***CAKE ANYONE?................"O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusts in him."  Psalm 34:8***

God brought us into this world - created in His own image.  That image was marred by sin but God made a way to buy us back out of the slave market of sin and now, as His dear children, wants to recreate in us the image of His Son, Jesus Christ.

If God wants to make us like Christ, then won’t he make a way for that to happen?   He has!

In an excellent study by Dr. Robert McGee called Search for Significance there is a chapter called “The Process of Hope and Healing”.  In it Dr. McGee talks about several factors that must exist in a person’s life before emotional healing can occur.   They are…….

·        honesty
·        relationships that affirm or make me feel good about myself
·        right thinking
·        the Holy Spirit’s power, strength, and wisdom
·        time

If any of these are missing, then the healing process will be slowed down if not stopped completely.  These factors aren’t steps we can accomplish one right after the other.  They are ingredients that promote healing when they all work together over a period of time.

We could compare it to baking a cake.  We don’t throw the baking powder in the oven and wait a couple of hours and then toss in a couple of eggs and then after waiting another hour or so put the flour in.  No, we stir all the ingredients together in a bowl and then put them in a pan in the oven.

If we left out any of the ingredients the cake would be flat or heavy or lack flavor or sweetness – in fact, it would be less than satisfying.  But with all the needed ingredients in the pan and as we wait the appropriate time our taste buds are rewarded with a deliciously satisfying cake.

Likewise, we need all the aforementioned ingredients for good emotional, spiritual, relational health working together in our life at one time and we will be rewarded with a deliciously satisfying life.  It makes me think of the verse, “O taste and see that the Lord is good!'

QUESTION:  Which of the ingredients do you need to focus on to be able to better 'taste and see that the Lord is good'?

**HONESTY*………….“Behold, God, You want truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.”  Psalm 51:6***
A few days ago, I shared 5 ingredients that are necessary for emotional/spiritual health from Dr. Robert McGee's excellent study, Search for Significance.

* *honesty*
* *relationships that affirm, or make me feel good about myself*
* *right thinking*
* *the Holy Spirit’s power, strength, and wisdom*
* *and time*

 I compared the emotional healing process to baking a cake, in that all the ingredients have to be 'stirred together' as it were and in time we get the finished product of a deliciously satisfying life. Over the next few days, I want to expand on these 5 ingredients beginning with........

**HONESTY** -  We can experience healing only to the degree that we are ***aware*** we need it.  Being completely unaware of our need, we won’t seek a solution.

God gave me a vivid illustration of this.   A few years ago I had knee surgery and because of the pain was not able to walk properly afterward.  At first I did the 'denial/positive thinking' thing............ the pain will get better with time and I'll get on with my life.  Right?  Wrong!  The pain didn’t go away and I continued walking in an awkward, stiff legged manner.  Very exhausting!

Frustration set in!  I couldn’t do life the way I wanted to!  Couldn’t play ball with my grandsons or do my own housework or go for walks with Alex.  It was really cramping my style and life was, shall we  say, less than enjoyable!  Just keeping up with the basics was a challenge!

When I couldn’t stand the pain and frustration any longer, I finally came out of denial and got honest acknowledging  to myself that this wasn’t going away on its’ own and that I needed help.

Fortunately, my daughter-in-law Lily is a physiotherapist and so I appealed to her experience and superior knowledge.  As we explored the history of my situation, it all began to make sense and for the next few weeks as she massaged my muscles, and I faithfully did the prescribed exercises, I began experiencing less pain and enjoying life again.

The first step (no pun intended :) to my healing was like the Psalmist David said***..........getting truthful in my innermost being'*** and then ***'God made me to know wisdom'*** through Lily as to how to deal with it.

When we can't stand the emotional pain in our lives any longer and its taking all our energy just to keep up with the basics, the first step is to come out of denial and be honest with God and at least one other person about our struggles. God can then give wisdom and the healing of whatever is causing our pain.

Stay tuned and in the next few days, we'll 'stir' in the rest of the ingredients that will help us enjoy  a deliciously satisfying life!

QUESTION:  How has or will coming out of denial - being honest - help you to recover from a 'hurt, habit or hang-up' in your life?

**AFFIRMING RELATIONSHIPS………"Live creatively, friends. If someone falls into sin, forgivingly restore him, saving your critical comments for yourself. You might be needing forgiveness before the days out. Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ’s law. If you think you are too good for that, you are badly deceived."  Galatians 6:1-3 MSG**This week I'm sharing the ingredients for a deliciously satisfying life.  If you missed the intro and the first ingredient you can go back to the meditations entitled "CAKE ANYONE?" and "GETTING HONEST" to catch up then look at the next ingredient we want to 'stir' into our recipe for a deliciously satisfying life..........

AFFIRMING RELATIONSHIPS  –  Galatians 6:1-3 from The Message doesn't pull any punches about how we should be in relationship with hurting people.  It tells it like it is.............forgive, restore, don't be critical, stoop down, reach out, share their burdens!  Without this kind of affirmation from others, people seldom have the courage to be honest about their lives let alone feel like they can overcome the 'hurts, habits, and/or hang-ups' that are slamming them up against the wall.

As I shared with Lily my frustrations (read the previous meditations for the whole story), she began to gently explore with me where the pain was.   She didn’t judge and criticize or lecture me for not speaking up sooner or for walking in such a harmful way to myself for so long.  She simply asked me to share where my pain was and encouraged me to push through the pain as I felt able to, a little at a time, to strengthen my muscles again.

Similarly, as WE come out of denial about the extent of OUR emotional, relational and spiritual pain, we can find help and hope as we reach out in honesty not only to God but to at least one other person we feel safe with.

We need people who will be gentle, encouraging and kind - who will accept us where we are at without judgment and criticism and give us the respect and support we need to push through our pain and gain the strength to live life to its fullest.

Lily didn’t give me false hope but was honest with me.  She said it would take time and work to heal but that I COULD heal and be free of unnecessary pain and be able to walk normally again.  As I followed her advice and saw how it was helping me I began to trust her and feel more hopeful.

Lily affirmed me in my efforts and applauded any little bit of progress I made.  I felt that she really cared about me.  I felt respected and supported by her.  As she worked with me I began to gain confidence which encouraged me to keep going.

Whether we need help for physical, emotional, spiritual or any other kind of pain in our life, the love, strength, and honesty we find in other people truly are God-like traits.  A friend, a small group, a pastor, or a counselor who won’t be frustrated with our slow progress—and who won’t give us quick and easy solutions—is a valuable find.

CARE TO SHARE in the comments below?  What person or group has provided the affirmation you have needed to find healing in your life?

**HOLY SPIRIT POWER!**

**“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper (Holy Spirit), that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.”  John 14:6-7**Our ***'Deliciously Satisfying Life***' cake is almost finished.  Just 2 more ingredients.  Can't you just smell that tantalizing aroma.  MMMMMMMM!!!!  Okay!  we better get 'stirring'!

My friend Sadie said just the other day, 'Judy!  I made a batch of bran muffins today and guess what I forgot to put in?  The OIL!'   Well, I tried one and, yes, sure enough she forgot the oil.  It tasted good but it was hard chewing!  Without this next ingredient, in our 'Deliciously Satisfying Life' cake our lives will be like that too..........hard chewing!  That ingredient is the the Holy Spirit and funny enough.......the symbol in the bible used for the Holy Spirit is oil!  Through Him, we have the power to do life.

If I try on my own to 'chew' my way (so to speak) through life, handling my 'hurts, habits, and hang-ups' on my own, before long, I will lose steam and find I don't have the power to keep going.  OR I can 'by faith' trust in God's power living in me through the Holy Spirit to handle what I can't.  By God's grace, I can be strong when I'm weak.  [(2 Corinthians 12:9)](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%2012%3A9&version=AKJV;NLT)

Remember my 'bum' knee?  If I had not come to the place of seeing my powerlessness over fixing the pain in my knee and had not asked for Lily’s help, I would still be in pain and walking dysfunctionally.........or worse yet, in a wheelchair.  I had to look beyond myself to someone superior in knowledge and expertise in order to get help.

Likewise, if we fail to recognize our powerlessness, we will miss out on the benefits of our salvation and the availability of God’s power through the Holy Spirit to help us overcome those things in our lives that are holding us back from being all we can be!

Stay tuned!  Tomorrow we will 'stir' in the last ingredient of our 'Deliciously Satisfying Life" cake!  But for now I have a question for you to answer in the comments below.

How does the Holy Spirit help you?

**TIME**

Can you smell the aroma of our '***Deliciously Satisfying Life***' cake yet?  Listen to this little section of Scripture from The Message.  **'Because of Christ, we give off a sweet scent rising to God, which is recognized by those on the way of salvation—an aroma redolent (definition-fragrant or sweet smelling) with life.'  2 Corinthians 2**

Not only will our life be 'deliciously satisfying' to us but we'll give enjoyment just from the aroma of our life to our God and others as well!  Bonus!

Well, a sweet smelling aroma isn't the ingredient we're stirring into our cake today.  That was just a 'by the way'.  :)

**TIME -**  is  our last ingredient.  I found out something through my whole knee surgery adventure – muscles don’t gain their strength overnight when they have been inactive for months and months!  I was quite surprised after my first therapy session with Lily when she said *'we'll have another treatment in two days*' and then after that another one in two more days and another and another!

I finally asked her about 4 or 5 sessions later, “How many more sessions do you think I will need before I am better.”  She gave that cute little laugh of hers and said in order to do this properly we need to take it slow and it will require quite a few more sessions.

Many of us feel the same way I did in the process of healing from our 'hurts, habits and hang-ups'.  Now that we know 'why' we are experiencing emotional pain in our life we think we should recover from them overnight.  But the facts are that we've usually been struggling for many years and its going to take more than a few days, weeks or even months to gain emotional/spiritual strength to heal.  These unrealistic expectations can cause discouragement and disappointment.

The apostle Paul understood this and helps us with perspective on the healing process.

He said, **“I’m not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don’t get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I’ve got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I’m off and running, and I’m not turning back.”  Philippians 3:12-14**  MSG

Thank you Paul!  That makes me feel better!  Our growth toward wholeness and maturity -- a 'Deliciously Satisfying Life' -- is a ***journey*** which we won't complete fully until we join the Lord in heaven.  But let's not have be stunted and superficial in our growth by not 'stirring' in all five ingredients..............HONESTY, AFFIRMING RELATIONSHIPS, RIGHT THINKING, HOLY SPIRIT POWER, TIME!

**TODAY'S QUESTION** is the same one I asked at the beginning of this series........... *Which of the ingredients do you need to focus on to be able to better 'taste and see that the Lord is good'?  Maybe now that we've explored them more fully you would like to ask God to help you in that area towards a more 'Deliciously Satisfying Life'.   MMMMMMMMMM!  I call smell your fragrant aroma already!*