

# Heartbeats

The Official Newsletter of  
Heart t' Heart

September 2007

A Twelve Step Support Group for the LDS Community

Volume 17 – Issue 8

## The Twelve Steps of Heart t' Heart

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 the decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. (*2 Ne. 10:24; Omni 1:36; 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, 24, 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. (*Mosiah 27:36-37; Alma 5:7; Moroni 7:3*)

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## Some Things Matter...

And some things don't. When I found myself in a position where I wasn't able to do ANYTHING, it didn't take me long to let go of all the things I thought were absolutely urgent and essential in my life. It didn't take me long to realize that in at least some places in my life, I was completely replaceable. Very humbling, and very necessary for me to know.

Before recovery, I wasn't able to prioritize the urgency of things, everything felt urgent to me. EVERYTHING. Everything mattered - except of course taking care of what really mattered - my relationship with Christ.

While I was sick, things came into focus very quickly for me, and I now have a solid understanding and witness that there is only one thing that REALLY matters in each day, and that is coming to Christ. People get upset with me when I say that (I think I'm finally getting used to it though - at first I was offended, but today, I don't really care), but being sick showed me that when the chips are down, there is really only one thing that counts and that is Christ. Now that I am feeling much better, this is something that has stayed with me, and is as firm as a granite monolith in my heart.

I have a lot of "responsibility" in my life (I have to be careful with that word, because I tend to take it a bit too seriously), just like anyone else I suppose, but I understand in the depths of my soul that nothing that really matters will fall apart without me, and everything that really matters to me, WILL fall apart if I don't seek this Jesus of whom the prophets have written.

The Gospel has become much easier for me to live. Life has become much simpler for me to live, and God has become my Rock.

Something I would like to make perfectly clear here is that during all this time I made NO ATTEMPT to abstain from my addictions - actually, most of them I wasn't even aware I had.

**(Some Things Matter, continued from p. 1)**

I heeded the advice given by Colleen in HDDMFB in the Introduction. In the original edition of the book I first read, it says "As illogical as it may sound, what I'm going to do is ask you to ignore the problem you're struggling with and turn your full attention to something which seems unrelated"

In the small edition it says, " As illogical as it may sound, what I'm going to do is ask you to stop focusing on the problem you're in a life and death struggle with, and turn your full attention instead in a direction that to the agnostic mind seems totally unrelated."

I know I've mentioned this before, but I am really floored by the impact this has made on my life. This

**I brought to God the only thing I had - a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and He came to me, in a fullness that words will never do justice to.**

changed my impression of God completely, because I was so focused on having to fix myself and feeling worthy, and if I didn't (and of course, I couldn't) fix myself and get myself worthy, I thought He wouldn't come to me. This was a lie!

During this time, and it was fourteen months before I was conscious of any kind of abstinence, I had THE MOST SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES OF MY LIFE UP TO THAT TIME. I don't feel that ANYTHING was held back from me that I was ready to receive.

I brought to God the only thing I had - a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and He came to me, in a fullness that words will never do justice to.

It upsets me greatly, this belief that goes around that I have to somehow make myself worthy of God's help, and that He won't help me unless I am sober. . . and if this is the case then I am lost.

My testimony is that this is NOT the case. God talks

to those who talk to Him. He does NOT hold back. He lives. He is the most loving, and kind, and approachable, awesome Man!

His work and Glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of ME, and He doesn't hold back waiting for me to reach a certain plateau or something. He comes to me in my extremity. He came to me with a love that filled the hole in my soul, a love that nothing else could ever be replaced by . . . and it is HIS love that has changed me. It is His love that has changed my heart, changed my disposition, so that I no longer desire to do evil (overeat, gossip, shop, pretend to be perfect, drug).

It is my testimony that He does NOT hold back. This burns in my soul so strong that I would like to shout it out. He did not wait for me to become sober from anything, He came to me when I called. This is my living and breathing experience. He came for those who sin. I am a sinner. He came for me, and He doesn't wait for me to get all decked out and pretty, He comes to me whenever I cry out to Him.

Everything I do is powered by Him. Everything I understand is given of Him. All the messed up beliefs I had, and still have, are being straightened out by Him. My sobriety is given of Him. Any love I feel is fueled by Him. Any mercy, compassion, kindness, goodness, gentleness, patience and long-suffering is given of Him. He is everything to me.

Some things matter, and some things don't. God Matters.

Mary S. ☐

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## EARTHQUAKE DETECTION

A few days ago, in a weekly fact-to-face meeting we were reading from AA's *Big Book*. Those in the meeting were all struck by the similarities in the conditions of these alcoholics, their accompanying symptoms and our own specific maladies.

In the section that we read, there were two statements that got my attention and which seemed to be the theme for the meeting; and I felt the need to share them here:

- "The delusion that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed."

- "All of us felt at times that we were regaining control, but such intervals usually brief were inevitably followed by still less control, which led in time to pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization."

I have read the *Big Book* before, but it was good to read this again, a reminder that my susceptibility to my particular drug of choice means that I do need to act differently from other people. There is no level of "moderate drinking" available to me.

The danger for me in any activity results when I use it (e.g. eating, pn, mb, video games, TV, other forms of "tune-out media", etc.) to escape the world around me, particularly the painful world that I create through my pride and selfishness (roots of my addictive enablers). It is this attitude of withdrawing, more than anything else, that takes me down the wrong path. Or, more specifically, it is channeling the need to find solitude in the direction of worldly means, rather than communion with Jesus that misdirects my course. The need to find momentary respite from stress, activity, work, others, etc. is not necessarily unhealthy. The Lord himself would take moments to be apart from others and recharge. The problem for me lies in the addictive ways I turn to for relief.

I realize I need to be careful not to become a perfectionist with my recovery and assume that by

doing more, or by doing less (avoiding all diversions), the game is won. Perfectionism wraps around the enabling forces of my addiction like a cuddly blanket. My focus should and needs to be always on developing a relationship with the one Being in this Universe that can and will heal me... my Jesus. But I think what the founders of AA discovered is that understanding their "condition" and particular sensitivities was critical too. It helped them to "quiet the voices" in their minds so that they could hear the reassuring voice of their Savior.

The second statement from the *Big Book* also intrigued me, describing the notion of how alcoholics exhibit periods of some self-control, only to eventually fall again, and then feeling even less in control than before. I have felt this phenomenon in my own life and have been troubled by it. It's like noticing how a "rash" is getting worse, and that it seems to flare up more easily and more severely each time it comes back. There truly is for me no standing still in the dis-ease. I am either being blessed by recovery or sinking lower into the mire.

But in evaluating this, I think there might be another effect also taking place. I think that it can also feel like things are getting worse when what's really happening is the Lord is just showing me my

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weaknesses as I come unto Him. It must be kind of like the fact that more earthquakes have been recorded in the last century than at any other time in human history in part because our instruments are better at detecting them. My increased acuteness to my character flaws, brought on by my desire for and striving to be more in tune with the Spirit and Jesus' will, sometimes makes me feel I am getting worse rather than improving. However, as in the earthquake example, even taking into account the increased sensitivity to fault-line disturbances, the illness will get worse if I don't turn to the source of healing and recovery.

I also realized that my worrying and stressing over my addiction and whenever I'm applying the principles of recovery and repentance correctly (if I am doing "everything right"), is as much a part of my addiction and its underlying enablers as anything else. Sometimes I feel that if I could just get out of the way, the Lord would be able to heal me. I have noticed before that as I worry less about how to avoid acting out, it usually takes care of itself. Or, I should say, that if I focus more on just spending time with the Lord, giving meaningful service to others, and expressing gratitude and thanksgiving to Him for all my blessings, He is able to lift my burdens more completely.

What other escape do I really need?...

Brooks □

## ON USING THE TOOLS IN HtH: TRUSTING THE LORD IN HIS TRAINING OF MY SPIRIT

Sometimes, I get caught up in using the HtH tools *on my own*, trying to earn or deserve the Lord's deliverance and merciful attendance in my life. And then, when I've tried and tried, and worn myself ragged doing it, I am a sitting duck for the Liar to convince me to just sit down and do nothing and stay drunk (practicing my addiction) and just wait for the Lord to show up and sweep me away into recovery. Sort of like picturing Him telling the Brother of Jared, "Just go launch your boats and sit in the dark and wait. I will come and be in your midst and light the boats for you with my Light."

Now, it isn't that He couldn't have done just that. Remember, in the Children of Israel's 40 years in the wilderness, His presence went before them like a pillar of fire in the night and smoke in the day. For 40 earth years, no less!

But, apparently, He reserves to Himself the prerogative to administer learning and experience to us in the way that He sees fit. In this case—with the Brother of Jared, He required him to prepare something—something tangible—to be a vessel for His light. And so the Brother of Jared had to go out (and I'm sure he was doing it prayerfully the whole time), and find some tools, some instruments, some implements—and bring them to the Lord so that He could fill them with His Light. So it is, for me, as I consider the "tools" we recommend in Heart t' Heart. I don't just go use the tools on my own. I bring the tool to Him—whether it be reading literature, writing in response, attending meetings or making a phone call or meditating—and He fills the tool with His Light. It has no light of its own.

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I am grateful, today, to realize that while there are some days when, in His wisdom, He instantly, directly, personally comes to me and relieves me of my disease, with no more effort on my own than to seek Him, to reach for Him (like the woman with the issue of blood, or the blind man by the side of the road, crying out to Him, "*Rabboni*," or Alma the younger, crying out in his coma, "Oh Jesus, Thou Son of God, . . .") . . . there are other days when I come to Him and feel Him give me something to do in order to create a vessel, a channel for His revelations and light to me—like go to a meeting, prayerfully. Or read some literature, prayerfully. Always using the tools in surrender to His Spirit and willing to receive as much or as little through them as He sees fit to bestow. He's my trainer, and He knows better than I do what I need to do to exercise my spirit properly each day.

Colleen H. □

## THE INVITATION OF MY JESUS

At the recent HtH Conference held in Orem, Utah, "Peg" shared an insight into the nature of "our Jesus" that I have pondered quite often ever since I first heard it. It was the idea that what made "John the Beloved" "beloved" was that he was the only apostle who felt it was "okay" to lay his head on Jesus' bosom. (John 13:23) At least, the only apostle that was ever recorded doing so. And, as "Peg" so eloquently expressed, what we may not realize, perhaps what we dare not let our hearts receive out of disbelief at something so human as to steal our breath away, is this: Jesus desires that we each feel as comfortable. John was beloved because he "got it" -- he made that leap of faith which told him it was not only "okay" -- but greatly desired by His Lord that we each would do something "so bold" as to lay our head upon His bosom. For it is not a "bold" thing, but rather, a manifestation that we see eye to eye with "our Jesus" - that we see Him as family and feel that bond.

Another place in scripture that invites the exact same sense of "family" that Jesus desires us to experience are the first 3 chapters in Ether. Like precious jewels, the evidences are there to be read, felt, embraced and enjoyed. In Ether chapter 1, the brother of Jared approaches the Lord on 3 occasions. The Lord's recorded response, each time, in verses 35, 37 and 40, all begin with a particular word. Compassion. A deep awareness of the brother of Jared's suffering coupled with the heartfelt desire to relieve it! This is not a distant, uncaring God being described. This is a God who suffers alongside us. Who feels the pain of our predicament and who yearns to deliver us! Whenever we see a word or phrase oft repeated in scripture like this, we may take from that repetition that the Lord is inviting us to "pay attention". The repetition of "compassion" in verses 35, 37 and 40 are just such an invitation from the Lord; "This is who I am. A loving God. A compassionate God. A God who cares deeply about you."

Ether chapter 1 is crowned by this revealing verse, words from the Lord Himself.

43 And there will I bless thee and thy seed, and

raise up unto me of thy seed, and of the seed of thy brother, and they who shall go with thee, a great nation. And there shall be none greater than the nation which I will raise up unto me of thy seed, upon all the face of the earth. And thus I will do unto thee because this long time ye have cried unto me.

"... because this long time ye have cried unto me."

There it is. A God's soul-deep revelation unto us of His deep hunger for us to see Him as family. His desire for us to cry unto Him with ALL our hearts! Have you ever wondered why He stresses the trial of our faith SO OFTEN and SO DOGGEDLY?

**So what does He want us to receive? He wants us to receive Him. Him. Him. Him!!! That is the primary purpose of this earth life.**

I will tell you this much; it isn't because He enjoys watching us suffer and squirm under the burden of the veil, encumbered by the effects of the Fall to boot. No, it isn't about suffering at all -- although, paradoxically, great suffering is required of us to receive what He ultimately DOES want us to receive.

So what does He want us to receive?

He wants us to receive Him. Him. Him. Him!!!

That is the primary purpose of this earth life. To be reunited with Him. First realizing it is desired, then Working towards that reunion. That perfect day when we, quite literally, "lay our head upon His bosom" even as John did. Everything points to it, including our temple rites. And in few other places is this better illustrated than the first few chapters of Ether.

At the end of Ether 2, the Lord does something very interesting. As you will remember, Jared and his family faced two problems: air and light. The

problem of air the Lord solves for them outright. But He does not do so for the problem of having no light. To realize why the Lord did not just hand-over this information to the brother of Jared is breathtaking. It is breathtaking because, yet again, we are confronted with a God who wants more, so much more, than to just be the "Answer Man" in our lives. Let these words sink deep into your heart. He wants so much more. So much more. Because He wanted more from the brother of Jared, He did not give him the answer. Instead, He gave the brother of Jared an invitation to deepen his relationship with the Lord even more. In essence, he invited the brother of Jared, and each of us, to "lay our head upon His bosom"!!! He wants this relationship to be full of trust and to be interactive. Interactive. Have you ever worked on something together with a family member? Even something as simple as baking a batch of cookies? There is joy in such simple things. These activities smack of family ties and trust and closeness. The Lord wants this from us. For this reason Ether 2 ends with this verse:

Ether 2:25 And behold, I prepare you against these things; for ye cannot cross this great deep save I prepare you against the waves of the sea, and the winds which have gone forth, and the floods which shall come. Therefore what will ye that I should prepare for you that ye may have light when ye are swallowed up in the depths of the sea?

This verse constitutes the Lord putting his cards on the table for us to see. He is revealing his heart to us. Showing us how deeply He wants a relationship with us. How human He is. How real He is.

Notice carefully His wording:

And behold, I prepare you against these things; for ye cannot cross this great deep save I prepare you against the waves of the sea, and the winds which have gone forth, and the floods which shall come.

In other words,

YOU CANNOT MAKE IT WITHOUT ME. LET ME BE A BROTHER TO YOU. LET ME LIFT YOU AND BLESS YOU. I HAVE PREPARED THIS SITUATION -- ON PURPOSE -- SO THAT

YOU WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE THAT LEAP OF FAITH, TO ENTER INTO THAT FAMILY RELATIONSHIP, TO CONVERSE WITH ME AS ONE MAN CONVERSES WITH ANOTHER!

He's practically BEGGING us to reach out for His help. Clearly He has the answers, but He doesn't just want to GIVE us the answers. No sense of family flows from that kind of one-sided, unthinking relationship. He wants us to interact with Him, make friends with Him. To BE the family to Him that we ALREADY ARE to Him!!! Thus, His question to the brother of Jared:

Therefore what will ye that I should prepare for you that ye may have light when ye are swallowed up in the depths of the sea?

In other words,

HERE'S OUR CHANCE!!! I'VE WAITED SO LONG FOR THIS!! TO REALLY BE A TEAM!! TO BE FAMILY!! I TRUST YOU TO COME UP WITH A RIGHTEOUS SOLUTION!! I'M ROOTING FOR YOU!! I AM HERE FOR YOU!! I AM SO EXCITED!! WHAT SOLUTION DO YOU PROPOSE?? WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, SUCH THAT YOU WILL KNOW THAT IT IS I, YOUR BROTHER, WHO GAVE YOU THE MIRACLE? THAT I MAY SHOW YOU THAT I AM THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS, THAT THE PROMISES MADE TO THEM ARE FOR YOU AS WELL? WHAT MIRACLE DO YOU PROPOSE I WORK ON YOUR BEHALF?

We know the rest of the story. The brother of Jared approached the Lord with his solution (which solution was also, no doubt, inspired by the Lord) and the Lord knew it was "enough." He revealed Himself unto the brother of Jared. The brother of Jared knew what "John the Beloved" also knew -- that Jesus was family. May we all come to have this same exact sense of "family" is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Tom K ☐



## **Jul-Aug GSB Contributions**

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Editor's Note: Please remember, the opinions shared in Heartbeats are of the person sharing. We hope and pray that you will read, ponder and pray for direct inspiration and counsel from the Lord. Take what you feel confirmed in your own heart concerning the sharing and toss the rest.

### **Online Meetings**

To attend one of the online meetings go to:

<http://www.heart-t-heart2.org/chat>.

(Note: New address)

All are welcome to attend. If this is your first time, review the information on the regular Heart t' Heart webpage: <http://www.heart-t-heart.org>.

**OL-04 - Sunday through Friday:** Every morning, 6:30 a.m. - 7:30 a.m. General Focus (MST).

**OL-02 - Tuesday, 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Mountain Time Zone (USA).** General Focus, Book Study: HDDMFB. Open Sharing.

**OL-01 - Tuesday through Thursday, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Mountain Time Zone (USA).** General Focus, Book Study: HDDMFB. Open Sharing.

**OL-03 - Saturday, 7:00 - 8:30 a.m. Mountain Time Zone (USA).** General Focus, Book Study: HDDMFB. Open Sharing.

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- 1 In-depth study/analysis of principles found in Steps or Traditions
- 2 Personal experiences with the Steps, Traditions, Tools – how they work in your life
- 3 Capturing from the scriptures, *Big Book* or *He Did Deliver Me From Bondage*
- 4 Open sharing with positive recovery messages
- 5 Program from the Prophets – quotations from modern prophets with a “recovery” message
- 6 Short quotes, thoughts or one-liners

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