Family SERVICES

HEALING THROUGH THE SAVIOUR

The Addiction Recovery Program

Written with support from Church leaders and counseling professionals by those who have suffered from addiction and who have experienced the miracle of recovery through the Atonement of Jesus Christ

ADDICTION RECOVERY PROGRAM

A Guide to Addiction Recovery and Healing

Prepared by
LDS Family Services

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LDS Family Services Addiction Recovery Program has adapted the original Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. into a framework of the doctrines, principles, and beliefs of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The original Twelve Steps are listed below, and the Twelve Steps as used in this program appear on page iv.

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The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
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.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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LDS Family Services

THE 12 STEPS

Step 1

Admit that you, of yourself, are powerless to overcome your addictions and that your life has become unmanageable.

Step 2

Come to believe that the power of God can restore you to complete spiritual health.

Step 3

Decide to turn your will and your life over to the care of God the Eternal Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Step 4

Make a searching and fearless written moral inventory of yourself.

Step 5

Admit to yourself, to your Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ, to proper priesthood authority, and to another person the exact nature of your wrongs.

Step 6

Become entirely ready to have God remove all your character weaknesses.

Step 7

Humbly ask Heavenly Father to remove your shortcomings.

Step 8

Make a written list of all persons you have harmed and become willing to make restitution to them.

Step 9

Wherever possible, make direct restitution to all persons you have harmed.

Step 10

Continue to take personal inventory, and when you are wrong promptly admit it.

Step 11

Seek through prayer and meditation to know the Lord's will and to have the power to carry it out.

Step 12

Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, share this message with others and practice these principles in all you do.

INTRODUCTION

Whether you yourself struggle with addiction or associate with someone who does, this guide can be a blessing in your life. The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous have been adapted into a framework of the doctrines, principles, and beliefs of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They are presented in this guide as key principles at the beginning of each section. This guide will help you learn how to apply these key principles; they can change your life.

This guide is intended to be a workbook and reference for those attending addiction recovery support groups sponsored by LDS Family Services. However, the doctrines and principles that are taught could also be of great benefit to those who live where participation in a support group is not feasible. This guide can be used by people seeking to change their lives and especially by those willing to work one-on-one with a bishop or a professional counselor.

Men and women who have suffered the devastating effects of various addictions and have experienced recovery were invited by LDS Family Services to share their experiences in applying these principles in their lives. Their point of view (the "we" in this guide) is used to convey the anguish of addiction and the joy of healing and recovery. You may find comfort, support, and a common bond with them.

Church leaders and counseling professionals have also been involved in writing and developing this guide. The combined wisdom and experience of these many authors stands as yet another witness of the reality of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the possibility of recovery from addiction.

■ ■ ■

We have known great sorrow, but we have seen the power of the Savior turn our most devastating defeats into glorious spiritual victories. We who once lived with daily depression, anxiety, fear, and debilitating anger now experience joy and peace. We have witnessed miracles in our own lives and in the lives of others who were ensnared in addiction.

We have paid an awful price in self-inflicted pain and suffering because of our addictions. But blessings have poured forth as we have taken each step to recovery. Having had a spiritual awakening, we strive every day to improve our relationship with Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we are healed.

We invite you with all our empathy and love to join us in a glorious life of freedom and safety, encircled in the arms of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. We know by our own experience that you can break free from the chains of addiction. No matter how lost and hopeless you may feel, you are the child of a loving Heavenly Father. If you have been blind to this truth, the principles explained in this guide will help you rediscover it and establish it deep in your heart. These principles can help you come unto Christ and allow Him to change you. As you apply the principles, you will draw on the power of the Atonement and the Lord will free you from bondage.

Some people consider addictions to be simply bad habits that can be conquered by willpower alone, but many people become so dependent on a behavior or a substance that they no longer see how to abstain from it. They lose perspective and a sense of other priorities in their lives. Nothing matters more than satisfying their desperate need. When they try to abstain, they experience powerful physical, psychological, and emotional cravings. As they habitually make wrong choices, they find their ability to choose the right diminished or restricted. As President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "Addiction has the capacity to disconnect the human will and nullify moral agency. It can rob one of the power to decide" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1989, 16; or *Ensign,* Nov. 1989, 14).

Addictions can include the use of substances such as tobacco, alcohol, coffee, tea, and drugs (both prescription and illegal), and behaviors such as gambling, codependency, viewing pornography, inappropriate sexual behavior, and disorders associated with eating. These substances and behaviors diminish a person's ability to feel the Spirit. They harm physical and mental health and social, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve taught: "We should avoid any behavior that is addictive. Whatever is addictive compromises our will. Subjecting our will to the overbearing impulses imposed by any

form of addiction serves Satan's purposes and subverts our Heavenly Father's. This applies to addictions to drugs (such as narcotics, alcohol, nicotine, or caffeine), addiction to practices such as gambling, and any other addictive behavior. We can avoid addictions by keeping the commandments of God" ("Free Agency and Freedom," *Brigham Young University 1987–88 Devotional and Fireside Speeches* [1988], 45).

By being humble and honest and calling upon God and others for help, you can overcome your addictions through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Just as we have recovered, you can recover and enjoy all the blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

If you suspect you are addicted and if you feel even the smallest desire to break free, we invite you to join us in studying and applying the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ as they are taught in this guide. We assure you that if you follow this path with a sincere heart, you will find the power you need to recover from addiction. As you apply each of these twelve principles faithfully, the Savior will strengthen you and you will come to "know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

HONESTY

KEY PRINCIPLE: Admit that you, of yourself, are powerless to overcome your addictions and that your life has become unmanageable.

Many of us began our addictions out of curiosity. Some of us became involved because of a justifiable need for a prescription drug or as an act of deliberate rebellion. Many began this path when barely older than children. Whatever our motive for starting and our circumstances, we soon discovered that the addiction relieved more than just physical pain. It provided stimulation or numbed painful feelings or moods. It helped us avoid the problems we faced—or so we thought. For a while, we felt free of fear, worry, loneliness, discouragement, regret, or boredom. But because life is full of the conditions that prompt these kinds of feelings, we resorted to our addictions more and more often. Still, most of us failed to recognize or admit that we had lost the ability to resist and abstain on our own. As Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve observed: "Addiction surrenders later freedom to choose. Through chemical means, one can literally become disconnected from his or her own will" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 7; or *Ensign,* Nov. 1988, 7).

Rarely do people caught in addictive behaviors admit to being addicted. To deny the seriousness of our condition and to avoid detection and the consequences of our choices, we tried to minimize or hide our behaviors. We did not realize that by deceiving others and ourselves, we slipped deeper into our addictions. As our powerlessness over addiction increased, many of us found fault with family, friends, Church leaders, and even God. We plunged into greater and greater isolation, separating ourselves from others, especially from God.

When we, as addicts, resorted to lies and secrecy, hoping to excuse ourselves or blame others, we weakened spiritually. With each act of dishonesty, we bound ourselves with "flaxen cords" that soon became as strong as chains (see 2 Nephi 26:22). Then a time came when we were brought face to face with reality. We could no longer hide our addictions by telling one more lie or by saying, "It's not that bad!"

A loved one, a doctor, a judge, or an ecclesiastical leader told us the truth we could no longer deny—the addiction was destroying our lives. When we honestly looked at the past, we admitted that nothing we had tried on our own had worked. We acknowledged that the addiction had only gotten worse. We realized how much our addictions had damaged relationships and robbed us of any sense of worth. At this point, we took the first step toward freedom and recovery by finding courage to admit that we were not just dealing with a problem or a bad habit. We finally admitted the truth that our lives had become unmanageable and that we needed help to overcome our addictions. The amazing thing about this honest realization of defeat was that recovery finally began.

The Book of Mormon prophet Ammon plainly stated the truth we discovered when we were finally honest with ourselves:

"I do not boast in my own strength, nor in my own wisdom; but behold, my joy is full, yea, my heart is brim with joy, and I will rejoice in my God.

"Yea, I know that I am nothing; as to my strength I am weak; therefore I will not boast of myself, but I will boast of my God, for in his strength I can do all things" (Alma 26:11–12).

Action Steps

Become willing to abstain

Even though people's addictions are different, some truths, like this one, never vary—nothing begins without an individual's will to make it begin. Freedom from addiction and cleanliness begin with a tiny flicker of will. People say individuals finally become willing to abstain when the pain of the problem becomes worse than the pain of the solution. Have you come to that point? If you have not and you continue in your addiction, you surely will reach that point because addiction is a progressive problem. Like a degenerative disease, it eats at your ability to function normally.

The only requirement to begin recovery is the desire to stop participating in the addiction. If your desire is small and inconsistent today, don't worry. It will grow!

Some people recognize the need to be free from addiction but are not yet willing to begin. If you are in

that situation, perhaps you can begin by acknowledging your unwillingness and considering the costs of your addiction. You can list what is important to you. Look at your family and social relationships, your relationship to God, your spiritual strength, your ability to help and bless others, your health. Then look for contradictions between what you believe in and hope for and your behavior. Consider how your actions undermine what you value. You can pray that the Lord will help you see yourself and your life as He sees it—with all your divine potential—and what you risk by continuing in your addiction.

A recognition of what you lose by indulging in your addiction can help you find the desire to stop. If you can find even the smallest desire, you will have room to begin step 1. And as you progress through the steps of this program and see the changes that come into your life, your desire will grow.

Let go of pride and seek humility

Pride and honesty cannot coexist. Pride is an illusion and is an essential element of all addiction. Pride distorts the truth about things as they are, as they have been, and as they will be. It is a major obstacle to your recovery. President Ezra Taft Benson defined pride:

"Pride is a very misunderstood sin. . . .

"Most of us think of pride as self-centeredness, conceit, boastfulness, arrogance, or haughtiness. All of these are elements of the sin, but the heart, or core, is still missing.

"The central feature of pride is enmity—enmity toward God and enmity toward our fellowmen. *Enmity* means 'hatred toward, hostility to, or a state of opposition.' It is the power by which Satan wishes to reign over us.

"Pride is essentially competitive in nature. We pit our will against God's. When we direct our pride toward God, it is in the spirit of 'my will and not thine be done.' . . .

"Our will in competition to God's will allows desires, appetites, and passions to go unbridled (see Alma 38:12; 3 Nephi 12:30).

"The proud cannot accept the authority of God giving direction to their lives (see Helaman 12:6). They pit their perceptions of truth against God's great knowledge, their abilities versus God's priesthood power, their accomplishments against His mighty works" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 3–4; or *Ensign,* May 1989, 4).

As you become willing to abstain and admit the problems you face, your pride will gradually be replaced with humility.

Admit the problem; seek help; attend meetings

When we indulged our addictions, we lied to ourselves and others. But we could not really fool ourselves. We pretended we were fine, full of bravado and excuses, but somewhere deep inside we knew. The Light of Christ continued to remind us. We knew we were sliding down a slippery slope toward greater and greater sorrow. Denying this truth was such hard work that it was a big relief finally to admit that we had a problem. Suddenly, we allowed a tiny opening for hope to slip in. When we chose to admit to ourselves that we had a problem and we became willing to seek support and help, we gave that hope a place to grow. We were then ready to take the next step of attending a recovery meeting.

Participation in a support group or a recovery meeting may not be feasible for everyone. If you cannot attend a recovery meeting, you can still follow each of the steps, with minor modifications, as you work with your bishop or a carefully chosen professional counselor.

When attendance at a recovery meeting is possible, you will find it helpful for at least two reasons. First, at these meetings you will study specific gospel principles that, when applied, will help you change your behavior. President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve taught: "The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior. Preoccupation with unworthy behavior can lead to unworthy behavior. That is why we stress so forcefully the study of the doctrines of the gospel" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 20; or *Ensign,* Nov. 1986, 17). Second, these meetings are a place to gather with others seeking recovery and with those who have already taken this path and are living proof of its effectiveness. In recovery meetings you will find understanding, hope, and support.

Study and Understanding

Studying the scriptures and the statements of Church leaders will help you begin your recovery. This study will increase your understanding and help you learn.

You can use the scriptures, statements, and questions that follow for prayerful personal study, for writing,

and for group discussion. The thought of writing may frighten you, but writing is a powerful tool for recovery. It will give you time to reflect; it will help you focus your thinking; it will help you see and understand the issues, thoughts, and behaviors surrounding your addiction. When you write, you will also have a record of your thoughts. As you progress through the steps, you will be able to measure your progress. For now, just be honest and sincere as you write your thoughts, feelings, and impressions.

Encompassed by temptations

"I am encompassed about, because of the temptations and the sins which do so easily beset me.

"And when I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth because of my sins; nevertheless, I know in whom I have trusted.

"My God hath been my support; he hath led me through mine afflictions in the wilderness; and he hath preserved me upon the waters of the great deep.

"He hath filled me with his love, even unto the consuming of my flesh" (2 Nephi 4:18–21).

- *Do you feel encompassed or trapped? When do you feel this way most often?*

- *What situations or feelings weakened you so you gave in to your addiction?*

- *When Nephi felt overwhelmed, in whom did he place his trust? What can you do to place more trust in the Lord?*

"I know that man is nothing"

"It came to pass that it was for the space of many hours before Moses did again receive his natural strength like unto man; and he said unto himself: Now, for this cause I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed" (Moses 1:10).

- *How did Moses describe himself as compared to God?*

- *How can a little child be of infinite worth and still be nothing when compared to his or her parents?*

- *In what ways are you nothing when you do not have the help of God?*

- *In what ways are you of infinite worth?*

- *Write about how recognizing your helplessness to overcome your addiction on your own can bring you to admit your own nothingness and become as a little child.*

Hunger and thirst

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

"And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens" (Enos 1:4).

- *In these two scriptures, we learn that our souls can hunger. Do you ever feel empty inside, even when you are not physically hungry? What causes that emptiness?*

- *How can your hunger for things of the Spirit help you be more honest?*

Honesty

"Some may regard the quality of character known as honesty to be a most ordinary subject. But I believe it to be the very essence of the gospel. Without honesty, our lives . . . will degenerate into ugliness and chaos" (Gordon B. Hinckley, "We Believe in Being Honest," *Ensign,* Oct. 1990, 2).

- *Write about ways you have lied and attempted to hide your addiction from yourself and others. How has this behavior caused "ugliness and chaos"?*

Humility

"Because ye are compelled to be humble blessed are ye; for a man sometimes, if he is compelled to be humble, seeketh repentance; and now surely, whosoever repenteth shall find mercy; and he that findeth mercy and endureth to the end the same shall be saved" (Alma 32:13).

- *Write about the circumstances that have compelled you to humility and to seek repentance. What hope does Alma give you? How can you find or receive that hope?*

The Lord's delight

"Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight" (Proverbs 12:22).

- *Writing the answers to these questions has called for a deep level of honesty about yourself. How does this passage of scripture relate to this kind of honesty? How can you become the Lord's delight?*

NOTES

HOPE

KEY PRINCIPLE: Come to believe that the power of God can restore you to complete spiritual health.

When we realized our powerlessness over our addictions, most of us felt stripped of any hope. Those of us who had grown up with no concept of God were certain we had exhausted every avenue of help. Meanwhile, those of us who believed in God were convinced He was too disappointed in us to help. Either way, step 2 presented us with an answer we had either never considered or else had discarded—to turn to God and find hope in the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Finally humbled, we reached out for help. Following what felt to us like the tiniest ray of hope, we began to attend recovery meetings. When we first came to meetings, we were filled with doubts and fears. We were frightened and possibly even cynical, but at least we came. There we heard men and women honestly describe what their lives had been like, what happened to change them, and what it was like to live in recovery from addiction. We discovered that many of the people we met in the meetings had once felt as hopeless as we felt. But now they were laughing, talking, smiling, attending meetings, praying, reading scriptures, and writing in their recovery journals.

Gradually, the principles they shared and practiced started to work for us. As we kept coming back, we began to feel something we had not felt in years—we felt hope. If there was hope for others who had been at the very brink of destruction, maybe there was hope for us too! We were grateful to hear that if we would turn to the Lord, there would be "no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no offense exempted from the promise of complete forgiveness" (Boyd K. Packer, in Conference Report, Oct. 1995, 22; or *Ensign,* Nov. 1995, 19).

In this atmosphere of faith and testimony, we found hope that began to awaken us to the mercy and power of God. We began to believe that He could deliver us from the bondage of addiction. We followed the example of our recovering friends. We attended meetings, prayed, renewed our activity in the Church, and pondered and applied the scriptures, and our own miracles began to happen. We found ourselves blessed with the grace of Jesus Christ to maintain our abstinence one day at a time. As we took step 2, we became willing to replace trust in ourselves and our addictions with faith in the love and power of Jesus Christ. We took this step in our minds and in our hearts, and we experienced the truth that the foundation of recovery from addiction must be spiritual.

As you take the steps recommended in this guide, you will experience the same truth. It is worth every effort. This program is spiritual, and it is a program of action. If you follow these principles and allow them to work in your life, you will find yourself being restored to spiritual health through your newfound relationship with the Lord. His Spirit will help you begin to see your choices more honestly and clearly; you will make decisions in harmony with gospel principles.

For some of us this miracle was almost instantaneous; for others, recovery has been more gradual. However it may occur for you, you will eventually be able to say with us that through "steadfastness in Christ," you are rescued from addiction and enjoy a "perfect brightness of hope" (2 Nephi 31:20).

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught of the power of the Lord to help you:

"We should not underestimate or overlook the power of the Lord's tender mercies. The simpleness, the sweetness, and the constancy of the tender mercies of the Lord will do much to fortify and protect us in the troubled times in which we do now and will yet live. When words cannot provide the solace we need or express the joy we feel, when it is simply futile to attempt to explain that which is unexplainable, when logic and reason cannot yield adequate understanding about the injustices and inequities of life, when mortal experience and evaluation are insufficient to produce a desired outcome, and when it seems that perhaps we are so totally alone, truly we are blessed by the tender mercies of the Lord and made mighty even unto the power of deliverance (see 1 Nephi 1:20).

"Some individuals who hear or read this message erroneously may discount or dismiss in their personal lives the availability of the tender mercies of the Lord. . . . We may falsely think that such blessings and gifts are reserved for other people who appear to be more

righteous or who serve in visible Church callings. I testify that the tender mercies of the Lord are available to all of us and that the Redeemer of Israel is eager to bestow such gifts upon us" (in Conference Report, Apr. 2005, 106–7; or *Ensign,* May 2005, 100–101).

You will see the tender mercies of the Lord in your life as you learn to watch for them and as you come to believe that the power of God can indeed help you recover.

Action Steps

Pray; read and ponder the scriptures

As you let go of pride and begin to consider bringing God back into your life, you will start to think in more prayerful terms. Eventually you will find yourself ready to kneel and pray aloud. You will find how good it feels to express your feelings and needs to God. You will feel you have reopened a conversation with someone who will always answer you, not always with a *yes* but always with love. At last you will begin to experience the healing effects of breaking out of self-imposed isolation.

The desire to communicate with God will lead you to study the words of modern and ancient prophets. As you hear of others who found answers in the scriptures, your hope will grow that you can find answers too. As you write your thoughts, you will receive additional impressions from the Spirit. Study prayerfully, and the Lord will give you answers to your questions and needs.

A great place to begin your study is with the verses at the end of each chapter in this guide. Each verse was selected with recovery in mind, and each question is asked with the hope that it might help you apply the verse to your life. Take a few minutes every day to seek what the Lord desires to communicate to you.

Believe in God the Eternal Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost

Most of us grew up with some concept of God, and as members of the Church we at least had some knowledge of Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost. We may even have had a simple belief in Them, but often we did not connect our personal struggles with our need for God's power in our lives.

The action required in step 2 is simply to become willing to practice believing in the love and mercy of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and the accessibility and blessing of the Holy Ghost. Our testimonies are that you can come to know the perfectly united love of the Godhead by watching for evidence of Their love and power in your life and in the lives of others.

Study and Understanding

The following scriptures may help you in taking step 2. We recommend that you use these scriptures and questions for discussion, study, and writing. Remember to be honest and specific in your writing.

Belief in God

"Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend" (Mosiah 4:9).

- *Many witnesses in heaven and in earth testify of God's existence. What evidences of God and His love have you experienced?*

Faith in Jesus Christ

"Preach unto them repentance, and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ; teach them to humble themselves and to be meek and lowly in heart; teach them to withstand every temptation of the devil, with their faith on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Alma 37:33).

- *Many of us tried to get out of our addictions through sheer willpower or through having faith in a friend or therapist. Sooner or later we found that*

our faith in ourselves or others did not enable us to overcome our addictions fully. Write about your feelings today of being humble and willing to turn to Christ and His gospel above all other sources of help in your recovery efforts.

The Savior's compassion

"Straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

- *This man sought help from the Savior and obtained it. Jesus did not rebuke him for his doubt. Write about the Savior's compassion and patience.*

- *How do you feel about sharing your feelings with the Lord?*

The gift of grace

"Let us . . . come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

- *In the Bible Dictionary,* grace *is defined as "divine means of help or strength" given through the "bounteous mercy and love of Jesus Christ" ("Grace," 697). This gift of divine strength enables you to do more than you would be able to do if left on your own. The Savior will do for you what you cannot do for yourself. His grace is the means by which you can repent and be changed. In what ways have you felt the gift of grace in your life?*

- *How can the gift of divine strength enable you to maintain continuous recovery?*

Healing

"Believest thou in the power of Christ unto salvation? . . . If thou believest in the redemption of Christ thou canst be healed" (Alma 15:6, 8).

- *When we think of healing, we usually think about our bodies. What else about you might require the healing power of Jesus Christ?*

- *Write about your need to draw on the redeeming (liberating, transforming) power of Christ.*

Awakening

"If ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words" (Alma 32:27).

- *Becoming aware—or awaking and arousing your faculties—is an important part of the process of learning to believe. In what ways are you more aware today of Jesus Christ and His power in your life than you were last week? last month? last year?*

Deliverance from bondage

"They were in captivity, and again the Lord did deliver them out of bondage by the power of his word" (Alma 5:5).

- *The word of God will be powerful in releasing you from bondage. You can find the word of God in the scriptures and the talks you hear at conference and read in Church magazines. You can also receive God's word directly through the Holy Ghost. Write some of the things you are willing to do today to receive His word to you.*

NOTES

TRUST IN GOD

KEY PRINCIPLE: Decide to turn your will and your life over to the care of God the Eternal Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Step 3 is the decision step. In the first two steps, we awakened to what we could not do for ourselves and what we needed God to do for us. Then in step 3 we were introduced to the only thing we could do for God. We could make a decision to open ourselves to Him and surrender our entire lives—past, present, and future—and our will about our lives to Him. Step 3 was an act of agency. It was the most important choice we ever made.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles made the following statement about this most significant decision: "The submission of one's will is really the only uniquely personal thing we have to place on God's altar. It is a hard doctrine, but it is true. The many other things we give to God, however nice that may be of us, are actually things He has already given us, and He has loaned them to us. But when we begin to submit ourselves by letting our wills be swallowed up in God's will, then we are really giving something to Him" ("Insights from My Life," *Ensign,* Aug. 2000, 9).

President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve described his decision to yield his will to God and the freedom that decision gave him: "Perhaps the greatest discovery of my life, without question the greatest commitment, came when finally I had the confidence in God that I would loan or yield my agency to him—without compulsion or pressure, without any duress, as a single individual alone, by myself, no counterfeiting, nothing expected other than the privilege. In a sense, speaking figuratively, to take one's agency, that precious gift which the scriptures make plain is essential to life itself, and say, 'I will do as you direct,' is afterward to learn that in so doing you possess it all the more" (*Obedience,* Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [Dec. 7, 1971], 4).

When we took step 3, we faced the truth that recovery was far more the result of the Lord's efforts than our own. He worked the miracle when we invited Him into our lives. Step 3 was a decision to allow God to recover and redeem us. It was a decision to allow Him to direct our lives, remembering, of course, that He always respects our agency. Thus, we decided to put our lives in His hands by continuing to follow this spiritually focused program of recovery.

When we first attended recovery meetings, we may have felt pressured or even forced by others to be there, but to take step 3 we had to decide to act for ourselves. We realized that changing our lives this much had to be our own decision. It wasn't about what our parents did, what they were doing now, or what they wanted. Neither was it about what our spouses, families, or friends thought, felt, did, or did not do. We saw we had to be willing to stay clean and sober regardless of anyone else's opinions or choices. Our willingness was the solid foundation on which the balance of recovery rested. As we read the Book of Mormon, we discovered a powerful validation of step 3 in Alma 5:13: "They humbled themselves and put their trust in the true and living God."

When we took this step, we felt terrified of the unknown. What would happen if we humbled ourselves and surrendered our lives and wills completely to the care of God? For many of us, childhood had been very hard, and we were terrified of becoming as vulnerable as little children again. We were convinced by past experiences that making a definite commitment was nearly impossible, given the insanity surrounding us in this world. We had seen too many commitments broken. We had broken too many ourselves. The best some of us could do was try what our recovering friends had suggested: "Don't use. Go to meetings. Ask for help." Those who had walked the steps of recovery before us invited us to experiment with this new way of living. They patiently waited for us to become willing to open the door to God just a little bit.

The Lord extends the same invitation: "I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20).

At first our efforts were anxious and halting. We kept giving the Lord our trust and then taking it back. We worried that He would be displeased at our inconsistency and withdraw His support and love from us. But He didn't.

Gradually we allowed the Lord to demonstrate His healing power and the safety of following His way. Eventually each of us realized that we not only had to give up our addictions, but we also had to turn our entire will and life over to God. As we did so, we found Him patient and accepting of our faltering efforts to surrender to Him in all things.

Our ability to withstand temptation is now grounded in our continual submission to the will of the Lord. We express our need for the power available to us through the Savior's Atonement, and we begin to feel that power within us, fortifying us against the next temptation. We have learned to accept life on the Lord's terms.

As Elder Maxwell observed, this submission to the Lord is hard doctrine. It requires us to rededicate ourselves to His will at the start of each day and sometimes every hour or even from moment to moment. As we are willing to do so, we find the grace, or enabling power, to do what we could not do for ourselves.

Continued submission to God's will reduces strife and brings more meaning to our lives. Small things like traffic jams are no longer cause for upset. We no longer fear our creditors. We accept responsibility for our actions. We accept and treat others as we would like to be treated, as the Savior would treat us all. Our eyes, our minds, and our hearts are finally open to the truth that mortality is challenging and that it will always have the potential to bring us sorrow and frustration as well as happiness.

Each new day we renew our submission to the Lord and His will. This is what most of us mean when we say, "One day at a time." We have decided to let go of the self-will and self-seeking that were at the root of our addictions and enjoy another 24 hours of the serenity and strength that come from trusting in God and in His goodness, power, and love.

Action Steps

Attend sacrament meeting; review and renew baptismal covenants

Taking step 3 and trusting God in all things can be like putting on a new pair of glasses and seeing everything with new eyes. By making the decision to turn your will over to God, you will begin to experience the comfort and joy that come from seeking and doing Heavenly Father's will.

Baptism and the sacrament symbolize your love for and surrender to Jesus Christ. You covenant to take His name upon you, to always remember Him, to follow Him and keep His commandments "that [you] may always have his Spirit to be with [you]" (Moroni 4:3; see also Moroni 5:2; D&C 20:77, 79).

Speak with your bishop or branch president about your addiction and your decision to follow the will of God. Do your best to attend sacrament meeting each week. As you worship, listen carefully to the sacrament prayers and consider the gifts that Heavenly Father offers you. Then renew your commitment to accept and follow His will for your life by partaking of the sacrament if your bishop or branch president gives you permission to do so.

As your recovery progresses, you will find yourself more willing to be among those who honor the sacrifice of the Savior. You will begin to experience the reality that "with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

Decide to trust and obey God; change what you can change; accept what you cannot change

These words—adapted from a prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr and known as the "Serenity Prayer"—can help you as you decide to trust and obey God, "God, grant me serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

You can accept with serenity the current reality of your condition when you trust in God's ability to help you. You can accept with serenity that although you cannot control the choices and actions of others, you can decide how you will act in each situation you face.

You can decide with courage to trust your Father in Heaven and act according to His will. You can turn your will and life over to His care. You can decide to do what He asks and to keep His commandments.

You may not be able to change some things in your life, but you can change your willingness to trust in God and obey Him. As you learn to trust Him, you will see that His plan is for you to follow what Alma called the "great plan of happiness" (Alma 42:8). You will learn that even in affliction and difficulty "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28) and keep His commandments (see also D&C 90:24; 98:3; 100:15; 105:40).

Study and Understanding

The following scriptures may help you in taking step 3. Use these scriptures and questions for meditation, study, and writing. Remember to be honest and specific in your writing.

In harmony with the will of God

"Reconcile yourselves to the will of God, and not to the will of the devil and the flesh; and remember, after ye are reconciled unto God, that it is only in and through the grace of God that ye are saved" (2 Nephi 10:24).

- *Consider what it means to live your life in harmony with the will of God. Think about how His enabling power can come into your life as you turn to Him. How do you feel about letting God direct your life?*

- *What prevents you from allowing Him to direct your life?*

Submitting to the will of God

"The burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord" (Mosiah 24:15).

- *The Lord could have removed the burdens of Alma and his people; instead, He strengthened them to bear "their burdens with ease." Notice that they did not complain but submitted cheerfully and patiently to the will of the Lord. Write about the humility it takes to want immediate relief and yet be willing to have a burden lightened gradually.*

- *What does it mean to submit to God? How do you submit?*

- *How do you feel about submitting willingly and with patience to the Lord's timetable of change?*

- *How can you gain the courage to keep trying until you are free of your burdens?*

Fasting and prayer

"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" (Helaman 3:35).

- *This verse describes a people who yielded their hearts to God. How can fasting strengthen your ability to yield your heart to God and abstain from addiction?*

- *Consider the importance of praying in the moment of temptation, and write about how prayer will strengthen your humility and your faith in Christ.*

- *How strong is your willingness to yield your heart to God instead of yielding to addiction in the moment of temptation?*

Humbling yourself before God

"He did deliver them because they did humble themselves before him; and because they cried mightily unto him he did deliver them out of bondage; and thus doth the Lord work with his power in all cases among the children of men, extending the arm of mercy towards them that put their trust in him" (Mosiah 29:20).

- *What keeps you from "crying mightily" to God for deliverance according to His will?*

- *What has kept you from seeking this kind of deliverance in the past?*

- *In what ways can you learn to trust in God?*

- *To humble yourself is a decision you make. Satan may try to get you to believe that although God helped others, He won't help you because you are helpless and hopeless. Recognize this lie for what it is. In truth, you are a child of God. How can this knowledge help you humble yourself?*

The choice to begin recovery

"I would that ye should be humble, and be submissive and gentle; easy to be entreated; full of patience and long-suffering; being temperate in all things; being diligent in keeping the commandments of God at all times; asking for whatsoever things ye stand in need, both spiritual and temporal; always returning thanks unto God for whatsoever things ye do receive" (Alma 7:23).

- *Step 3 is a choice. Recovery happens by God's power, but only after you choose to seek His help. Your decision opens the channels for His power to flow into your life. Consider how humility, patience, gentleness, and so on are all choices. The last quality listed in the scripture is gratitude. How does gratitude help you be humble?*

- *What other qualities did Alma include in this list?*

- *Which of these qualities do you lack?*

- *Which ones can you work on today? What can you do now to start?*

Becoming as a child

"The natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father" (Mosiah 3:19).

- *Many of us experienced unloving treatment from parents or guardians, and becoming "as a child" is challenging, maybe even terrifying. If you have unresolved problems with a parent, what can you do to separate your feelings about your parent from your feelings about God?*

- *Although you may have problems to resolve with your earthly parents, you can have confidence in Heavenly Father and the Savior as perfect fathers. Why can you trust Heavenly Father and the Savior as you submit your life to Them?*

Communing with God

"[Jesus] kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:41–42).

- *In this prayer, the Savior demonstrated His willingness to submit to the Father. He expressed His desires but then humbly did the will of His Father. Consider the blessing of being able to tell God your feelings. How does knowing that He understands your reluctance, your pain, or whatever you feel help you say, "Thy will be done," and mean it?*

NOTES

TRUTH

KEY PRINCIPLE: Make a searching and fearless written moral inventory of yourself.

When you took step 3, you decided to trust the Lord. You turned your will and your life over to His care. In step 4, you show your willingness to trust God. You make a searching and fearless written inventory of your life, surveying or summarizing the thoughts, events, emotions, and actions of your life, making your inventory as complete as possible.

Doing a fearless and thorough inventory of your life will not be easy. When we say *fearless,* we do not mean you will have no feelings of fear. You will likely experience many emotions as you survey your life, including embarrassment or shame or fear. *Fearless* means you will not let your fears stop you from being thorough in the inventory process. In step 4, it means you commit to rigorous honesty as you focus on events in your life, including your own weaknesses, and not on anyone else's weaknesses.

In the past you probably justified bad behavior and blamed other people, places, or things for the problems you had created. Now you will begin to take responsibility for past and current actions, even though you may need to acknowledge painful, embarrassing, or difficult events, thoughts, emotions, or actions.

If the thought of making a searching and fearless inventory of yourself feels overwhelming, know you are not alone. Our hearts go out to you. We remember our struggles to find the willingness to complete this step. Many of us wondered if we might skip step 4 entirely and still overcome our addictions. Eventually we had to believe the words of those who went before us: "Without a searching and fearless moral inventory, . . . the faith which really works in daily living is still out of reach" (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* [1981], 43).

Addiction crippled our ability to reflect honestly about our lives. It limited our ability to understand the damage and havoc—the liabilities—it caused in all our relationships. Before we could confidently rely on the Savior, we needed a framework through which He could help us sort out our past honestly. Step 4 provided that framework; it was the "vigorous and painstaking effort to discover what these liabilities in each of us have been, and are" (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions,* 42).

The inventory was also a step in helping us align our lives with the will of God. Through this inventory, we identified negative thoughts, emotions, and actions that ruled our lives. By discovering those destructive elements in our lives, we took the first step toward correcting them. Doing an inventory was difficult, but this step opened the door to the additional faith and hope we needed to continue our recoveries and overcome addiction.

How to do an inventory

Once we had admitted the need for step 4, the next questions became, "But just how do I do an inventory? What tools will I need?" An inventory is a very personal process, and there is no single right way to do it. You can consult with others who have already done an inventory and seek the Lord's guidance in doing your own. He will help you be truthful and loving as you sort through your memories and feelings.

One way to do an inventory is to list memories of people; institutions or organizations; principles, ideas, or beliefs; and events, situations, or circumstances that trigger positive and negative feelings (including sadness, regret, anger, resentment, fear, bitterness). Some items on the list may appear multiple times. That is okay. Do not try to sort or judge or analyze at this point. For now, the most important thing is to be as thorough as possible.

As you do your inventory, look beyond your past behaviors and examine the thoughts, feelings, and beliefs that led to your behavior. Your thoughts, feelings, and beliefs are actually the roots of your addictive behaviors. Unless you examine all your tendencies toward fear, pride, resentment, anger, self-will, and self-pity, your abstinence will be shaky at best. You will continue with your original addiction or switch to another one. Your addiction is a symptom of other "causes and conditions" (*Alcoholics Anonymous* [2001], 64).

Some people group their lives according to age, grades in school, places lived, or relationships. Others start simply by brainstorming. You will probably not remember everything all at once. Continue to be

prayerful and allow the Lord to bring things to your remembrance. Leave this process open-ended, and add to your inventory as your memories come.

Once you have finished your list, seek the Lord's guidance in learning from each memory. Some people organize this part of their inventory into a table or chart with columns under each of the five headings listed below. They restrict their entries to brief statements. Others create a page for each entry on their list, and then write answers in each of the five categories.

Incident. What happened? In just a few words, give a short description of your memory of the event. Think more in terms of a summary rather than a long story.

Effect. What was the effect on you or others?

Feelings. What were your feelings at the time of the incident? What are your feelings now about it? Consider how your fears may have contributed to it.

Self-examination. How did your character weaknesses or strengths affect the situation? Do you see any evidence of pride, self-pity, self-deception, or self-will in your attitudes and actions? Be sure to record also those times when you acted right.

The Holy Ghost can help you humble yourself and face the truth, even if the truth is painful. With the help of the Lord, you can recognize your strengths and weaknesses (see Ether 12:27). Questions like these may help:

- *What outcome did I want in this situation and why?*
- *How did I try to control the situation?*
- *Was it any of my business?*
- *What actions did I take or omit to get what I wanted?*
- *Did I ignore reality?*
- *Were my expectations reasonable for myself and for others?*
- *Did I lie to myself or to others?*
- *Did I ignore the feelings of others and think only of myself?*
- *How did I act like a victim to control others, get attention and sympathy, be special, and so on?*
- *Did I resist help from God and others?*
- *Did I insist on being right?*
- *Did I feel slighted for lack of recognition or acknowledgment?*

Inspired counsel. What counsel does the Lord give concerning this incident? Remember you have nothing to fear as you submit to the Savior. You are here to learn good from evil, and the Savior can help you forgive yourself and others. Record your thoughts and impressions as you consider inspired counsel from the scriptures and from Church leaders.

Four necessary elements

Four elements are critical to a successful moral inventory—writing, honesty, support, and prayer. These elements of a moral inventory will help you recognize and overcome sins and shortcomings.

Writing. The inventory of your life will be most effective if you write it. You can hold a written list in your hands, review it, and refer to it when necessary; unwritten thoughts are easy to forget, and distractions can easily interrupt you. As you write your moral inventory, you will be able to think more clearly about the events in your life and you will be able to focus on them with less distraction.

Some people try to avoid writing their moral inventory, feeling embarrassed or fearful about their writing ability or about someone else reading what they write. Don't let these fears stop you. Your spelling, grammar, penmanship, or typing skills do not matter. You can draw stick figures, if you must, but get your inventory on paper. Until you put it in a tangible form, you still haven't done your fourth step. As you complete the fourth step, remember that perfectionism—trying to do your inventory perfectly and to please others—can block you from being complete.

The fear of someone reading what you have written can be a genuine concern, but you can overcome it. Those of us who have done an inventory have had to face this fear. We had to do all we could to keep our inventory private and then trust the results to God. We had to care more about healing than about our ego or reputation. The inventory required us to call on God's help continually, to ask Him to protect and guide us as we accomplished it. You must remember that step 4 is an act of stepping out of shadows of shame and admitting your need for repentance. If you will be prayerful about how and where to keep your inventory pages private, the Lord will guide you to do what is best.

Honesty. Being honest with yourself about the sinful areas of your life can be terrifying. Often people avoid looking too closely at themselves in the mirror of

the past, fearing the reflection may reveal the truth of what their lives have become. Now as you take the fourth step, you must face the truth about your life and your fears squarely.

In your inventory, you will not only discover your weaknesses but you will also understand and appreciate your strengths better. Include in your inventory your good traits and the positive things you have done. In truth, you are a combination of weaknesses and strengths. As you become willing to see the whole truth about your past—good and bad—you allow the powers of heaven to reveal the truth and help you put the past in proper perspective. The Lord will help you change your life's course and fulfill your divine potential. You will learn that you are like all other humans, with strengths and weaknesses. You can begin to face others on equal footing.

Support. The encouragement and support of others who understand recovery can help you in your efforts. They can guide you in discovering the method, structure, or approach that will work best for you in reviewing your past. They can encourage you if you get discouraged.

Prayer. As you consider the magnitude of step 4 and the challenge it represents, think of how the Lord has helped you in each previous step. As you turned to God for comfort, courage, and guidance, you found the help that will continue with you as you do an inventory. Paul taught that God is the "God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation" (2 Corinthians 1:3–4). If you pray each time you sit down to write your inventory, God will help you. You will learn this reality as you take this seemingly impossible step—God can and will always be there for you, if you ask.

Freeing yourself from the past

Some people are concerned about looking into the past for fear of inadvertently creating false memories from vague or exaggerated impressions. In doing your inventory, consider only those memories that are plain enough to be addressed and sorted through. Here again, trusting God is the answer. If you conduct your inventory with sincere prayer, with real intent, having faith in Christ, you can trust Him to bring those things to your remembrance that will help in your recovery.

One glorious result of completing step 4 is that you take a major step toward freeing yourself from behaviors that defined your past. The reflection of yourself that you will see as you complete this step can inspire you to change the direction of your life if you will let it. Because of the love and grace of the Savior, you do not have to be what you have been. By calling on the Lord for guidance as you examine your life, you will come to recognize your experiences as learning opportunities. You will find that uncovering weaknesses you have suffered with for so long will allow you to move forward to a new life.

Action Steps

Write in a personal journal; seek guidance from the Holy Ghost

For many of us, an inventory was our first effort to write about our lives. A personal journal can continue to be a very powerful tool of recovery. Prophets of the Lord have often taught the importance of journals. For example, President Spencer W. Kimball counseled, "Write . . . your goings and comings, your deepest thoughts, your achievements and your failures, your associations and your triumphs, your impressions and your testimonies" ("The Angels May Quote from It," *New Era,* Oct. 1975, 5).

When you prayerfully write about your life, you give the Holy Ghost an opportunity to help you see and understand the potential lessons that come from each of your experiences. If you are not currently keeping a journal, we encourage you to start. If you are already keeping one, we encourage you to be more prayerful as you write so the Lord can teach you and enrich your understanding through His Spirit.

Make an accounting of your life, past and present

Completing an inventory will take time. There is no need to rush through it, but you need to get started. Where you begin is not as important as eventually examining your past as far as your memory and the Lord's inspiration will take you. Just write as memories come into your mind. What you write is private, and you will share it only with a trusted support person you will prayerfully select when you take step 5. Your inventory is about you and your relationship with yourself, with God, and with others. As you gather courage to see yourself as you really are, God will open your eyes, and you will begin to see yourself as He sees you—as one of His children with a divine birthright. Take this step, and keep your eyes on that birthright.

Remember your sins no more

After you have completed your written inventory and when the time is right, those portions that include negative or angry expressions, accounts of personal transgressions, and any other sensitive matters that should not be shared with others or passed down to future generations should be destroyed. The destruction of these writings can be a symbol of your repentance and a powerful way to let go. The Lord promised Jeremiah concerning His people, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:34). We should follow the Lord's example in forgiving our own sins and the sins of others.

Study and Understanding

These scriptures and statements from Church leaders may help you complete step 4. Use them for meditation, study, and writing. Remember to be honest and specific in your writing.

Reviewing your life

"I invite each one of you to thoughtfully review your life. Have you deviated from the standards that you know will bring happiness? Is there a dark corner that needs to be cleaned out? Are you now doing things that you know are wrong? Do you fill your mind with unclean thoughts? When it is quiet and you can think clearly, does your conscience tell you to repent?

"For your peace now and for everlasting happiness, please repent. Open your heart to the Lord and ask Him to help you. You will earn the blessing of forgiveness, peace, and the knowledge you have been purified and made whole. Find the courage to ask the Lord for strength to repent *now*" (Richard G. Scott, in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 103; or *Ensign,* May 1995, 77).

- *Step 4 is one way to follow Elder Scott's counsel. Find a quiet time to pray for direction and courage as you review your life. Prayerfully seek time for self-evaluation, and record the ideas that come to you as you consider Elder Scott's questions.*

Acknowledging the past

"Turn away from your sins; shake off the chains of him that would bind you fast; come unto that God who is the rock of your salvation" (2 Nephi 9:45).

- *Turning away from sins and shaking off addictive chains cannot begin until you acknowledge that the sins and chains exist. Write about the resistance you feel when you think about being completely honest about your past.*

Replacing denial with truth

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

- *A main characteristic of addiction is denial or self-deception—when an individual denies having a problem. What healing effects can come from replacing denial with truth?*

- *How can step 4 help you accomplish such a task?*

The hope of recovery

"I did remember all my sins and iniquities, for which I was tormented with the pains of hell; yea, I saw that I had rebelled against my God, and that I had not kept his holy commandments" (Alma 36:13).

- *Remembering your sins may be painful, but it can propel you into a new life of peace (see Alma 36:19–21). Ask someone who has completed this step how it helped him or her. How can the hope of recovery help you through the pain of remorse to the joy of forgiveness?*

The truth

"By the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:5).

- *Some people have difficulty remembering or acknowledging the painful truth about the past, but the Holy Ghost can help you remember and can comfort you as you take step 4. You can receive these blessings even if you do not have the gift of the Holy Ghost. Write about how the Holy Ghost can guide you in the inventory process.*

- *Why is it important to know the truth about your current situation?*

- *Why is it important to know the truth that you are a child of God?*

Weakness and strength

"If men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them" (Ether 12:27).

- *Apply this verse to your life by copying it and inserting your name as if the Lord were speaking directly to you. Write the thoughts that come into your mind about this scripture and its personal application.*

"The truth shall make you free"

"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

- *Being honest with yourself and with the Lord, who is also known as the "Spirit of truth" (D&C 93:9), is the key to freedom from the lies that enslave you. As you come to know Him, His power and presence in your life will free you from addiction. How can recognizing truth improve your relationship with Jesus Christ?*

NOTES

CONFESSION

KEY PRINCIPLE: Admit to yourself, to your Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ, to proper priesthood authority, and to another person the exact nature of your wrongs.

A common characteristic of many who have suffered from addiction is a sense of isolation. Even in a crowd or while engaged in activities where others might feel a sense of connectedness, we felt like we didn't fit in. As we came to recovery meetings, we began to emerge from the emotional isolation in which addiction thrived. At first, many of us just sat and listened, but eventually we felt safe enough to speak and share. Still, we kept many things to ourselves—shameful things, embarrassing things, heartbreaking things, things that made us feel vulnerable.

We did honest and thorough inventories in step 4, but that was a private experience. We were still left alone with the shame of the past. Not until we took step 5 were we able to throw off the shackles of our isolating secrets and gain some perspective on ourselves and the past. Confession began a process of disclosure where we shared expressions of remorse with friends, family, and others. It was part of an ongoing effort to repair and reestablish broken relationships. Confession also involved seeking forgiveness from the Lord through prayer and through any necessary priesthood channels.

We found it best to take step 5 as soon as possible after completing step 4. Postponing it would have been like acknowledging an infected wound without cleansing it. Step 5 seemed overwhelming, but as we asked the Lord for help, He gave us courage and strength. After reviewing our inventories, we confessed to our bishops anything that was illegal or a sin or a misdeed that would have prevented us from having a temple recommend. This disclosure to proper priesthood authority was an essential part of recovery and healing.

We also selected another trusted person to whom we could disclose the exact nature of our wrongs. We tried to select someone who had gone through steps 4 and 5 and who was well-grounded in the gospel. We began the meeting with prayer to invite the Spirit, and then we read our inventories aloud. The individuals who listened to our inventories often helped us see lingering areas of self-deception. They helped us put our lives into perspective and avoid exaggerating or minimizing our accountability.

Writing our inventories was like recording hundreds of separate scenes from our lives. In step 5, we had a chance to see our lives unfold, scene after scene, in a flowing narrative. As we did, we began to recognize patterns of weaknesses that had influenced our choices. We started to understand our tendencies toward negative thoughts and emotions (self-will, fear, pride, self-pity, jealousy, self-righteousness, anger, resentment, unbridled passions and desires, and so on). These thoughts and emotions were truly the exact nature of our wrongs.

In completing step 5, we demonstrated before God, ourselves, and another witness our commitment to a new life based firmly on telling and living the truth. Although step 5 was one of the most difficult steps to take, we were encouraged by the counsel of President Spencer W. Kimball: "Repentance can never come until one has bared his soul and admitted his actions without excuses or rationalizations. . . . Those persons who choose to meet the issue and transform their lives may find repentance the harder road at first, but they will find it the infinitely more desirable path as they taste of its fruits" ("The Gospel of Repentance," *Ensign,* Oct. 1982, 4).

We have experienced what President Kimball taught. Once we honestly and thoroughly completed step 5, we were left with nothing to hide. We outwardly demonstrated our desire to "give away all [our] sins" (Alma 22:18) so that we could receive a greater knowledge of God's love and the love and support of many good people who rallied around us.

Action Steps

Begin to seek forgiveness; counsel with the bishop as needed; be honest with God, yourself, and others

The "duty of all persons [is] to confess all their sins to the Lord" (Bible Dictionary, "Confession," 649). More serious transgressions must be confessed to proper priesthood leaders, usually the bishop: "While only the

Lord can forgive sins, these priesthood leaders play a critical role in the process of repentance. They will keep your confession confidential and help you throughout the process of repentance. Be completely honest with them. If you partially confess, mentioning only lesser mistakes, you will not be able to resolve a more serious, undisclosed transgression. The sooner you begin this process, the sooner you will find the peace and joy that come with the miracle of forgiveness" (*True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* [2004], 134).

Use great care and wisdom when selecting someone other than a priesthood leader to whom to disclose your wrongs. Do not share such sensitive information with individuals you suspect might extend improper guidance, provide misinformation, or have difficulty maintaining confidences. Those with whom you share your inventory must be extremely trustworthy in both word and deed.

Let peace come into your life

President Brigham Young cautioned members not to disclose sins unnecessarily: "When we ask the brethren, as we frequently do, to speak in sacrament meetings, we wish them, if they have injured their neighbors, to confess their wrongs; but do not tell about your nonsensical conduct that nobody knows of but yourselves. Tell to the public that which belongs to the public. If you have sinned against the people, confess to them. If you have sinned against a family or a neighborhood, go to them and confess. If you have sinned against your Ward, confess to your Ward. If you have sinned against one individual, take that person by yourselves and make your confession to him. And if you have sinned against your God, or against yourselves, confess to God, and keep the matter to yourselves, for I do not want to know anything about it" (*Discourses of Brigham Young,* sel. John A. Widtsoe [1954], 158).

Occasionally you may observe individuals in recovery meetings or in other situations who seem to rehearse continually their sins and shortcomings or the sins others have committed against them. They are always confessing but never finding peace.

Do not confuse step 5 with an obsessive desire to dwell on negative things. The intent of step 5 is exactly the opposite. We take step 5 not to hold on to the things we confess but to begin to distinguish evil from good for ourselves and to choose good.

Study and Understanding

The following scriptures and statements from Church leaders may help you in taking step 5. Use them for meditation, study, and writing. Remember to be honest and specific in your writing.

Confession to God

"I, the Lord, forgive sins unto those who confess their sins before me and ask forgiveness" (D&C 64:7).

- *How does confessing your sins to God help you make positive changes in your life?*

- *Most of us feel fear and an unwillingness to take step 5. How can confessing your sins to God give you courage and strength eventually to confess to another person?*

Confession to others

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed" (James 5:16).

- *You may fear that someone who really knew all your weaknesses and failings would reject you. But a priesthood leader or a trusted friend who understands the recovery process usually responds with understanding and compassion. How could such a response help you heal?*

Trying to look good to others

"Let not any man publish his own righteousness . . . ; sooner let him confess his sins, and then he will be forgiven, and he will bring forth more fruit" (Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church,* 4:479).

- *One major obsession of those who struggle with addiction is a great desire to look good to others. How would this desire keep you from improving and bringing "forth more fruit" (or good works)?*

- *How would your behavior change if you were only concerned about looking good to God?*

Sincerity

"Whosoever transgresseth against me, him shall ye judge according to the sins which he has committed; and if he confess his sins before thee and me, and repenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also" (Mosiah 26:29).

- *When you confess your sins, you must be sincere. Consider how holding back part of your confession undermines the sincerity of your efforts. What part of your inventory, if any, are you tempted to hide?*

- *What do you have to gain by continuing to hide this portion of your inventory? What do you have to lose?*

Confess sins as soon as you recognize them

"In this same year were they brought to a knowledge of their error and did confess their faults" (3 Nephi 1:25).

- *This verse is an example of people who did not procrastinate confessing their faults once they were brought to a knowledge of them. What are the benefits of doing step 5 as soon as possible after step 4?*

- *What might be the detrimental effects of procrastinating step 5?*

Relieving stress and finding peace

"I would not dwell upon your crimes, to harrow up your soul, if it were not for your good" (Alma 39:7).

- *Some people would claim that we dwell too much on negative things in life by taking steps 4 and 5 and that doing so can only add to our stress. In this verse, we are taught that facing shortcomings can do us good, not just "harrow up" (or distress) our souls. In what ways can steps 4 and 5 relieve you of stress and bring you more peace?*

Forsaking sin

"By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them" (D&C 58:43).

- *To forsake something means to abandon it or give it up completely. How do you demonstrate your desire to forsake your old ways by completing step 5?*

NOTES

CHANGE OF HEART

KEY PRINCIPLE: Become entirely ready to have God remove all your character weaknesses.

After the rigorous emotional and spiritual cleansing of steps 4 and 5, most of us were amazed at the transformation in ourselves. We prayed more intently, pondered the scriptures more regularly, and kept a journal more consistently. We prepared to make and keep sacred covenants by attending sacrament meeting.

As we took step 5, many of us met with our bishops and sought help in repentance. Most of us found our addictions tempted us less intensely and less often. Some of us were already free from our addictions. With such mighty changes in our behavior and our lives, some of us wondered why we needed more steps.

As time passed, though, we noticed that abstinence seemed to make our character weaknesses more visible, especially to ourselves. We tried to control our negative thoughts and feelings, but they continued to reappear, haunting us and threatening our new lives of abstinence and Church activity. Those who understood the spiritual implications of recovery urged us to recognize that while all the outward changes in our lives were wonderful, the Lord wanted to bless us even more. Our friends helped us see that if we wanted not only to avoid our addictions but actually lose the desire to return to them, we had to experience a change of heart. This change of heart or desire is the purpose of step 6.

"How?" you may cry. "How can I even begin to accomplish such a change?" Don't be discouraged by these feelings. Step 6, like the steps before it, may feel like an overwhelming challenge. As painful as it may be, you may have to admit, as we did, that recognizing and confessing your character weaknesses in steps 4 and 5 did not necessarily mean you were ready to give them up. You may realize that you still cling to old ways of reacting to and coping with stresses in life—maybe even more so now that you have let go of your addictions.

Probably the most humbling thing to acknowledge is that you still harbor a prideful desire to change without the help of God. Step 6 means surrendering to God all remnants of pride and self-will. Like steps 1 and 2, step 6 requires you to humble yourself and admit your need for the redeeming and transforming power of Christ. After all, His atoning sacrifice has enabled you to accomplish each step to this point. Step 6 is no exception.

As you come unto Jesus Christ, seeking help with this step, you will not be disappointed. If you trust Him and have patience with the process, you will see your pride gradually replaced by humility. He will wait patiently for you to weary of your own unaided effort to change, and as soon as you turn to Him you will witness once again His love and power in your behalf. Your resistance to letting go of old patterns of behavior will be replaced by an open mind as the Spirit gently suggests a better way of living. Your fear of change will diminish as you realize the Lord understands the pain and hard work it requires.

As the process of coming unto Christ takes hold in your heart, you will find the false beliefs that fueled negative thoughts and feelings gradually replaced by truth. You will grow in strength as you continue to study the word of God and ponder its personal application. Through the testimonies of others, the Lord will help you learn the truth that you are not beyond His power to heal. The desire to blame others for the condition of your character or to rationalize your way out of a change of heart will be replaced by the desire to be accountable to Him and submissive to His will. Through the prophet Ezekiel, the Lord declared, "A new heart . . . will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26).

The Lord wants to bless you with a change of disposition that will unite you with Him in mind and heart, just as He is united with the Father. He wants to give you rest from your isolation from God the Father, the isolation that caused the fears which contributed to your addiction. He wants to make the Atonement effective in your life, here and now.

As you yield to the promptings of the Spirit and look to the Savior for salvation, not only from addiction but from character weaknesses, you can be assured that a new disposition or character will grow out of your willing heart. A growing desire to be sanctified by God will

make you ready for a change in your very nature. One of the best descriptions of this process can be found in these words of President Ezra Taft Benson:

"The Lord works from the inside out. The world works from the outside in. The world would take people out of the slums. Christ takes the slums out of people, and then they take themselves out of the slums. The world would mold men by changing their environment. Christ changes men, who then change their environment. The world would shape human behavior, but Christ can change human nature. . . .

"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" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, 5–6; or *Ensign,* Nov. 1985, 6–7).

Action Steps

Be willing to allow the Savior to convert your heart; participate in the fellowship of Christ by attending Sunday School and Relief Society or priesthood meeting

When we were baptized, few of us understood the lifelong process of true conversion. However, President Marion G. Romney of the First Presidency explained it plainly: "In one who is really wholly converted, desire for things contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ has actually died. And substituted therefore is a love of God, with a fixed and controlling determination to keep his commandments" (in Conference Report, Guatemala Area Conference 1977, 8).

As you experience the miracle of ongoing recovery—first from destructive addictive behaviors and then from character weaknesses—you will experience true conversion. You will begin to awaken, to come to yourself just as the prodigal son came to himself (see Luke 15:17). You will begin to realize that to return to Heavenly Father's kingdom, you must not only awake but arise and allow Jesus Christ to be your Redeemer.

As you yield your heart to God and grow stronger in humility, your resolve not to repeat past behaviors will become firmer and firmer. Delivered from the bondage of the past, you will feel more and more comfortable among brothers and sisters in the Church. You will find yourself desiring to return and be gathered as a child of God and numbered in full fellowship among the sheep of His fold (see 1 Nephi 22:24–26; Mosiah 27:25–26; Mosiah 29:20; Helaman 3:35).

Be willing to be changed so imperfections may be removed through the power of God

Whether your addiction has been to alcohol, drugs, gambling, pornography, self-destructive eating patterns, compulsive spending, or another behavior or substance that represents your need to run and hide from stress or challenges in your life, you can come to realize that it all began in your mind and heart. Healing also begins in your mind and heart. As you become willing to be changed by coming unto Jesus Christ, you will learn of His power to heal.

By taking step 6, you increase your commitment to abstain from past addictions through a deepening relationship with the Savior, Jesus Christ, and with the Father, who sent Him. You decide to become sober minded like the young prophet Mormon (see Mormon 1:15). You continue to accept that God must truly become everything to you in order to save you from weaknesses of thought, word, and action.

Study and Understanding

The following scriptures and statements from Church leaders may help you in taking step 6. Use these scriptures and questions for meditation, study, and writing.

Giving away all your sins

"The king said . . . what shall I do that I may be born of God, having this wicked spirit rooted out of my breast, and receive his Spirit, that I may be filled with joy. . . . I will give up all that I possess . . . that I may receive this great joy. . . .

". . . The king did bow down before the Lord, upon his knees; yea, even he did prostrate himself upon the earth, and cried mightily, saying:

"O God . . . I will give away all my sins to know thee, and that I may be raised from the dead, and be saved at the last day" (Alma 22:15, 17–18).

- *Reread Alma 22:15, 17–18 carefully. What obstacles—including attitudes and feelings—keep you from giving away "all [your] sins" and more fully receiving the Spirit of the Lord?*

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Learning humility

"If men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them" (Ether 12:27).

- *Being mortal and imperfect, we are all subject to many weaknesses. In this verse, the Lord explains His purpose in allowing us to experience mortality and to encounter such weaknesses—to help us be humble. Notice, though, that we choose to humble ourselves. How is becoming ready in step 6 part of humbling yourself?*

- *List some of your character weaknesses, and next to them list the strengths they may become as you come unto Christ.*

Participating in the fellowship of the Church

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

"Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

"May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:14–19).

- *As you take upon yourself the name of Christ and are strengthened by His Spirit, you begin to identify yourself with the Saints—brothers and sisters who have been baptized and entered into His family on earth (see Mosiah 5:7). As you have come to know your fellow Saints better, how have you become more willing to participate more fully in the fellowship of priesthood, Relief Society, and Sunday School?*

Redemption

"The natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love" (Mosiah 3:19).

- *Many of us become Saints in name only at baptism and spend the rest of our lives struggling to "put off the natural man" and develop the characteristics listed in this verse. How has this struggle prepared you to accept that only through the Atonement of Christ—by becoming one with Jesus Christ and with the Father—can you experience redemption?*

Coming unto Christ

"No matter what the source of difficulty and no matter how you begin to obtain relief—through a qualified professional therapist, doctor, priesthood leader, friend, concerned parent, or loved one—no matter how you begin, those solutions will never provide a complete answer. The final healing comes through faith in Jesus Christ and His teachings, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit and obedience to His commandments" (Richard G. Scott, in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 9; or *Ensign,* May 1994, 9).

- *Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve taught that no amount of support or fellowship—even in recovery groups or congregations of the Church—will bring you salvation. Other people may support and bless you in your journey, but eventually you must come unto Christ Himself. Write about how your journey of recovery began.*

- *Who was instrumental in helping you get on the path to repentance and recovery? How has their example pointed you toward the Savior?*

- *What have you learned about the Savior that has helped or influenced your desire or ability to change your behavior?*

Patience with the process

"Ye are little children and ye cannot bear all things now; ye must grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth.

"Fear not, little children, for you are mine, and I have overcome the world, . . .

"And none of them that my Father hath given me shall be lost" (D&C 50:40–42).

- *Sometimes we become impatient or discouraged that recovery is an ongoing process. These verses show the Savior's and our Heavenly Father's patience with us as "little children." Apply these verses to yourself by writing them out addressed to you personally.*

- *How can the promises in this scripture strengthen you when you get discouraged?*

Help from the Lord

"My beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.

"Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life" (2 Nephi 31:19–20).

- *Ponder and write about how the Lord helps you along the strait and narrow path. How does your growing love for God and for others bring you out of addiction, help you continue in abstinence, and restore you to a hope of eternal life?*

NOTES

HUMILITY

KEY PRINCIPLE: Humbly ask Heavenly Father to remove your shortcomings.

All the steps require humility, but step 7 requires it most explicitly: "Humbly ask Heavenly Father to remove your shortcomings." The humble heart we developed in step 6 brought us to our knees in step 7 to ask the Lord to remove our shortcomings. When we had progressed to this point, we were ready to pray without any other motivation but our desire to become one in heart and in mind with Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. No longer were we satisfied with a change in habits or even in lifestyle. We were finally ready to have God change our very nature.

Step 7 represented for each of us such total surrender to the Savior that many of us could not help but cry out in our hearts, as Alma did, "O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me" (Alma 36:18). Genuine remorse filled our hearts, not only because we had suffered or made others suffer but because we regretted that even in recovery we still could not remove our own shortcomings.

Having felt a portion of the love of God, we desired to give up all our sins, even all inclination to sin, so we might know Him better. Finally, voluntarily, with all our hearts, we offered our whole souls to God and asked Him to forgive us and make us in His image. We had finally come to realize that no other name, no other way nor means, can give us a complete remission of our sins. Holding nothing back, we pled with the Father that He, in His infinite mercy, would forgive us for all our pride, transgressions, and shortcomings. We asked that He would grant us grace, that through Him we might maintain this new way of life.

The Lord did not begin such a revolutionary change of our entire character until we allowed Him to do so. Step 7 was our decision. We had to humble ourselves deliberately. We had to surrender every particle of self-sufficient pride and admit that our efforts to save ourselves had been insufficient. We had to feel and live the truth King Benjamin taught—that we are all beggars before God and have no hope of salvation by our own efforts but only through the mercy and grace of Jesus Christ (see Mosiah 2:21; 4:19–20).

Step 7 marked for each of us the moment when we finally yielded without reservation to the eternal truth taught in Mosiah 16:4: "All mankind were lost; and behold, they would have been endlessly lost were it not that God redeemed his people from their lost and fallen state." Our experience taught us that in taking step 7 we were not excused from the work that was ours to do. We still had to be patient and "press forward with a steadfastness in Christ" (2 Nephi 31:20).

We had not become entirely free from the desire to sin. We had to learn to accept life on God's terms and wait upon His purposes and His timing—even in the removal of our shortcomings. In taking step 7, we learned to live with the same humility and patience toward God that Alma and his brethren showed when their burdens were lightened but not removed: "They did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord" (Mosiah 24:15). We finally abandoned the idea that we could become perfect by ourselves, and we accepted the truth that God desires us to conquer our weaknesses in this life by coming to Christ and being perfected in Him. We found that by His grace, He enabled us to deny ourselves of all ungodliness and to understand that salvation comes not by our own power but by His (see Moroni 10:32).

Each step comes with a warning, though, and step 7 is no exception. We who have embraced these principles must warn you that you cannot expect to take this step without sacrifice—and rightly so. In Doctrine and Covenants 59:8, the Lord commands, "Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit." This offering is the essence of step 7. Even as you feel the pains of your own rebirth, remember that His suffering, not yours, ensures your redemption from sin. Your sacrifice is only a humble reminder of His "great and last sacrifice" on your behalf (Alma 34:14).

When you put everything into God's hands, you have finally done all you can to receive His unmistakable witness that your sins are forgiven, that your past is truly in the past. Like people who were converted in the Book of Mormon, you can testify that you have "been visited by the power and Spirit of God, which [is] in Jesus Christ" (3 Nephi 7:21). Along with Alma, you can exclaim: "I could remember my pains no more;

yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more. And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!" (Alma 36:19–20).

Action Steps

Seek for the power of the Savior's Atonement to become effective in your personal life by meditating on the sacrament prayers

One effective form of meditation is to think of a verse or a phrase of scripture as you pray to understand its meaning and application in your own life. Since each of us must make the covenant that is repeated in the sacrament prayers, you could meditate on them.

Following the invitation of the prophets to apply the scriptures in your life, you may want to read Moroni 4:3 and 5:2 and humbly consider these sacred words in your own voice: for example, "O God, the Eternal Father, [I] ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to [my soul as I] partake of it . . . and keep his commandments which he hath given [me], that [I] may always have his Spirit to be with [me]."

Pray humbly for God to do for you what you cannot do for yourself

By keeping a simple prayer in your heart, such as "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?" or "Thy will be done," you will be continually reminded of your total dependence upon the Lord. The love of God, yours for Him and His for you, will help you form one relationship to which you can give yourself without reservation. You sought this love all the years you were trapped in addiction. In step 7, you will find a way to obtain peace as you enter into the "rest of the Lord" (Moroni 7:3; see also Alma 58:11; Ezra Taft Benson, "Jesus Christ—Gifts and Expectations," *Ensign,* Dec. 1988, 2).

Study and Understanding

The following scriptures and statements from Church leaders may help you in taking step 7. Use these scriptures and questions for meditation, study, and writing. Be honest and specific in your writing.

Choosing to be humble

"As I said unto you, that because ye were compelled to be humble ye were blessed, do ye not suppose that they are more blessed who truly humble themselves because of the word?" (Alma 32:14).

- *Most of us came to recovery meetings in desperation, driven by the consequences of our addictions. We were compelled to be humble. The humility described in step 7, however, has a different cause. It is voluntary. It is the result of your own choice to humble yourself. How have your feelings of humility changed since you started recovery?*

Filled with joy

"They had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth. And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things; who shall come down among the children of men.

"And it came to pass that after they had spoken these words the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience, because of the exceeding faith which they had in Jesus Christ who should come" (Mosiah 4:2–3).

- *The people of King Benjamin offered the kind of prayer that we offer as we take step 7. They felt peace and joy when the Spirit of the Lord came upon them and gave them a remission of their sins. Reflect on experiences you have had with these feelings. Write about how it would be to have these feelings become your way of life.*

Believe in God

"Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend.

"And again, believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you; and now, if you believe all these things see that ye do them.

"And again I say unto you as I have said before, that as ye have come to the knowledge of the glory of God, or if ye have known of his goodness and have tasted of his love, and have received a remission of your sins, which causeth such exceedingly great joy in your souls, even so I would that ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long-suffering towards you, unworthy creatures, and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing steadfastly in the faith of that which is to come, which was spoken by the mouth of the angel.

". . . If ye do this ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of your sins; and ye shall grow in the knowledge of the glory of him that created you, or in the knowledge of that which is just and true" (Mosiah 4:9–12).

- *Prayerfully write a list of the things King Benjamin said we must do. How do these things relate to taking step 7?*

- *What promises come from doing as King Benjamin instructed? (See the last verse.)*

- *If you received these promises, what would change in your life?*

Obeying the law and the commandments

"For this end was the law given; wherefore the law hath become dead unto us, and we are made alive in Christ because of our faith; yet we keep the law because of the commandments" (2 Nephi 25:25).

- *We are "made alive in Christ because of our faith" in Him. What does it mean that the law is dead to us? Why do we continue to keep the law or obey the commandments?*

- *How do you feel today about keeping the law?*

- *How is keeping the commandments an expression of your love for God?*

The love of God

"When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands on our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities" (Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 3; or *Ensign,* May 1988, 4).

- *Coming to know the mercy and goodness of God thus far, you have probably begun to feel the love of God—love for Him and love from Him. Reflect on and write about any increase of love you have felt while working through the steps.*

- *How does step 7 qualify as the greatest act of your love so far?*

Taking upon yourself the name of Christ

"Whosoever doeth this shall be found at the right hand of God, for he shall know the name by which he is called; for he shall be called by the name of Christ" (Mosiah 5:9).

- *Most of us think of taking Christ's name upon us in context of baptism and the sacrament, and rightly so. Consider for a moment what it might mean to be called by the name of Christ and to have His reputation as your own.*

- *What do you need to do to be found at the right hand of God? What do you covenant to do when you are baptized and when you partake of the sacrament?*

- *Write about the feelings you experience when you think of His willingness to give you His name or reputation in exchange for all your shortcomings.*

Surrendering your weaknesses

"A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation" (Joseph Smith, comp., *Lectures on Faith* [1985], 69).

- *Some people read these words and think "all things" refers to all possessions. How has surrendering all your weaknesses to the Lord increased your understanding of what it means to sacrifice all things?*

NOTES

SEEKING FORGIVENESS

KEY PRINCIPLE: Make a written list of all persons you have harmed and become willing to make restitution to them.

Before our recovery, our addictive lifestyles were like a tornado full of destructive energy that cut through our relationships, leaving much wreckage behind. Step 8 was an opportunity to make a plan to clean up the wreckage and rebuild all that could be saved. When we felt the healing power of the Savior's mercy as we worked on step 7, we felt eager to reach out to others and to mend broken relationships. We learned, however, that impulsively rushing to make amends without taking time for prayer and perhaps counsel from a trusted adviser, such as a bishop or other priesthood leader, could be as detrimental as not making amends. Step 8 was an assurance against harming others when we began contacting them in step 9.

Before we could rebuild relationships, we needed to identify the relationships that were damaged. We began to list people we had harmed, but many of us found we could not list these people without being distracted by feelings of resentment toward those who had harmed us. We honestly confessed our negative feelings to the Lord. In response, He showed us that we faced the same decision as the man in the parable who, having been forgiven of all his debts, needed to forgive others. We could almost hear the Lord say to us, "I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have . . . compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?" (Matthew 18:32–33).

If you find yourself facing this problem, you may need to do as many of us have done. Before you make a list of people from whom you need to seek forgiveness, first list those people you need to forgive. Don't be surprised if some names appear on both lists. People often get caught in terrible cycles of exchanging hurts with others. To break these cycles of mutual resentment, someone has to be willing to forgive.

To begin this process of forgiveness, we once more found the tool of writing to be invaluable. Next to the names of the people we needed to forgive, we recorded the way we originally felt when the hurtful incidents happened and what we were still tempted to feel. The list helped us be specific in our prayers as we shared with the Father all our unresolved feelings. We pled for the grace of Christ to help us extend to others the same mercy He gives us. If we found people on our lists that we had an especially difficult time forgiving, we took the Savior's counsel to pray for their welfare, asking all the blessings for them that we would want for ourselves (see Matthew 5:44).

As we prayed for help to forgive others—even if it felt insincere at first—we were eventually blessed with a miraculous sense of compassion. Even in extreme situations, people who have taken this approach have received the ability to forgive far beyond themselves. One sister spent several weeks writing about her childhood and praying for her abusive father. She testifies with joy that the Savior has relieved her of her negative, painful feelings toward her father. In making a similar effort, we have learned that by making a thorough inventory of our resentments and acknowledging them to the Savior, we finally ceased to be victims of those who hurt us. Once we honestly attempted to let go of offenses toward us, we found we were able to finish our lists of those we hoped would forgive us.

As you reach this point and begin your list, you should pray for guidance from the Lord. These guidelines may help. Ask yourself, "Is there anyone in my life, past or present, who I feel embarrassed, uncomfortable, or ashamed around?" Write down their names, and resist the temptation to justify your feelings or excuse your negative actions toward them. Include those you meant to hurt, of course, and also those you did not intend to hurt. Include those who have passed away and those you have no idea how to contact. You will deal with these special cases when you take step 9. For now, as you work through step 8, focus on your willingness to be rigorous and unrelenting in your honesty.

To be thorough, look for things you neglected to do or things you left undone that hurt others. Don't leave out little things. Think honestly about the harm you caused others as you indulged in your addiction, even if you were not aggressive toward them. Admit the harm you did to loved ones and friends by being irresponsible, irritable, critical, impatient, and dishonorable. Look for anything large or small that added to another person's burdens or that saddened or challenged someone. Look

for lies you told or promises you broke and ways you manipulated or used others. List everyone who was affected. You may find your step 4 inventory a useful guide in this process.

Finally, after you have listed everyone you have harmed, add one more name to the list—your own. When you indulged in your addictions, you harmed yourself as well as others.

As you work, remember that step 8 is not an exercise in casting guilt or shame on anyone—either yourself or those on your lists. The Savior will lift the burdens of guilt and shame as you take one more honest look at troubles in your relationships and your part in them. By becoming willing to make amends, you benefit from the peace of knowing that Heavenly Father is pleased with your efforts. This step helps you take the actions that enable the Savior to set you free from your past. Being willing, you become ready to take step 9.

Action Steps

Forgive yourself and others; make a list of people you might have offended or harmed

In step 8, you begin an amazing adventure in relating with a new heart to yourself, to others, and to life. You are ready to contribute peace to the world rather than add contention and negative feelings. You are willing to give up judging anyone unrighteously and to stop taking inventory of others' lives and faults. You are ready to stop minimizing your own behavior or making excuses for it. You are willing to take another thorough inventory—this time of those you have harmed.

Although you may be terrified to consider it, you can become willing to meet the people on your list when the opportunity arises. You can prepare to do all you can to make amends to them. You can live by faith in the Lord, not in fear of what others might do. You can become willing in step 8 to live a life guided by principles rather than by shame or fear.

Seek the gift of charity; pray for others

For thousands of years, people have read Paul's great discourse on charity and tried to model their lives after it. Many have struggled to have charity and have often fallen woefully short of doing so.

The writings of the prophet Mormon clarify what charity is and how to obtain it. He defined charity as "the pure love of Christ" and taught that the Father gives it to those who "pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart" and to "all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ" (Moroni 7:47, 48).

Charity is a gift we receive as we learn to follow Jesus Christ and as we love Him with all our hearts, minds, and souls. Filled with this pure love from Him and for Him, we find ourselves able to love others as He has loved us. We become able to forgive the faults of others and to make amends for our mistakes.

In preparation for making amends, many of us have found the following exercise helpful. Think of someone for whom you have had hard feelings. For two weeks, deliberately kneel and pray for him or her each day. Keep a record of changes in your thoughts and feelings about that person. (See Matthew 22:37–38; 1 Corinthians 13; 1 John 4:19; Moroni 7:44–48.)

Study and Understanding

The following scriptures and statements from Church leaders may help you as you take step 8. Use these scriptures and questions for meditation, study, and writing.

Peaceable followers of Christ

"I would speak unto you that are of the church, that are the peaceable followers of Christ, and that have obtained a sufficient hope by which ye can enter into the rest of the Lord, from this time henceforth until ye shall rest with him in heaven.

"And now my brethren, I judge these things of you because of your peaceable walk with the children of men" (Moroni 7:3–4).

- *In the first seven steps, you began a process of becoming a peaceable follower of Christ. When you are at peace with the Lord, you are better prepared to be at peace with others. What other steps do you need to take to be at peace with the people in your life?*

- *Write about the wisdom of taking the steps in order.*

The Lord's perfect love

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

"We love [God], because he first loved us" (1 John 4:18–19).

- *The idea of making amends can be frightening if you focus on doing it perfectly. How can your trust in the Lord's perfect love for you and for the person from whom you seek forgiveness strengthen your resolve to make restitution wherever possible?*

Reaching out to others

"Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:37–38).

- *Even though you may fear that some people will reject your efforts to make peace with them, do not let this fear keep you from putting them on your list and preparing yourself to reach out to them. The blessings are far greater than the pain. Study these verses, and write about the blessings of becoming willing to make amends.*

"The nearer we get to our heavenly Father, the more we are disposed to look with compassion on perishing souls; we feel that we want to take them upon our shoulders, and cast their sins behind our backs. . . . If you would have God have mercy on you, have mercy on one another" (Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church,* 5:24).

- *Without Jesus Christ, we are all perishing, imperfect souls. How does it help you to know that in taking step 8 you are one perishing soul preparing to make amends to another perishing soul?*

Forgiving and asking forgiveness

"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

"Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:21–22).

- *Forgiving and asking forgiveness for a single wrongdoing is easier than forgiving or asking forgiveness for longstanding situations filled with multiple offenses. Think about relationships, past or present, where multiple offenses have occurred and will need to be forgiven. How can you gain strength to forgive and seek forgiveness?*

- *How is Jesus Christ the greatest example of the ability to forgive? Consider His willingness to help you forgive others.*

"I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.

"I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men" (D&C 64:9–10).

- *Jesus taught that to fail to forgive others is a greater sin than the original trespass or offense. How is refusing to forgive yourself or someone else the equivalent of denying the Savior's Atonement for sin?*

- *How do resentment and bitterness damage you physically, emotionally, and spiritually?*

Breaking the cycle of bitterness and offense

"Nothing is so much calculated to lead people to forsake sin as to take them by the hand, and watch over them with tenderness. When persons manifest the least kindness and love to me, O what power it has over my mind, while the opposite course has a tendency to harrow up all the harsh feelings and depress the human mind" (Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church,* 5:23–24).

- *The Prophet Joseph Smith described how kindness can lead to repentance and forgiveness. Ponder and write about your willingness to be the one who breaks the cycle of bitterness and offense.*

- *Think about people who have shown kindness and love to you. How have their actions inspired or motivated you to act differently?*

- *Consider the troubled relationships in your life. In what ways might they change as you reach out to other people with love and kindness?*

NOTES

RESTITUTION AND RECONCILIATION

KEY PRINCIPLE: Wherever possible, make direct restitution to all persons you have harmed.

As we moved on to step 9, we were ready to seek forgiveness. Like the repentant sons of Mosiah who went about "zealously striving to repair all the injuries which they had done" (Mosiah 27:35), we desired to make amends. Still, as we faced step 9, we knew we could not carry out our desires unless God blessed us with His Spirit. We needed courage, good judgment, sensitivity, prudence, and appropriate timing. These were not qualities that most of us possessed at that time. We realized that step 9 would once more test our willingness to humble ourselves and seek the help and grace of the Lord.

Because of our experiences in this challenging process, we offer a few suggestions. It is very important that you are not impulsive or careless as you attempt to make amends. It is equally important that you do not procrastinate making amends. Many recovering individuals have relapsed when they allowed fear to keep them from doing step 9. Pray for the Lord's guidance and consult with a trusted adviser for help to avoid these pitfalls.

Sometimes you may be tempted to avoid meeting with a person on your list. We recommend, however, that you resist this temptation, unless, of course, a legal restriction keeps you from meeting with someone. A spirit of humility and a feeling of honesty can repair damaged relationships when you make reasonable efforts to meet in person. Let people know you are approaching them to make amends. Respect their wishes if they indicate they would rather not discuss the matter. If they give you the chance to apologize, be brief and specific about the situation you remember. Details are not necessary. The purpose is not to explain or describe your side of things. The purpose is to admit those wrongs you have committed, offer an apology, and make restitution wherever possible. Do not argue with people or criticize them, even if their response is not favorable or accepting. Approach each person in a spirit of humility, offering reconciliation, never justification.

Apologizing for some actions can be particularly challenging. For example, you may have to address matters that could have legal repercussions, such as dishonesty or serious sexual sin. You may be tempted to overreact or to make excuses and avoid making amends. You should prayerfully seek ecclesiastical or professional counsel before taking any action in these very serious cases.

In other cases, you may have no way of making amends directly. The person may be dead, or you may not be able to discover where he or she lives. In such cases, you can still make amends indirectly. You can write the person a letter expressing your regret and desire for reconciliation, even if the letter cannot be delivered. You can give a gift to the person's favorite charity. You can find someone who reminds you of that person and do something to help him or her. Or you may be able to do something to help a member of the family anonymously.

There may be times when approaching another person or seeking to provide restitution is painful for that person or even harmful. If you think that might be the case, discuss the situation with a trusted adviser before proceeding. This part of recovery must never lead to the further harm of others. Also, at times you may have caused harm that is beyond human ability to repair. Elder Neal A. Maxwell spoke of this reality: "Sometimes . . . restitution is not possible in real terms, such as when one contributed to another's loss of faith or virtue. Instead, a subsequent example of righteousness provides a compensatory form of restitution" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 41; or *Ensign,* Nov. 1991, 31). From the moment you decide to adopt these true principles as your new way of life, you begin to make amends.

After making amends for most of your past actions, you may still have one or two people you feel like you cannot face. Do not despair. Many of us dealt with the same reality. We recommend you take your feelings to the Lord in honest prayer. If you still have great fear or anger toward an individual, you probably should postpone meeting with him or her. To overcome negative feelings, you could pray for charity and to see the person as the Lord sees him or her. You could look for positive reasons why restitution and reconciliation will help. If you do these things and are patient, the Lord

can and will—in His own way and in His own time—give you the ability and the miraculous opportunities to be reconciled to everyone on your list.

Upon completing step 9 to the best of your ability, you have finally done all you can to put yourself in harmony with the commandments of the Lord. You have begun to experience a new life of hope—not in yourself but in the love of God. You have gone down into the depths of humility and found the Lord waiting to embrace you. You have done all you can to heal relationships and become reconciled to others. You have at least partially entered into His rest; remaining there has become your greatest desire. You are learning to recognize and follow personal revelation better, which leads you to live in harmony with the teachings of ancient and modern prophets of God. Even in your most difficult moments, you feel a new kind of peace. You have learned to receive the blessing Paul described when he wrote, "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

Action Steps

Love others; refrain from judging others; be willing to accept a Church calling and to pay tithes and offerings

In the past, if you were religiously active, you may have been motivated by fear of the judgment of God or of what others would think. Perhaps you acted out of a sense of duty. Today you recognize that service is a way of coming unto Christ. It is a way of expressing love to God. It expresses a continuing need for His power and gratitude for His divine help. Consider whether your activity in the Church is still motivated by fear or duty or if it is a natural outgrowth of your reborn faith in Christ.

Find ways to serve wherever you are. Become worthy and available to serve in a Church calling or in other ways. As you serve your brothers and sisters and teach them by word and by example, you will share with them His living reality in your life. (See Matthew 25:40; John 13:34–35; John 15:15; Mosiah 2:17.)

Be willing to do what is necessary to make amends

In taking step 9, you must avoid becoming discouraged if others do not receive your apologies well or if they do not believe you have really changed. Making amends may take time and patience. Give others time to realize that this time is different. This time you are not making empty promises; you are living to receive a complete remission of your addiction and character weaknesses. Eventually, abstinence and changed behavior will speak for themselves.

Study and Understanding

The following scriptures and statements from Church leaders may help you in taking step 9. Use these scriptures and questions for meditation, study, and writing. Be honest and specific in your writing.

Influencing others for good

"The Spirit of the Lord doth say unto me: Command thy children to do good, lest they lead away the hearts of many people to destruction; therefore I command you, my son, in the fear of God, that ye refrain from your iniquities;

"That ye turn to the Lord with all your mind, might, and strength; that ye lead away the hearts of no more to do wickedly; but rather return unto them, and acknowledge your faults and that wrong which ye have done" (Alma 39:12–13).

- *Some of the greatest harm we have done to others is by influencing them to develop addictions themselves. Write about the people in your life whom you have influenced in this way.*

- *Where can you find courage to face these people, according to Alma's teachings in these verses?*

Persuasion or compulsion

"Whosoever will come may come and partake of the waters of life freely; and whosoever will not come the same is not compelled to come; but in the last day it shall be restored unto him according to his deeds" (Alma 42:27).

- *With many powerful reasons to take step 9, you must never get caught up in the rationalization or lie that you have no choice. The Addiction Recovery Program is a program of persuasion, not compulsion. Write about whether you feel persuaded or compelled to take step 9. What reasons for being persuaded are listed in this verse?*

Preparing to meet God

"I would that ye would come forth and harden not your hearts any longer; for behold, now is the time and the day of your salvation; and therefore, if ye will repent and harden not your hearts, immediately shall the great plan of redemption be brought about unto you.

"For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors" (Alma 34:31–32).

- *What else do you accomplish when you soften your heart and go to make amends?*

- *How does your willingness to make amends increase when you realize that you are also preparing to meet God?*

Activity in the Church

"[The sons of Mosiah] traveled throughout all the land . . . zealously striving to repair all the injuries which they had done to the church, confessing all their sins, and publishing all the things which they had seen, and explaining the prophecies and the scriptures to all who desired to hear them" (Mosiah 27:35).

- *Because of addictions, many people quit attending church. Some used the faults of others to justify their limited involvement. Write about your own experiences with activity in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.*

- *How has becoming closer to the Savior through recovery helped you feel reunited with His Church?*

- *How does being active in the Church help you make amends and recover more fully?*

Willing restitution

"You must restore as far as possible all that which is stolen, damaged, or defiled. Willing restitution is concrete evidence to the Lord that you are committed to do all you can to repent" (Richard G. Scott, in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 102; or *Ensign,* May 1995, 76).

- *Write about how taking step 9 is evidence not only to the Lord but also to yourself and others that you are committed to a life of humility and honesty.*

The intents of your heart

"He that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven" (D&C 1:32).

- *In making amends, you may face people who will not forgive you. Maybe their hearts are still hard toward you, or perhaps they do not trust your intentions. How does it help you to know that the Lord understands the true intent of your heart and that He will receive your offer to repent and make restitution, even if other people may not?*

What the Savior can do for you

"Men cannot forgive their own sins; they cannot cleanse themselves from the consequences of their sins. Men can stop sinning and can do right in the future, and so far their acts are acceptable before the Lord and worthy of consideration. But who shall repair the wrongs they have done to themselves and to others, which it seems impossible for them to repair themselves? By the atonement of Jesus Christ the sins of the repentant shall be washed away; though they be crimson they shall be made white as wool. This is the promise given to you" (Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine,* 5th ed. [1939], 98–99).

- *As you go out to make amends, do not be discouraged by thoughts such as, "This is impossible! There's no way I can adequately make up for the wrong I've done this person!" Although that may be true, consider the power of Jesus Christ to repair those things you cannot repair. Write about the necessity of trusting that Jesus Christ will do what you cannot do.*

- *In what ways can you show the Lord your trust in Him? How can you increase that trust?*

NOTES

DAILY ACCOUNTABILITY

KEY PRINCIPLE: Continue to take personal inventory, and when you are wrong promptly admit it.

By the time you come to step 10, you are ready for a new way of living. The first nine steps helped you learn a pattern of life based on spiritual principles. These principles now become the foundation on which you build for the rest of your life.

In taking the first nine steps, you have applied principles of the gospel—faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and repentance. You have seen miraculous changes in your life. You have experienced love and tolerance, and you have developed a desire for peace. Your desire for your addiction has all but disappeared. When you are tempted, you often find yourself recoiling from your addiction rather than desiring it. You feel humility and awe of what Heavenly Father has done that you could not do alone.

The final three steps will help you maintain your new spiritually minded way of life, so they are often called *maintenance steps.*

Self-evaluation throughout life is not a new concept. In the Book of Mormon, Alma taught that maintaining a mighty change of heart takes effort. In verse after verse, he indicated that honest, prayerful self-appraisal and immediate repentance must be a continual part of life (see Alma 5:14–30). To retain what you have gained, you must stay in fit spiritual condition. You do this by asking the kind of searching questions that Alma suggested about your feelings, thoughts, motives, and conduct. Through daily self-evaluation, you will keep from slipping into denial and complacency.

As you learned in steps 4 and 5, an inventory that includes only your behaviors is not sufficient to change your heart. You also have to examine your thoughts and feelings. This principle is just as true in step 10. Continue to watch for pride in all its forms, and humbly take your weaknesses to your Heavenly Father, as you learned to do in steps 6 and 7. If you feel worried, self-pitying, troubled, anxious, resentful, carnal minded, or fearful in any way, turn immediately to the Father and allow Him to replace these thoughts with peace.

As you pay attention to your thoughts and feelings, you can also discover any negative beliefs you still hold. Ask your Father in Heaven to remove these. In taking step 10, you will no longer have to resort to justifying, rationalizing, or blaming anything or anyone. Your goal will be to keep your heart open and your mind focused on the lessons the Savior has taught.

Most of us follow step 10 by taking inventory each day. As you plan your day, prayerfully examine your motives. Are you doing too much or too little? Are you taking care of your basic spiritual, emotional, and physical needs? Do you serve others?

Ask yourself these and other questions as you seek balance and serenity in your day. As the day unfolds, you can quickly stop negative thoughts or feelings that threaten to overwhelm you. Be especially alert for old behaviors or thinking patterns during highly stressful situations.

Some people think of this type of inventory as a time-out. During this time-out, take a few moments and apply to your immediate situation each principle you have learned in following the steps. You will soon remember how essential it is to rely on the Lord in all your efforts to recover. You can say to yourself in a moment of crisis, "What character weakness in me is being triggered? What have I done to contribute to this problem? Is there anything I can say or do, without pretense, which will lead to a respectful solution for me and the other person? The Lord has all power. I'll relax and trust Him."

If you have taken a negative action toward another person, make amends as quickly as possible. Cast aside pride, and remind yourself that sincerely saying "I was wrong" is often just as important in healing a relationship as saying "I love you."

Before you go to bed, examine your entire day. Ask yourself if you still need to counsel with the Lord about any negative behaviors, thoughts, or feelings. In addition to counseling with the Lord, you can talk to an adviser or a friend in the program, someone you can trust to be objective about your thinking.

You will continue to make mistakes as you interact with others, but a commitment to step 10 is a commitment to take responsibility for mistakes. If you examine

your thoughts and actions each day and resolve them, negative thoughts and feelings will not increase until they threaten your abstinence. You no longer have to live in isolation from the Lord or others. You will have strength and faith to face difficulties and overcome them. You can rejoice in your progress and trust that practice and patience will ensure continued recovery.

Action Steps

Participate in priesthood interviews as part of your commitment to self-appraisal; continue to strengthen your relationships with other Church members

We can all remember a time when we were afraid to look honestly at our own behaviors. Trying to avoid such moments was one reason many of us limited our involvement in the Church. However, as we progressed through this program of rigorous honesty, we began to understand the value of self-appraisal.

Now we no longer fear the opportunities for self-appraisal that come through activity in the Church. We are able to appreciate the truth of this teaching of Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve:

"Worthiness interviews, sacrament meetings, temple attendance, and other Church meetings are all part of the plan that the Lord provides to educate our souls, to help us develop the healthy habit of constantly checking our bearings to stay on the path of faith. Regular spiritual checkups help us navigate life's highways and byways. . . .

". . . We can all . . . benefit by looking deep inside our hearts during reverent moments of worship and prayer and asking ourselves this simple question, 'Am I true?'

"The question becomes more powerfully useful if we are completely honest with our answers and if it motivates us to make repentant course corrections that keep us on the path of faith" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 20; or *Ensign,* May 1997, 17).

As you participate in these opportunities for self-evaluation, you will find yourself growing in love for brothers and sisters in the fellowship of the Church.

Examine your thoughts, words, and deeds daily; immediately set right any wrongs

Step 10 represents acceptance of the truth that you must continue to live by spiritual principles. If you stray from them, repent immediately and ask God at once to restore your peace through His Spirit. Honesty and humility can strengthen you. You will become more conscious of Heavenly Father's presence in your life as you call on Him to help you stay spiritually clean. You will learn to value progress and to forgive imperfection in yourself and others. You will lose the desire to be at odds with anything or anyone. Self-appraisal becomes a way of life as you let go of fears and overcome temptations one day at a time.

Study and Understanding

Study the following scriptures and statements of Church leaders. Use these scriptures, statements, and questions for meditation, study, and writing. Be honest and specific.

Watch your thoughts, words, and deeds

"If ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not" (Mosiah 4:30).

- *It could be dangerous or deadly if you didn't pay attention to what you were doing while driving a car. How does step 10 help you to stay awake and alert to where you are going in life?*

- *Write about being self-observant. How does self-appraisal help you avoid lapsing again into your addictions (and perishing)?*

Humility and self-control

"Blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble" (Alma 32:16).

- *Being willing to eliminate negative thoughts before they erupt into hurtful behavior is a way of humbling yourself without being compelled. Write about your willingness to humble yourself. Experiment for a day with eliminating negative thoughts. What blessings come to you?*

Living in the present

"The more enlightened a person is, the more he seeks the gift of repentance, and the harder he strives to free himself from sin as often as he falls short of the divine will. . . . It follows that the sins of the god-fearing and the righteous are continually remitted because they repent and seek the Lord anew every day and every hour" (Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary,* 3 vols. [1966–73], 3:342–43).

- *One of the most beneficial effects—mentally, emotionally, and spiritually—of living the principles described in these steps is that you learn to live in the present. How does step 10 help you to deal with life one hour at a time when necessary?*

- *How does it help you to know that you only have to live these principles one day at a time?*

Continuing repentance and forgiveness

"As oft as they repented and sought forgiveness, with real intent, they were forgiven" (Moroni 6:8).

- *Knowing that the Lord is willing to forgive you as often as you repent with real intent can give you courage to try again each time you fall short. Write what you think it means to repent and seek forgiveness with real intent.*

Continuing in your spiritual growth

"I would that ye should be humble, and be submissive and gentle; easy to be entreated; full of patience and long-suffering; being temperate in all things" (Alma 7:23).

- *Whoever coined the old saying "Practice makes perfect" didn't mention how much patience it takes to keep practicing. How does self-appraisal and making amends on a daily basis ensure you will continue in your humility and your spiritual development?*

"Behold, in the last days, . . . both those who shall come upon this land and those who shall be upon other lands, yea, even upon all the lands of the earth, behold, they will be drunken with iniquity and all manner of abominations. . . .

". . . Behold, all ye that doeth iniquity, stay yourselves and wonder, for ye shall cry out, and cry; yea, ye shall be drunken but not with wine, ye shall stagger but not with strong drink" (2 Nephi 27:1, 4).

"When the night came they were drunken with anger, even as a man who is drunken with wine; and they slept again upon their swords" (Ether 15:22).

- *In these verses, people are described as drunken but not with wine. Recovering addicts often refer to this kind of situation as being on a "dry drunk" or "an emotional bender." Write about any tendency you might have to hold on to anger or other hurtful emotions.*

- *How does taking an inventory at the end of each day help you overcome this tendency?*

Lifelong improvement

"I still feel to urge upon the Latter-day Saints the necessity of a close application of the principles of the Gospel in our lives, conduct and words and all that we do; and it requires the whole man, the whole life to be devoted to improvement in order to come to knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ" (Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young,* sel. John A. Widtsoe [1954], 11).

- *Taking these steps could definitely be described as a "close application" of gospel principles. How does being willing to evaluate yourself daily at every level—actions, words, thoughts, feelings, and beliefs—help you devote yourself to lifelong improvement?*

NOTES

PERSONAL REVELATION

KEY PRINCIPLE: Seek through prayer and meditation to know the Lord's will and to have the power to carry it out.

As we studied and practiced the steps of recovery, we became familiar and comfortable with a life based on humility and acceptance of God's will. Gone were the angry, confused times when, if we prayed at all, we prayed either in an attitude of stubborn self-will or whimpering self-pity. We began to live so our lives reflected the prophetic counsel of President Ezra Taft Benson: "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" ("Jesus Christ—Gifts and Expectations," *Ensign,* Dec. 1988, 2).

In step 11, we made a lifelong commitment to seek one day at a time to know the Lord's will and to have the power to carry it out. Our greatest desire was to improve our abilities to receive guidance from the Holy Ghost and to conduct our lives accordingly. This desire was such a great contrast to the attitudes we had when we were lost in our addictions.

If you were like us, before you began to recover you thought hope, joy, peace, and fulfillment would come from an earthly source. Whether this source was alcohol, drugs, sex, gambling, dishonest spending, unhealthy eating, or codependency—whatever your particular addiction was—your effort was to get by in a world where you felt confused, lost, and alone. When others tried to love you, perhaps you couldn't feel it. Their love was never enough. Nothing satisfied the hunger you felt. As you have lived the principles of recovery, however, your heart and life have changed.

You have begun to understand and appreciate your need for the Savior, Jesus Christ, and His role in your life and to treasure the Light of Christ. You have begun to realize you are not just talking to yourself when you feel your conscience guide you. Clumsy and unpracticed as you may have felt initially, you now pray to the Father in the name of Christ for a closer relationship with Him. You deliberately "seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written" (Ether 12:41).

You study the scriptures because they testify of Him in every instance, especially the Book of Mormon. In testimony after testimony, the prophets of the Book of Mormon describe seeking and finding a better understanding of the Father through the Holy Ghost. You have experimented on the scriptures and found them to be true. Prayer and meditation have become the lifeblood of your new life. Where prayer and meditation used to be a neglected duty, your heart's desire is now to kneel before your Father at least morning and evening and pour out your heart to Him in gratitude for Jesus Christ and for the Holy Ghost.

As you work through step 11, you will come to realize even more that through the Holy Ghost you will receive knowledge or revelation of the Father's will for you. Through the Atonement, you will have the power (or grace) to carry out the will of the Father. You will know you are blessed and supported by three glorified, exalted individuals—God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost—who are united in power and purpose to bring to pass your immortality and eternal life.

You will grow in your ability to resist temptation as you study the scriptures and pray and meditate about them. Learning to receive revelation takes practice and patience. You can prepare yourself by studying what has been said by prophets and apostles and by trying to live according to their teachings. You can prepare by being ready to receive, write down, think about, and follow the guidance you receive. When you express gratitude to the Lord for the blessings you have received, your capacity to receive guidance will increase.

As you keep yourself free from your addictions, you will be more able to receive the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve taught: "The Holy Ghost will protect us against being deceived, but to realize that wonderful blessing we must always do the things necessary to retain that Spirit. We must keep the commandments, pray for guidance, and attend church and partake of the sacrament each Sunday. And we must never do anything to drive away that Spirit. Specifically, we

should avoid pornography, alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, and always, always avoid violations of the law of chastity. We must never take things into our bodies or do things with our bodies that drive away the Spirit of the Lord and leave us without our spiritual protection against deception" (in Conference Report, Oct. 2004, 49; or *Ensign,* Nov. 2004, 46).

Prayer and meditation are powerful antidotes to fear and depression. You "have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save" (2 Nephi 31:19). Only by coming to the Father through Jesus Christ, in His name, with His Spirit upon you, can you continue to progress and grow spiritually. Step 11 represents a commitment to improve your relationship with God through a lifetime practice of seeking guidance daily and obeying the commandments.

Action Steps

Come unto the Father in the name of Jesus Christ for direction and power through private prayer and meditation; receive and study your patriarchal blessing

Over the course of recovery, many of us learned to arise early and seek a period of quiet solitude for study and prayer. If you haven't done so already, schedule time for prayer and meditation, perhaps in the morning. During this time you can put God first, before anyone or anything else in the day. Kneel if you are physically able. Pray, often aloud, to the Father, seeking the Spirit to guide you (see Romans 8:26). Then study, using the scriptures and the teachings of modern prophets to guide your meditation. Review your patriarchal blessing often. Prayerfully ponder the guidance you find in it. (If you have not received a patriarchal blessing, talk with your bishop about obtaining one.)

Writing will once again be a powerful tool of self-expression and appraisal as you record your thoughts and feelings in a journal. You can also record impressions of counsel, comfort, and wisdom that come through the Holy Ghost.

When this precious time of private meditation has ended, do not cease to pray. Silent prayer, in the depths of your heart and mind, will become your way of thinking throughout your days. As you interact with others, as you make decisions, as you deal with emotions and temptations—counsel with the Lord. Invite and seek His Spirit to be with you continually, that you might be guided to do the right thing. (See Psalm 46:1; Alma 37:36–37; 3 Nephi 20:1.)

Meditate throughout the day on the scriptures and other inspired literature; continue to pray

In many ways, step 11 is a natural continuation of your efforts in step 10 to stay aware of the truth in your life. As you plan your days, go about your activities, and retire to bed at night, let your heart be drawn out in prayer to God continually. One idea is to take a thought from what you have read in your morning studies and meditate upon it frequently during your daily activities. This practice will help you keep your mind in tune with truth.

By nature, we all tend to be undisciplined, yet by looking to Jesus Christ and the example He has set, you will find the humility to continue submitting to the Father. Like the Savior, you will be able to say sincerely "Thy will be done" (Matthew 26:42) throughout the day. The Light of Christ will guide you and prepare you to receive the companionship of the Holy Ghost. The companionship of the Holy Ghost will become more constant, and your ability to recognize and testify of truth will increase.

Study and Understanding

Study the following scriptures and statements of Church leaders. They will increase your understanding and help you learn. You can use these scriptures, statements, and questions for prayerful meditation, personal study, and group discussion.

Draw near to the Lord

"Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (D&C 88:63).

- *The Lord respects your will and your agency. He allows you to choose to approach Him without compulsion. He draws near to you when you invite Him to be near. Write about how you will draw near to Him today.*

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Gratitude

"Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 5:17–19).

- *When you remember to be grateful for everything in your life, even the things you don't understand, you will be able to maintain the continual contact with God that Paul called praying "without ceasing." Try to thank God throughout the day. How does this practice affect your closeness to the Spirit?*

Feast on the words of Christ

"Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, 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).

- *In this verse, Nephi taught that when you feast on the words of Christ, these words will guide you in all you need to know and do. Picture how it would be to have Jesus Christ walk and talk with you all day long. Write about the feelings you have when you meditate on this image.*

Personal revelation

"The Savior said 'I will tell you in your *mind* and in your *heart,* by the Holy Ghost' (D&C 8:2, emphasis added). . . . An impression to the *mind* is very specific. Detailed words can be heard or felt and written as

though the instructions were being dictated. A communication to the heart is a more general impression" (Richard G. Scott, "Helping Others to Be Spiritually Led," Doctrine and Covenants and Church history symposium, August 11, 1998, 2).

- *As your understanding of personal revelation increases, you will recognize it more often and in a greater variety of ways. Write about how you have experienced impressions and revelations from the Lord.*

"I say unto you [these things whereof I have spoken] are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit; and this is the spirit of revelation which is in me" (Alma 5:46).

- *Alma testified that when he prayed and fasted, his ability to receive revelation increased. Abstinence from your addiction can be considered a form of fasting. Write about how abstaining has increased your ability to have the spirit of revelation.*

"The idea that scripture reading can lead to inspiration and revelation opens the door to the truth that a scripture is not limited to what it meant when it was written but may also include what that scripture means to a reader today. Even more, scripture reading may also lead to current revelation on whatever else the Lord wishes to communicate to the reader at that time. We do not overstate the point when we say that the scriptures can be a Urim and Thummim to assist each of us to receive personal revelation" (Dallin H. Oaks, "Scripture Reading and Revelation," *Ensign,* Jan. 1995, 8).

- *Learning the language of the scriptures is a lot like learning a foreign language. The best way to learn is to immerse yourself in them, to read and study them every day. Write about a passage of scripture that has opened up to you and become a personal revelation to you.*

Receiving counsel from the Lord

"Seek not to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand. For behold, ye yourselves know that he counseleth in wisdom, and in justice, and in great mercy, over all his works" (Jacob 4:10).

- *Our prayers may have been ineffective in the past because we spent more time counseling the Lord—telling Him what we wanted—than seeking His will about our decisions and conduct. Think of a recent experience with prayer. Was it full of counsel to the Lord or from the Lord? Write about your willingness to listen for and receive His counsel to you.*

NOTES

SERVICE

KEY PRINCIPLE: Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, share this message with others and practice these principles in all you do.

Service will help you grow in the light of the Spirit throughout the rest of your life. In step 10, you learned to evaluate your life each day and to be accountable for your actions. In step 11, you learned to remember the Savior from moment to moment so you might have the guidance of the Holy Ghost as continuously as possible. Step 12 involves the third anchor—service to others—that ensures a continued recovery and a remission of sin.

To remain free of addiction, you must get outside yourself and serve. The desire to help others is a natural result of spiritual awakening.

You have a message of hope for other addicts, for all afflicted and troubled people who are willing to consider a spiritual approach to changing their lives, and for anyone seeking truth and righteousness. The message is that God is a God of miracles, just as He has always been (see Moroni 7:29). Your life proves that. You are becoming a new person through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. You will share this message best through your efforts to serve others. As you serve, your understanding and knowledge of this process is strengthened and deepened.

Sharing your testimony of His mercy and His grace is one of the most important services you can offer. Bearing the burdens of others through acts of kindness and selfless service is part of your new life as a follower of Christ (see Mosiah 18:8).

President Ezra Taft Benson taught: "Men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that He can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. He will deepen their joys, expand their vision, quicken their minds, strengthen their muscles, lift their spirits, multiply their blessings, increase their opportunities, comfort their souls, raise up friends, and pour out peace. Whoever will lose his life in the service of God will find eternal life" ("Jesus Christ—Gifts and Expectations," *Ensign,* Dec. 1988, 4).

Be prayerful as you consider ways to serve, seeking always to be led by the Holy Ghost. If you are willing, you will find many opportunities to share the spiritual principles you have learned. You will find ways to share your testimony with others and opportunities to serve them in many other ways. As you serve others, you will maintain humility by focusing on the gospel principles and practices you have learned. Only then can you be assured that your motives and inspiration are good. Be sure to give freely, not expecting a particular result. Respect the agency of others. Remember that most of us had to "hit bottom" before we were ready to study and apply these principles. The same will be true for most of those you desire to help.

When you become aware of others who deal with addiction in their lives or the lives of their loved ones, you may want to let them know about this guide and the LDS Family Services Addiction Recovery Program. If they feel like talking, let them. Tell some of your story to let them know that you can relate. Don't give advice or try to fix them in any way. Simply inform them of the program and the spiritual principles that have blessed your life.

You may discover that if an addict is not ready to embrace these spiritual principles, perhaps a family member or friend of the addict may be receptive. Virtually everyone living in these perilous times could benefit by learning and applying gospel principles. You may occasionally feel inspired to offer someone a copy of this guide along with a Book of Mormon. In doing so, you will actually share the tools that have helped you rebuild your life by coming to Christ.

When you do something for someone else or share the message of hope and recovery, you must not allow another person to become too dependent on you. Your responsibility is to encourage others who struggle to turn to Heavenly Father and the Savior for guidance and power. In addition, you should not be reluctant to encourage them to turn to the Lord's authorized servants as well. Great blessings can come from the Lord through those who hold priesthood keys.

As you try to help others, you must understand that it will be difficult for them to remain in recovery if family members do not support them or do not understand that recovery takes time. Anyone can recover,

however, no matter how others—even closest loved ones—choose to react.

As you carry to others the message of recovery through gospel principles, you must be patient and meek. There is no place in your new life for ego or any sense of superiority. Never forget where you have come from and how you have been rescued by the grace of God. Jesus Christ will do the same "in all cases" for those who will repent and turn to Him (Mosiah 29:20).

In your enthusiasm to help others, be sure to keep a balance between sharing the message and working on your own program. Your primary focus must continue to be to apply these principles yourself. Your efforts to share these ideas with others will be only as effective as the recovery you maintain.

These principles you have learned and practiced to overcome your addiction are the same principles that will lead you in all aspects of your life to act according to the Lord's plan. Using these principles of the gospel, you can endure to the end as the Lord has commanded and you can do so with joy.

Action Steps

Bear public testimony; magnify callings and talents in serving others; hold family home evening and family prayer; prepare to attend the temple and worship there

Your testimony of the love and mercy of Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, is no longer a theory. It has become a living reality. You have experienced it for yourself. As you have become aware of His love for you, you have also become aware of His love for others.

President Howard W. Hunter taught, "Those of us who have partaken of the Atonement are under obligation to bear faithful testimony of our Lord and Savior" ("The Atonement and Missionary Work," seminar for new mission presidents, June 21, 1994, 2).

Bear testimony to your family in word and deed in the privacy of your own home. Bear testimony in regular family home evenings, family prayer, and family scripture study. Bear testimony as you join with your family in service projects and as you live your life in a Christlike way. You can also bear testimony in Church settings, such as in fast and testimony meetings or in classes or while giving Church service.

Magnify the Church callings you receive. If you do not have responsibilities in your ward or stake, let your bishop know that you are available to serve. You can also bless others by participating in family history work and by preparing to worship and serve in the temple and to make covenants there with the Lord. President Gordon B. Hinckley taught, "Temple service is the end product of all of our teaching and activity" (in Conference Report, Oct. 2005, 3; or *Ensign,* Nov. 2005, 4). The principles taught in this guide will lead you to the temple; they will increase your desire to serve there.

Although you may not have thought it possible before, you can now imagine entering the doors of the holy temple, drinking deeply of the peace there, and feeling close to the Lord in His house. In the temple, you will find spiritual power to continue in your recovery. Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve testified: "Regular temple work can provide spiritual strength. It can be an anchor in daily life, a source of guidance, protection, security, peace, and revelation" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 123; or *Ensign,* May 1992, 88).

Serve others who struggle with addiction by sharing the principles of recovery; apply these principles in all aspects of life

The LDS Family Services Addiction Recovery Program offers great opportunities for service. You can serve others by attending meetings and sharing your experience, faith, and hope. You can support others and strengthen them.

As you have practiced the principles of the gospel, you have learned that the Atonement applies in every aspect of life. President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified: "For some reason we think the Atonement of Christ applies *only* at the end of mortal life to redemption from the Fall, from spiritual death. It is much more than that. It is an ever-present power to call upon in everyday life. When we are racked or harrowed up or tormented by guilt or burdened with grief, He can heal us" (in Conference Report, Apr. 2001, 28; or *Ensign,* May 2001, 23).

You can share this message with others through your example and your words of encouragement. When you meet people throughout the day, greet them with a smile. Show gratitude for what they do. When opportunities arise, bear testimony of the hope that comes through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Study and Understanding

The scriptures and the teachings of Church leaders will help you continue your recovery. Study the following scriptures and statements. Use them for prayerful meditation, personal study, and group discussion.

Conversion and recovery

"Converted means to turn from one belief or course of action to another. Conversion is a spiritual and moral change. *Converted* implies not merely mental acceptance of Jesus and his teachings but also a motivating faith in him and his gospel—a faith which works a transformation, an actual change in one's understanding of life's meaning and in his allegiance to God in interest, in thought, and in conduct" (Marion G. Romney, in Conference Report, Guatemala Area Conference 1977, 8).

- *The Savior counseled Peter to strengthen his brethren after he was converted (see Luke 22:32). Write about President Romney's definition of conversion and how it applies to your experience in recovery.*

- *How do you feel about strengthening others as they recover from addictive behaviors?*

Great progress from little steps

"Be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great" (D&C 64:33).

- *Write about the feelings you have when you think of living these principles in all aspects of your life. How does it help to realize that great works are done in small steps?*

Strengthening others

"This is my glory, that perhaps I may be an instrument in the hands of God to bring some soul to repentance; and this is my joy.

"And behold, when I see many of my brethren truly penitent, and coming to the Lord their God, then is my soul filled with joy; then do I remember what the Lord has done for me, yea, even that he hath heard my prayer; yea, then do I remember his merciful arm which he extended towards me" (Alma 29:9–10).

- *We have learned that it is critical to recovery to be willing to share our testimonies of these principles. How will sharing your experience help you remain strong in your recovery?*

"[As ye] are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life—

"Now I say unto you, if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?" (Mosiah 18:9–10).

- *Your experience with addiction helps you empathize with those who struggle with addiction; your experience in recovery helps you comfort them. Write about your increased desire and your ability to stand as a witness of God since you have followed the steps of recovery.*

Serving with the help of the Lord

"The Redeemer chose imperfect men to teach the way to perfection. He did so then; He does so now" (Thomas S. Monson, in Conference Report, Apr. 2004, 19; or *Ensign,* May 2004, 20).

- *Sometimes we wonder if we are ready to share recovery with others because we are not yet practicing these principles perfectly. How does it quiet your fears to realize that the Savior works through imperfect people?*

The power of God unto salvation

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16).

- *Write your thoughts and feelings as you look back and consider that it took a spiritual experience to help you overcome your addiction. Write about any feelings of reluctance you may have to tell others that you were healed by applying the principles of the gospel of Christ.*

"Go your way whithersoever I will, and it shall be given you by the Comforter what you shall do and whither you shall go.

"Pray always, lest you enter into temptation and lose your reward.

"Be faithful unto the end, and lo, I am with you. These words are not of man nor of men, but of me, even Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, by the will of the Father" (D&C 31:11–13).

- *The scriptures are full of guidance for those who wish to maintain a spiritual way of life that will lead them back to God. What specific guidance do you find in these verses?*

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