

Heartbeats

The Official Newsletter of
Heart t' Heart

February 2008

A Twelve Step Support Group for the LDS Community

Volume 18 – Issue 2

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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HOW TO AVOID HAVING A “DUMB ASS” DAY

In Mosiah 21, we find the people of King Limhi are having an experience that could be the perfect metaphor for addiction.

Their enemies (think: your/our addictions) are taunting them from just outside their borders. (Just as our temptations taunt us.)

Eventually, their enemies come into their land and begin to put heavy burdens on them (keep thinking enemies=addictions, and keep thinking of the enemies' accomplices or spies within your borders as your character defects—they are what let the tempter into us). And finally, according to verse 3, the people are being *driven* by their enemies like a “dumb ass.” (Mosiah 21:3 – . . . and began to put heavy burdens upon their backs, and drive them as they would a dumb ass.)

Now, you might not know God well enough yet to have experienced His sense of humor, but I've found Him to be pretty accepting of the “silly” thoughts that goes through my mind every now and then. And I've found Him to really enjoy the “play” we can put on a word or phrase. So, when I started to laugh and had to say out loud, “So, Lord, I guess You're just trying to help me avoid having so many ‘dumb ass’ days,” I would have sworn I perceived a smile and an ever so slight chuckle. I'm so glad that He's willing to accept me in the weakness of my own language. I have no idea where and when we got the idea that He's a straight-laced, stern-faced prude.

So I went on to pen these thoughts in my journal:

Are you having a dumb-ass day?

Are you being driven by your enemies—your addictions that are fed and harbored within your “borders” by your character defects?

Have you lost your agency again, today?

("How to Avoid...", cont. from p. 1)

Have your enemies come into your "borders" and started smiting you, putting heavy burdens of guilt, shame, fear, resentment, discouragement and every other species of pride on your back?

And how do we get out of having a "dumb ass," day? Do we come at our addictions head on? Not unless we want to get beaten back over and over again, like Limhi's people did. (See Mosiah 21:8-12.)

So how do we avoid having a "driven by addiction" day? A glance back at Mosiah 3:19 gives us the answer: ". . . yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father."

Finally, back in Mosiah 21:13, the people do just what that verse counsels--they submit or surrender to reality. They give up the fight, but for awhile they are still left to suffer at the hands of their enemies. They don't try to take up arms again, though. They're done fighting.

Instead they "subject themselves to the yoke of bondage." They surrender to the truth that they can not free themselves. And in v14, they finally reach the depths of humility. How can you tell? They cry all the day long to the Lord. Not *instead* of doing their daily chores and labors, but *all the while they're doing other things*. They don't cease to pray when they get up from their knees, but they pray all day *in their hearts*..

And in v15, it says that the Lord was slow to answer them because of their "iniquities." (Remember "iniquities" doesn't always mean "sins." Often it can mean taking any action—even the *right* action—without knowing the Lord. See Matthew 7:21-22.). In other words, the Lord was slow to respond to them because of their self-righteous, self-sufficient mind-set. And it wasn't that He was punishing them, either. He just couldn't get through to them

right away. It took some time for them to get down to the depths of humility.

I come to the end of my study time, and I realize that my Study Partner—has just turned these verses into a parable for me that could really help me stay out of my addiction today. I just need to remember to stay out of the prideful, stubborn, rebellious stinking thinking that sets me up to have another "dumb ass" day. (Smile, chuckle—humor helps you learn!)

Colleen H. □

P.S. Okay, calm down, lighten up. I didn't say I AM a dumb ass. Like the scripture, I just used a simile** driven . . . AS (like) a "dumb . . ."

** (no, that's not smile, misspelled) "si-mil-lee: When a comparison is expressed by the use of some word or phrase such as "like, as, . . ."

FIRING MY OLD GOD!

This morning, I was capturing from Elder Bruce C. Hafen's talk, "Beauty for Ashes," from the following part:

"We might think of the degree of our personal fault for the bad things that happen in our lives as a continuum ranging from sin to adversity, with the degree of our fault dropping from high at one end of the spectrum to zero at the other. At the "sin" end of the continuum, we bear grave responsibility, for we bring the bitter fruits of sin fully upon ourselves. But at the other end of the spectrum, marked by "adversity," we may bear no responsibility at all. The bitterness of adversity may come to us, as it did to Job in the Old Testament, regardless of our actual, conscious fault."

"Along this fault-level continuum, between the poles of sin and adversity, lie such intermediate points as unwise choices and hasty judgments. In these cases, it may be unclear just how much personal fault we bear for the bitter fruits we may taste or cause others to taste."

I love the continuum picture Elder Hafen offers. It encompasses so much, including the faults of others, into the scope of the Atonement. It shows that the important aspect of the Atonement is not judgment, but returning us to God.

It may be that nowhere in the scriptures is the Atonement associated with judgment...I really don't know...but I had always thought of the Lord (pre-recovery) as judgmental and therefore the Atonement must be too, right?

My image of God and Christ and my forgiveness was pretty harsh. The scenario went something like this:

Jesus- "Father, Thy daughter wants You to forgive her for getting angry with her kids."

Father- "What, AGAIN!!!"

Jesus- "She says she is trying really hard to be patient."

Father- "Yeah, yeah, she said that the last time, too."

Jesus- "Well at least she is trying..."

Father- "Okay, since it's YOU Who are asking on her behalf, I guess I will forgive her AGAIN! But I'm gonna be keeping My Eye on her!"

You can see that I didn't believe in a God of real, divine love or real, divine forgiveness. I am so very grateful to have had those lies removed from me! I am so glad to be coming to know a little about Who God is, what are His characteristics.

My new picture of God and Christ is much different. Here They are, in the same scenario as above:

Jesus-"Sweet and Holy Abba, as advocate to my friend, Thy daughter, I ask Thee to forgive her for her anger."

Father-"Yes, look at her, my Son, she is so beautiful in her humility!" (Good thing He looks upon our hearts, because I am a sniveling, blotchy-faced mess.)

Jesus-"Yes, Father, I rejoice with Thee in this moment."

Father-"I'm so filled with joy that we can apply mercy to this child, my Son. My glory is magnified in this."

Jesus-"As is Mine, and I gladly give it to Thee, most Holy."

Father-" My best beloved, I am well pleased with Thee. My daughter is drawing near unto Us. She is hearing Us and her heart is softening." (Their arms are around me!)

The thing that is the really delightful surprise is that the promise of eternal life springing from knowing God is really true! (John 17:3) As I have come to know Him better, I cannot help trusting Him and relying on Him.

He is always patiently, even EAGERLY, waiting for me to turn again to Him. ... I can REALLY worship THIS God!

Faith in Him distills as dew from heaven as I come to know Him. As always, I complain of how slow it seems sometimes. But it IS coming, my faith is growing in ebbs and flows, and ups and downs. He is SO good to keep taking me back, His arms outstretched still.

He is always patiently, even EAGERLY, waiting for me to turn again to Him. How different is this wonderful God from the one I imagined before! What hope He inspires! I praise Him.

And back to that judgmental Atonement I was talking about, I've learned that the only "judgment" associated with it is the condition that we

repent/turn again to our Father and the Savior.

No need to count up and see if we have gone beyond the 7 times 70 limit for how often we can be forgiven. No need to worry if He will forgive us if we sincerely ask. No need to fear rejection or conditional approval. I can REALLY worship THIS God! Thanks for listening....

– Anonymous. ☐

PATHS I NEVER ENVISIONED FOR MYSELF

I am the recipient of a blessed, blossoming relationship with Jesus Christ, even though I am only on Step 3. Though Step 11 is way, way in the distance, I am beginning to realize that the steps aren't necessarily an "order", but a process. Although in my own personal recovery, I stand squarely at the edge of a room labeled "Step 4." And I have yet to enter with any earnest, sincere, heart-deep effort. I am a little petrified to be quite honest.

But in these last few days, I am exercising faith in the concept of capturing and dialoguing with the Lord in my recovery journal. And let me tell you: He has taught me some wonderful, valuable things about myself. Merely by letting go and letting Him guide my scripture study, or study of good books, I am being led down paths of learning I would have never envisioned for myself. He is an amazing teacher. Yes. No doubt. But He is also the Savior of the world, and the very personal, intimate, one-to-one Savior of my life.

I am grateful for His presence, and His counsel, and the wonderful ways He teaches me. I won't even begin to explain the deep and candid way He has instructed me in recent days on the value of getting up early, going to bed early, etc. He is an Amazing being, I am grateful for my afflictions (and the recovery process) in bringing me closer to Him. I bear testimony that the concept of dialoguing and capturing our conversations is a REAL and POWERFUL tool. I was as skeptical as anyone, but

after trying it, I can see that He truly knows me, cares for me, and provides guidance in as gentle, firm and amazing a tone as I could EVER imagine. Thank you. That is all...

John B. ☐

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(From Hebrews 4:16)

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at

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Registration form will be out soon. Please plan to come!

A FEW RECENT THOUGHTS ON THE PLACE OF CHRIST IN MY LIFE

God's Counsel Becomes My Command Because of Love

I know that the Lord's words to me are "counsel," and that He will not force me to obey Him, but I will respond as if they are commands out of faith in Him, without compulsion.

My love for Him makes His counsel my command.

How Close Does the Lord Want Us to Picture Ourselves?

Jacob 6:5 – Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I beseech of you in words of soberness that ye would repent, and come with full purpose of heart, and *cleave unto God as he cleaveth unto you*. And while his arm of mercy is extended towards you in the light of the day, harden not your hearts.

Mormon 5:11 – For I know that such will sorrow for the calamity of the house of Israel; yea, they will sorrow for the destruction of this people; they will sorrow that this people had not repented that they *might have been clasped in the arms of Jesus*.

The Lord Alone Shall be Desired In that Day!

Lately, one phrase keeps going through my mind. It's from the second exercise leading into Step One in HDDMFB (p.13): "the Lord ALONE shall be exalted in that day." (2 Nephi 12:11) I also hear it going through my mind with this "spin" on it: The Lord alone shall be *desired* in that day.

In my scripture-guided journaling, of late, the Lord keeps leading me to sort out and come into conscious contact (inventory) with the lessons the last decade or two have taught me. And I see that the truth is, I allowed other things to take precedence over Him in my desires.

As I do this inventory, I am so tempted by the adversary to really beat myself up. I had this closeness to the Lord. Why did I let other things lead me away and become the objects of my desires? How could I be so slow!! In His mercy, I feel Him comfort me and remind me that to Him a decade or two is only equivalent to a matter of seconds and that by that perspective, I'm not THAT slow a learner!!

One of the things that I am finally sitting "still" enough to learn at a heart-deep level is this: I must learn to want Him and seek Him and His Spirit, His Presence not as a means to an end (getting healed, thinner, etc.), but just simply to *be* with Him.

It feels like a I'm having my own version of Job's

experience, where he had to just sit and wait upon the Lord and continue to trust Him, no matter what. Like Job, I am finally becoming humbled enough to say of the Lord, "Though He should slay me (not rescue me, not change anything in my life to answer my desires) still I will trust Him---and seek Him. I will come to Him, and let everything else unfold as He sees fit to unfold it to me. I am coming to realize as I never have before that when He said, "I am the vine and ye are the branches," (John 15:5), He was trying to get me to recognize that any fruit (visible results) will only grow on the branch if the Life of the Vine is coursing through the branch. The fruit is the fruit of the vine, not of the branch.

One of the things that I am finally sitting "still" enough to learn at a heart-deep level is this: I must learn to want Him and seek Him and His Spirit, His Presence not as a means to an end (getting healed, thinner, etc.), but just simply to be with Him.

My heart is so humbled in realizing this. I have every desire to "practice" life from this point of view today. Thanks . . .

CH □

COMMUNING WITH MY JESUS

This morning while counseling with the Lord in writing, I felt real communion.

There have been several mornings, lately, where it's been a real struggle for me, where my entries consist of nothing more than "Dear Savior," and nothing is written down. And I have wondered if doing this is, well, real or not.

Then comes a morning like this morning, and I know: He is real. And I am amazed to feel that He is willing to even laugh with me; that He has a sense of humor, if I will only "allow" myself to experience it and trust

Him enough to let Him share that with me. It's wonderful, and I want to grow in that trust.

Everything He says about Himself in scripture is true. He cannot allow sin in the least degree. But as it has been said, judgement day is not today. One day He will exercise that judgment, but that day is not today. He is there to help me, and it thrills Him when I open up to Him. It is really neat that something like that would thrill Him. It says something about the kind of person He is. It says something about how much He cares about us. It says something about how He values honesty. Perhaps part of a broken heart and a contrite spirit is that magic that happens when we "get honest with God" finally. Whenever I do so, really do so, I can instantly feel it. He responds in kind. He wants us to bare our souls to Him, and I increasingly feel I can do so, with Him, like I can with no other person. Scott asked about "succor" in another post. I know that honesty is part of receiving that succor.

Not every morning may be like this morning. But I believe He wants it to be. He wants us to strive for it. He literally means what He promises in the sacrament prayer. He wants His Spirit to be with me, always.

Thank you for letting me share this.

TomK ☐

THE FIRSTLINGS OF THE DAY

I had an epiphany of sorts yesterday. I was driving along and the thought occurred to me that the best part of the day was the early morning, or firstling of the day. That time of day is also my worst enemy. I somehow, every morning, think that I can just be lazy for a bit, because I have all day. Then, somehow it gets to be later and later and I spend the whole day more and more frustrated at myself for being behind in what I need to do.

Yesterday I realized that the commandment to offer the "firstlings of the flock" as a sacrifice in similitude of the sacrifice of the Savior has relevance to this situation. If I think of my time as my flock, then the firstling of it, the early morning, should be given to Him. As I was waking this morning I immediately got my quad and turned to Mosiah 5:13 "For how knoweth a man the Master whom he has not served,

...who is far from the thoughts and intents of His heart." It clicked with me in a new way.

I had been doing what I needed to do as far as scripture study was concerned, or so I thought. I did it every day, usually sometime in the morning, after doing this or that other thing. But to do it before everything else...it is a sacrifice, the firstling of my time.

Wendy ☐

WHAT IT MEANS TO TRULY EXPERIENCE SOMETHING

As I read Romans 5:3-4, this morning, I felt the following insight open to my understanding. I think it is very important because of the emphasis God places on learning "by our own experience."

3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

To have something happen to you that you face with patience—that is what transforms the event into "experience."

To have something happen to you that you face with patience—that is what transforms the event into "experience." To meet the event with patience. And as you absorb the lesson of the event, you gain "experience" and from gaining experience (a meaning, a lesson, an insight) you begin to feel hope again. You see that the events of your life are not just random, but they have meaning—they give you experience (growth, education, learning, advancement, development). And that is exactly what God sent us here to gain--experience. He sent us here to provide us with that which would develop and mature our character, that we might by our own "experience" (event leading to learning) become more like Him.

CH ☐

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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.

Phone Meetings

Tuesday-6:00 pm, PST

Wednesday-7:00 pm, MDT

(See website for details)

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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

Send articles to:

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