

GRATITUDE

Principle 7: Reserve a daily time with God for self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will.

Step 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and power to carry that out.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” (Colossians 3:16)

Introduction

Tonight we are going to focus our attention outward rather than inward. We have taken many steps on our road to recovery. Our first step was to admit that we were (and are) powerless. Our second step led us to choose, once and for all, a power by which to live. We took our third and most important step when we chose to turn our lives and wills over to the only true Higher Power, Jesus Christ.

As we continue our journey, we grow in our conscious contact with God and He begins to unfold in our lives. And, as we begin to grow in our understanding of Him, we begin to live out the decision we made in Principle 3. We keep walking now, in peace, as we maintain inventories on a regular basis and as we continue to deepen our relationship with Christ. The way we do this according to Principle 7, is to “reserve a daily time with God.” During this time we focus on Him by praying and meditating.

Prayer is talking to God. Meditation is listening to God on a daily basis. When I meditate I don’t get into some yoga-type position or murmur, “om, om, om.” I simply focus on and think about God or a certain Scripture verse or maybe even just one or two words. This morning I spent ten or fifteen minutes just trying to focus on one word: *gratitude*.

I need to meditate every morning, but I don’t. Some mornings my mind wanders and I find it very difficult to concentrate. Those old familiar friends will come back. You know, that old familiar committee of past dysfunction. The committee will try to do everything it can to interrupt my quiet time with God.

Through daily working the principles to the best of my ability, however, I've learned to shut them up most of the time.

I've learned to listen to God, who tells me that I have great worth. And He will say the same to you—if you will listen.

When I start my day with Principle 7 and end it by doing my daily inventory, I have a pretty good day—a reasonably happy day. This is one way I choose to live “one day at a time” and one way I can prevent relapse.

Another way to prevent relapse, especially during the holidays, is by maintaining an attitude of gratitude.

Gratitude

This week, the week before we celebrate Thanksgiving, I suggest that your prayers be focused on your gratitude in four areas of your life: toward God, others, your recovery, and your church. I'm going to ask you to write them down on your “gratitude list.” This is an interactive lesson.

Teacher's Note: Make copies and hand out the “Gratitude List” found in Appendix 10. After you present each of the four areas on the list, pause and give the participants a couple of minutes to complete each of the sections.

We are going to take some time now for you to build your gratitude list for this Thanksgiving.

First, for what are you thankful to *God*? Offer prayers of gratitude to your Creator.

In Philippians 4:6, we're told, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

Psalm 107:15 encourages us to “give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and wonderful deeds for men.” What wonderful deeds they are! What are at least two areas of your life in which you can see God's work and that you are thankful for this holiday season?

You can reflect on the last eleven months or on what God has done for you this week or even today. Then take a moment to list just a few of the special things for which you are thankful to your Higher Power.

The next area is to list the individuals that God has placed in your life to walk alongside you on your road of recovery. We need to be thankful for *others*.

“Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing. And cultivate

thankfulness. Let the word of Christ—the message—have the run of the house” (Colossians 3:15–16 MSG).

Who are you thankful for? Why? Take a moment to list them.

The third area we can be thankful for is our *recovery*.

“As for us, we have this large crowd of witnesses around us. So then, let us rid ourselves of everything that gets in the way, and the sin which holds on to us so tightly, and let us run with determination the race that lies before us” (Hebrews 12:1 GNT).

What are two recent growth areas of your recovery for which you are thankful? Again, list them now.

The fourth and final area to be thankful for is your *church*.

“Enter the Temple gates with thanksgiving” (Psalm 100:4 GNT).

What are two things for which you are thankful to your church?

Wrap-Up

Take your “gratitude list” home with you tonight and put it in a place where you will see it often. It will remind you that you have made progress in your recovery and that you are not alone, that Jesus Christ is always with you.

Using your gratitude list, going to your recovery meetings and making them a priority, getting involved in service in your church are the best way I know to prevent relapse during the holidays.

Let’s close in prayer.

Dear God, help me set aside all the hassles and noise of the world to focus and listen just to You for the next few minutes. Help me get to know You better. Help me to better understand Your plan, Your purpose for my life. Father, help me live within today, seeking Your will and living this day as You would have me.

It is my prayer to have others see me as Yours; not just in my words but more importantly, in my actions. Thank You for Your love, Your grace, Your perfect forgiveness. Thank You for all those You have placed in my life, for my program, my recovery, and my church family. Your will be done, not mine. In Your Son’s name I pray, AMEN.