP IN TIME OF TROUBLE

As we remember service men and women who served our nation in times of war and other national troubles, it's good to be mindful of words from the Bible that prompt us to remember God's help in our time of need. Many veterans, who found themselves in fox holes on the frontlines, came to know how important it was that God was with them in ways that never would have been as evident to them had they been safe at home.

The Lord is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. (Exodus 15:2 NIV)

In the Bible we read of people who experienced hurtful circumstances and trauma but remained faithful to God. They brought their circumstances before God and trusted Him to help them. When they were afraid, they chose to find comfort and strength in the truth that God is faithful and will do what He has promised. They were willing to follow God and leave the outcome with Him.

In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling. (Exodus 15:13 NIV)

Many of us, in the chaos of addiction and now in recovery, recognize that we need a power greater than ourselves to help us through each day. On our own, we know we are powerless. We know the problems we face are greater than the strength we have. Our hope is in God alone for victory over our dependencies.

As people gather across our nation on this Remembrance Day, let's give thanks for the military men and woman who serve our country and keep our land safe from those who would seek to oppress our nation. Let's also give thanks to God for His strength and goodness which brings peace to us in body, mind, and spirit.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I give thanks for Your help in times of war and in challenging times. As I learn to trust You for victory over the oppression of my addiction, keep me aware of Your presence ever with me. I pray for lasting peace in both my country and in my soul. Amen

We know the problems we face are greater than the strength we have. Our hope is in God alone for victory over our dependencies.

NOVEMBER 12

FRIENDS IN TIME OF NEED

We live in a time of war and threats of war between nations. Some nations at war form alliances with other friendly nations as leaders look for solidarity, friendship, and/or military support from other nations. Yesterday was Remembrance Day in Canada and men and women who fought in past wars paraded to cenotaphs in areas of the country where they live. We were reminded once again that in times of war we need friends who will stand shoulder to shoulder with us and fight for freedom from those who would seek to oppress our nation or our friends.

One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (Proverbs 18:24, Hebrews 13:5b NIV)

We need to encourage each other by sharing our experience, strength, and hope on the journey to freedom.

In the fight to overcome our addiction we too need friends. Our recovery will not come easily. It's important not to be arrogant and think we are stronger or less vulnerable than others. We need friends to come alongside us, and we need to come alongside others who are challenged and need support as they face their struggles. We need to encourage each other by sharing our experience, strength, and hope on the journey to freedom.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Romans 8:35, 37 NIV)

All of us need the friendship of God who promises to never leave us nor forsake us. We need God's Holy Spirit living in us to provide us with the strength we need to resist temptation. With God's power at work within us, we have the assurance that even though we face strong enemies of our soul, we will ultimately win the war.

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to seek and live in healthy committed friendships as I move forward in my recovery. Give me the wisdom to listen to, and apply as appropriate, the experience, strength and hope that others share. Thank you for your love that holds me close and shelters me in times of trouble. Amen

NOVEMBER 21

SUFFERING FOR DOING THE RIGHT THING

Living with God in recovery often presents difficult challenges such as: waiting for something we feel desperately in need of right now; not retaliating with anger when someone offends us; living with less when we could scam our way into having more; and facing the consequences of revealing difficult truths. Despite the immediate pain we may be feeling, God promises that we will be blessed when we make the right choice and do the next right thing.

Blessed are those who suffer for doing what is right. The kingdom of heaven belongs to them. (Matthew 5:10 NIRV)

The greatest example for us to follow is Jesus. He did no wrong and did not deserve punishment or death. Yet, to pay the penalty for our sins, Jesus was willing to be nailed to a cross and die there. While He was suffering on that cross many who watched, or passed by, made fun of Him. Jesus knew that His Father's plan was for Him to be the sin offering for those who were made in God's image so that their sins could be forgiven, and they could be restored to eternal life with Him. So, despite the false evidence spoken against Him, the suffering, and the mocking, Jesus willingly remained on the cross and died for the sins of the whole world.

Those who passed by shouted at Jesus and made fun of him. They shook their heads. In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders made fun of him. "He saved others," they said. "But he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross! Then we will believe in him. In the same way the rebels who were being crucified with Jesus also made fun of him. (Matthew 27:39, 41-42, 44 NIRV)

You and I will never have to suffer to the degree that Jesus did. When we are unpopular and perhaps slandered because we choose to do things God's way rather than the world's way, it's good to remember that God knows best. Because of His obedience, Jesus was later raised up with glory and honour. You and I will also be blessed by God as we persevere in doing what is right and good.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Suffering is never easy to endure. Help me to choose what is right rather than what is convenient. Help me to honour You in all my ways rather than choose to go along with the crowd. Amen

Living with God in recovery often presents difficult challenges

HUMILITY

A humble life is grounded in a realistic view of ourselves. A humble person is not someone who feels inferior but someone who is overwhelmed by the undeserved goodness of God. We believe that God cares, therefore we no longer need to hide behind too much self-confidence or the burden of self-doubt. Our security is in the safety of God's acceptance and unfailing love for us.

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

Humility comes quietly to those who draw close to the Lord, trust in His goodness, and express that in their obedient behaviour.

An attitude of humility allows us to accept our dependence on God and follow His direction. With humility of heart, we listen to God's warning signals and turn away from any familiar path that could be harmful. Humility permits us to follow an unfamiliar path with our hand in the hand of God. Humility allows us to lay down everything that hinders our way forward. We embrace God's principles because we believe that they will ultimately produce fullness of life.

My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body. Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. (Proverbs 4:20-23 NLT)

Humility comes quietly to those who draw close to the Lord, trust in His goodness, and express that in their obedient behaviour. The God of time and eternity who created us in love is always close to us and invites us to rest close to His heart. With confidence, we can say, "God, here I am, I humbly ask you to remove all my shortcomings so I can relax in your presence now and always." There, with Him, we can finally live as people of integrity and be at peace.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for being with me when I grieve over the happenings in my past. I am thankful that I do not have to face this sorrow alone. Today, I humbly ask You for forgiveness and to remove all my shortcomings. Please hold me close to Your heart. Amen

BUILDING A GOOD REPUTATION

When we were living in addiction we were not known as people who had a good reputation. In fact, even though we tried to hide what was going on, we had sunk so deep into our addiction that our character and reputation were destroyed by our consistent poor choices. Dealing with a bad reputation is one of the most difficult things to face as we seek to live well in recovery with God.

God's word describes the value of a good reputation and has lots of helpful advice for us as we seek to rebuild ours.

A good reputation and respect are worth much more than silver and gold. Never let loyalty and kindness leave you! Tie them around your neck as a reminder. Write them deep within your heart. Then you will find favor with both God and people, and you will earn a good reputation. Always let others see you behaving properly, even though they may still accuse you of doing wrong. Then on the day of judgment, they will honor God by telling the good things they saw you do. (Proverbs 22:1 CEV, Proverbs 3:3-4 NLT, 1 Peter 2:12 CEV)

The list of good choices that are foundational to good character are clearly laid out in the above Bible verses: be loyal; be kind; behave properly; do good. Rebuilding our reputation is about letting God remove our character defects and inviting Him to help us develop positive character qualities while remaining humble. There is nothing we have done that we cannot learn something from it. When we have blown another's trust several times, it may take time for them to trust us again. However, when change is evident over time, many of us have experienced that people do come around and respond with kindness.

Jesus came to earth to die a sinner's death on the cross and laid down His good reputation in order that we might receive forgiveness and a new life in recovery with God. He sacrificed everything for us. As tough as it may seem to us to rebuild our reputation, God is all powerful and will help us do that.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Jesus came to earth and gave up His good reputation so I could have a new life. Through Your Holy Spirit, I ask You to empower me to do the work required to rebuild my reputation and be a person who has favour with You and with others. By the choices I make, my desire is to honour You with my thoughts, words, and actions. Amen

A good reputation and respect are worth much more than silver and gold.

***Proverbs 22:1
CEV***

FACING FAILURE

There is a desire in each one of us to succeed, to win, to excel, yet often when we have been asked to do something, we allow thoughts of failure to overcome us before we even start. The fear of failure terrifies us and takes away our hope.

We risk failure when we set our goals too high. A sense of inadequacy follows, and we find ourselves filled with shame and embarrassment when we fail to accomplish the impossible goal we set. God created us and is aware of each of our limitations. His expectation is that we use the gifts we have been given and, with His help and guidance, do the best that we can in each circumstance we encounter. Trying to be what God never intended us to be is a sure recipe for failure.

Trying to be what God never intended us to be is a sure recipe for failure.

This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every Morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:21-23 NIV)

Another kind of failure we face is the failure that comes from sin. We settle for less than we could be or have. We wallow in resentments. We hold grudges. We cling to unhealthy ways of living. We live according to our own human plans instead of God's good, pleasing, and perfect plan. We often embrace violence instead of peace, self-centeredness instead of caring, hatred instead of love, despair instead of hope.

The power of the Holy Spirit has made me free from the power of sin and death. This power is mine because I belong to Christ Jesus. We thank God for the power Christ has given us. He leads us and makes us win in everything. (Romans 8:2, 2 Corinthians 2:14a NIV)

When we choose to live God's way rather than our own way, we will no longer set ourselves up for failure. We will have the satisfying experience of peace in our hearts. As we submit to God, He will direct us in the way we are to go, and we will accomplish those things He has planned in advance for us to do.

Prayer: Loving God, Forgive me for the times my sin has caused me to live in failure. Help me to live in Your plan for my life, doing those things You have planned for me to do. Help me to commit myself to instruction and to listen carefully to Your words of knowledge. Help me to choose to do those things You have planned for me to do. Amen

ENTIRELY READY FOR DEFECTS TO BE REMOVED

Requesting that God remove all our defects of character is asking Him to rid us of everything within us that hinders our ability to live life to the full. By reading God's Word we have come to know that God loves us and is committed to taking care of us. We are precious in God's sight. Focusing on this enduring relationship of unfailing love and care will enable us to obey God's commands and walk in His ways.

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)

To experience life to the full we must choose for God's way each time His direction conflicts with what we believe is a better way. Character defects are removed as we become willing to follow God's principles instead of our own way.

"Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10 NIV)

Any other conversation with God is our way of defending, rebelling, bargaining, or engaging in a useless exercise of trying to manipulate the God of heaven and earth to consent to what we want.

Becoming willing to have God remove all our defects of character is a bit like dealing with dirty clothes. We don't put clean clothes on top of dirty clothes. That would give the appearance of change while we are just covering up what is dirty and needs to be removed. When sinful habits and defects of character are revealed, we need to give God permission to remove these, cleanse us fully, and then put on our new self which has been renewed in the knowledge of God our creator.

Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me—now let me rejoice. (Psalm 51:7-8 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to be willing to have all my defects of character removed. Help me to live each day as a new creation, entirely surrendered to Your will and Your ways. Amen

Character defects are removed as we become willing to follow God's principles instead of our own way.

FLEXIBILITY

To be flexible means that we are adaptable and willing to yield when circumstances require short or long-term change. When we first come into a recovery program, people and our surroundings are often not what we are used to. In our addiction we usually did what we wanted, when we wanted. Now we are asked to follow a fixed schedule. People don't do things the way we would. If we really desire to turn our lives around, we will need to be willing to persevere through the unknowns and be flexible.

So prepare your minds for service. With complete self-control put all your hope in the grace that will be yours when Jesus Christ comes. In the past you did not have the understanding you have now, so you did the evil things you wanted to do. But now you are children of God, so you should obey him and not live the way you did before. (1 Peter 1:13-14 ERV)

When we are flexible, we can learn new things.

In sobriety our flawed opinions and views on life may be different than those held by the people around us. Being powerless over our dependency may not be something we are willing to admit. Accepting that there is a power greater than ourselves who can restore us to sanity may be something that we are not sure we agree with. We need to be flexible as we listen to those who have been in the program for a while. They were probably like us when they came in, but were willing to learn from their mentors, counsellors, peers, and others.

Show me your paths and teach me to follow; guide me by your truth and instruct me. (Psalm 25:4-5a CEV)

When we are flexible, we can learn new things. We do not need to reject what others are saying just because it is something we haven't heard before. We can test the truth of what we are hearing against God's Word as recorded in the Bible. If we ask Him, God will bring clarity and understanding to what we are hearing.

Jesus said: ***I will not judge those who hear me but don't obey me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it.*** (John 12:47 NLT)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Teach me to listen and be flexible so I can learn about Your ways and benefit from the wisdom of those around me. Amen

REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

Ten times in just a few verses from the Bible we are told by a wise king that we should remember our creator. Remember God, while we are young, through all the different seasons and troubles of life, all the way through to the vulnerability of life when the "silver cord is cut" and our bodies return to the dust from which we came and our spirit goes back to God who gave us life.

Remember your Creator. Remember him while you are still young. Think about him before your times of trouble come... Remember your Creator before those who guard the house tremble with old age... Remember your Creator before the front doors are closed... Remember your Creator before you become afraid of places that are too high... Remember your Creator before the almond trees have buds on them... Remember your Creator before the silver cord is cut. Remember him before the golden bowl is broken... Remember your Creator before you return to the dust you came from. Remember him before your spirit goes back to God who gave it. (Ecclesiastes 12:1, 3-7 NIRV)

Remember your Creator. Remember him while you are still young.

When we remember our creator, we will know for sure that our life is not our own and we will humble ourselves before God and seek to know His ways. When we remember our creator, we will be aware that life and health come from God alone and we will come before Him daily to receive His blessing and provision. When we remember our creator, then no matter what circumstances we face we will know we are safe, and that God will get us to the other side. We will never get lost in pride when things are going well for us, and we won't live in despair or addiction when we face problems. We will remember that God is on our side, God is working out His plans for us, and nothing can stand in His way. When we remember our creator while facing illness or death, we will have great peace knowing that the loving hands of God are holding us. When our days on earth are complete, God will welcome us into His eternal presence.

Prayer: Creator God, It's so easy to get lost in the details of my own plans and daily living. Help me to remember that it is from You I received the gift of life and to You I will return. Help me to live in honour of Your Name so that the inheritance I have received from You is evident to all who know me. Amen

USELESSNESS AND SELF-PITY DISAPPEAR

On pages 83-84 of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous we read twelve promises that will happen as we diligently work the twelve steps. The question is asked: *“Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us - sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.”*

The Bible also makes this “extravagant promise.” *That’s also how it is with people. The ones who stop doing evil and make themselves pure will become special. Their lives will be holy and pleasing to their Master, and they will be able to do all kinds of good deeds.* (2 Timothy 2:21 CEV)

**You didn’t
choose
me. I chose
you. I
appointed
you to go
and
produce
lasting
fruit**

Many of us have wasted years and even decades in addiction. By the time we get into recovery our bodies are tired and worn out, our minds are fragile, and it takes a long time for us to find favourable circumstances where we can learn new skills. We often feel like the opportunity to be successful and productive has passed us by, but the sixth promise addresses us at this place when it says, *“That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.”*

This promise is echoed in what God promises us. God’s plan for our lives will begin to be perfected the moment we put our trust in Him and begin to follow His ways. God will use everything in our past, in our present, and in our future, to bring about the amazing plan He has prepared for us. His will for us is to have a meaningful, purposeful, and joyful life.

John 15:16a NLT **For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.** (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV)

How does God do it? How does it all come about? We don’t know and we don’t have to know. Our part is to get to know God, follow His guidance, stay strong in His love, and be available. God will teach us everything we need to know and promises that we will experience a fulfilling and fruitful life.

Prayer: Gracious Father, I have wasted much time in addiction and unhealthy life practices. Help me to believe Your promise that You can use me in a way that blesses others and fills me with joy and satisfaction. Show me my part in Your overall plan and help me to fulfill it by doing the next right thing and leaving the outcome with You. Amen

HELP ME LORD

When we are in a place of despair we often cry out to God for help but wonder if He is really listening. We feel unsettled and insecure. We wonder if God has turned away from us, but in hope, we cry out to Him for protection. The writer of the following Psalm called out to God for help when he was in similar circumstances.

Defend me, God. Argue my case against those people who don’t know you. Protect me from those evil liars. God, you are my place of safety. Why have you turned me away? Why must I suffer this sadness that my enemies have brought me? Send your light and your truth to guide me, to lead me to your holy mountain, to your home. I want to go to God’s altar, to the God who makes me so very happy. God, my God, I want to play my harp and sing praises to you! Why am I so sad? Why am I so upset? I tell myself, “Wait for God’s help! You will again have a chance to praise him, your God, the one who will save you.” (Psalm 43:1-5 ERV)

**Let’s tell God
all about our
troubles and
then wait for
Him to sort out
all our
concerns.**

When we read this Psalm, we see how the writer is honest about the trauma he is experiencing. He recognizes that God is his place of safety but asks God why He has turned him away. He questions God about the reason he must suffer this sadness.

Like us, it appears the writer believed that God always works for the good we desire, but he was upset to find out that God works “all things” together for our good, both the good and the troublesome. In the end he discovered that God is much more gracious in His plans and actions than we are. Jesus told us that in this life we would have trouble. Everyone in this life will experience problems. Troubles are not just for those living in self-will rather than God’s will.

In the words that follow the writer’s plea for the Lord to help him, we see his attitude change as he asks God to send His light and truth to guide him. He also tells himself to wait for God’s help. When we find ourselves in trouble it would be good to follow the example set in this Psalm. Let’s tell God all about our troubles and then wait for Him to sort out all our concerns in His way and time.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, When my circumstances overwhelm me and cause me to be fearful, help me to trust that You are near and ready to help. Amen