

Heartbeats

The Official Newsletter of
Heart t' Heart

August 2010

A Twelve Step Support Group for the LDS Community

Volume 20 – 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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“THIS IS BUT THE BLINK OF AN EYE”

I was capturing from AA's 12&12, page 68 (Step 6) and read:

Many will at once ask, "How *can* we accept the entire implication of Step Six? Why - that is *perfection!*" This sounds like a hard question, but practically speaking, it isn't. Only Step One, where we made the 100 percent admission we were powerless over alcohol, can be practiced with absolute perfection. The remaining eleven Steps state perfect ideals. They are goals towards which we look, and the measuring sticks by which we estimate our progress. Seen in this light, Step Six is still difficult, but not at all impossible. The only urgent thing is that we make a beginning, and keep trying.

This reminds me of something our Stake President said once concerning perfection, which was, "Just keep doing your best." Even that remark is daunting for me because I want to stop and judge myself to try to determine just how well I am doing. But doing so assumes that I know what is best, even what is *MY* best. But all of that knowledge is the Lord's, not mine.

As some of you know that my husband recently had a coronary bypass graft surgery. When they informed us that he would need a triple bypass done, I was devastated. Surely, I thought, there must be something else we can do, something less drastic and less risky. (Some hospital personnel will even refer to patients who undergo this invasive a surgery as "cabbages.") I tried to talk him into getting a stint put in, instead, and to convince him of all that I had read in years past about the alternative treatments possible.

Even as I objected, though, I wondered if my husband would (or could) commit to the kind of rigorous life changes that these alternative treatments would require. I knew it would require some radical changes in lifestyle and in diet, and with my own ongoing struggle with compulsive eating, I felt unequal to supporting him. So, we finally settled in the decision for him to go through with the surgery. I'm grateful to say that all went well during the surgery, but in the first day or so afterwards he had swelling on the brain and the doctors could not assure us whether the swelling would be temporary or leave permanent brain damage. This totally terrified me! Suddenly, the worst case scenario--just what I had feared might happen seemed on the verge of

(This Is But the Blink--continued from p. 1)

happening. Eventually, though, he began to improve and become more normal in his functioning.

There may be some blessing in his having had this problem, as he cannot remember any of the first couple of days after the surgery. He does not remember the suffocating feeling of having the respirator tube down his throat, or the terrific pain of immediate post surgery, or having to be restrained so he would not tear any of the tubing out of himself. But I remember it! I remember looking into his panicked and weeping eyes as he mouthed, "I can't breathe!" I remember his spasms as waves of pain swept over him. I remember watching his vital signs and fluid collection containers to try to judge what the professionals might not be telling me about his condition. I remember wondering if they were actually lying to me to keep me calm while I was there. Then later, when the doctor suggested he might have brain damage, I wondered if my husband of 33 years would still know and love me. That was the most terrifying thing of all.

As I turn to the Lord with these questions, I hear, "Peace, this is but the blink of an eye" and I feel His gentle approbation, His smile of love. I am in awe of the depth and breadth of His patience and kindness. How great Thou art!

I'm sorry I have been so graphic. I have not said these things to my children or parents. I was so adamantly against this operation before it happened that I thought they might think I was exaggerating things to prove my point.

As a result of all of this traumatic emotional upheaval, I am exhausted. I have been taking naps almost daily, though sometimes I just lay there and wonder at the weakness I feel. How well am I doing? Am I doing my best? Can my best really be this pathetic puddle I seem to be? As I turn to the Lord with these questions, I hear,

"Peace, this is but the blink of an eye" and I feel His gentle approbation, His smile of love. I am in awe of the depth and breadth of His patience and kindness. How great Thou art!

So I continue to practice turning to the Lord and trying to hear and do His will. I falter and struggle. I look at this sentence further on in the AA 12&12- "At the very least, we shall have to come to grips with some of our worst character defects and take action towards their removal as quickly as we can" - and realize that my turning to God is the best I can do, now and at ANY time, because THAT is the action I must take for any improvement to happen in me. It is God who is making the mighty changes that will allow my defects to fall away. He is the one on whom I can and must rely.

Karen T. ☐



WHAT KIND OF PRAYER?

I have been thinking this morning about my prayers, and how different they can be--sometimes being downright inconsistent. Until I started attending Heart t' Heart and reading *He Did Deliver Me*, I didn't understand how central agency is in how God deals with us. Over and over the scriptures tell us that things will happen to us according to our own will (see Alma 29:4). In my immaturity I want to say, "Wait a minute. I don't get everything I want. How can it be that everything is according to my will?" But the truth is, I get to choose however I want to behave, and even believe. God doesn't interfere with that. Of course I can't choose any consequences different from those connected to the original choices. As the old saying goes, if I pick up one end of the stick, I pick up the other end as well. And the Lord doesn't step in and prevent me from picking up the stick in the first place. And that even happens with my prayers. I only get what I *really* desire--not what I *try* to sound like I desire.

The Lord knows my heart. He knows what I am really praying for. And as Huck Finn said, "You can't pray a

lie." If I want to make a choice, and if I am determined to choose something that is wrong, God doesn't stop me, even if I pretend I am praying to Him to ask His guidance. He knows if I already have my mind made up. He may even tell me, "Go ahead," if I am determined that I want what I want. He knows He isn't going to be able to talk me out of it, and that sometimes the only way I will learn is to go ahead and make the poor choice. Then maybe I will learn from the negative consequences that follow.

But the danger comes when I pretend that the Lord is telling me that my choice is the best one, because I am really not open to hear anything but the answer I want. I've learned that just because the Lord says: "Go ahead and do it. That's what you're going to do anyway, so see if you can learn something from it," I mustn't assume that He is saying I'm doing *His* will for me..

The only way I can get an honest answer from God is to ask an honest question. That kind of question is not "Is it ok if I do such-and-such." An honest question takes the form of "What should I do? If You tell me to do this, I will. But if You tell me it's not the best thing, I am willing to let it go." The only true, sincere prayer has to be accompanied by a fully open heart that is willing to hear whatever God may say to me--a heart that is truly willing to say, "Not my will, but Thine be done."

When I am honest with the Lord, the most frequent question He asks me has to do with my motives. Am I wanting to do something because it is an expression of my love for Him, or am I doing something because it will make me look good to others? The same action can be right or wrong, based wholly on my motive for doing it. I think that is why this program demands "rigorous honesty." That is the only way we can get down to what our real motives are. And that is the only way I can offer a truly sincere prayer--one that is leaving the answer completely in God's hands.

Phil H. □



2010 Heart t' Heart Annual Conference

**"I Can Do All Things
Through Christ"**

(From Phlippians 4:13)

August 13 & 14, 2010

at

UVU, in Drem Utah

UNWORTHY DOES NOT MEAN WORTHLESS

How do I express the overwhelming gratitude I have for my Savior snatching me from an everlasting burning? Not just the everlasting burning that awaits those who ultimately reject his atonement, preferring their own brand of salvation over his free offering, but the here-and-now everlasting burning within that is caused by believing I am worthless, contemptible, an eternal failure?

King Benjamin, in Mosiah chapter 4, verse 11, refers to us as "*unworthy creatures*." But unworthy does not mean worthless. The fact that the Savior was willing to atone for our sins shows our worth in his eyes. He was willing to pay an infinite price for us, because *to him, we are of infinite worth*.

So what does King Benjamin mean by "unworthy creatures?" He means that we cannot even *begin* to pay the debt we owe the Savior for his atonement, for no one

of us can save himself. In Mosiah 2:21-25, King Benjamin explained that we are unprofitable servants, that as soon as we obey God's commandments, he blesses us, and we remain forever in his debt.

Alma said it as follows: "Do not say: O God, I thank thee that we are better than our brethren; but rather say: O Lord, forgive my unworthiness, and remember my brethren in mercy—yea, acknowledge your unworthiness before God at all times." (Alma 38:14)

When we recognize and acknowledge that we cannot be worthy enough, in all eternity, to overcome sin on our own, when that truth sinks deep into our soul, we have begun to feel the humility that is so essential to pleasing God.

How do we take the sacrament worthily? By desiring to have the Savior apply his atoning blood to cleanse us from sin. We are worthy to take the sacrament if we *desire* to be cleansed from sin, and we are sincerely trying to do our best to keep the commandments, however feeble our best may be.

When we recognize and acknowledge that we cannot be worthy enough, in all eternity, to overcome sin on our own, when that truth sinks deep into our soul, we have begun to feel the humility that is so essential to pleasing God.

And when we feel the Holy Spirit, when we feel the burning in the bosom, or the still small voice, or the flashes of inspiration, or we feel the warmth of Christ's love for us, that is God's confirmation to us that he has indeed cleansed us from sin – he has applied Christ's atoning blood and we have been made clean *for now*.

Let us not forget that because we are mortal, we sin. All of us. Every day. Every single day. As we strive to be humble, to remember our dependence on the Savior, and as we cry out to him to apply his atoning blood and cleanse us from sin the moment we recognize that we

have slipped again, or that we have turned the desires of our heart away from him, the time between cleansings will grow shorter and shorter, and although we remain unworthy creatures, we can become worthy to have the spirit of the Lord with us always.

That we may each do so is my humble prayer in the name of our Savior and Redeemer Jesus Christ. Amen.

Keith H. □



IN ORDER TO BELIEVE

The first principle we need to know in order to believe God can and will relieve our addictions is?...

On page 1/paragraph 1 in HDDMFB, the famous quote from the Prophet Joseph says, "I teach them correct principles and they govern themselves."

Now the first—most rehearsed and memorized (almost rote)—answer most of us would give to the question, "What are these "correct principles" that Joseph was referring to?" would probably be, "Oh, that's easy. Faith, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost." But, this morning, as I was capturing, I felt another deeper insight opened to me as it was recalled to my remembrance that Joseph once made this statement:

"It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the Character of God, and to know that we may converse with him as one man converses with another." (Teachings, p. 345.)

How interesting and instructive it is to add that statement to this, also by the Prophet Joseph:

"And thus by learning the Spirit of God and understanding it, you may grow into the principle of revelation, until you become perfect in Christ Jesus." (Teachings, p. 151.)

and the pain of all the perpetrators as well.

And how interesting it is to stop and think about what the whole canon of Holy Writ, of scripture, teaches us about the “Character of God.” I’d like to share a couple of “characteristics” of God, a couple of qualities the scriptures reveal about His character that I believe are absolutely vital for us, the members of the LDS Church, (the Bride of the Lamb) to understand so that we might “cleave unto Him as He cleaves unto us.” (Jacob 6:5.) It is this degree of love that can entice us addicts out of the clutches of Satan, as well, and seal our hearts to our Father and Savior.

He Prefers to Extend Mercy Rather than Execute Justice Upon Us.

Really. Mercy is a far more prominent characteristic of God (both of the Father and of the Son Who is “at one” with the Father in perfect character). That is why the scripture can testify that while mercy cannot rob justice, it can satisfy justice. In the end, in harmony with the character of God—mercy will be extended to us, and God Himself will bear the demands of justice in our behalf. Oh, wait, that’s right: He already has. *Actually both the Father and the Son already have.*

What Greater Love Can a Man Have Than This . . . ?

The question is often quoted, “What greater love can a man have than this—that he would lay down his life for his friends?” The answer I perceive the Savior whispering into my heart as He reveals the truth of our Father’s sacrifice for us: That He would lay down the life of His Son. I “hear” this answer in the midst of our morning dialogue and my heart is dissolved to tears in comprehension of our Heavenly Father’s character, and how the Son gives all glory and honor to Him.

And Then There's the Character of the Son . . .

And then there’s the character of God, the Son, who came down to be with us in our mortality. Who humbled Himself and condescended to suffer not only the worst suffering any of us have ever experienced, but *all* the suffering *all* of us have ever experienced. What must that have been like—to suffer the pain of every victim

He came to rescue us from each other and from ourselves. He came to be our Good Shepherd and lay down His life for us, collectively and individually. There are none of us that are too lost. Not one. “None of those whom the Father hath given me shall be lost.” He said that. And that means every single soul that has ever drawn even one breath on this, the world Jesus created.

He came to do two things. First, to go to any lengths to demonstrate to us how much He loves us, and second and most important to give our Father the chance to demonstrate how much *He* loves us.

He came to do two things. First, to go to any lengths to demonstrate to us how much He loves us, and second and most important to give our Father the chance to demonstrate how much He loves us.

And Then There's God, the Holy Ghost . . .

And then there’s God, the Holy Ghost. To understand His Character and how “at one” He is with the Father and the Son, all we need to do is think about what He is sacrificing for our sake. He is postponing His own embodiment in order to serve us. We are told that the body and the spirit inseparably connected bring a fullness of joy. He is postponing that joy for us.

All this sacrificing for us isn’t to make us feel guilty. It is to make us feel *loved*. It is to try to convey to us the first principle of the Gospel: to know (realize, comprehend) the “Character of God.” How much we mean to Him, how much He (and All as one) think of us, value us, appreciate us, enjoy us, delight in us. In one word, how much we are *loved*.

We love Him, because He first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

Colleen H. □



STAGES OF SPIRITUAL BIRTH

The following question from the questions that introduce Step Twelve in HDDMFB brought some understandings to me of the principles I have been learning to live by over the past year:

Day 4: Alma 7:14—"Now I say unto you that ye must repent, and be born again." Think about the process of physical birth—the conception, period of "hidden" growth (in the womb) and then the active labor, transition and delivery. Liken the physical process to the stages of spiritual birth.

Conception: The sperm fertilizes the egg. I guess the Lord comes and fertilizes us so to speak. It is because of Him that we are even here, that we have a body. Then he gives our spirit what it needs to grow. Our spiritual growth is us and Him coming together.

Period of Hidden growth in the Womb: He is the only one who knows perfectly how to succor us. I guess what I have experienced is opening myself up to Him in a raw way that was just between He and I. Now my sponsor has been a witness, but this has been a private wrestle and struggle. It's not something that I am hiding, but what has gone on this past year has been very raw and sacred for me. It hasn't been something I have been doing publicly. Of course I share things I believe now or things I have learned, but the growth and the struggle have been a private thing. I guess that's not entirely true. I mean people in my life have known of my struggles but no one knows as much as the Lord does.

Active Labor: I think this is the struggle and wrestle I have spoken about. This has been a most painful process for me. I have wrestled for years with questions that have brought my heart anxiety. This year, however, I have been in an active wrestle to find answers and find peace, and I am still in that wrestle in some ways.

Transition: I guess what I think about here is that it is

the Lord who does the work, I just have to choose to make myself available and open for Him to do so.

Delivery: What I am learning is deliverance is all in and through Him. All that I do for this is desire it and use my agency to live for it, by turning to Him over and over, and He does the work to deliver me. When is the delivery? What stage am I in now? Do you cycle through the stages throughout your life? I think maybe you do and the ultimate delivery is to be able to live with our Father in Heaven again. And along the way, anytime I find peace about something that was causing my heart so much pain, I feel I have been delivered.

Jamie H. □



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 Literature Study - Articles based on quotes and capturing from any approved literature sources: the Scriptures, AA, SA, NA, HtH, etc.
- 4 Open Sharing - Articles with positive recovery messages
- 5 Program from the Prophets - Articles based on finding support for the principles in steps in the public talks of the Prophets.
- 6 Short quotes, thoughts or one-liners

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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-03 - Saturday, 7:00 - 8:30 a.m. Mountain Time Zone (USA). General Focus, Book Study: HDDMFB. Open Sharing.

Phone Meetings

Thursday-11:00 am, MDT

Sunday-4:00 pm, MDT

(See website for details)

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