# Heartbeats

### The Official Newsletter of Heart t' Heart

A Twelve Step Support Group for the LDS Community

Volume 19 — Issue 2

#### The Twelve Steps of *Heart t' Heart*

February 2009

- 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)
- Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. (Alma 15:17; Mosiah 4:2; Jacob 4:6-7; Ether 12:27)
- Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. (Mosiah 26:29; Alma 22:18)
- 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)
- 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)
- 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 SAVIOR IS THE HEART OF OUR PROGRAM

e are counseled to "pray always, that [we] enter not into temptation." How do we pray always? How do we stay that close to the Lord? I would like to share the following thoughts on that, as I recently shared with a friend.

When I am tempted, I turn to the Savior in my mind, wherever I am and whatever I am doing, and talk to Him. I tell Him about the situation (confess my need for Him) and ask Him to take the thought away. I may apologize for the stuff I have previously put into my mind that I now have to ask Him to take away. I know the memories of past transgressions is not blotted out entirely, but He takes my focus off of them. If the temptation is particularly strong, I may have to ask again in a few minutes. Sometimes I have had to ask repeatedly over the period of an hour or more, but if I persist, and keep asking, the temptation goes away, or is at least reduced to the level where I can turn away from it. This approach is based on the Savior's own invitation in D & C 6:36: "Look unto me in every thought. Doubt not, fear not." When He says EVERY thought, He means just that. Even our most degraded, disgusting thoughts, He wants us to take to Him. They are not really our thoughts anyway. They are put into our minds by Satan. And even if it is something Satan put there last time we acted out, or 5 or 10 years ago, we still need to give it to the Lord, and He is willing to take our mind off of it.

I also find it is important to take every negative thought to the Lord, and not wait until I am faced with a temptation to begin asking for His help. By then it may be too late already. I need to start talking to Him long before it becomes a temptation. I need to talk to Him about my discouragements, my disappointments, my frustrations, my sadness--all of this I need to take to Him and ask Him to relieve me of them--because these are the things that set me up to be tempted--the things that make me vulnerable--the things I want to comfort myself about. It is essential that we go to the Lord for our comfort before the adversary starts putting thoughts of acting out into our minds. The truth is that backing up--getting to the problem earlier and earlier--farther away from the moment of acting out is an important key. We need to deal with our challenges and problems when they first arise--when they are still small--before they

#### (The Savior is the Heart...-cont. from p. 1)

become so huge we feel we have to run away to our addiction to block them out.

All of this really depends on how I start my day. Although I do not do it perfectly, what has helped me the most is taking time every morning to connect with the Lord. This is done by capturing from the scriptures or from 12 step literature. Reading is helpful, but often is not enough. Capturing gets into our soul and helps us see ourselves better, and all the things we need the Lord's help with (our character defects--such as our self-pity--as well as our acting out, for example). In addition to the capturing, I find it essential that I talk to the Savior personally, one on one. I generally do this in my journal on my computer. I type my thoughts to Him, and I listen for the promptings of the Spirit that tell me what His response is. It takes a lot of courage and faith to start doing this, but if you try and persist, it gets easier, and you come to know that the things you write really are not coming from your own mind. I learn things from the Savior that I did not know. That to me is proof that it is from Him. I also have the experience of reading what others have written in their conversations with Him, and I recognize the same voice, the same person in all our writing. That is a testimony to me as well.

This personal relationship with Jesus is so important to this whole process. The Savior is kind and patient and accepts me totally. He does not blame or condemn me. I had heard this in theory over the pulpit and elsewhere, but until I started talking with Him and recording His kind answers to me, I didn't really believe it FOR ME. I had to experience His goodness first hand to know without doubt that it applied to me and that I could trust it and call upon it.

So if we put these thoughts in order, we see them like this:

- 1. Come to know and trust the Savior as completely as we can. Our faith and trust in Him grows as we practice it.
- 2. Connect with Him every morning before Satan has time to get to us. First thing, before anything else is best.
- 3. Call on Him repeatedly during the day. If I am talking to Him, asking His advice and counsel on everything during the day, I do not feel far away from Him when I need to call on Him to protect me from trials.
  - 4. Ask Him for comfort when any challenge comes

up, not just sexual temptation.

5. Take EVERY tempting thought of a sexual nature to Him and ask Him to remove those thoughts from my mind.

In short, the Savior is the heart of our program. It all centers around Him and our relationship with Him.

Again, the whole point here is that the Savior is the center, the very foundation of our recovery. He is the one who can give us the power to resist. He is the one who can solve the problems that lead us to want to act out in the first place. He will direct what we define as abstinence if we will ask Him. He knows what we are able to tackle at the present time.

In short, the Savior is the heart of our program. It all centers around Him and our relationship with Him.

"Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do." (2 Nephi 32:3).

For me that is a daily feasting upon the words of Christ, not only in the scriptures, but directly to my heart and mind. Those are the words of Christ that are the most important for me to listen to and feast upon.

As I said earlier, I am far from perfect in applying these principles in my life, but they are what has helped me more than anything else. I know the Savior cares tremendously about each one of us, and stands ready to reach out and help us as we reach out in humility and submission to Him.

Phil H. 🗖



HtH Annual Conference Dates are set!

August 14 - 15, 2009

UVU campus, Orem, Utah

Details will be forthcoming,
but put this on your calendar now.

We hope to see you there!

### **BABY STEPS**

R ecently, I held in my arms for the first time my new granddaughter, Emma, born just a few weeks earlier.

I remember hearing someone suggest in a HtH meeting that God looks at us with the same awe and reverence that we feel when we look at a tiny baby.

In 10 months or a year, Emma will be learning to walk. She will fall many times. Her parents, watching her, will be thrilled with every attempt she makes to master that skill. They will look at her repeated attempts with wonder and awe, and they will be encouraging her and praising her for her efforts. They will not look at her failures as negative, or shameful. They know, because of their perspective, that the falling down is part of little Emma learning what it feels like to stand and balance herself, and what muscles she must move to put one foot ahead of the other and still maintain her balance.

As much as her parents love her and want the best for her, they know that if they stop her from trying to walk for fear she will hurt herself temporarily when she falls down, she would never develop her full potential as a human being.

So it is with God. He watches us trying to stand, trying to walk, in a spiritual sense. It takes us many attempts to learn what it feels like to stand and get our balance. Satan whispers in our ear that each of those failed attempts, each of those sins, makes us a failure. Far from it!

The Lord knows that there are things we can learn no other way.

If it takes Emma longer to learn to walk than it took her older sister, Rachel, will her parents be upset with her? Will they scold her and berate her? Or will they just continue to hug her every time she takes a tumble and encourage her to keep on trying, telling her they know she'll get it eventually?

When I was able to return to the temple after beginning my recovery journey, I was struck by the symbolism in the temple. The Lord teaches us so much in the temple without words!

One of the first things that I noticed that I had not noticed in all my previous years of going to the temple

was that although we wear white clothes in the temple to symbolize purity and unity, the ceremonial robes used in the endowment ceremony include a piece of clothing that is not white. It represents the apron of fig leaves spoken of in Moses 4:13. For the first time ever, I realized that it is a symbol of Satan's influence in our lives. I believe it is a symbol of sin.

That piece of clothing is worn as part of the ceremonial clothing even after the steps of receiving the Aaronic Priesthood and the Melchizedek Priesthood are symbolized. It is worn even after symbolically entering the Lord's presence!

Perhaps my quest is... to hold on tight to my Father and my Savior so that I become more and more unified with them...

What does that mean? I have pondered that, and it seems to me that the Lord is trying to teach me that sin is a necessary part of this mortal experience. We cannot be saved in our sins, while still embracing our sins, but we can be saved by our Savior, Jesus Christ, from our sins. Our sins teach us that we can't do it on our own, that we must develop a unity with our Father and our Savior to progress spiritually.

Perhaps my quest is NOT to expect to have no struggle in living the commandments, NOT to have an easy, "I always-choose-the-right" life. Maybe my quest is to hold on tight to my Father and my Savior in those struggles, so that I become more and more unified with them, more and more mindful of my need for them in my life.

Can I become more aware today of the ways in which I need them? Can I remember them just a little more? Can I perhaps, one day, grow to the point where I am aware of my need for them each minute, each second, of my existence? Perhaps one definition of perfection is becoming totally unified with them every moment, relying on them every moment.

That I may be more aware of my dependence on my Father and my Savior, and walk hand in hand with them every day, every hour, every minute, is my humble prayer, in the name of my Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Keith H. 📮

# WHAT HEART t' HEART HAS DONE FOR ME

t' Heart, I actually can't remember. I just have to say, "It has been a lifetime ago." Since I have been in Heart t' Heart, the Lord has given me a new life, a new view of the world, myself, and others.

How did this happen? What Heart t' Heart has done for me is to give me a forum and a fellowship that allowed me to explore the many misconceptions I had about God and my relationship to Him. I came crippled with so much shaming misinformation and so much self-condemnation. I believe that at the heart of my addiction, depression, and co-dependency, was a heart that was longing for a connection with God. Perhaps that is understated: I was starving for a connection with God! But I didn't know how or where to find Him because I thought I had to get myself fixed and worthy before He would help me or talk to me.

My experience in Heart t' Heart has helped me to connect with my Jesus, who has led me through the wilderness of my own misconceptions or precepts of men mingled with scripture. For me, He Did Deliver Me from Bondage has been a "myth-buster." It has delivered me from the bondage of my own limiting belief systems. It has encouraged and supported me to come unto Christ, and know that I could indeed converse with Him as one man speaks with another, just as the Prophet Joseph described. The principle of "capturing" described in He Did Deliver Me from Bondage continues to be one of the most powerful things I have ever learned. At the heart of recovery, is the ability to reconnect with God. Every step and every principle of our 12 Step recovery leads to the blessing of "conscious contact" in Step 11. In Heart t' Heart, we share our journey as we forge our way through fears and limiting beliefs and experience this freely given privilege.

I experienced a victory the other day as I noticed that I no longer fear exploring the depth of my own fears, regrets, memories, and emotions. I used to be terrified of the painful truths that were buried inside and hid from this pain and fear with my addictions. The Lord and I have traveled many dark places together. He brings his "flashlight" and shines light in the darkness, giving me comfort, healing, and a new perspective.

Here's a neat quote that touched me today:

Our personal journey through life provides us with many special experiences that become building blocks of faith and testimony. These experiences come to us in vastly different ways and at unpredictable times. They can be powerful spiritual events or small enlightening moments. Some experiences will come as serious challenges [including addictions!!] and heavy trials that test our ability to cope with them. No matter what the experiences may be each gives a chance for personal growth, greater wisdom, and, in many cases, service to others with more empathy and love. As the Lord stated to the Prophet Joseph Smith in a reassuring way during one of his most significant trials at Liberty Jail, 'All these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.' ~Ronald A. Rasband, May 2008 Ensign, p. 11.

I used to think I came to earth to have a perfect family and learn how not to make mistakes. Unfortunately, that notion of my mortal experience caused me to feel that I was constantly a failure. I learned that I couldn't control the agency of others, nor could I save myself from my own imperfection. I believe that I came here to do two things: 1) to learn, and 2) to let my Savior bless me. Based upon that paradigm, I am having great success! My life is rich with learning experiences! It is rich with trial and error! I need my Savior so much. And His grace is covering me, just as He promised.

Peggy M.  $\Box$ 

# HUMBLING AND AMAZING EXPERIENCE

at is 2:42 AM as I write. I've just finished posting my step five study on the HDDMFB forum. I am filled with the Love of Christ. I am so grateful for His atonement and the opportunity we all have to apply it to our sins and to the sins of others.

It has been an amazing experience for me to work through my scripture studies online. It has been an exercise of letting go and letting God. My Jesus has been teaching me so much! The first and foremost thing He is teaching me and re-teaching me is that He loves me. He loved me first. I've had many experiences where I've felt that I've had to "go after" the love I wanted in my life. I was looking in the wrong direction, that's for

sure, yet all the while, the Lord was looking after me. He was even pursuing me when I'd flee. I'm so grateful to be running out of wind— even second winds. I'm learning to let Him catch me in the arms of His love and hold me.

I'm not sure whether to laugh or cry right now. I'm singing the song of Redeeming Love. The scriptures are true. The Lord lives. His gospel is true. I know this and feel to testify of it to whoever might read this. He Lives! His Atonement is real. I'm so grateful to all of you who share and bless me with your testimonies. I'm so grateful we're all in this together with Jesus. In His name, even Jesus Christ. Amen.

Colleen B.

### INVENTORYING MY ADDICTION (DEPENDENCY) ON BEING VICTIMIZED

fter I had woke up, come conscious, this morning, the following thoughts began to come into my mind. I quickly grabbed my portable keyboard and typed as fast as I could and here's what I learned (as I typed). Take what you feel blessed by and forgive what you don't. I'm wide open to discussion on this deepest of all (so far, for me) inventory levels.

VICTIM THINKING January 15, 2009

Many people are "victimized" as children. In fact, you could say, in a way-most are-, maybe ALL are. In other words, everyone, pretty much without exception, is submitted to someone else's will while they are a child. In some cases this submission involves abusive treatment. But in every child's case, it involves having to do what the big person wants you to do, whether you like it or not. And there are some of us that begin to feel "victimized" just because we have to come in when the big person says to or go to bed when they say, or stay with a babysitter, or not get to go to the store with them when we want to, or can't have a popsicle or candy bar when we want it, or have them not read us a story at night, etc. We feel put upon, we feel cheated, neglected, unloved. WE are the ones who turn the experiences of living with normal, imperfect, mortal parents into reasons to feel let down and "done dirty."

Some of us, thanks to our own weakness of character

(which is what the Lord is trying to get us to admit and allow Him to change in us), respond to being told "You can't," by adopting the attitude, "Then I won't." If you, Mom or Dad, tell me I can't have that, or I can't do that, then I'll show you, I WON'T even try. I won't do what I could do. I'll adopt the idea, "I can't," and I'll use it every time something comes up that someone else would be happy to see me do. Or even every time I would do something that would make me happy. No, I can't. Somebody told me I can't, and I'm angry about it, and I've decided to show them by saying it first—and saying it OFTEN. I CAN'T do that. Sorry, I'd like to, but I CAN'T. Even, within my own mind, I'll feel the Lord (my conscience) urge me to go ahead and do something, and my first reaction is, "I can't," followed immediately with some reason (excuse) for why I "can't." When the truth is (as an adult), the real reason is, "I WON'T."

And when I finally do give the control of my life to God, guess what? I find Him taking me right out of the victim mode, the victim role.

And then there are others of us who really have been "done dirty." We've been abused in one or more of several ways-verbally, emotionally, physically, or even sexually. We've been neglected to the pont of hunger and lack of basic hygiene. We have been the victims of a sad, truly abusive childhood. Some of us respond to it by refusing to ever be in a one down position again. In other words we become super-achievers. Others of us respond by getting used to the one down position and find all kinds of replacements for our original abusers, even when we are adults in size and potential and could begin to achieve our own interests and desires in life. We get ourselves into relationships with dominating, controlling people who will help us stay in the one down position we've decided to maintain, or we develop physical or emotional problems that leave us debilitated.. One way or another, we are always at the mercy of some external situation that gives us an excuse for why we can't rise up and risk participating in life-in a exercise class or a painting class, or go back to school or learn a skill or a trade or go to a dance or any myriad of other possibilities.

In other words, I am seeing that it has been me, myself, for many years that has CHOSEN to adopt the perennial (continuing) victim role—a victim of my compulsive behaviors, a victim of my addictions, a victim of my

circumstances, a victim of my family members. And when I finally do give the control of my life to God, guess what? I find Him taking me right out of the victim mode, the victim role. I find Him opening my mind and heart to MY weakness—to this "defect" in MY character that has kept me leaning against my own prison doors from the inside. Doors that have no locks on them—but they have to open inward, and I have to step back and give them room. I have to get up off the floor, uncurl out of my "poor me, look how shut down and shut up I am" fetal position and give the door room to swing open so the King of Glory can come in and pick me up and carry me out into the Light and give me the gift of Truth—that I still have a LOT of life to live.

## WE VICTIMS HAVE A HARD TIME MOVING ON PAST STEP ONE–IT'S SO VALIDATING!!

And we love Step One—we victims. Step One becomes our permanent home. We revel in Step One. We sit on Step One and put our fingers in our ears and sing "La, La, La," at the top of our lungs. Or maybe we just yell it, since we are too shut down by our victimization or sick from some current ailment to actually sing. One way or the other we do block out the sound of the other steps, beginning with the one closest—Step Two. Came to believe that *God* could restore us to sanity. . . God could and would if He were sought. And if we were ready to stop pouting about how victimized we were as a child.

Hard stuff to inventory, I know! I'm your life-time member of the "Poor me," club, believe me—and this is me inventorying. So if you don't like what I'm saying, that's for you to figure out (inventory). Much love to us all as we come down into the depths of the Truth and humble ourselves to admit what we've been avoiding facing for years.

Colleen H.

### "WALK IN THE MEEKNESS OF MY SPIRIT"

his morning for my capturing I turned to the Gospel Doctrine lesson for today. The scripture that stood out for me most was:

D&C 19:23 Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me.

I wanted to share something I learned.

I looked up the word, *of*, in the dictionary. It says: "1) used as a function word to indicate a point of reckoning; 2) used as a function word to indicate origin or derivation; 3) used as a function word to indicate the cause, motive, or reason..." There were other definitions, but with these three (and they are the first meanings given), there is so much to be understood.

D&C 19:23 Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me.

I hear the Lord, saying: "Learn of me! Don't just learn about me. Learn of me! Come unto me and receive my words. I am the point of everything. Reckon with me. Feel me. Think of me. Consider me to be the most important one to come unto, for I am the origin or root of all truth. I am the truth. You must come directly unto me, for thy relationship with me is the point of this earth life—coming into relationship, choosing me, seeking me. I am the beginning and the end, thy reason for being."

Then, I thought about: "walk in the meekness of my Spirit." It's a two-sided meekness. Foremost, it is the Lord's meekness, His humility to walk with me. Such an incredibly, awesomely tender sacrifice to make—for me.

I hear Him saying: "It is pure joy! It is my reason for being—the reason given through Father's will for me."

And my meekness? It is my will and joy in seeking Jesus—in learning His will for me. It is the same meekness as His! "Yes, Peg. This is to treasure my words, just as I treasured Father's words."

"This is to receive my peace, for to live in my will for thee is to know you are living according to all you were sent to earth to accomplish. There is no greater peace than this. This is the peace that passeth understanding. This is the peace of the cross—of me, bowing my head in my last dying breath and saying, "it is finished." It is the peace that I gave my life to bring into the world and the peace I offer thee as you come unto me."

Peg W. □



<u>January GSB Contributions</u>	<u>www.heart-t-heart.org</u>		
Private	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: <a href="http://www.heart-t-heart2.org/chat">http://www.heart-t-heart2.org/chat</a> .	OL-O4 - Sunday through Friday: Every morning, 6:30 a.m 7:30 a.m. General Focus (MST).  OL-O2 - Tuesday, 11:00 a.m 12:30 p.m.  Mountain Time Zone (USA). General Focus, Book Study: HDDMFB. Open Sharing.  OL-O5 - Wednesday, 7:30 p.m 8:30 p.m.  Mountain Time Zone (USA). Food Focus, Book Study: AA Big Book.  OL-O3 - Saturday, 7:00 - 8:30 a.m.  Mountain Time Zone (USA). General Focus, Book Study: HDDMFB. Open Sharing.	
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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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