

Heartbeats

The Official Newsletter of
Heart t' Heart

June 2008

A Twelve Step Support Group for the LDS Community

Volume 18 — Issue 5

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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FINDING THE LOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST (Romans 8:38-39)

You will note that in the posted meeting format, we state that we support all the principles and doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This is true. Our program is deeply rooted in the Restored Gospel. Nonetheless, many of us find when we come into recovery, that we have not correctly understood some gospel principles--especially those that reveal a loving God. This disconnect with the loving, merciful characteristics of God is not at all uncommon for addicts and people who have experienced abuse in their childhoods. I would like to share an excerpt from the Co-Dependent's Anonymous manual, pp. 18-19, that helps us to realize that many of us have to make quite a paradigm shift on this subject. The title of the excerpt is "Building Our Own Concept of our Higher Power."

Many of us participate in organized religions or learn various doctrines and concepts of God or a Higher Power. Some of us may hope to cleanse our sense of shame by living righteous lives. Even controlled behavioral change combined with our religious beliefs are not enough. Our motives may be virtuous, but we're still emotional bound to the abusive, neglectful people in our lives—most deeply to those from our childhood.

Organized religion may remind us of an abusive, authoritarian God. Some of us may be angry at our Higher Power for the negative experiences we faced, or we may discover we've been angry at this Higher Power for years but didn't know it. Some of us believe we're undeserving of God's love or grace.

We must ask ourselves, "Is my life filled with honesty and serenity?" "Am I working toward a safe, healthy loving relationship with my Higher Power, myself and others?" Most often we say, "No." Our fear and shame drive us to behave in devastating ways.

(Finding the Love of God..., cont. from p. 1)

Wherever our codependent course takes us, we find we're left with no other recourse than to seek a safe power greater than ourselves—one that can restore us to sanity. To continue recovery we must become willing to consider this endeavor...If we already have a relationship with God, we can help strengthen it. Whatever our past beliefs, we can begin building a spiritual foundation for our program of recovery.

I love the hope of this message! I love that I must start where I am honestly, and work from there.

In Step 2, we learn that we need a power greater than ourselves to help stabilize us, center us, and to keep us from being tossed emotionally "to and fro." It's not usually until we crash in some way that we are able to acknowledge just how much of our security (or lack of it) have been because we relied on man and not God. Once we "awaken" to how much we need God and how much we have relied on others for our sense of security, we are ready to make the decision required of us in Step 3: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

The first 3 steps are very distinct, separate little baby steps, but powerful! They involve a shift in our attitudes that influences our emotions and behaviors in powerful ways. Step 3 is the place I begin to ponder the question: "What think ye of Christ?" (Matthew 22:42). What's ironic is that I assumed that because I was a Latter-day Saint, I already knew the True and Living God, that I had an accurate understanding of his attributes and that I had a good relationship with Him. I wasn't prepared to let myself consider any other possibility because the fact that I "should" know him didn't allow me to explore the plain inner truth. It wasn't until I crashed in depression, PTSD, and perfectionism that I realized that my beliefs about God had been built upon a core sense of shame which had given me a shaky foundation. This shaming view of self and God had come as the "traditions of my fathers," a tradition of well-intended, sincere religious devotion intermingled with abuse and dysfunction, had robbed me of light and truth

about God, myself, and others. It was a foundation that crumbled against the realities of life. Step 3 offered me a decision: To turn my life over to God. But how could I do that, when I didn't trust him to be safe, when I felt a constant sense of never measuring up, when I was so burned out on harsh self-judgment that the thought of more harsh judgment sent me running away from both God and myself?

This is the first lesson I learned about God when I came into recovery, that He takes me where I am at, and that being rigorously honest about where I am at is essential for me to receive his help. If there is anything that describes what it means to be "worthy" of God's help, it is a willingness to be rigorously honest.

In Step 3, we make a choice. We exercise agency. We make a decision. Are we going to keep coming back to a God that we may not purely understand or trust? Are we going to "exercise a particle of faith" and "experiment upon the word?" What's amazing and comforting all at once, is that Jesus invites us to experiment, and acknowledges that it is an experiment. He acknowledges that because of past experiences with authority figures, for many of us, a particle of faith in a Higher Power is about all we have. This is the first lesson I learned about God when I came into recovery, that He takes me where I am at, and that being rigorously honest about where I am at is essential for me to receive his help. If there is anything that describes what it means to be "worthy" of God's help, it is a willingness to be rigorously honest. That's where the "rubber meets the road" so to speak, where and when God and man can really come together: in the plain truth. Oh, what a freedom!

For me, the steps are not just something I DID, but something I DO continually. Step 3 is a decision I continue to make, sometimes falteringly, sometimes without inhibition. There are still things in my life that cause pain and irony, that cause me to fall back

to old beliefs that I've been abandoned or cast off. And just like in the beginning of recovery, I come to Step 3 where I am required to make the decision: Will I keep coming back to God? Will I trust one more time? And when those moments come, I am invited from a tender place inside to consider a conversation between Jesus and his disciples:

From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. (John 6 :66 – 69, Emphasis added.)

For all my struggles and all my doubting, I am learning that there is no other name, no other place, where I can go to calm the troubled seas in me. So I keep making the decision to "seek this Jesus" (Ether 12:41), to experience His comfort and grace.

Peggy M. ☐

SOME REFLECTIONS (CAPTURING) FROM ELDER BEDNAR'S CONFERENCE ADDRESS, OCTOBER, 2007

As I studied Elder Bednar's talk in October, 2007 conference, entitled "Clean Hands, Pure Heart," I recorded the following reflections (capturing):

During the Lord's three-day ministry in the New World, He taught His doctrine, authorized His disciples to perform priesthood ordinances, healed the sick, prayed for the people, and lovingly blessed the children. As the Savior's time with the people was drawing to a close, He succinctly summarized the fundamental principles of His gospel.

Said He, "Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day" (3 Nephi 27:20).

Some personal reflections: "Be baptized in my name." There's the standard, surface, general meaning of these words, but as I ponder on them, this thought is opened to me: BE IMMERSED IN MY NAME, IN MY REPUTATION, IN MY MERITS—FORSAKING ANY MERITS OF YOUR OWN.

"Sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost." One synonymous concept for "sanctified" is to be "restored to sanity," or in other words to a spiritual mind centered in communion with Jesus Christ, to the "mind of Christ." When I receive (really seek and rejoice in) the Holy Ghost—desiring His companionship more than anything else—I am restored to my "right mind." What is my right mind? It is the mind of Christ. It is to always remember Him and always have His Spirit to be with me. It is to experience AT-ONE-MENT with Him in Spirit and in Truth, today.

". . .that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day." One day, many years ago, the phrase, "the last day" stood out to me as I was reading a verse of scripture that contained it. I turned to the Lord (who I

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picture as my study partner in ANYTHING I read) in my “imagination,” in my mind, in other words.

I asked, “Lord, that seems so far off—that “last day” phrase. So far in the future. Yet, Your Name is “I AM.” You have taught me to be still in the “now” and trust You in the past and future. How is this constant reminder of “the last day” compatible with staying secure in the present?”

The answer that came to me, astounded me:
COLLEEN, ONE WAY TO INTERPRET OR APPLY THE CONCEPT OF “THE LAST DAY” IS TO THINK OF IT AS “TODAY.” AFTER ALL, TODAY IS THE LAST DAY OF YOUR LIFE SO FAR.

That brought the counsel of this verse of scripture to focus right here, right now. I understood it to mean, “Come unto Christ, TODAY. Seek and desire the Holy Ghost TODAY. Be sanctified TODAY—ONE DAY AT A TIME.”

The basic principles outlined by the Master in this scripture are essential for us to understand and apply in our lives. First was repentance, ‘a turning of the heart and will to God, and a renunciation of sin’ (Bible Dictionary, “Repentance,” 760). As we appropriately seek for and receive the spiritual gift of faith in the Redeemer, we then turn to and rely upon the merits, the mercy, and the grace of the Holy Messiah (see 2 Nephi 2: 8) . Repentance is the sweet fruit that comes from faith in the Savior and involves turning toward God and away from sin.

I was so blessed and grateful to see the ORDER in which repentance is defined in the Bible Dictionary. First, turning of the heart and will to God, and THEN the renouncing of sin. That is so in harmony with the witness the Lord opened to me through Moroni 10:32, when He made the words “Come unto Christ and be perfected in Him, and deny yourself of all ungodliness,” open to me the order in which I must go through my recovery—by first coming to Christ, and gaining from Him and my willingness to stay close to Him, the power to deny myself of all ungodliness.

Before that time, I had spent so many years trying to “renounce sin” on my own, BEFORE seeking His grace (power) and guidance.

In a similar manner, you and I are admonished to turn toward and learn from Christ and to come unto Him through the covenants and ordinances of His restored gospel.

“Learn FROM Christ”!!!! That little word “from” (not only ABOUT) Christ burned through my mind as I read Elder Bednar's words.

Rather, we are to “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4), to become sanctified by yielding our hearts unto God (see Helaman 3:35), and to obtain “the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16).

“The mind of Christ” -- to be as one, AT-ONE with Him in mind. To allow His Spirit to be with me and to counsel and comfort me. This is what “recovery” means, at least to me.

“The mind of Christ” -- to be as one, AT-ONE with Him in mind. To allow His Spirit to be with me and to counsel and comfort me. This is what “recovery” means, at least to me. It means to be restored to oneness with HIS mind--which is to be restored to sanity, wisdom, peace, joy, calmness, fulfillment---and to be by His coming (into my “midst”) no longer disposed/inclined to do self-destructive, self-defeating (evil) things to myself or to others.

Recovery is something that happens automatically as I use the 12 true principles in the steps to come unto Christ and put all my faith and trust in HIS merits. It is like the dew (or manna) each morning. There is no “striving” (lashing and fighting with my addiction). It's not that the thought can't cross my mind or the temptation nigger through, but in “the mind of Christ” (seeking Him, looking to Him) even as I go about the other stuff of my days--I find myself able to do as He did and dismiss the Liar without further argument. This is the miracle that comes from studying these steps and the Book of Mormon scriptures that support them. I share this testimony as a living witness, in the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Colleen H. □

MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE LIVING CHRIST

The next part of HDDMFB that stands out to me is the subtitle in step 11 that says: "Revelation must be personal to be permanent." How very true!

What this means to me is that I can't rely on anyone else's revelation for my life. I need to go to the Lord for confirmation and understanding of things. In and of myself I tend to misunderstand and distort precious truths, that otherwise could uplift; in my mind, what is meant to be a gift from God, becomes weighted, goal driven, and full of strivings — and that just doesn't work for me.

I've learned that I need to do this, even when I am listening to General Authorities. I need to take what I hear to the Lord for understanding. This has made a huge difference in my experience with the Living Christ, my walk with Him, and my willingness to continue the dance He has invited me to share with Him.

If I rely on others, or even on my own power, I get lost and confused . . . unable to make contact with He who is my life blood.

Even when I hear wonderful things at 12 step meetings, when I hear what I consider valuable revelation, I want and need to go home and write it out . . . capture it, and learn for myself from the Lord. Otherwise it seems to just slip through my life, and become more straw in the many bales of straw I have been through in my life.

Permanent revelation changes my heart, and my heart, when it is changed by Christ . . . when it is changed through His power and His way, is full of life, and laughter, and light, and love. I NEED these things. I NEED my revelation to be permanent!

Thanks for listening!

Mary S. ☐

EARLY ABSTINENCE?—A LETTER

Dear Recovering Addict,

I think most of us have been where you are now. When we first start working on recovery, we often experience a period of abstinence—a time when the problem seems to be taken away. I think this is the Lord's gift to us to show us what it is we are seeking and how nice it will be when we have that continuously. But this early period of freedom from the addiction is not usually the same thing as recovery. Recovery comes from turning our hearts and our lives over to the Savior, surrendering to Him, not only our addictions, but all our weaknesses, whatever they may be.

I want to encourage you to keep working a program of recovery, studying the scriptures, capturing from them (there is a discussion of capturing in He Did Deliver Me from Bondage and Clean Hands, Pure Heart, two of the publications on our "Approved Literature" list), attending 12 Step meetings, either in person or online, and working with a sponsor. All of our recovery activities have the goal of helping us develop our relationship with our Savior, for it is only through Him that we find true, lasting relief from addiction.

The Lord has blessed me with several years of abstinence now, but I would still not say I am "cured." I can't let my guard down that way. I know I could fall back into it any moment. Last night I accidentally got exposed to a p~rn site while looking for something else. There was still a pull, and without the Lord's grace, I could have gone further. I need Him every day, but with Him with me, I can stay clean.

God bless you and all of us on this journey.

Phil H. ☐

**Now would be a great time to register
for the Annual HtH Conference,
scheduled for August 15 & 16, 2008,
at UVU in Orem, Utah!**

HERE HE IS AGAIN, FRONT AND CENTER

For our reading today, we're going to start in Principle 11 -- p. 142, but we might end up in a few excerpts from President Benson's amazing words in "Born of God" and another talk about the Gifts of Christ . . . Counsel With the Lord In All Thy Doings (Alma 37:37)

Principle Eleven: The mighty change of heart brings me an awareness of Christ's living presence in my life through the gift of the Holy Ghost, as I learn to receive and believe the voice of the Lord in my own mind.

Here's a bit of our ramble into Pres. B's words:

The constant and most recurring question in our minds, touching every thought and deed of our lives, should be, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6.) The answer to that question comes only through the Light of Christ and the Holy Ghost. Fortunate are those who so live that their being is filled with both. Ezra Taft Benson, "Jesus Christ—Gifts and Expectations," Ensign, Dec. 1988, 2

I'd like to call attention to the second and third sentences: "The answer to that question comes only through the Light of Christ and the Holy Ghost. Fortunate are those who so live that their being is filled with both."

Personal comment: It is as if God sent us here with two safety nets or safety lines to secure us in staying in "conscious contact" with Him. There is one built into all of us and that is the "Light of Christ." We've been taught to think of it as our "conscience," but the truth is it isn't "our" conscience---it's Christ's Light in us.

The question comes to my mind: When did this "light," this "influence," of Christ get put into me (and each of us)? In the eons of time learning of Him and FROM Him in the premortal worlds. This is the answer I feel burn through my soul. We were disciples, friends, and loved ones of His before we

were born. We were saved (we voluntarily waited) until this time in the history of the world to come forth and be part of the Restoration.

I truly wonder if any of us have any idea how significant the deterioration in the honor of Christ as who he claimed to be really is. That He testified of Himself--that He was the Son of God.

I love C.S. Lewis' statement that no one can say Christ was a great teacher. He didn't leave us that option (though 90% of those who even speak of Him today relegate Him to that status.) Lewis goes on to say something to the effect that He was either the Son of God or a madman. There have been other great spiritual leaders in all the traditions of the world, but not one who said, "I am the Christ, the Son of God--the Promised Messiah."

In the current moment in human history, there has never been a time like this--when the "voice" of the Restoration is so needed. But, it must get PERSONAL to be powerful. It's just so much second hand testimony (even from Apostles and Prophets) until we have sought to know Him one-one-one, for ourselves.

Most of us are like Laman and Lamuel--"He revealeth no such thing unto us." But the truth is He stands at the veil--and His Light, His Influence is ever in us--like memories whispering through the veil--telling us what is good and true and right. And then (according to 2 Ne. 32:3), the Holy Ghost "speaks the words of Christ." So there He is again, front and center. Conscious contact with God is grounded 100% in conscious contact with Jesus Christ. He is not just our Savior in Gethsemane or on the cross, or in the final judgment. He is our Savior right here, right now, through His Light and through the Holy Spirit's magnifying witness. He is the One the Father sent to represent Himself to us. When we look to Christ, we automatically look to the Father who is "as one" with Him. Thanks for letting me share this testimony. It is the most precious thing I can share. In His Name, Amen.

CH ☐



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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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Sunday-4:00 pm, MDT
Wednesday-7:00 pm, MDT
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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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