

The Official Newsletter of
Heart t' Heart

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The Twelve Steps of *Heart t' Heart*

Dearest Friends:

Becoming a Peaceable Follower of Christ

As I was Christmas shopping, I found a beautiful picture book in which a photographer had combined breathtaking images of nature with scriptural quotes and great “one-liners” from powerfully inspired poetry. One of the pictures was captioned with these words from Gerald Hopkins: “The World is Charged with the Grandeur of God.”

The world is charged with the grandeur of God. I felt the Holy Spirit’s overwhelming witness: It is! It is! Despite September 11, and any other personal tragedies we might have each sustained in this past year. The world is charged (filled) with the unfolding purposes and, thus, grandeur of God.

Even in this season of humanity’s history, which threatens our peace and teeters on the brink of global warfare, God’s grand design is unfolding. Even if this is the era foretold to hold more global suffering and destruction than has ever been, or even imagined in the history of humanity, God’s work is sure.

Here we are, closer to a truly “world-wide” war than any of the World Wars of the past. “The war to end all wars” was what they called the last world war. Anyone who followed and believed the words of Israel’s prophets, however, have known that was a premature accolade. We know we’re still waiting for *that* war to begin, and we know who it is that will end it.

Humanity is too much like childish, quarreling brothers who, like the Lamanites and Nephites, or the Jaredites before them, are “drunken with anger even as with wine and slept upon their swords” (Ether 15:22), no longer in defense, but in mutual aggression and belief that the “other guy” is evil and needs to be eradicated from the face of the earth. Only when the Lord Himself steps into the room in such a way as to “rock our world” will the warring children, all brothers under the same Father-God, be subdued. And those who will not accept His way of life will be mercifully ushered out of this sphere of existence into the worlds beyond the veil, where they can continue to live in the way that makes them happy.

What does all this have to do with a December “Dearest Friends” message? It has to do with continuing—looking forward to His coming in glory and living in such away that He can come to us, in our own personal,

1. We admitted we were powerless over compulsive addictive behaviors* – that our lives had become unmanageable. (Mosiah 4:5; Alma 26:12)
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. (Mosiah 4:9; Alma 26:12)
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. (2 Nephi 10:24; Omni 1:26; Mosiah 3:19; 2 Nephi 4:34)
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. (Alma 15:17; Mosiah 4:2; Jacob 4:6–7; Ether 12:27)
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. (Mosiah 26:29; Alma 22:18)
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. (Helaman 3:35; 2 Nephi 31:19; Mosiah 2:20–21)
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. (Alma 36:18; Alma 38:8; Moroni 10:32; Mosiah 5:2; Alma 34:15–16)
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all. (3 Nephi 12:9; 3 Nephi 12:24; 3 Nephi 12:44–45)
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others. (Mosiah 27:35; 3 Nephi 12:25; Mosiah 26:30)
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. (2 Nephi 4:18; 2 Nephi 10:20; Mosiah 26:30)
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. (2 Nephi 32:3; Alma 37:37; Helaman 10:4)
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others still suffering from the effects of compulsive behaviors and to practice these principles in all our affairs. (Alma 5:7; Mosiah 27:36–37; Moroni 7:3)

*Any problem may be inserted here, in place of “compulsive addictive behaviors.”
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Becoming a Peaceable Follower of Christ

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inner lives. We “keep coming back”—we continue to practice living like people who have received Him—as peaceable followers of Christ, who have entered into His rest and are willing to demonstrate it by our peaceable walks with the children of men. (Moroni 7:3-4)

I had a recent experience with what it means to be possessed of this “peaceable” spirit of Christ. I visited my son in the County Jail. I was tempted to not be “peaceable” with him, and to lecture him on the “good word” (Whose good word? Mine, of course!) and what will happen when he gets out of there.

And I’m afraid I gave in to that temptation. I pled with him—for the ten-thousandth time—to listen to the voice of reason and sanity, to return to the “faith of his mother,” to come home and live by our values and rules (the operative word is “our”), and on and on—interspersing my comments with expressions like “sweetheart” and “I love you.”

Later, as I pondered Moroni 7:3-4, Alma 29:1-4, and D&C 88:32-33, I had a powerful feeling the Savior wouldn’t have talked like that to my son. In His perfect ability to live in harmony with the law of agency and the purpose of this world—which is to let each person learn for themselves by exercising that agency—He would have shown only love for my son, asking how he was and what he was experiencing.

Thus, He would have given my son a listening ear, encouraging him to “learn for himself” by his experiences at this point in his journey. And He would have accepted my son right where he was—whether that was on his prodigal way away from home, or on the way back.

Jesus has that “peaceable” way—demonstrated when He was in His own mortality. It’s a way of walking with, and taking supper with, and talking with, and gently but powerfully telling stories His listeners could hear—or not, depending on their readiness.

His way is gentle, kind, accepting, trusting in our inner heritage as divine beings—as children of the Father, children who will someday, somewhere, tire of swine-swill and decide for ourselves to come home and adopt and uphold our Father’s standards.

Jesus was gentle—longsuffering to those who were sincerely lost, sincerely unconvinced, sincerely unbelieving, sincerely confused, and thus, sincerely sinning. His wrath was expressed instead toward those who pretended to know God, but who—like the good son in the parable of the prodigal—had not ever tried to come close to his Father. Those were the people the Lord lectured, like I lectured my son. Those were the people to whom he read the “riot-act.” People like me, who were embarrassed and offended, and whose pride and self-will was irritated and inflamed.

A peaceable walk with the children of men identifies a true child of Christ. I pray that at this Christmas season, we can break

though to the paradoxical mystery of genuine humility: a combination of godly sorrow and peaceful acceptance of each person as precious, redeemable, sovereign, and respected for being honest and obvious about where they sincerely are.

I am sincerely here: half-way along the trail of learning His peace and what it means to “resist not evil,” even while I refuse to participate in it myself. That kind of love will call my son home to me faster than any lecture, no matter how sugar-coated. Looking back I see I wanted him to pity me. “Poor Mom. She’s suffering so. I better change for her, for her sake.”

Hello?! When will I realize we must each change for the sake of one love and one love only—the love born of sympathy and synchronicity between us and God?

Well, thank goodness another Christmas is coming. Maybe this time I can really receive the Lord and let Him into my “Inn”—and let Him and His amazingly non-codependent, and yet eternally available help be with me and teach me how to be like Him...and with Him. May the peace of Christ settle deeper into our hearts—yours and mine—so we can have “Christmas” (the celebration of His coming) in our hearts everyday.

May we learn the amazing depth of His “peaceable walk” with the children of men. May we have His peace that passeth understanding, no matter what we must face this coming year, and that we may have a new year filled with the Grandeur of God—the mysterious and amazing grandeur of His peace! □

“Unto us a child is born...the Prince of Peace.”

MEETINGS: The amazing power of sharing and listening

At a meeting recently, a fellow participant in our local Heart t' Heart group shared about how she had run around from one "healing idea" or "theory" to another—never finding any to be genuinely and lastingly effective. She shared her feelings of urgency and neediness, frustration and dashed hopes bordering on despair which grew with each "lo here," or "lo there" answer she heard and pursued.

Finally, when she hit a bottom of despair and sheer exhaustion of time, energy and money, she cried out to the Lord, "Where? Where, O Lord, is the answer?" and she perceived His answer settle over her soul and resound in her mind's ear: "I am the answer. I am the Master

Healer, the great Physician. All these things are tools. They are not bad or wrong. They are given and/or allowed by me to give my brothers and sisters choices that can reflect their degree of conversion to the Father's plan—for in His plan there is only one way and means that is *the* way and means—and that is through Me and My personal administration to you, My personal approbation and merciful acceptance of you and My commandments (instructions) to you concerning which of all these tools you may need...once you have used the tools of scripture study, writing, prayer and meditation. Put Me and My recommendations, My counseled tools first in your life. In

the process and course of using them, you will find the personal revelation to know which, if any, of these other tools may contribute to your healing. You can come to me first, through the front door, not through some back door."

She concluded by saying she had finally decided to let the Master be her Primary Physician, her Healer.

As I listened to her share these ideas (not necessarily in these exact words), I could not help but remember Elder Richard G. Scott's counsel about the Savior being the "only sure and final answer." (Richard G. Scott, "To Be Healed," *Ensign*, May 1994, 7.) □

Step Study: The 9th Step is a Gift from God

This column focuses on thoughts and reflections on one of the Twelve Steps. Remember, just as in our meetings, the views expressed represent the thoughts, reflections and opinions of the person who is sharing and do not necessarily represent the position of Heart t' Heart as a whole.

In a recent Heart t' Heart meeting, Cheryl D. shared on the topic of resolving deep woundedness and bitterness towards her father. She gave permission to share her experience, strength and hope with you.

Cheryl does not have one positive memory of her father in childhood, or since. He was addicted to alcohol and severely abusive in many ways. As she worked through the steps yet again (Cheryl has 30 years of recovery work behind her), she came to Step Nine—the making amends step—and felt she needed to do something to rid herself of the pain and the negative energy of her unresolved feelings for her father who is now deceased.

Cheryl wrote and wrote and wrote pages and pages,

detailing and describing every feeling she could find which blocked her forgiveness of him, every incident which contributed to her woundedness and pain. When she was done, she found to her dismay that there was no change in her feelings of bitterness and even outright hatred and rejection of this man.

Finally, with all her pages of hard work representing pain and tears and anguish before her, she knelt down before the Lord and cried out. "I have done all that I can do. I've left no stone unturned. I have desired to be free of these negative feelings. I have desired to be able to let go and forgive my father. I have nothing left to give, Lord. Nothing left to do. I still find that I have no power to change my heart!"

A testimony flowed over her soul and into her mind

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Capturing from the Scriptures: The 10th Commandment & the 12 Steps

What does the commandment about coveting have to do with the Twelve Steps? I think it has a lot to do with them. When I look up the synonyms for “covet,” I find:

long for, wish, desire, ache, pant, crave, hanker, yearn for, and envy.

Anybody relate? I think most of us can identify the feelings of addiction as craving something, some substance or behavior. We may or may not relate this to the tenth commandment, which says:

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's (Exodus 20:17).

Why might we not connect this with our addiction? Maybe because it speaks of our neighbor. If I am desiring a chocolate cake and I go buy it, then it's mine, right? How can I covet something I own? Well, that's what we want to talk about here.

One area where it may be easiest to define coveting is in sexual addiction. For example, if I indulge in feelings of sexual attraction toward any woman besides my wife, that is clearly coveting, and it is also feeding my addiction.

We are told that the sin committed by David and Solomon was in lusting after women who were not their wives, even though they each had multiple wives. In their cases, it wasn't that they couldn't have more than one wife, it

was wanting a wife the Lord had not given them—and that is the key. We are told:

David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon and Moses my servants, as also many others of my servants, from the beginning of creation until this time; and in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me. David's wives and concubines were given unto him of me, by the hand of Nathan, my servant, and others of the prophets who had the keys of this power; and in none of these things did he sin against me save in the case of Uriah and his wife; (D&C 132:38-39, emphasis added).

Moses, and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob also had multiple wives, but they did not sin in this, “...because they did none other things than that which they were commanded” (D&C 132:37). They accepted what the Lord gave them, and did not take that which He had not given them.

Well, it's clear enough in that arena, but what about the chocolate cake? If I buy it, or make it, isn't it mine to do with as I please? Well, maybe, and maybe not.

The Lord has given us many things, and for many reasons. Through the Prophet Joseph Smith the Lord said:

Yea, and the herb, and the good things which come of the earth, whether for food or for raiment, or for houses, or for barns, or for orchards, or for gardens, or for

vineyards; Yea, all things which come of the earth, in the season thereof, are made for the benefit and the use of man, both to please the eye and to gladden the heart; Yea, for food and for raiment, for taste and for smell, to strengthen the body and to enliven the soul. And it pleaseth God that he hath given all these things unto man; for unto this end were they made to be used, with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion. (D&C 59:17-20, emphasis added)

Not to excess. That is pretty easy to understand and apply to my own situation. I can use what God has provided, but not too much of it. But what does “extortion” imply?

When I think of extortion, I think of a corrupt person using a position of power to force someone under his control to do something improper. While it is usually used in connection with money, it isn't a big leap to see this in terms of the things the Lord has given us “to gladden the heart...and to enliven the soul.”

When we use that chocolate cake to sooth our sorrows or distract us from something we should pay attention to, we are not using it in the way the Lord designed. We can tell when we do that, because we feel bad afterwards.

If I watch a movie occasionally, to relax a bit, I feel fine afterwards. But if I take a Saturday and watch two or three movies, instead of attending to the other things I should be doing, I have an uneasy

The 10th Commandment

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feeling afterward that says: “That was too much!” And there are some movies I must avoid altogether to be abstinent. And some people have to avoid chocolate cake to be abstinent. So things that may “gladden the heart” under some conditions, if misused, bring sadness and sorrow.

What has our Father in Heaven provided to help us when we are sad, or discouraged? Isaiah said of the Savior:

*Surely he hath borne our griefs,
and carried our sorrows... (Isaiah
53:4)*

And in Hebrews we read of Him:

*For we have not an high priest
which cannot be touched with the
feeling of our infirmities; but was
in all points tempted like as we
are, yet without sin. Let us
therefore come boldly unto the
throne of grace, that we may
obtain mercy, and find grace to
help in time of need. (Hebrews
4:15-16)*

The Lord is not only touched with our struggles, He is also able to heal us from them. Sometimes He will change our circumstances, but more often He will change us to be able to bear our circumstances. For example, the people of Alma were

made able to bear the burdens placed upon them by the Lamanites, rather than the burdens being removed altogether (Mosiah 24:15). Lehi’s family was blessed in the wilderness to be able to eat raw meat, rather than the Lord miraculously hiding their campfires from the eyes of their enemies (1 Nephi 17:12).

When we force food, or spending, or lust, or anything else to serve a purpose for which it was not intended, or in a way that the Lord has not approved, or fill the role that the Son of God was appointed to fill in our lives, we are practicing extortion or idolatry. These things are given to us on loan, as it were, to use in the way the Lord sees fit. In fact, there is nothing we can call our own, even ourselves. As Paul put it:

*...ye are not your own... For ye
are bought with a price: therefore
glorify God in your body, and in
your spirit, which are God's.
(1 Cor. 6:19-20).*

What is left for us to do? Only one thing: surrender ourselves, our lives unto God. We already belong to Him anyway. All that is missing is our will. When we surrender that, we become for the first time, truly ourselves.

May we have the courage to make that surrender and thereby enter into the only real victory. □

The 9th Step – a Gift from God

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of a most amazing and miraculous—and unexpected—dispensation of the mercy and grace of Christ: “Your offering is sufficient, Cheryl. I will make up the balance.”

As with herself, Cheryl realized that the Savior stood ready to supplement all of our honest offerings, our honest efforts to repent—even if all we honestly had to give was next to nothing.

I thought of Stephen Robinson’s now famous story of the little girl who worked and worked as hard as she could given her capacity as a small child to earn enough money to buy a bike. When she was done, she had less than a dollar to contribute. Her father made up the rest, even though it was nearly 100% of the total.

This is the Father-figure we have in Jesus Christ, who learned all He knows of fathering from His Father—our Heavenly Father. How wonderful it is to know—by the testimony of the dear Prophet Joseph Smith, the Prophet of this dispensation, that we are born of such kind and tender-hearted parentage. And He (They) sent the Savior to testify and administer that kindness to us.

Cheryl testified: When you don’t have the honest ability to forgive and love, let the Lord give you the gift of a Ninth Step. Do the best you can do to let go and forgive the other person, and then lay the true results at His feet. He will pick it up—whatever percentage of the whole it is—and carry it to completion for you.

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The 9th Step – a Gift from God

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I am so grateful for the Heart t' Heart meetings I am blessed to attend, and the synthesis of the Restored Gospel and the amazing “decoding” power of the correct principles in the Twelve Steps.

I am grateful for the inspiration and the nurturing in the good word

of God which I receive at Heart t' Heart meetings, as I listen to participants liken the principles of sanity and truth unto themselves and apply them to real life situations—their own real life situations.

I give thanks continually for all of you in the Heart t' Heart programs (and in the LDS Family Services programs). They are “sister-programs” in principle and in truth.

I bear testimony of this in the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.