

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



MARCH 2025



These meditations are available online
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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.

NOTES

MARCH 1

MAKING ROOM FOR THE NEW BY CLEARING OUT THE OLD

How can a person become complete in God, lacking nothing? Today's circumstances are often adding to what already needs to be dealt with inside us. If we had a cupboard which was already packed full and we were trying to get more in, some stuff would just spill out because the cupboard has no room to contain what we are trying to get in. Our minds are like that. In our minds we have already stored our life to date happenings. We need to clear out some of the old before we can add the new otherwise confusion will result, and life will become unmanageable.

So get rid of all that is wrong in your life, both inside and outside, and humbly be glad for the wonderful message we have received, for it is able to save our souls as it takes hold of our hearts. (James 1:21 TLB)

When something is complete it means that it has been worked on to bring it to that state. To be complete in God we need to work on getting rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behaviour that we have been exhibiting. Life's hurts may have intensified our behaviour, but God wants us to forgive those who have harmed us and instead, be kind and compassionate towards them just as He has been towards us.

You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete.

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32 ESV)

James 2:22 NLT

When we have cleared out some of our old behaviour patterns, we can then replace them with the new lifegiving ways of behaving that will draw us closer to God. We need to have daily conscious contact with God. We need to keep a personal inventory and be honest about what is causing us to keep doing something that is harmful to us. God wants us to be complete, lacking nothing, but we need to be willing to have faith in His Word and then practice His principles in all our affairs.

You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. (James 2:22 NLT)

Prayer: Gracious God, Please give me the will and desire to get rid of my harmful ways and, in all that I do, let my actions make my faith complete. Amen

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 life looks like now." In each of these stages of our recovery journey it is good to acknowledge God's input into what was going on and thank Him for all He has done.

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

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, may have brought someone across our path to share a message of hope with us, or He simply may have stirred a desire in us for something other than what we were currently living. God strengthened us and gave us the courage to seek help and now we are living one day at a time, one moment at a time. God has given us sobriety and a new life worth living. Do we take time each day to thank God for all He has done for us?

***It is good to
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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)

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 to meet our needs, regardless of the harm we may have caused. That bondage was broken as we repented of our sin and trusted in the forgiveness of God because on the cross Jesus paid the debt for our sin.

As we have studied God's Word and put His principles into practice in all our affairs, we have found freedom to speak and behave in ways we never could have imagined. We wake up each day with a heart filled with gratitude and are encouraged to share our experience, strength, and hope with others.

Prayer: Loving God, I cannot begin to tell you how grateful I am for what You have done in my life. 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

OLD GROWTH GOODNESS

Across the planet there are discussions about how to protect old growth forests. Wildfires in Canada, Australia, United States and South America have all had an impact on several forests that have grown over a long period of time. To be designated an old growth forest, the requirement is that the forest will have developed over a period of at least 120 years and will have withstood fire, storms, and logging. These forests are precious because they create amazing conditions for soil nutrition, plant growth, protection of animal life and so on. God's word uses the picture of old growth trees – trees with deep roots – to reveal to us a picture of the value of experience with God over a long period of time.

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. Many of us have been refreshed and encouraged by the stories and advice of old-timers. They have lived through ups and downs and experienced what has worked in their recovery and what has failed.

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 also uses a picture of trees to help us understand how beautiful life in heaven will be. Today's question is, "What am I putting into practice today so I can become an old-timer who is blessed by God?"

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 grow strong, regardless of what I may encounter. Also, help me to learn from the experience of old-timers as they support me in my life with You in recovery. Amen

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ANGER

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

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

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

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

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

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

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God

forgave you. (Ephesians 4:31-32 NIV)

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

CAN I EVER ESCAPE THE PAIN OF THE PAST?

When we are trying to do what is right and live according to God's principles, we often hear hurtful comments from others who choose to remind us of our past and the things we did. Some people find it hard to allow us to move on. Others have doubts that we have turned our will and life over to the care of God and are resentful that we should be forgiven. The person who wrote the following words from the Bible appears to have been dealing with a similar situation.

I am about to collapse from constant pain. I told you my sins, and I am sorry for them. Many deadly and powerful enemies hate me, and they repay evil for good because I try to do right. You are the Lord God! Stay nearby and don't desert me. You are the one who saves me. Please hurry and help. (Psalm 38:17-22 CEV)

When others remind us of the exact nature of our wrongs, the guilt that is dormant within us may flare up and cause us pain. We know the hurt we caused and, where possible, have sought to make amends. We have repented before God and have been forgiven. With God's help, we are now trying to do what is right and live as forgiven children of our Heavenly Father. Where we seem to have failed in making peace for the hurts of the past, we need to pray and ask Jesus to come near and comfort and heal those who are still suffering because of our wrongs.

Most of all, love one another deeply. Love erases many sins by forgiving them. (1 Peter 4:8 NIRV)

In a song entitled "To God Be the Glory", there is a line that is forever true regardless of who we are or what we have done. "The vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus a pardon receives." To persevere in our life with God in recovery, we need to ask God for the will and the strength to practice His principles in all our affairs. When we obey His Word as written in the Bible, He will surely be our help in our times of need.

Prayer: Loving God, When others are unforgiving of my past and cause me pain, please help me to remember that Jesus bore the pain of my sin on the cross. Remind me to pray, as Jesus did, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Amen

We need to pray and ask Jesus to come near and comfort and heal those who are still suffering because of our wrongs.

ATTITUDE

The attitude we exhibit can be like medicine that heals or like poison that kills. When we look at the circumstances around us, is our instant response positive or negative? When we look at others, do we first see their gifts or their faults?

"My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the Lord. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9 NLT)

Our attitude can be like medicine that heals or like poison that kills.

We are living in error when we believe our attitude is determined by our circumstances. Circumstances will sometimes be favorable and sometimes not. External factors have little to do with our contentment. A good attitude is rooted in the truth that God is good every day and God is making that goodness available to us in every circumstance.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28 NIV)

What do we do when we find ourselves struggling with a negative perspective or bad attitude? We need to recognize that a bad attitude comes from negative thinking which impacts our response in most situations. Even though someone may trigger a hostile response within us, our attitude is ours and not theirs, and we need to submit our bad attitude to God. Together with God, we can uncover the root cause of our bad attitude and receive healing and release from its bondage.

Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted and keep a humble attitude. (1 Peter 3:8 NLT)

Choosing to remember God's goodness and His promises to us is the foundation on which we build our faith and maintain a positive attitude towards others.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me when my attitude towards You and towards life in general is not in keeping with who I truly want to be. Help me to understand and deal with the underlying root of my self-centered thinking so I may be set free from its bondage. Amen

DISCOVERING TRUTH

If we hold something in our hand and then let go of it, it will drop to the ground. It doesn't matter if it is large or small, light or heavy, it will drop. Why? The law of gravity on earth is in operation.

Has the law of gravity always been around? Yes. But it wasn't until the 1600's that a scientist named Sir Isaac Newton described it and then Albert Einstein in the early 1900's more accurately helped us understand it through his theory of relativity. Much of modern science in physics and aerodynamics is based on these principles. Scientists did not invent gravity. It was always there, but its activity was not thought about.

The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. (Psalm 19:1, Romans 1:20 NLT)

The God who created this earth and put natural laws in place has also given us spiritual laws that are in operation. In Step 11 the founders of AA invited us to the process of discovering life as it really is when they said, "We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out." Reading and putting into operation God's laws as recorded in the Bible will lead us to a more satisfying life because we are living according to the truth rather than going against it.

We know that stepping off a balcony on the 4th floor will lead to serious injury or even death because of gravity. In a similar way, we will sustain injury and sometimes even death when we live in ways that go against the laws of God. Today, let's get to know and put into practice the safe and caring principles God has established for recovery, and for life.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Through the reading of Your Word as recorded in the Bible, help me to understand and practice Your principles for life and for recovery. My desire is to know the plans You have for me and, as I move forward, have the power to carry them out. Please help me! Amen

The God who created this earth and put natural laws in place has also given us spiritual laws that are in operation.

AFFIRMED AND ACCOMPANIED BY A LOVING GOD

After years of listening to other's harsh and condemning words about us, it's wonderful to have an opportunity to experience the affirmation of God and to be reminded that as we walk together with Him, He is well pleased with us.

God, have mercy on us and bless us. May you be pleased with us. Then your ways will be known on earth. All nations will see that you have the power to save. God, may the nations praise you. May all the people on earth praise you. May the nations be glad and sing for joy. You rule the people of the earth fairly. You guide the nations of the earth. (Psalm 67:1-4 NIRV)

God now gets praise from others through the witness of our life with Him in recovery.

These verses remind us that it was God who, in his mercy, reached out and rescued us. He didn't just set us on a pathway and expect us to find our own way but, with great joy and direction, He accompanies us. In an amazing turnaround of events, God now gets praise from others through the witness of our life with Him in recovery.

We invited Jesus into our lives to forgive and save us and, by the power of God's Spirit, we are now being transformed into His likeness. Others notice, and some may ask what happened to us that caused us to change. As we share our experience, strength, and hope with them, they come to know that it was God's power that made all the difference in our lives.

Recovery does not bring about a perfect world but, as we walk with God without hiding behind substances, God will teach us the right way and warn us off the wrong way. Together with God, we can navigate our relationships

with others. Seeking recovery with others can be messy. Life itself at times is messy. But, together with God who guides and governs individuals and groups of people fairly and with justice, we can take the necessary steps that will help all of us live together in peace.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, It really is a pleasure to walk in the acceptance and affirmation of Your great love for me. Jesus, by His finished work here on earth, made it possible for me to be accepted into Your family. At times, when I find it a challenge to endure others, help me to take a moment and reach out to You for guidance and then do as You say. Help me to see myself as one of Your precious children and know that You delight in me. Amen

CARRYING THE MESSAGE BY PRACTICING THE PRINCIPLES

Sometimes we breathe a sigh of relief when we reach Step 12 of the 12-Step program. We have almost completed what we set out to do and are pleased that we stayed the course. During the past few months, we have learned a lot about ourselves and the power of our addiction to take us to places where we never thought we would go. The program also taught us a lot about ourselves and how we treated people. We knew very little about God but now our desire is to get to know Him by improving our conscious contact with Him. We have had a spiritual awakening! Our past is in the past, and our future is open to everything God has for us. We now want to share the message of our "Good News" with others.

It's important that a church leader, responsible for the affairs in God's house, be looked up to—not pushy, not short-tempered, not a drunk, not a bully, not money-hungry. He must welcome people, be helpful, wise, fair, reverent, have a good grip on himself, and have a good grip on the Message. (Titus 1:8-9a MSG)

When we begin to share with others, we need to be demonstrating God's principles in all our affairs. Others will not want to listen to us talk about God and how our lives were changed if our behaviour does not match what we say. Jesus said others will recognize that we are His disciples by the love we demonstrate towards one another.

Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples—when they see the love you have for each other. (John 13:34-35 MSG)

God wants us to gain wisdom by putting into practice all that we have learned. The journey ahead will be in increments of one step at a time. As we allow God to keep us focused on His Word, He will bring us to the knowledge of all truth.

Let wise people listen and add to what they have learned. Let those who understand what is right get guidance. (Proverbs 1:5 NIRV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to carry the message of what Jesus did for me to others. Please help me to practice Your principles in everything I say and do, so that I can faithfully share the "Good News" with great joy. Amen

We now want to share the message of our "Good News" with others.

AFFIRMED AND ACCOMPANIED BY A LOVING GOD

After years of listening to other's harsh and condemning words about us, it's wonderful that we now have an opportunity to experience the affirmation of God and to be reminded that He is well pleased with us.

God, have mercy on us and bless us. May you be pleased with us. Then your ways will be known on earth. All nations will see that you have the power to save. God, may the nations praise you. May all the people on earth praise you. May the nations be glad and sing for joy. You rule the people of the earth fairly. You guide the nations of the earth. (Psalm 67:1-4 NIRV)

God now gets praise from others through the witness of our life with Him in recovery.

These verses remind us that it was God who, in his mercy, reached out and rescued us. He didn't just set us on an unknown path and expect us to find our own way but, with great joy, He accompanies us. In an amazing turnaround of events, God now gets praise from others through the witness of our life with Him in recovery.

When we repented of our sin and invited Jesus to forgive and save us we became new creations by the power of God's Holy Spirit, and are now being transformed into His likeness. Others notice, and perhaps some may ask what caused us to change. As we share our experience, strength, and hope with them, they will then know that it was God's power that made the difference in our lives.

Being in recovery does not bring about a perfect world for any of us, but as we navigate relationships and walk with God without hiding behind substances, God will help us understand what is right and what is wrong. Seeking recovery with others can be messy. Life itself is often messy. But together with God, who guides and governs individuals and whole groups of people fairly and with justice, we can take the necessary steps that will help us all live together in peace.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, It really is a pleasure to walk in the acceptance and affirmation of Your love. You have called me to know that I belong to You, and through Jesus that was made possible. When it is a challenge for me to endure others, please help me to take a moment and reach out to You for guidance and then do exactly as You say. Help me to see myself as Your beloved child and know that You love and care for me and are always with me. Amen

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

The end of Tradition 12 in the Big Book of AA sums up an important principle in our recovery: We need to regularly count our blessings.

We are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all. (Big Book of AA)

The Bible also gives us many wonderful words on which to focus our thoughts as we do this.

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV)

God speaks blessings of protection, peace, and tenderness over us each day. Will we choose to believe God's Words and fill our minds with His thoughts or let negative thinking and feelings rule over us?

God offers us the blessing of forgiveness. Jesus died on the cross and took the punishment for every sin we have ever committed and for those we are not even aware of. We are blessed today with a clear conscience as we confess our wrongs to God and let Him remove our sin from us.

Blessed is the person whose lawless acts are forgiven. Their sins have been taken away. Blessed is the person whose sin the Lord never counts against them. (Psalm 3:1-2a NIRV)

Let's make it a habit to count our blessings each day as the founders of AA suggest. As we do that, we will become more aware of the grace of God poured out on us and our hearts will be filled with the joy of knowing that God truly is ever with us.

Prayer: Loving God, I am grateful for the gifts I receive each day. Give me the desire to accept all that You are offering me and the humility to remember that everything I have and all that I am is because of Your great love for me. I acknowledge the truth that life without You is meaningless and unmanageable. Thank You for Your amazing grace poured out on me. Amen

We are blessed today with a clear conscience as we confess our wrongs to God and let Him remove our sin from us.

SORTING OUT SOFT ADDICTIONS

Soft addictions are habits or behaviors we use to control distressing moods or thought patterns. They satisfy a shallow want but ignore or block a deeper need. They numb us to feelings we don't like or are unfamiliar with. They substitute a superficial high for genuine feelings of accomplishment. God does not want us to lean on these temporary supports. He wants us to acknowledge the truth about our real needs. When we are willing to deal with reality and seek God, He promises to strengthen us and hold us steady.

Are we engaging in an activity to improve our life and our relationships or are we simply trying to numb our feelings and let the world go by?

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10 NIV)

Soft addictions are formed through the misuse of ordinary things in life such as, our phones, sleeping, eating, shopping, work, or exercise. We have to be radically honest about the underlying root of our behaviours – all of them – not just those that are easily labeled “addictions and dependencies.” Asking ourselves some simple questions can help us recognize if something has become a soft addiction for us.

Are we engaging in an activity to improve our life and our relationships or are we simply trying to numb our feelings and let the world go by? Are we conscious of God's presence in us and around us as we participate in the activity or are we seeking satisfaction in it rather than from living in the truth? Do we believe we are serving God's purposes in what we are doing or are we using the activity to comfort and distract us from feelings of

discontent, loneliness, or anger? These are some of the issues we need to consider as we determine whether the activity is healthy or a soft addiction.

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:2 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to recognize any way I am misusing good things to avoid dealing with negative feelings. I ask you to mend those places in me that cause pain. I want to follow You in all my ways. Amen

MY LIFE HAS GREAT BEAUTY AND INFINITE VALUE

In some recovery circles we affirm these words on a regular basis: ***My life is of great beauty and infinite value. God has a plan for my life that is meaningful, purposeful and joyful. There is a work for me to do today that will bless others and give me deep satisfaction.***

God knew each one of us before we were formed in our mother's womb and considers us extremely valuable. Our value is not due to our wealth, our education, or our social standing. We are valuable because we bear the image of our Creator.

[God said] ***Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us.*** Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! (Genesis 1:26, 31 NLT)

Throughout history, God has gifted artists with vision and skill to paint pictures and sculpt beautiful pieces that we can gaze on and appreciate. God is the ultimate artist, and He has implanted great beauty in us. With loving care and attention God crafted each person, and we are His magnificent masterpieces.

You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

(Psalm 139:13-14, 16 NLT)

God's artistic skill was not completed in us on the day we were born. As a weaver takes many threads and weaves them into intricate patterns for a wall hanging or a rug, so God continues to bring beauty into our being and into our world as He weaves together the details of each day of our life. God truly is creating something beautiful in our life.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for making me the intricate person that I am. As You weave all the threads of my life into a beautiful work of art, help me to know Your ways and accept Your guidance as I follow You in all You have planned for my life. Amen

Our value is not due to our wealth or our education or our social standing. We are valuable because we bear the image of our Creator.

CHARACTER DEFECT: SELF-JUSTIFICATION

In certain situations, when our behaviour is challenged, we are quick to try to 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 was just speaking my mind." Often 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)

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

In our addiction, after failing to fulfill the commitments we made, we often lied to others. We became experts at making up believable excuses and even justified lying to ourselves. Self-justification is rooted in the 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 doing.

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 then be free to become the person God created us to be. God is with us to 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 doing. I want to be transformed in my mind so that I am no longer in bondage to self-justification when my behaviour is inappropriate. Amen

LIVING BY THE TRUTH

How we got to where we are at today is the result of our own faulty thinking and flawed solutions. However, where we go from here can be beyond all we could ask for or even imagine, if we consistently apply God's truth to our daily living.

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)

Who do the tapes playing in our heads say that we are? Who does God say we are? What are our felt needs right now? How does God say He'll meet those needs? Where do we think our lives are headed? What does God say about His plans for us? We will have the life we desire when we base our life on God's answers to these questions.

Jesus said, "***You are truly My disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.***" (John 8:31-32 and 10:10b NLT)

The events of the past, no matter how difficult, are not to blame for our present emotional and spiritual state. We are in this condition because we have chosen to interpret and respond to situations based on our own limited knowledge and beliefs. Jesus Christ through His finished work on the cross has opened a new way for us, one of forgiveness for our sins and a restored relationship with God. If we repent of our sin and seek His help, God will reveal truth to us. God will fill us with His Holy Spirit who will give us the will and desire to live according to the truth of His Word as recorded in the Bible. He will enable us to forgive those people and events that caused us harm and we can then let go of the emotions and thoughts which keep us in bondage to our past.

As we ask for and apply God's truth to each situation that arises, we will move from hoping and desiring a new way of life to experiencing it.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I confess that I have lived my life based on my own understanding. Show me where my thinking needs to change so I can experience the satisfying life You offer me. As I read the Bible each day, increase my knowledge of Your Word and give me the wisdom to put what I learn into practice. Amen

Where we go from here can be beyond all we could ask for or even imagine.

TAKING CARE AS WE MAKE AMENDS

When we come to the point of making amends, fear can overwhelm us as we think about facing those we have harmed. When we caused them harm, we were enemies of God and serving a different master. We have now been reconciled to God and are willing to admit the error of our former ways. God has forgiven us for the wrongs we have done and now we need to ask forgiveness of those we have harmed and, if possible, work towards reconciliation.

At one time you were separated from God. You were his enemies in your minds, because the evil you did was against him. But now he has made you his friends again. He did this by the death Christ suffered while he was in his body. He did

it so that he could present you to himself as people who are holy, blameless, and without anything that would make you guilty before him. (Colossians 1:21-22 ERV)

God has forgiven us for the wrongs we have done and now we need to ask forgiveness of those we have harmed and, if possible, work towards reconciliation.

When we are reconciled to God, we have the power of the Holy Spirit in us strengthening us to do what we need to do. God cares about the people we have harmed. Some of our relationships may no longer exist but we need to be willing to make amends for the harm we have caused, except when doing so would further injure the person we harmed or others. We need to pray and seek advice from God, our sponsor, or another trusted friend, as to how we can properly make our amends.

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. (Romans 13:8 NIV)

Though we may dread doing the work of reconciliation, in the end it will give us peace in our hearts. Hopefully the people we have harmed will offer us forgiveness, but if they choose not to, that choice remains with

them. When we make our amends as God requires of us, then we can leave the outcome of our obedience with Him.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, As I seek to do the work of making amends with those I have harmed, I ask for the courage to do all that needs to be done. Help me to have love for those I have injured and with my amends truly desire what is best for them. Amen

LEARNING FROM SOUND ADVICE

Wise people are willing to listen to sound advice and learn. When we begin our journey with God in recovery, we need to welcome help from people whose desire is for us to succeed in being restored to sanity. We can learn from their experience, strength, and hope because they have gained wisdom by listening to others and by following the principles for a successful life as recorded in the Bible.

Wisdom is found on the lips of those who understand what is right. But those who have no sense are punished. (Proverbs 10:13 NIRV)

Those who have walked the spiritual journey to recovery will tell us of prayers that God answered when they felt like giving up. They persisted in doing the next right thing and God made a way for them to be overcomers, even when they doubted there was a way forward. Some of us are foolish and end back up in the same place we came from because we disregarded the truth that God will give us the power we need to hold on. We punish ourselves repeatedly by choosing not to do what is right and good.

Knowledge begins with fear and respect for the Lord, but stubborn fools hate wisdom and refuse to learn. But now you know the true God. Really, though, it is God who knows you. So why do you turn back to the same kind of weak and useless rules you followed before? Do you want to be slaves to those things again? (Proverbs 1:7; Galatians 4:9 ERV)

God wants to take us through to victory, but if we are unwilling to pay attention to His sound advice, we will forever be on the same old roundabout going nowhere. God's Word, as recorded in the Bible, assures us that He will honour all the promises He has made. Why not trust and obey what God says? Why not be a person who gains wisdom?

Prayer: Gracious God, Help me to listen and learn from those who have walked this journey of recovery before me. Also, please give me the will and desire to trust Your Word as recorded in the Bible so that I may gain the wisdom to walk in Your ways. Amen

Wisdom is found on the lips of those who understand what is right.

***Proverbs 10:13a
NIRV***

CONFIDENCE

God has given gifts to everyone; no one has been left out. God has a plan for our lives, and He equips us with everything we need to fulfill that plan. The gifts He gives us are not solely for our own benefit but are to be used in serving and caring for others. The first step in developing confidence in using our gifts is to acknowledge that God is our creator and each one of us is individually gifted with the qualities God desires to use.

The first step in developing confidence in using our gifts is acknowledging that God is our creator, and each one of us is individually gifted with the qualities God desires to use.

Lord ... You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. (Psalm 139:13-14 NLT)

To improve our confidence, we will need to demonstrate to ourselves that we can achieve what we set out to do. How do we do that? We ask God for help to do the next right thing and then we step out and do something we haven't done before. We leave behind the safety and security of our comfort zone to achieve something new. This might include having a talk with a counselor or pastor, signing up for a class, volunteering our time, doing service work in a support group, participating in a Bible fellowship group, applying for a job or training course, etc. We will never grow in confidence if we stay in our comfort zone.

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)

As we participate in what we believe God has planned for us to do, God promises to help us. Are we willing to step forward, confident in who God says we are? Are we willing to follow the plan He has for us. Will we resolve each day to exchange our old pessimistic self for the new confident self who is created in God's likeness?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for the good plan You have for my life and the gifts You have given me to fulfill it. Please guide and direct me as I seek to follow Your plan and also fill me with the power of Your Holy Spirit to carry it out. Amen

BRINGING MY VULNERABILITY TO GOD

To prevent relapse in vulnerable times we need to allow our lives to be continuously shaped by God's principles.

The Bible teaches: ***If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.*** (1 Corinthians 10:12-13 NLT)

When we experience feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction, God invites us to see them as signals that something is wrong and then seek His help to identify and deal with the underlying problem. Where we used to wait for others to come and drag us out of dark places, we now need to do the reaching out ourselves and experience the joy of connectedness. We can also reach out to God. He's always available to help. Rather than running away from a problem in frustration, we can persevere and seek possible solutions that may be more available than we think.

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. (Hebrews 10:36 NIV)

Sometimes our feelings of vulnerability can be dealt with by simply taking time to be grateful. There will always be things that are not working out the way we want them to but, at the same time, there may also be many undeserved blessings and gifts for which we can give thanks.

Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle's! (Psalm 103:2-5 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, When I feel vulnerable, please help me to run to You instead of running away. You are the source of my strength, and I will trust You to work for good in those problems I may encounter. Amen

To prevent relapse in vulnerable times, we need to allow our lives to be continuously shaped by God's principles.

AVOIDABLE TROUBLE

Who wants trouble? None of us do and if we listen to God's counsel there's a lot of trouble we can avoid. A loving and protective parent wants to safeguard their child, so they 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 provides warning signs of danger for us and, if we heed them, they will help us live safely and avoid relapse.

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

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

Whether it is convenient to stick with the truth or not, God clearly tells us that harm and trouble will come to us when we avoid acting on His proven ways or hide the truth about our activities as we lie to others.

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 enough to get away with something that was dishonest, and it didn't cause us any concern as long as we were not caught? To avoid problems in life and in our recovery this kind of thinking and behaving needs 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 trouble into 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 a wonderful way to avoid 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 to seek out and follow the wisdom of those who are successfully walking with You. Amen

CONTINUING TO LEARN AND GROW

Our life with God in recovery should be one of continual learning and growing. We need to be diligent as we reflect on our motives and behaviour that arise in certain situations. When our actions or attitudes conflict with God's principles we need to realign our ways with what God's Word says, and we need to do it sooner rather than later. Where we are wrong it's important to admit it and take any necessary action. If we know we have harmed someone, whether intentionally or unintentionally, we need to make amends. These actions will build our character, strengthen our relationship with God, and help us find the satisfying life of living in community as God intended.

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)

How am I doing in the basics of life with God in recovery?

What is the status of my relationship with God? Where have I surrendered to God's will and where have I operated in pride and self-will? How am I living "***Not my will but Yours be done?***" (Luke 22:42 NIV)

Have I been fair-minded and flexible? Do I take time to listen and understand the other person's point of view? Am I critical and disagreeable in interactions, or respectful and patient? In my relationships with others do I practice "***Do to others as you would have them do to you?***" (Luke 6:31 NIV)

Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. (Romans 12:3 NLT)

How does my life look today as I measure it against God's tried and true principles?

Prayer: Loving God, Thank you for providing helpful principles for a successful life. Show me any offensive way that I may be treating others and give me the courage and strength to correct my actions. Amen

How does my life look today as I measure it against God's tried and true principles?

COURAGE TO BELIEVE IN CHANGE

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

In the Bible we read the story of a man named Gideon. He was discouraged and had little self-respect. His family was extremely poor, and he was the least in his family. An angel appeared and called to him, ***"Mighty hero, the Lord is with you!"*** (Judges 6:12 NLT). Gideon did not feel or look like a mighty hero. God was calling him to deliver his people from their enemies and Gideon felt inadequate in the face of this great task. God, however, chose him and simply said, ***"I will be with you."*** (Judges 6:16 NLT) By the end of the story, Gideon was the mighty deliverer of his people that God had identified Him to be.

We need to find the courage to change – the courage to see life, even our life, as God sees it.

Gideon's first step toward success was finding the courage to change. What in Gideon needed to change? Gideon needed to see himself as God saw him – a mighty hero.

Many of us feel weak and think we are failures. We had problems with addiction. We made bad choices. We've struggled to put our life back together again. Now in the sanity of our recovery we wonder how God could possibly care about people like us and give us a successful life. Just like Gideon, we need to find the courage to change – the courage to see life, even our life, as God sees it.

No matter what we need, God can and will supply it. Our part is to trust God. God is with us, and He will give us the strength and ability to overcome each difficulty we encounter. Just like Gideon, our faith in God will grow and we will have the courage to change the things we can and the wisdom to know what to leave in God's hands.

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. (Isaiah 41:10 NIV, Philippians 4:13 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, Help me to remember that You are with me as I face the challenges of each day. When I feel distressed by circumstances remind me of the truth of Your Word that, "through Christ who gives me strength I can do everything that is required of me". Amen

DORMANT OR DEAD

An essential part of our life with God in recovery is recognizing what is harmful and decaying and what is healthy and returning to life after a time of dormancy.

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. Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father. (John 15:5-6, 8 NLT)

In early spring lots of branches on trees and bushes look quite dead. However, given time and proper pruning, those trees and bushes will soon have green leaves, buds, and some will have delicious fruit. Row after row, of what now seem like dead bushes, will be filled with strawberries, raspberries, and blueberries, and then sold at farmers' markets and stores. They are then brought to our tables for us to enjoy eating.

God wants our lives to be filled with fruitfulness. He has created us with life-giving abilities and talents but knows that we need to balance our seasons of action with periods of recreation and reflection.

It takes the seasoned eye of a gardener to know what's dead and what is still alive and healthy and resting until the right time to grow and flourish and bear fruit. In our new lives with God in recovery, it takes God's wisdom to identify which thoughts, behaviours, and relationships are harmful and need to be let go. Also to be identified are those which are life-giving and will need to be protected and nourished for the new season ahead.

This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace. (Colossians 1:6 NLT)

As we turn our will and our life over to the care of God, He can be trusted to give us a joyful and fruitful life as we navigate through the seasons of recovery.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for sorting out dormant branches in my life from dead ones. I desire to feed on Your Word so I can be everything You created me to be. Amen

God knows that we need to balance our seasons of action with periods of recreation and reflection.

RELYING ON GOD'S PROMISES

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

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

*Psalm 107:13-14
NIRV*

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

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

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

God promises to strengthen those whose hearts are turned towards Him. When we have troubles, is God the first person we turn to? Do we truly believe that He exists and rewards those who seek Him? God has made many promises to us, but faith to believe that

He exists is required to activate those promises. If we truly believe God is our higher power, let's confidently stand on His promises today.

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

Prayer: Almighty God, To You all hearts are open and all desires known, cleanse me of everything that would cause me to doubt Your Word and help me stand firm on Your promises. Amen

ROOTS OF SELFISHNESS

Life in addiction narrowed our focus to a self-absorbed view of what we thought we needed in life. Life in recovery is a journey of recognizing the self-centered ways we have lived, and then seeking God and mentors to teach us how to live considerately and kindly towards others.

The founders of AA were not wrong when they described the selfishness problem this way: ***"Selfishness -- self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate. Sometimes they hurt us, seemingly without provocation, but we invariably find that at some time in the past we have made decisions based on self which later placed us in a position to be hurt. Above everything, we must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us!"*** (Big Book pages 62-63)

The Bible instructs us: ***Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.*** (Philippians 2:3-4 NLT)

Selfish people have difficulty seeing life from anyone else's point of view. People in addiction rarely concern themselves with what is best for others. Unfortunately, that self-centered mindset doesn't automatically change when we give up our destructive habits. Unless we intentionally learn and put into effect an unselfish way of living, we will simply transfer our current selfish mindset to a new area of self-interest.

It is important to focus on our beliefs and behaviours in early recovery, and it is equally important to compare those beliefs and behaviours with what God says in His word. ***I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.*** (John 13:34 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Forgive me for my self-focused way of living. Help me to live in the security of your care and unfailing love for me. Teach me how to love and care for others and keep me from evil that I may not cause harm to anyone. Amen

Life in recovery is a journey of recognizing the self-centered ways we have lived, and then seeking God and mentors to teach us how to live considerately and kindly towards others.

RELATIONSHIPS – CO-DEPENDENCY

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

We are living co-dependently when we look to those around us to affirm our value. Others have a limited ability to understand us or provide for our needs. The same limitation applies to us when we are dealing with others and trying to meet their needs. God's plan for us to have secure and satisfying relationships begins with us discovering the person God says we are – nothing more and nothing less.

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

We need to let go of the impossible expectations we put on others. People cannot love us enough or touch us deeply enough to satisfy the deep longings in our heart. Only God can truly satisfy those longings. We have our own desires and dreams and we need to let others have theirs. We make our own mistakes and others make theirs. We need to forgive ourselves and others and determine to learn from the mistakes that we all make.

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

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

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

BEING DILIGENT ABOUT MY RECOVERY TODAY

Those who make steady progress in recovery and find one day becoming one month, one year, and then one decade, are those who remain focused and pay careful attention each day to what works. We call this being diligent.

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

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

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

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

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

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am powerless without You. Each day, help me to be diligent in the spiritual practices that keep me conscious of Your will for me and give me the power I need to carry it out. Amen

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things are
going well.***

LIVING IN CONSCIOUS AWARENESS OF GOD'S LOVE FOR ME

Being conscious of who we are and our place in life is often considered to be “self-perception.” We develop self-perception by noting how the important people in our lives interact with us. If we grew up in a dysfunctional family, their skewed view of us may have warped our self-perception and our ability to see ourselves as God sees us. God created us for a reason and has an amazing plan for our lives. The Bible tells us God’s thoughts towards us cannot be numbered.

To be conscious of being loved, valued, and honoured as the person God created us to be will change the way we live our lives.

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I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:16-19 NIV)

God cares about us and the things that matter to us. The God who created the universe gazes on us with love and delight. We are precious to God and He wants us to see ourselves in the light of His love. The greatest demonstration of God’s love for us is that He sent His beloved Son Jesus into the world to pay the penalty for our sin. When we repent of our sin and accept the finished work of Jesus on our behalf, we are made righteous before God and will have

eternal life. Are we living in conscious awareness of this great love?

Reading and meditating on scripture each day informs us of all that God has promised. God’s desire is that through our daily Bible readings His heart of love and blessing will be confirmed in us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, My desire is to know Your will for my life and have the power to carry it out. I choose to put my trust in the plans You have prepared in advance for me and Your promise to direct my steps in the way I should go. Once again, I surrender my will and life to Your care and give myself wholeheartedly to obey You in all I say and do. Amen

BEHAVING WITH WISDOM

If someone says a person is – a wise owl – it makes us think of that person as having wisdom in all they say and do. Also, we may assume a person who reads a lot of books or has a few college degrees has gained a lot of wisdom. We certainly want any judge we stand before to be wise and discerning.

Corrie Ten Boom, a Dutch woman to who lived during the Second World War was a wise woman. In whatever situation she was in, Corrie determined to live for God and do His will. She and her family helped Jewish people escape from persecution by the Nazis. They hid them in their house and helped many get to freedom. She and her family were caught and ended up in a concentration camp where they endured much suffering. Years later, after Corrie was released, she met one of the camp guards who was the cause of great suffering for her and her sister. By the grace of God, Corrie demonstrated great wisdom by forgiving this man, as God’s word had taught her to do.

For the Lord grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity. He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him. Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will find the right way to go. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy. (Proverbs 2:6-10 NLT)

Many of us will never face the extreme challenges that Corrie Ten Boom faced in the concentration camp where she was held. However, everyday life brings challenges where we need God’s guidance to live wisely. We need help to make big and small decisions. God offers to live within us and guide us on a safe path. When we trust Jesus to be our Saviour, God fills us with His Holy Spirit. God’s Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Wisdom. He will empower and guide us as we seek to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus.

Let’s be wise people. Let’s get wisdom and enjoy today by taking time to meditate on God’s word, listen for God’s direction as we pray, and receive God’s guidance as we desire to walk in His truth.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to live wisely. Help me to take time to read Your Word, listen to Your heart, receive Your direction, and walk in Your truth today and every day. Amen

Everyday life brings challenges where we need God’s guidance in order to live wisely.

LOVE IS NEVER JEALOUS

Jealousy is a negative and damaging emotion. It's the feeling of disappointment we have when something we believe should be ours is given to someone else. We hold resentment against that person, believing we are more deserving of the acclamation or commendation they have received. Jealousy also brings mistrust of that person. We may also feel jealousy when another person pays attention to someone we are in a relationship with. This is often an expression of our own insecurity being expressed through anger and jealousy. When God describes how to be loving people, He tells us that it never includes being jealous.

Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud, or rude. (1 Corinthians 13:4-5a CEV)

Be done with dishonesty and jealousy and talking about others behind their backs.

(1 Peter 2:1b TLB)

We often think an angry person is dangerous to be around, but the Bible tells us that a jealous person is even worse.

An angry person is dangerous, but a jealous person is even worse. (Proverbs 27:4 CEV)

We may experience jealousy when we live in low self-esteem and begin to compare our lot with that of others. Sadness, loneliness, uncertainty and suspicion are all trap doors we don't want to fall through as we allow jealousy to control us. Co-dependency, and even violence with words or actions, can be expressions of jealousy within.

And by all means don't brag about being wise and good if you are bitter and jealous and selfish; that is the worst sort of lie. For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, inspired by the devil. (James 3:14-15 TLB)

God's invitation to us today is to leave jealousy and selfishness behind and focus on kindness, patience, acceptance, and the honouring of others.

Prayer: Loving God, Forgive me for the times I have been dissatisfied with my own life and been jealous of others. Help me to know my value in Your sight regardless of the acclaim that others might receive. Help me trust that You are working in me to help me build safe and life-giving relationships. Help me to honour and respect others for who they are. Help me to grow in my love for You and for others, and in thankfulness for who You say I am. Amen

ST. PATRICK – MODEL FOR LIFE IN RECOVERY

Deep pain that results from unfair and unjust treatment by others is the reality of many people. Some of us try to cover up that pain with substances and other destructive addictions. With the memories we choose to carry, it's hard to believe that we could live soberly, let alone live well.

If you are tired from carrying heavy burdens, come to me and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28 CEV)

Saint Patrick, who is celebrated around the world today, was just a child when he was captured by pirates, taken to Ireland and sold as a slave to herd and tend sheep. We can only imagine the fear and loneliness Patrick experienced while he was separated from his family and familiar surroundings and held captive by strangers who only wanted to use him for their own gain.

Patrick managed to escape when he was twenty years old and was reunited with his family. However, sometime later he responded to the call of God to return to Ireland and bring the message of God's hope and love to the very people who had used and abused him.

Patrick's faith in God helped him rise above his circumstances to live not only in forgiveness but in a life dedicated to blessing and uplifting others.

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. (Luke 6:27-28 NIV)

What about you and me? Do we believe God can bring good out of the bad things that have happened to us? Are we willing to ask God to bless others as we tell our story of God's redeeming love for us, even our enemies?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to learn from St Patrick's example that Your extravagant love is more than enough to overcome the deepest hurts in my life. Help me to let go of resentments and offer forgiveness to others. I sincerely want to bless others as You have blessed me. Amen

St. Patrick's faith in God helped him rise above his circumstances to live not only in forgiveness but in a life dedicated to blessing and uplifting others.