

2.3

SUPPORT FOR ADDICTION RECOVERY

Having a support person(s) for an individual in recovery ensures that the treatment process will focus on their needs as a whole person. The effectiveness of a support person is not dependent on having gone through recovery themselves. Rather, it is based on their willingness to consistently show up and demonstrate acceptance, caring, and a belief that transformation is possible.

SUPPORT FOR ADDICTION RECOVERY

In this lesson you will:

- Better understand the perspective of the person in recovery
- Recognize the qualities needed to be effective as a recovery support person
- Identify strategies for supporting addiction recovery

SUPPORT FOR ADDICTION RECOVERY

What is the journey from addiction to recovery? What does it take? When a person with a substance use disorder is contemplating recovery or ready to make that decision, they need a person in their life who can demonstrate what it looks like to walk that out. It doesn't have to be someone who's been in recovery themselves; it just has to be someone that's genuine and willing to meet them where they're at.

As a supporting friend, you have a great opportunity to truly impact the life of a person who's been on the path of addiction and is now seeking recovery. Coming out of treatment, people can feel like they are of no value. The most important aspect of support is to let them know they still have worth and value, regardless of where they're at in their journey. They are worthy of living a happy life and being connected to community.

Listening deeply is the next most important piece; listening to learn. Approach the person without judgment. See the person that you're trying to help as separate from their substance use issues. Be open, accepting, and kind. In doing so, you are building trust and creating a safe space that empowers them to set goals and dream for a better future.

Part of listening to learn is asking good questions that help the recovering individual to think deeply and gain a better understanding of themselves and

their goals. In the early stages of recovery, questions can focus on the small victories, exploring strategies for coping, and identifying support systems. As recovery continues, questions can be about their progress, their dreams for the future, and goal setting. When the person is in long-term recovery and has established a solid foundation for sobriety, check-in questions can be about healthy habits, action steps for personal growth, and opportunities to serve.



In recovery, learning to live life again includes basic things like establishing a healthy pattern of sleep and meals. Success in these areas is much easier with a support person to answer questions and provide resources. Once the basic needs are met, then it's time to discuss short-term, long-term, and even bigger goals. Help in setting priorities and figuring out what needs to be done today keeps the person in recovery moving towards their goals.

Opportunities to learn and grow should be part of the plan. The challenge of trying something new reveals strengths and weaknesses - important information

DISCUSSION OR REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What has been your experience with substance use disorders?
2. What is recovery for substance use disorders?
Refer to Fig. 1 for additional thoughts.
3. What are reasons for having a support system in addiction recovery?
4. What are the different types of support that individuals can access during the recovery process?
5. What are ways to support a person in recovery?
6. What are three open-ended questions you could ask someone in recovery?
Refer to Fig 2 for ideas.

Figure 1

WHAT IS RECOVERY?

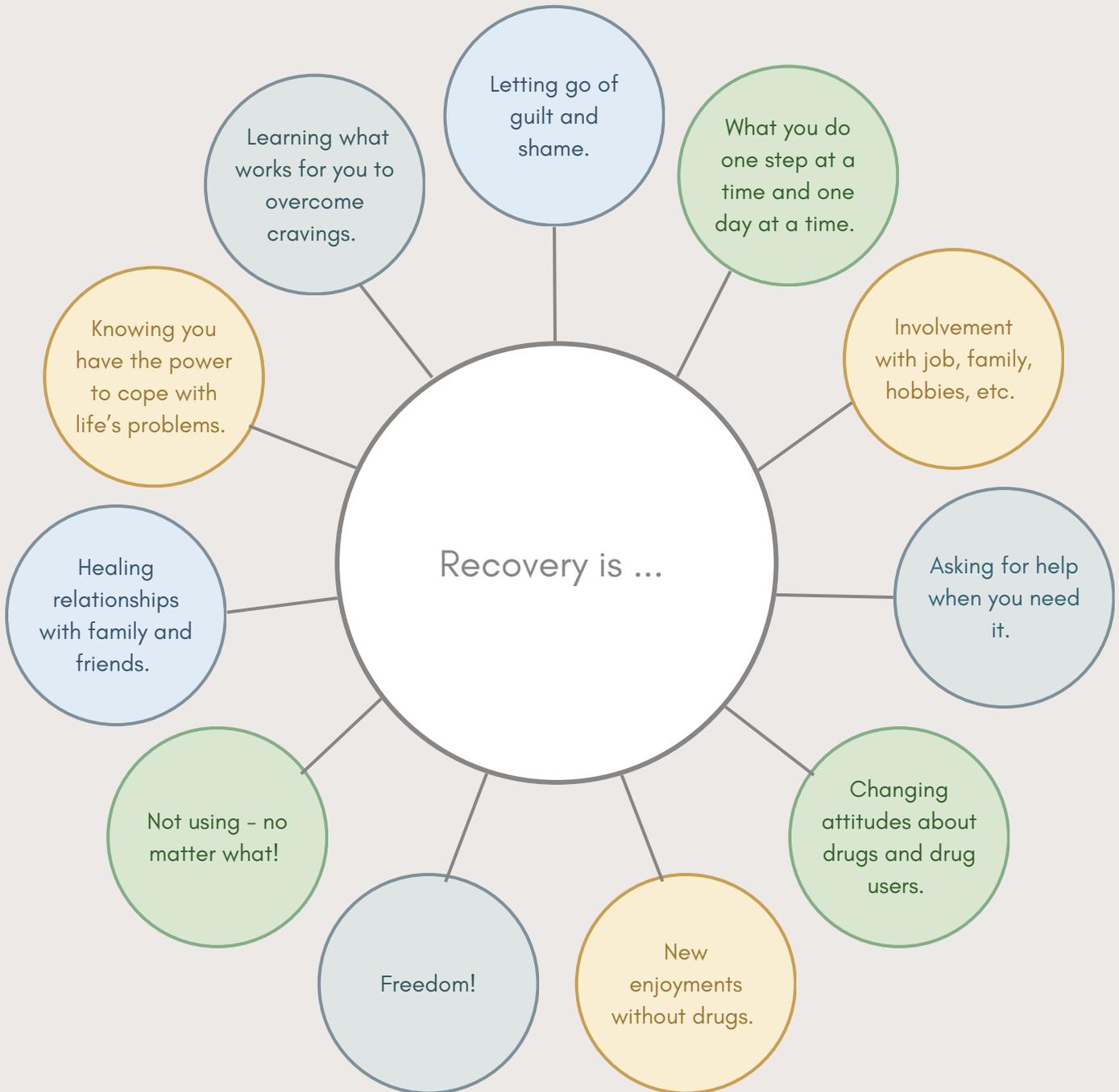


Figure 2

KEY QUESTIONS FOR RECOVERY

1. How are you feeling?

2. How can I help?

3. What are the most positive aspects of your recovery?

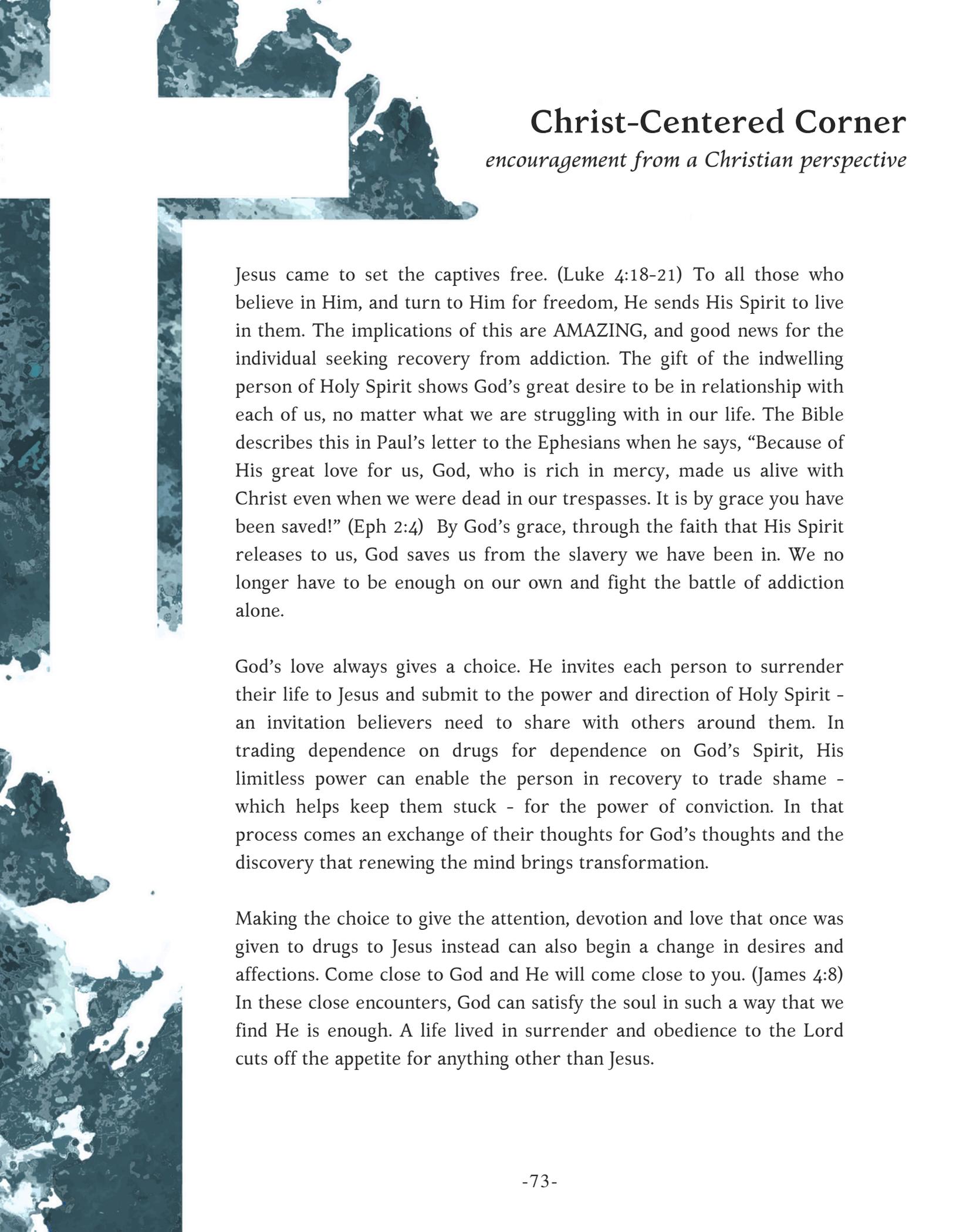
REFERENCES

Fletcher Group: Building Recovery Ecosystems - a not-for-profit founded in 2017 to help those in society move from the disease of addiction and the devastation of homelessness to lives of hope, dignity, and fulfillment. In addition to best-practice technical assistance, they have videos, webinars, recommended reading, etc. available on their website.

<https://www.fletchergroup.org>

Lakes Area Recovery Support Systems:
see Module E

Braun, H. (2023) *Surrendered to the Holy Spirit: A Life Saturated by the Presence of God*.
Shippensburg: Destiny Image Publishers.



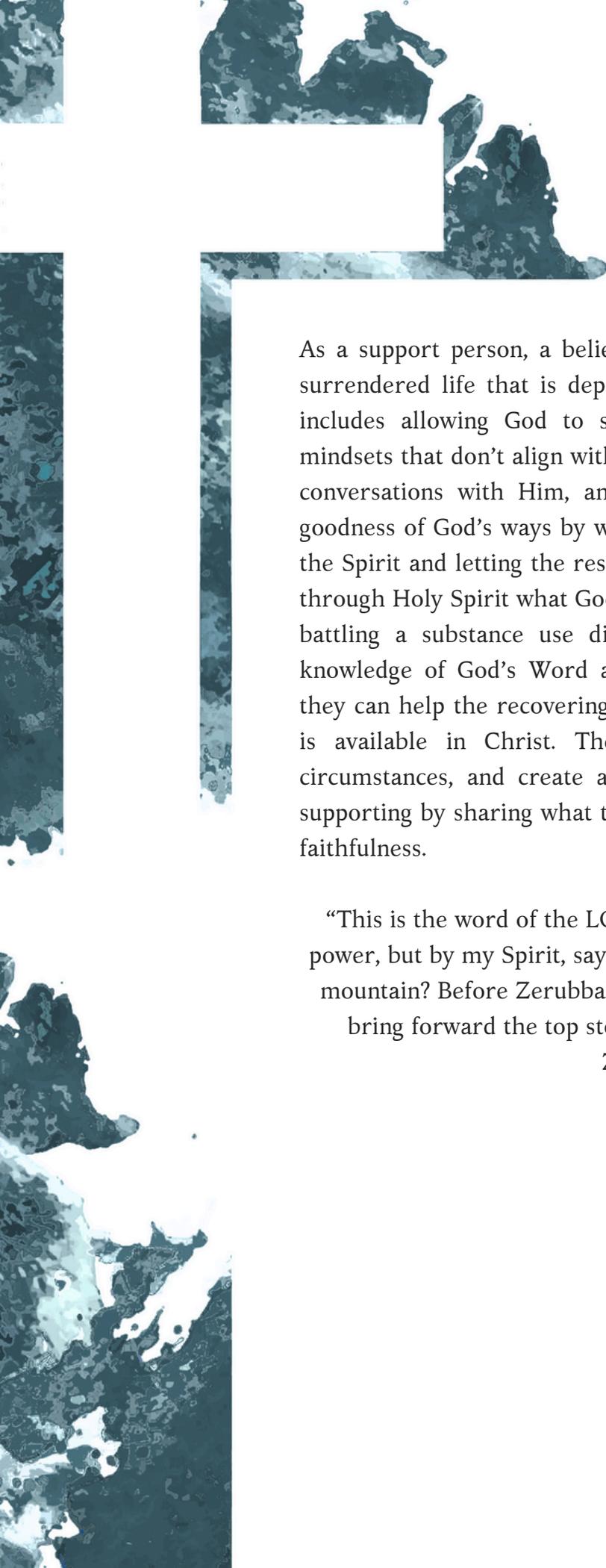
Christ-Centered Corner

encouragement from a Christian perspective

Jesus came to set the captives free. (Luke 4:18-21) To all those who believe in Him, and turn to Him for freedom, He sends His Spirit to live in them. The implications of this are AMAZING, and good news for the individual seeking recovery from addiction. The gift of the indwelling person of Holy Spirit shows God's great desire to be in relationship with each of us, no matter what we are struggling with in our life. The Bible describes this in Paul's letter to the Ephesians when he says, "Because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our trespasses. It is by grace you have been saved!" (Eph 2:4) By God's grace, through the faith that His Spirit releases to us, God saves us from the slavery we have been in. We no longer have to be enough on our own and fight the battle of addiction alone.

God's love always gives a choice. He invites each person to surrender their life to Jesus and submit to the power and direction of Holy Spirit - an invitation believers need to share with others around them. In trading dependence on drugs for dependence on God's Spirit, His limitless power can enable the person in recovery to trade shame - which helps keep them stuck - for the power of conviction. In that process comes an exchange of their thoughts for God's thoughts and the discovery that renewing the mind brings transformation.

Making the choice to give the attention, devotion and love that once was given to drugs to Jesus instead can also begin a change in desires and affections. Come close to God and He will come close to you. (James 4:8) In these close encounters, God can satisfy the soul in such a way that we find He is enough. A life lived in surrender and obedience to the Lord cuts off the appetite for anything other than Jesus.



As a support person, a believer has the opportunity to demonstrate a surrendered life that is dependent on the leading of Holy Spirit. This includes allowing God to speak and bring correction to their own mindsets that don't align with His - through time in His written word, in conversations with Him, and in worship. They can demonstrate the goodness of God's ways by walking out quick obedience in the power of the Spirit and letting the results speak for themselves. They can discern through Holy Spirit what God is doing to draw to Him the person who is battling a substance use disorder or is in recovery. Through their knowledge of God's Word and their personal relationship with Jesus, they can help the recovering addict focus not on their lack but on what is available in Christ. They can speak God's perspective on the circumstances, and create a mercy moment for the person they are supporting by sharing what they've experienced of God's nature and His faithfulness.

“This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts. Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’”

Zechariah 4:6-7