

Praying Twice a Day Can Help You Overcome Addiction—Here's How

Recovery Commandment: Morning Prayer

Prayer is something many addicts early in recovery find difficult to do, especially if they have been avoiding God because of the shame and guilt of their behavior (or possibly because of what was done to them in the past). Consistent prayer at the start of the day is simply a behavior that can change the addict's disposition.

From all of the addictions medical science has studied, we know that an addiction is basically "self-will run riot." This expression of addiction simply means, "doing your own thing." First thing in the morning, put aside time to pray. Don't do your own thing. Do what I call Commandment No. 1 (of the 5 Commandments of Recovery) instead.

You don't have to pray long. You can say, "God, I'm supposed to pray. I want to recover. Would you help me stay sober today?" From that point on, you can also discuss any issues you want to talk to him about. He is able to handle hurt, anger, fear, anxiety or any other feeling or thought you have kept from him. Prayer is a way for you to behaviorally change yourself. See it as a positive step in your recovery as well, as it makes you like Jesus, who is ever interceding for you in prayer.

For many addicts, addiction starts early in the day—not necessarily first thing in the morning, but perhaps during the drive to work. Prayer is preventative. It is a way of acknowledging that you have addiction issues and are in desperate need of sobriety. Without sobriety, you are on a path to self-destruction, and you'll probably shatter other's

lives as well. More than likely, those around you have already been devastated, either through your anger, depression or acting-out behavior. As an addict, you are in a fight every day, especially the first 30 to 90 days of recovery; typically, the toughest period of recovery for the addict. Make sure you pray.

Prayer may or may not make you feel better instantly, but if you consistently apply it to your life, you will begin to reap the benefits. Prayer is one of the tools you will have as a believer who is a recovering person.

Recovery Commandment: Evening Prayer

This may sound like work, because it is. Praying is not something you have to like or agree with; it is something you just have to do, behaviorally. At the end of the day, if you are free, pray a prayer of thanksgiving for a day of sobriety. Sobriety isn't something you do by yourself; it is something you do with the help of God and others. If there are any other issues from the day you want to talk to God about, you can bring them up in the same prayer. It is important to end your day in a spiritual place in addition to starting the day this way.

The recovery program that is going to work is spiritual in nature. Since you were born a spirit, with a soul, living in a body, it is important to reestablish your own walk with the Lord. Make this a time of being thankful that you had a day of recovery. Even the worst day in recovery is something to be thankful for, because even on the best day without recovery, you were covered with shame, guilt, and fear. So, if you have any relief from those feelings, I believe it is appropriate to pray and thank Jesus for all he has done for you so you could be free.

Unconditional love is something we rarely get in our lives. When we do get it, it changes us. Unconditional love is often

a part of Recovery for Everyone groups. The other addicts in the group have been where you are and are loved by others who have been there. Now that you are there, you can receive the love they have for you. When they stand up to give you a hug, it may feel uncomfortable at first, but let it happen and receive the love that they have for you. As one old-timer said, "It sounds like you are one of us." The acceptance and unconditional love you will receive from this group is something you may not have known you needed. It will feel like a weight has been lifted off you when unconditional love comes your way. Many addicts have not been loved for who they really are. The group is a place where you can be unconditionally loved because they know you and accept you just like you are.

Practicing praying twice a day along with the other commandments of recovery from the book, *Recovery for Everyone* can allow you to see others who are reaching recovery. My hope is that you can give this to yourself and inspire others who are on the journey to recovery. {eoa}

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