

Heartbeats

The Official Newsletter of
Heart t' Heart

April 2008

A Twelve Step Support Group for the LDS Community

Volume 18 – Issue 3

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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THE GOD I'VE MET IN RECOVERY

Most of my life, the way I understood God and the way I heard others describe Him (even in church settings) would be considered by most people the equivalent of an abusively stern parent. Let me see if I can demonstrate what I mean. He would be a man who gives out edicts, and expects them to be filled, at all cost to his children. A man who wants things done his way, or no way - just BE OBEDIENT! A man who doesn't really care how his children FEEL, just as long as his "kingdom" rolls forward. A man who expects callings to be filled without any question, or input from his children. A man who bribes his children's "good" behavior with certain "blessings," while withholding His favor from those children who can't comply in the most excellent ways. A man who leaves the stragglers in his family behind on the side of the road, if they can't keep up the pace His healthiest kids set.

I could go on and on, but I won't. I hope the point has been made.

I can not say it with enough conviction and testimony: This is NOT the God I have met on the path of recovery!

Instead, I have met a tender Man who is vitally interested in my opinion, and who listens intently to the way I think and feel, even when it isn't noble and brave. I have found Him to be a Man who is willing to turn my mistakes, and even my sins, into something good for my life. A Man who is more gentle than anything I have experienced in this world . . . more kind, more patient, more loving, more compassionate . . . a Man who *is* LOVE.

I have met a Man who desires to be with me, and teach me through His Spirit --- always leaving my dignity intact, always respecting me, my feelings, and my input.

I have met a man who DESIRES my input, values it, and works with me to gently bring me to a place of LOVE and acceptance beyond

(“The God I’ve Met ...” cont. from p. 1)

what I could ever comprehend on my own.

So, now, when I read the scriptures, I am reminded through the Spirit that I am reading a *love* letter, and words that I once perceived as intended to beat me have been turned into expressions--even caresses of love.

This is taking a LONG time, because there are SO MANY misunderstandings inside of me --- but it is WORTH every moment . . . every tear . . .

I am SO GRATEFUL!

GOD IS GOOD!

Mary S. ☐



KILLED AT THE ROOT

A few days ago, I was counseling with the Lord about my need to stay close to Him as consistently as possible each day. I asked Him, point blank, what I could do to contribute to that.

His reply humbled me. He indicated to me that there is nothing that I can DO to contribute to connecting with Him. He told me that in thinking that way I still have the wrong person (myself) in the “power” position. He told me that the only thing I can “do” to be close to Him is BE STILL and allow Him to encircle me in the robes of HIS righteousness. That all I can do is be still and KNOW something--truly grasp it--that it is by HIS power and HIS intervention that I am being saved--not through ANY power of my own--except the power to turn to Him and cry out to Him for deliverance. He told me that is the only part I play in my own deliverance--to look to Him--to Jesus Christ (as one with Heavenly Father) as often as I am tempted in a day. He told me that my humility before Him, unto Him, is what gives Him permission to exercise His Power

(Grace) in my behalf.

I asked Him, point blank, again: That seems so simple, Lord. Why don’t I do it? Why?

I was humbled again, by His answer. He told me that it is me that doesn’t believe I deserve mercy. Instead I believe the adversary, the Liar who wants to tear me down by defining me according to my weaknesses. In other words, the Lord, the Spirit of Truth, showed me the weakness that keeps me focusing on my weaknesses (and thus in the “thrall” of the greatest perfectionist of all--Lucifer). In other words my perfectionism.

Then I saw that it is true that all I can do to contribute to my deliverance is trust Him--and even trust His willingness to take me back as often as I need to be taken back.

I saw it is true! It is me, myself, that is impatient and disgusted and punishing in my attitude toward myself and my weaknesses. And so, I refuse to bring myself to Him. He reminded me that I have brought my weaknesses to Him in the past, and I have experienced His mercy after the accounting process--and I am the one holding back now, upset with myself that I have to “come begging” again. I am the one who judges myself a lost cause, not Him.

Then I saw that it is true that all I can do to contribute to my deliverance is trust Him--and even trust His willingness to take me back as often as I need to be taken back. I need to desire to learn of Him, by His example and His character, what it means to love THAT way--His way. He is teaching me what it means to love an imperfect person--myself. And in response, my love for Him is like a light cleansing the darkness from my heart. I see my addictive behaviors wavering and starting to wither --being killed at the root.

Colleen H. ☐

DEAR BROTHER IN RECOVERY,

I am sorry you are going through this hard time. I hope I can encourage you with a couple of thoughts;

First, you mention working on expressing gratitude. I've gotten a lot of mileage lately from this thought which I've printed out and posted above my desk;

"True gratitude is the ability to humbly see, feel, and even receive love. Gratitude is a form of returning love to God. Recognize His hand, tell Him so, express your love to Him. As you come to truly know the Lord, you will find an intimate, sacred relationship built on trust. You will come to know He understands your anguish and will, in compassion, always respond to you in love."
- Gene R. Cook, "Charity: Perfect and Everlasting love," Ensign, May 2002, p. 83.)

If I need to feel God's love -- and I do -- then perhaps this is the road that will get me there. It's what I'm trying to do right now every day.

The other thought concerns slipping and feeling bad about it afterwards--bad as in, "I am a low-down, dirty, good-fer-nuthin' varmint who..." etc.

Before I started the recovery process I never felt bad about acting out at all. It seemed necessary for survival. So, when I finally began trying to have some abstinence and sobriety and opened up to my priesthood leaders and my wife, I was surprised how awful I felt now that I was trying to follow the Lord. (Awful, as in a solid year of sobbing on my knees many nights a week in crushing despair and feeling and hearing nothing, studying and capturing with pen in hand every morning for 18 months--never hearing or feeling so much as a flicker of response.) In fact, though he had sustained me in many ways throughout my life, he seemed to have completely disappeared and I was left alone.

I don't claim to know the truth of this, but here is a

thought which may encourage you even when you are feeling bad about slipping up; you are making progress if the gift of your conscience is being restored. The ability to feel remorse and regret and just feel plain old "bad" is a step on the right path.

Only after I went through those "bad" and abandoned feelings (maybe I needed to interpret them as me having abandoned God, and that's why I felt abandoned or empty and alone) have I come to a place where I don't feel so devastated when I slip, because I am giving my all to come to Christ and I know he knows it's true, even when I fail momentarily.

Anyone who has climbed a mountain has slipped and stumbled somewhere on the way. There are scrapes and bumps and it can hurt. It doesn't mean they won't get where they are going, just that they are willing to encounter the hazards of the journey.

Anyway, whether those images and thoughts are useful or not, I encourage you to keep going. So you've spent 30 years trying to get out of this. Me too. If it takes 30 more I'll be nearly 80, but I'll still be on the right path and I believe I'll get where I'm going.

Scott □

2008 Heart t' Heart Annual Conference

"Come Boldly Unto the Throne of Grace"

(From Hebrews 4:16)

August 15 & 16, 2008

at

UVU, in Drem Utah

Registration form in this issue! Please plan to come!

LEARNING TO ACCEPT THE INFINITE LOVE THE LORD HAS FOR ME

I tend to cringe at the word "EVIL" in scripture. I don't want to be labeled or thought of as "EVIL". I still hold to "false traditions" in regard to my relationship with Christ (and thus, with Heavenly Father). Fear of being punished. Fear that He will withhold from me because I did something bad, something evil.

Recently, while reading some past forum posts, I found a definition of evil that has helped me to stand still and not cringe away from owning the "evil" I've done. The author shared an insight she felt the Lord had opened to her understanding---that to do "evil," doesn't necessarily mean to behave in a way that

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demonstrates pure meanness, ugliness or wickedness. "Evil" to the Lord, according to the author's insight, means to do anything that does not originate in our prayerful communications with Him. Something not coming from Him. Not flowing from a oneness with Him. I can feel that at least some of my fear of coming to God just as I am--so far less that perfect--so prone to do "evil" (act without counseling with Him) has been taken, but some still remains in me.

I just want to share, to testify "out loud," how much I want to let go of all of my fear of God. I am beginning to see that it has no foundation in scripture. And in all of my counseling with the Lord in writing, I've noticed He tells me over and over and over again, "I love you, Tom." I must really need it, cuz He keeps telling me this every chance He gets!! I hope I can learn to BE STILL. I hope I can accept that HE IS GOD (HE IS GOOD). He's not angry with me for "screwing-up" "yet again." To Him I am an infant. He expects me to make some mistakes. He is not shocked or surprised by them at all, any more than I would

(heaven forbid) get angry with one of my children for falling down when learning how to walk. Would anyone seriously consider chastising a child for falling down when they are learning to walk? The idea is ludicrous -- but then I turn around and act that way with Jesus when I approach Him. "Are you still mad at me because I didn't do this, or didn't do that?" "How long are you going to be mad at me?" How did I ever come to think like this? It is so beyond messed-up!! And even in saying that I am being unkind to myself!!!

It is for reasons like this that I feel this great need to "cleave unto Him" as He "cleaveth unto me." Otherwise, how can I possibly have any hope to extricate myself from these lies? I need Jesus to show me the way, to tell me the truth, to restore to me life in Him.

Thank you,

Tom K. ☐

"NO NEED TO FIGHT IT. JUST STOP FEEDING IT."

No need to fight it. Just stop feeding it." I once came across these very wise words, and realized that they were saying the same thing that the AA Big Book says:

"And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone even alcohol. For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in liquor. If tempted we will recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude toward liquor has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality safe and protected. We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is our experience. That is how we

react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition. "

In other words, the way to get rid of my addiction is not to fan the flames of it with desperate striving against it, but to stop feeding it with the fuel of my desperation, my panic, my fear, my engagement of it. That's exactly what the Liar wants me to do. He wants to keep me engaged. I feed my need to act out by fearing acting out. It's like a monster that feeds on my fear of it. By "fearing" it, I attend to it, focus on it, fondle it, harbor it, keep it alive.

I stop fighting it and that stops feeding it. Instead I put that focus and time and energy and attention into thinking hope in Christ, trust of Christ, attention to Christ and His words--both through the prophets and directly to me through my prayerfully consecrated "imagination."

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It is so sad that we think, "Oh, what if I was just imagining that?" What's wrong with that? What's wrong with one turning their imagination over to the Spirit of Truth, to God---and trusting Him to give them bread, not stones, fish not serpents--in other words communication from Him, not lies? We turn our imagination over to the adversary, the Father of Lies, the evil one almost continuously--what with our media helping us along in that direction. Fear, lust, possessions, position, prestige, etc., etc. resentments, past offenses, current offenses, and (here's where imagination really takes off) FUTURE offenses. Just waiting to be offended, just looking for offense.

All this feeds addiction.

Let me say it again (I need to hear it often). There's no need to fight my addiction. I just need to stop feeding it. And that's what repentance means to me. I stop feeding it by using that "back burner" place in my mind where I've been keeping it alive with half-conscious thoughts and instead turn my "back-burner," half-conscious thoughts to Jesus--one Son of God. I do that as consistently as I can. I believe this is the current application and experience and meaning of the "atonement" -- at work in my life, *today*.

Of course the Atonement happened through the Savior's intervention for us and His suffering in the garden and on the cross. And of course His Atonement will be the power that will recover us from the fall and bring us back to our original Home and Family in Heaven someday. But right here and right now, for me, the Atonement represents the oneness with Him that grows in my consciousness, as I am willing to feed my relationship with Jesus Christ (and that also includes our Father who sent Him, of course) with that energy and time and focus and "worshipful" fear that I've spent my life giving to either doing my addiction or fighting to not do it.

Somewhere in each of our pasts, the Liar infected us with a terrible fear and "hang up" on something (to each of us it's different, but the effect is the same--thus we are fellow addicts), . . . and ever since then, we've been feeding it with our fear.

Believe, me, it is a terrifying thing to give that worship/fear/compelling relationship up, and transfer all that energy and attention to the true and living God. After all, He chooses, for now, to remain behind the veil and to communicate with us in thoughts that the Liar can try to convince us we're wise enough to have made up on our own.

But that is the experiment that the Gospel is calling us to--to try Him and see if He is not faithful. To believe in and practice (that means faltering, imperfect repetition) the Spirit of revelation until (as Joseph Smith put it), we become "perfect in Christ Jesus." As we become more and more perfect in Christ (Moroni 10:32 uses the same phrase), we

become (in a sense) more and more IMPERFECT at doing our addiction! We begin to forget to do it, and then we forget how to do it. It just fades away as our communion (at-one-ness) with the Lord takes affect.

It's a process. It's a journey. It takes patience, and patience turns our journey into an experience (education, lesson learned), as Romans 5:3-4 indicates. If we'll just endure, some day it will end, and we will have the victory—in and through Jesus Christ. We have God's promise. (D&C 50:40-46)

CH □



OBTAINING “SUFFICIENT HOPE”

A few weeks ago, I was capturing from the POL-6 Exercise 1.2, looking at the following scripture:

Moroni 7:3—“You...that are the peaceable followers of Christ, and that have obtained a sufficient hope by which ye can enter into the rest of the Lord, from this time henceforth until ye shall rest with him in heaven.”

What is the “sufficient hope” we must receive to be able “to enter into the rest of the Lord”? For me, it is the hope of conscious contact with the Lord.

It's interesting. The Israelites saw sign after sign that the Lord was with them in the desert after leaving Egypt. There was water flowing up out of the rock, manna, quails, the brass serpent, the Ten Commandments written on stone tablets...so very much that was astonishing.

Yet, they were idolatrous, lustful, ungrateful, unbelieving, and even outright lewd at times. Their love for God was as dry as the desert where they wandered.

We are all invited into the wilderness, into the desert alone with the Lord, and are offered water—living water, springing forth out of the

Rock. If we dare, we are invited to draw near unto Him and to believe in the signs He gives us of His love.

I can't begin to say all the ways I have been blessed to know of the Lord's presence.

Yet, the truth is difficult to face. The walk through the desert is long and hot and dry, and we get discouraged. I should say, “*I get discouraged.*” When I'm not delivered right away, it is easy to wander away into self-sufficient striving to fix myself or to get impatient and complain to the Lord and to others. I have a real weakness to self-pity and enjoying the sympathy from others for my “hard lot” in life. It could be called an addiction to drama.

Sometimes, there are lessons that must be learned before the Lord can deliver us.

For me, the thing that brings me peace is to come directly to the Lord with my pain. I counsel with Him and He teaches me what my weaknesses are and even suggests new ways of approaching situations that are healthier.

The changes in my life are a sign of the Lord's goodness and mercy. One of my sons told me a couple of weeks ago that I am not the same mother he had growing up, and said he feels like he has to get to know me all over again. That's kind of great! In fact, it meant a lot to me.

I think all of us are “signs” that “bear record that it is the Son of God”—the Savior, Himself—who walks with us (1 Nephi 11:7), and we can look back on our lives and see the signs of His presence.

That gives me great hope.

Peg W. □



Feb-March 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.

Phone Meetings

Tuesday-6:00 pm, PST

Wednesday-7:00 pm, MDT

(See website for details)

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We encourage reader contributions to Heartbeats. Ideas for articles:

- 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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