

# Heartbeats

The Official Newsletter of  
Heart t' Heart

September 2008

A Twelve Step Support Group for the LDS Community

Volume 18 – 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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## LESSONS LEARNED ON THE RIVER

A few weeks ago, I went with my wife and son on a float trip down the Snake River. It was a beautiful day. But it didn't start out that way as far as the weather went. While traveling to the river the temperature was in the 50s, a little cold to float the river. When we arrived at the meeting place it was still in the low 60s. By 9:30 in the morning, there were low lying clouds that looked like they were settling in. Still, when we hit the river, the temperature had risen to about 75 degrees, and the weather felt pretty nearly perfect.

As we started out on the river we choose to be in a paddle boat. On this boat we had a guide, but all of us got to paddle. I enjoy paddling and helping control the boat. (Go figure, I'm a control freak.) Anyway, we received instructions on what to do, how to paddle and what to expect when we hit the big rapids. We worked and practiced as a team and could control the boat easily, in the calm waters, that is. We were all pretty excited. One bit of instruction that the guide gave us was that when we started through the rapids we needed to keep paddling until he told us to stop. Otherwise, we might get stuck in the backwash and not make it through the rapids.

As we hit the first big rapid, the boat went down and then up so fast that it was hard to paddle and hang on to the boat at the same time. Also I hadn't realized that when the boat went up in the front (where I was sitting) it would be completely out of the water and there would be nothing to paddle but air! Then, my second surprise was, when it came back down into the water, it created a wave that enveloped me, soaking me with very cold water. Only when the boat settled down, could I paddle and help the others control the boat. Still, it was great fun!

Something I noticed as we drifted along was that almost immediately after a stretch of rapids the river became calm. We just floated along smiling, hearts beating and talking excitedly about how we almost fell out or the look on each other's faces. It was a great ride!

I noticed too that just before one of the big rapids, the water was almost soft looking very calm and inviting. It was a very neat picture. But then, almost in an instant, we would be caught up in the turbulent rapids and tossed about like a leaf in the wind, paddling for all we were worth.

**(Lessons Learned on the River, cont. from p. 1)**

As I observed this about the river, I began to see it as an analogy or parable that I could compare to my experience with addiction. I saw how much like life the river is, just running along a course that has been carved out for a long, long time. I started thinking about it more and realized that my addiction was a part of the river of my life, too. And just like facing the rapids in the river, I don't have to face the challenge of my addiction alone. I'm not, as the saying goes, up a creek without a paddle. Just like preparing to go out on the river, I can prepare myself each morning with morning prayers, scripture study, and remembering my need to obey my Guide, the Savior. Paying close attention to Him is what gets me through the rapids that come along daily.

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Once I've put my boat into the current of each new day, the Holy Ghost becomes like my river guide, continuing to give me instructions as I float along. Without our guide, that day on the river, we would have entered the rapids sideways or in the wrong place, putting us in jeopardy. And just like the guide on the river, the Holy Ghost will set me up to enter each rapid (period of temptation) safely. In other words, Heavenly Father has set me up in life with a lot of help so that I can get through the rapids—the dangerous times of my life—safely. Besides having the Holy Ghost to guide me, I have my family and my 12 step buddies and church leaders to support me. I have a whole team of people on my side. I have a support system.

Still, sooner or later, there would come another one of those moments that were so rough—that tossed me around so much that no amount of paddling did any good. All I could do was hang on. That is like when all I can do to get through a rough challenge with my

addiction is pray and surrender to my Savior. Just like when the boat would rise and there was no water to put my paddle into. That's where a prayer in my heart is so important. When I cry out to Him and admit my weakness and surrender it to Him, He does the rowing for me. He is right beside me, if I ask for His help.

Then, as if those insights weren't enough of a gift, the Lord used the river trip to open another layer of understanding to my mind. This insight really struck a deep cord in my heart. When the rapids came, I couldn't just sit back and ride it out. As long as my paddle could reach the water, I had to paddle, and paddle hard. I had to struggle and work hard against the currents and undertows. That's when I really need to lean into my tools, like pulling on that paddle with all my might, as well as take the help of those who can be inspired to help me along. Being willing to pull hard on those paddles (tools) and not give up really is an essential part of my survival.

Gratefully, life is also like the river, in that periods of hard rapids are usually followed by a smoother, mellow period. The river becomes calm and easy for a while. I can rest and get my strength back for the next rapids. And in both smooth times and hard times, I don't have to travel the river of life by myself. I have so many who love and support me, and that help me through it all.

What a wonderful revelation our river trip became to me, that day. It was a living experience that brought such a heart-deep lesson: As hard as life is, there is peace. It doesn't stay hard all the time. The Savior stated it perfectly: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let your heart not be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John 14:27) Even as I write this, I see yet another insight: I was never afraid during that whole trip! Why? Because of my faith in and reliance on the instructions of our guide.

I pray we can all remember to always exercise the same faith in Lord. I thank God for the gift of this chance to retell this story and preserve this precious teaching moment. Thank God for the whisperings of the Spirit and for His gift to me of having enough recovery to recognize it. . . . Thanks for the chance to share just a few of the analogies I saw in this amazing adventure.

Joe M. □



## IS GOD ENOUGH?

I was counseling with the Lord this morning, and He asked me why I don't come to Him more regularly—like every morning instead of 2 or 3 times a week. I had to think and reflect for a few minutes until I came upon this: I get ideas in my mind about what the most important or urgent, or “fun” thing would be for me to do in the time before I go to work each day. Or sometimes it is what would be most fun to do the night before, that would keep me up late enough that I won't have time to counsel with the Lord the next morning. In either case, I often have something in mind that takes top priority—even over my time with my Savior. It might be checking my e-mail, reading the Heart t' Heart forums, looking at the news online, or doing my family history, which I dearly love. Or maybe it was the movie last night that kept me up too late, and I know if I get up in time to spend time with the Lord, I will be exhausted all day, so I sleep in too late. In any case, it seems to be a matter of thinking there is something else that will be more rewarding to me than spending time with my Lord.

It doesn't take much reflection to realize that this is the same kind of thinking that got me into my addiction, and kept me there for so many years. I thought I knew better than God what would bring me happiness. I thought the way I had found of “coping” with my problems (by running away to my addiction) was better than humbling myself and admitting to God that I needed Him to take the problems away in the first place. Or help me through them without acting out. Maybe I didn't know He would do that for me. At any rate, I see how basic, how fundamental a choice it is to trust God. Trust Him in surrendering my addiction to Him. Trust Him in surrendering my time to Him. Trust Him in all things forever. And I can. He is good. He is trust-worthy.

Phil H. □

## IF I GIVE HIM ALL, WHAT'S LEFT FOR ME?

This morning, as I addressed Heavenly Father in prayer, He testified to me yet again, that it is very appropriate and TIMELY that I take the Gift of His Son's pure love for me, and give ALL my love to Him—to Jesus Christ. Father reminded me (bringing 3 Nephi 19 to my mind), that when I commune with His Son, Jesus Christ, He (the Father) hears (and feels) my

thoughts and my feelings. He reminded me, yet again, that it is Jesus Christ who He (the Father) has given me to. (As D&C 50 testifies.) He reminded me again that charity is the “pure love of Christ,” and as He has testified to me before, that means (at least for me) to love Christ PURELY. Having no other gods before Him. It means picturing giving Him ALL my heart, might, mind and strength. ALL. What part of “all” don't I understand?

Maybe it would help to liken this idea unto the law of consecration. As I understand it, that law is the IRRATIONAL idea (by all carnal-mindedness) of giving EVERY material thing to the Lord by giving it to His church, and then being willing to receive back that which He (through His church leaders) returns to you. The seemingly insane act of consecration is to give it ALL, holding nothing back, —and I think most of us would agree that doing that would be the equivalent of taking a flying leap of faith, going against every “natural man” instinct.

**This goes beyond the "firstlings" or the "first-fruits" of my time or my attention or my life. This isn't a tithe. This is total consecration—total surrender—total honor and glory to the Father and to His Son Jesus Christ.**

That degree of giving 100% of my love and trust and life to Christ is what the Father continues to show me He desires me to give Him (as one with Jesus). This goes beyond the “firstlings” or the “first-fruits” of my time or my attention or my life. This isn't a tithe. This is total consecration—total surrender—total honor and glory to the Father and to His Son Jesus Christ. This is not Christ and something or anything else as my answer. This is Christ—reading of Him, thinking of Him, thinking unto Him, exercising faith in His promise to not leave me comfortless, but to come to me. (See John 14:18.) This is seeking “this same Jesus,” that Moroni begged me to seek, in Ether 12:41. This is wanting and exercising faith in Him to give me wisdom and guidance (personal communication) if I will seek it with real intent, with a sincere heart, and not upbraid me (James 1:5.)

So what degree of love does this interpretation of charity as “the pure (100%) love of (toward) Christ leave me to

feel toward myself or toward others? None. I have nothing left to give, and I admit it. That is until I begin to experience the miracle of what He gives me in return for me loving Him purely—only. I give all my love to Him and in return He gives me back His love for myself—and it is purer and sweeter and more compassionate and kinder than any feeling I have ever experienced toward myself or felt coming from anyone else. And He gives me His love for others. In other words I find myself feeling moved from deep within my soul to be warmer, kinder, more compassionate, and yet to also be wiser and more balanced in how I interact with and serve others. It bubbles up spontaneously, and I watch myself (as if I am possessed of (and in by) charity. Come to think of it, isn't that exactly the way that Moroni worded it:

**Moroni 7:47 But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him.**

Crazy interpretation? Over the top? Only in the same spirit that Pres. Benson testified of:

**May we be convinced that Jesus is the Christ, choose to follow Him, be changed for Him, captained by Him, consumed in Him, and born again. (Ezra Taft Benson, “Born of God,” Ensign, July 1989, 2.)**

It is my testimony that THIS is the degree of loving/trusting/surrendering to God that the AA Big Book testifies of when it states that for a total bankrupt addict, "God is either everything or He is nothing." (p. 53, 4th ed.)

Colleen H. ☐

## ALL THESE THINGS SHALL GIVE THEE EXPERIENCE

**T**he Lord is gradually showing me that everything I go through down here is for my experience, just as D&C 122: 7 reminds us:

And if thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather

blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

"shall give thee experience"

"shall be for thy good"

"shall give..."

"shall be...."

It almost seems like everything we go through down here may not make sense IMMEDIATELY ... but in some future time, it will be revealed unto us just how GOOD God was to us.

**It almost seems like everything we go through down here may not make sense IMMEDIATELY ... but in some future time, it will be revealed unto us just how GOOD God was to us.**

Things make the most sense to me when I think about where this is all headed, in the Eternal future. God offers us joint-inheritance with His Beloved Son! In other words, someday, we will organize worlds and see if our own children will "... do all things whatsoever [WE] shall command them." What an experience that will be. Meanwhile, we get a taste of it down here on earth as family units. How valuable will this mortality be to us in that future day! How precious each recollected moment (and our recollection will be perfect). Both good and bad will have "given us experience" and will have "been for our good" and will help us as we guide our own children through the perils of some future mortality!

Tom K. ☐

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# THE PERSONIFICATION OF HUMILITY

Helaman 3:35 – Nevertheless they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God.

And there is nothing—absolutely nothing—that conveys to one’s heart and mind the principle of humility better than to begin to feel the living presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is there or could there ever be a greater repository and example of humility than Him and His great love for me? Where else could I ever go to learn by being with someone, this principle of humility?

If pride is, as Pres. Benson put it, “enmity toward God,” then the only Being in all of mankind’s knowledge that is purely without pride is Jesus Christ. I want what He has, but I can’t get it by copying Him. No matter how hard I try to copy Him, I will always fall short. The only way I can become like Him is to be with Him and oh, so slowly absorb His nature (energy, glory—HIS humility). And so, since I can’t get over my pride, first, on my own (or any other weakness for that matter), then I must go ahead and turn to Him just as I am—no matter how judgmental and down on myself my pride entices me to be. I must go ahead and believe in HIS great humility and His willingness to meet me as I am, in my great neediness, because (after all) that is the ONLY way I can be on my own power.

According to Helaman 3:35, sanctification will come by my yielding my heart to God, not by my keeping my heart to myself until it’s sanctified. Oh, what a joy and consolation we have in Jesus! The example He is to us of our Father’s great humility and love. The perfect personification of it. I am so grateful to know this—and all from our own LDS scriptures. This truly is meant to be an entire church of Saints: those who love God above all other people and all other things. It is the only antidote for addiction (at least in this addict’s life.)

CH □



# THOUGHTS ON CONSECRATION AND PRIDE

If you haven’t spent time reading in the Forum, lately, you should! Recently, there was a discussion on consecration and pride in the General Discussion section. Here are excerpts from that discussion:



Why is it always our assumption that in the law of consecration, we would get back less than we are giving? It's a strange compound of pride (that we are bringing so much to the table) and fear (that we are going to be taken advantage of.)

I see that this has been part of what is holding me back on step 9. Or, at least, stopping me from feeling like I've really done step 9. I don't want to be taken advantage of. I don't want to extend amends that don't mean anything to the other person. They've probably forgotten the slight anyway, right? Why am I doing this? Is it not about me, in the end? (Honestly, I don't know.) Recovery can be such an alien landscape.

Something else that occurs to me is the phrase "humble enough" from Step 6. "Enough" is a funny word too. Do I go just this far and then stop? Is my effort really "enough"?  
—Tricia V.



It's total surrender. But I don't think anyone experiences it as an "EVENT". We commit to the program. That is our surrender -- to keep coming back each time we have a slip. To keep seeking Him.

This is a different situation than the continuous "repentance cycle" which never results in any progress.

We may still slip sometimes, but it is in a context of learning from those slips and letting the Lord teach us and heal us. We stop trying to "get points for good behavior by mustering strength from inside of us" and instead we actually DO become righteous through His power.

All we bring is willingness. Deep down inside of us, we know if that willingness is real. When it does become real, that is when the Savior is ONE with us. As powerful as He is, even the Savior cannot abide in a relationship that is one-sided or unwanted. He can bless the tiniest amount of willingness and make something of it.  
—Tom K.



The Law of Consecration is a real mystery to me sometimes --- just like so many things about the Lord, and His will and His ways --- they seem to change and evolve and grow and become more obvious and at the same time more mysterious.

My understanding of willingness changes. My understanding of Truth changes. My understanding of everything changes, and the landscape of my life is continually changing --- which makes God and His will and his ways VERY interesting!

I have found that FOR ME, Jesus is in the depths of humility --- the interesting thing about that is, that as I come to know Christ, my understanding of humility and it's depths also changes.

God is GOOD. He also seems to have a VERY interesting sense of humour! -Mary S.



I was just reading back on the SA Spouse's forum and found this absolutely BEAUTIFUL, poetic way of defining consecration--written by Tricia V:

Nov. 17, 2007: I love my husband because as I have allowed God to purify my heart, I find the love I used to feel for my husband was only a shadow. As I have given my "widow's mite" of love to the Lord, I have been blessed with a barrel that does not waste, and cruse that does not fail to supply love to my husband and family (and myself).

-Colleen H.



As I was coming back from getting bread this morning, I realized that just like we tend to think of consecration as benefitting the poor at the expense of the rich, we (well, I) think of mercy as benefitting the guilty at the expense of the ... victims. Now I know we say "there are no actual victims", perhaps in the same way that all men are beggars.

But how can this truth appear to the person wounded by the addictions of another? Where is Justice? It does not work to say "well, actually, you're not just, and if there were absolute justice all would be lost." Will we be instruments of justice, to cause suffering, or instruments of peace? What does peace mean without conflict?

And why must there be conflict? Because God's work and glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of fallen, wretched, sinful beings who are at war

with him, who worship themselves, who will not be ruled by the being who created them. No conflict was Satan's plan, as they say. -Tricia V.



I've always felt very ...worried that I'd be taken advantage of, that I'd somehow get the short end of the stick. When am I going to dump this victim, poor me mentality and step into the light of abundant thinking? Easy to say, but hard to do, for me anyway. It is amazing though how different the scriptures seem to me since I have been working the twelve steps. They seem to say much nicer things than they did before, like they really are from a God who loves me.... I am so grateful for this opportunity I have to learn from all of you. -Katie N.



I think mercy comes at the expense of Jesus Christ, no one else can atone for the sins of the world. God Himself atoneth for the sins of the world to satisfy the demands of justice. (see Alma 42:15) Consecration does not benefit the poor at the expense of the rich because the rich don't own a thing they only think they do. Oh they do, by the laws of this world, but consecration is not a law of this world. Consecration, if lived, will make things "on earth as it is in heaven." Would you allow one of your children to starve while the other is over fed? Why would we think God would do that then? Remember none of us is any more deserving that the alcoholic sleeping on the street and if we would have mercy we must show mercy.

There are victims and injustice in this world but they will all be made right in eternity but our just and merciful God.

I think mercy is always undeserved. The law of justice says that everything that is taken must be restored and every harm must be made right. To make right or restore what was taken by another is to show mercy. The Samaritan had compassion on the injured man but showed mercy to the ones that injured him by making right what they did wrong. Of course he could not completely make it right like Jesus can but the amazing thing to me is that Jesus accepts our efforts no matter how small as if we had truly atoned for the sins of others. We receive infinite mercy when we are willing to and give finite mercy and that is amazing grace. Our Lord is a wonderful God of love. -Tim A.



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(Note: New address)

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- 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
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