

Patterns of Light:

Step One

Discovering Patterns of Recovery
within the Book of Mormon
and Twelve Step Literature

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Introduction

Hi! My name is Colleen, and I'm a person who has been challenged by compulsive addictive behaviors most of my life.

Before I go any further, I would like to express my appreciation for this chance to share my experience, strength and hope with you. Thanks for being there for me and blessing me with this opportunity.

The Origin of This Work

I've been in and around Twelve Step groups since 1981, working on my recovery from several forms of severe childhood trauma and the dependencies on compulsive eating, compulsive spending, perfectionism, workaholism, and codependency that resulted from that trauma. I have also struggled to overcome self-worth and self-esteem issues that stem from such childhood experiences and adult choices. It requires a daily dose (and sometimes several times a day) of spiritual connectedness to sustain a remission from the lies I have inherited and the challenges those incorrect beliefs create for me.

This study guide originally began with my attempt to turn to the scriptures every morning for at least 10–15 minutes, looking for and capturing from verses that verified one of the principles in the Twelve Steps. (See "What Is Capturing" p. 39)

I focused primarily on the Book of Mormon because President Ezra Taft Benson, who was the prophet of the Church at the time, had stated that the Book of Mormon was *the* book written for *our* time. I theorized that if this were so, then it should be all about recovery. I wondered if I would be able to find these twelve principles validated in the Book of Mormon.

I purchased an inexpensive copy of the Book of Mormon. I wanted to feel free to underline, write in the margins, and generally mark it up with complete abandon to the Spirit that I fully trusted would attend my efforts.

At first, I was a little doubtful. I was positive the word “addiction” was *not* in the Book of Mormon. But as I began to read, I felt as if I had been given a gift of translation. It was as if I were reading with new eyes. I began to see the references to “bondage” as references to the *bondage* of addiction. I saw references to “enemies” as being applicable to my character defects or to my dysfunctional behaviors which had once been my coping devices – addictions and compulsions that had started as my friends but were now on the verge of destroying me.

With just those two transpositions, the Book of Mormon became the *ultimate* book on addiction and recovery. I read it with an excitement and a hunger and a thirst that I had never felt before.

The Book of Mormon spoke to me, personally. I began to awaken to the truth of Joseph’s statement that *this book is “the most correct of any book on earth.”* (**Book of Mormon, Introduction**) It has truly become the keystone of my spiritual life. And in harmony with the pattern of true principles found in the Twelve Steps, I had its precepts open to my mind and heart and have been brought nearer to God than I ever imagined possible. It is this harmony that I hope to convey for the blessing of others.

By the time I finished the Book of Mormon, the truth of the Twelve Steps and the realization that they are a powerful curriculum for studying the Gospel principles in simple, baby steps was riveted on my heart – and so was the truth of the Book of Mormon, as well as a renewal of my witness of Joseph Smith’s prophetic calling and of the Church’s authenticity.

The Intention of This Work

These study booklets are not intended to take the place of your personal scripture study. They are simply to demonstrate the recovery that is available in the scriptures of the Restoration. It is my intent, hope, and prayer that you will enjoy and rejoice in these offered insights, *and* that you will have many insights of your own as your heart resonates and your mind responds to the insights I've been given to share.

These booklets have been created to fit a standard daily planner, with the idea that you will be reminded and encouraged to include journal pages, references and comments of your own. In fact, we're counting on you to do that. Use this booklet as a starting point on your journey of recovery. Then, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, transform it into a record of your relationship with the scriptures and with the Lord.

It is my fervent prayer that working through these exercises will introduce everyone who uses them to the truthfulness of both the Book of Mormon and the Twelve Step model of recovery – and all for the purpose of bringing us to Christ, that we might become perfect through our relationship with Him. **(Moroni 10:32)**

- Colleen C. Harrison

Step One:

We admitted we were powerless—that our lives had become unmanageable.

Admitted that we of ourselves are powerless, nothing without God.

Introduction

Step One presented quite a hurdle for me when I was first introduced to it—as it does many Latter-day Saints. *Me? Powerless? Not me!* After all, I am a child of God, *literally*. That’s what the Restoration teaches. God sent me here to prove that I can stand on my own two feet, learn to be a God myself. God is independent. Isn’t he?... (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 353)

Believe me, if being power-filled and self-sufficient was the end result God wanted to see in me, then my addiction—this desperate, destructive dependency I had on overeating—was convicting me of being the worst failure I could imagine. I needed my addiction to get me through every day of my life. I felt hopeless and powerless, living a life of spiritual bankruptcy created by the “rapacious creditor” of my addiction. (*AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, 21) (Subsequently referred to in this text as *12 & 12*.)

As I prayed and pondered my way through the Book of Mormon, I found dozens of references to support the idea that we are powerless without God. The harmony between Bill Wilson’s life-changing experience and Ammon’s words hit my soul with all the power of the principle of **“out of the mouths of two or [more] witnesses” (Matthew 18:16; D& C 6:28):**

There I humbly offered myself to God, as I then understood Him, to do with me as He would. I placed myself unreservedly under His care and direction. *I admitted for the first time that of myself I was nothing; that without Him I was lost.* (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 13; emphasis added.) (Subsequently referred to in this text as AA.)

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 26:12)

And finally from the Pearl of Great Price:

Now, for this cause I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed. (Moses 1:10)

I was frankly puzzled and tempted to be frustrated at either myself or the Church. I couldn't figure out how I could have read so many books by church leaders, and attended Seminary, Institute, Education Weeks, Sunday School – and not heard this principle taught! How could a concept so central to the message of the scriptures of the Restoration and to the theology of the Gospel be so unfamiliar in our cultural paradigm? The following benevolent insight came to me as I prayed to understand:

Such a mindset is understandable, when one places the Latter-day Saints in their historical context. The early history of the Church – their persecution within the United States borders; their flight into the wilderness of the unsettled arid desert regions of the great Intermountain West; their necessity to establish a tradition of intense self-reliance. All of these add up to a relatively insulated and sheltered environment, and understandably so. Steeped in this tradition for over a hundred and fifty years, several generations of Latter-day Saints (speaking of our people as a whole, not as individuals) have often confused the value of temporal independence *under* God (D&C 78:14) with needing to be independent *from* God.

The following 28 daily exercises weave together the testimony of the Book of Mormon with complementary quotes from the original literature of Alcoholics Anonymous, and offer an in-depth study of Step One and the principle of powerlessness. Commentary and thought-provoking questions are included to help liken these concepts to your own recovery. Use the sacred tool of prayerful writing to capture and hold these principles in your heart and to leave a record of your spiritual journey for your children and loved ones who come after you.

Step One—Week One

1.1 Mosiah 3:19—“For the natural man is an enemy to God...”

This verse in Mosiah goes on to describe what it means to become a saint, not through our own works, but through the atonement of Christ. We must somehow persuade (D&C 121:41) our natural-man self to become: **“as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to *all things* which the Lord seeth fit to *inflict* upon [us], even as a child doth submit to his father.”** (Mosiah 3:19; emphasis added)

Who cares to admit complete defeat? Practically no one, of course. Every *natural instinct* cries out against the idea of personal powerlessness. (12 & 12, 21; emphasis added)

Can you hear the harmony of these two testimonies?

I have come to realize that there exists in each of us two selves, or personae. I’m not referring to a pathological condition such as Multiple Personality Disorder. I’m talking about the average person seeking to become whole. Within each of us is the eternal self, who is *not* an

enemy to God. According to LDS theology, this eternal self exists co-eternally with God, lived with God, and valiantly defended God's truth before this mortality. And then, also within us, is our finite, mortal self – our natural-man self – who came into existence only a number of years ago and who knows only so much of life as we have been taught in this mortality.

The natural man expresses itself as pride. This pride is actually a form of “*enmity* toward God... [a] ‘hatred toward, hostility to, or a state of opposition.’” (Ezra Taft Benson, “Beware of Pride,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 4) It is a rejection of the spiritual and of being led by the Spirit. The natural man leads us to place our dependency needs on something or someone in this world – the only world we can remember. To become powerless and to see yourself as *nothing without God* is the equivalent of bringing your natural-man self to admit that God exists, that your eternal self exists, and that your natural-man self is as completely dependent upon God and the eternal self within you as an infant is dependent upon his parents.

Application:

Ponder and prayerfully write about how your life has been marked by resistance to being willing to “accept life completely on life’s terms” (AA, 449). How has your addiction (or other insurmountable problem) kept you from relying on God and honoring the spiritual life (self) within you? Have you felt any degree of “*enmity*” towards God – or towards the events, circumstances or people in the life God has allowed you to have? How have feelings of confusion, frustration, or even outright anger contributed to your flight into idolatry (addiction)?

1.2 Mosiah 3:25 – “Therefore they have *drunk* damnation to their own souls.” (emphasis added)

Compulsive addictive behaviors include drinking alcohol, overeating, using illegal drugs or an excess of legal drugs, using sexual excitement and indulging in any other addictive substance or behavior. The problem with these behaviors is that they begin small. We often ease into our addiction. Gradually, our use grows, until eventually it is so powerful that it literally damns or stops our emotional and spiritual development. Our relationship with our addictions can destroy all our other relationships, like a cancer which robs healthy cells around it of energy and nourishment. Even our physical health can be threatened as we progress from an occasional indulgence, to a habit, to a compulsion, to a degree of self-destructive addiction that begins to *possess* our soul and influences us to “**shrink from the presence of the Lord**” – who is our *only* hope for deliverance. It is as if the addiction takes on a life of its own and perpetuates itself in our minds and hearts.

Application:

Write a very brief (1 or 2 pages, maximum) history of your compulsive addictive behavior. What was it like at first? How much did you indulge in this behavior in the beginning of your relationship with it? How has it progressed? Have there been periods of remission when you’ve been able to avoid these behaviors? How have you felt when the behaviors returned? Has it caused you to give up on the Lord? Or have you felt that He must have given up on you? Does it feel like this behavior pattern has a life of its own? Where do you think it gets that life? (Read **Moroni 7:17** before you answer.)

1.3 Mosiah 4:2 – “And they had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even *less than the dust of the earth.*” (emphasis added)

Remember, these were good, active members of the church who gathered to hear King Benjamin’s words and

who came to “[view] themselves in their own *carnal state*.” Why less than the dust of the earth? Because the dust of the earth loves and obeys God instantly, spontaneously, trusting Him in all things, while man—even the most devout man—wrestles with the temptation to resist or turn away from God. (See **Helaman 12:6** and **2 Nephi 4**) Each of us must eventually come to a place where we are humble enough to admit that we too are “**less than the dust of the earth**.” All of us—whether active church member, less active, or outright inactive, disfellowshipped or excommunicated—must first accept our “devastating [tendency to] weakness and all its consequences,” as a “stark fact” of our mortal existence (*12 & 12*, p. 21).

Application:

Ponder and prayerfully write about your feelings and reactions surrendering to the fact of your own mortal limitations and weaknesses. How does it feel to realize that you have finally discovered the boundaries of your own willpower? Are you grateful to be compelled to be humble and to turn to God? Why or why not?

1.4 Mosiah 24:21—“For they were *in bondage*, and none could deliver them except it were the Lord their God.” (emphasis added)

Bondage. Here is the key concept that originally burst upon my mind and opened my awareness to the beautiful harmony between the Twelve Step program of recovery from addiction and the Book of Mormon. Suddenly, the Book of Mormon’s emphasis on wars and battles and people taking each other captive—all the dynamics of life and death struggles—made perfect sense to me. The entire book is a series of metaphors and parables about how people get into bondage and how they get out! We who have fled into the prisons of addictive or compulsive behavior, driven there by our resentments and regrets, our self-pity and self-will, are also enslaved. And as the Book of Mormon and the original literature of Alcoholics

Anonymous testify in unison: We are “100% hopeless, apart from divine help.” (AA, 43) There is no power that can deliver us from the bondage of compulsive, addictive behaviors either, except Christ. “Only an act of Providence can remove [them] from us.” (12 & 12, 21)

Application:

Ponder and prayerfully write about the battle you have waged with your problem. How many other ways have you tried to deal with or overcome your addiction or problem? List these “half measures” (AA, 59) that may have been good up to a point but which then lost their power to sustain your recovery.

1.5 Mosiah 27:29 – “My soul hath been redeemed from the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity. I was in the darkest abyss;...My soul was racked with eternal torment.”

Gall of bitterness? bonds of iniquity? darkest abyss? racked with eternal torment? Have you ever heard a better set of phrases to describe the experience of hitting bottom? Step One is the establishment of *absolute need* for God. For most of us, this is not a very pleasant experience. We feel like our mortal weaknesses have sucked us down into the clutches of insanity and the pits of hell. How paradoxical it is to realize that this bottomed-out place of absolute humility is actually the same firm bedrock upon which all the other principles of recovery, repentance and redemption are grounded. (12 & 12, p. 21)

Application:

Ponder and prayerfully write about one or more of those pits of hell moments, or periods of insanity in your own darkest abyss experience. This exercise of remembering is not for the sake of further torture, but for the sake of stripping away any layers of denial that may still be covering up our full consciousness of how awful it was – and maybe still is.

“Bitterness.” “Bonds.” “Iniquity.” “Darkest abyss.”
“Eternal torment.” (See **D&C 19:5–12**) How could you use these words to apply to your past? If you feel these words don’t apply to you or your situation, you may be one of those who will be spared from having to bottom out because of your willingness to learn these things without being compelled. (**Alma 32:16; 12 & 12, 23**) Go ahead and write about the hardest moments you’ve had, or that you’ve seen others have.

1.6 Alma 32:13—“Because ye are compelled to be humble blessed are ye; for a man sometimes, if he is compelled to be humble, seeketh repentance.”

No direct compulsion may be used upon the souls of the children of men by a righteous priesthood holder (**D&C 121:37 and 41**). Thus, while God does not compel us directly, by force, He does allow other influences, such as natural circumstances and consequences, to give us experience. He knows full well that **“wickedness never was happiness”** (**Alma 41:10**) and that, sooner or later, we will have had enough of the influence of wickedness to realize that truth, also. And when we do, we will each come around, come to our self, and come back to Him—all in the act of seeking repentance. When we come to Him, we realize that all of this life’s experiences have been orchestrated for this very purpose—to compel, or cause, us to be humble, that we will seek repentance and turn to God. Then *He* is free to give us all that He has. Our compulsions can compel us to be humble or powerless, thus turning our hearts to God.

Application:

Ponder and prayerfully write about the idea that while God does not—in fact, *can* not—compel us, He has created this telestial world so that we can be exposed to good and evil, or rather, what works and what doesn’t work. Write about the idea that God Himself did not make up these rules or these consequences. They are laws

and principles that He too has had to live by while working out His own salvation and rising to His now exalted station. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 345) Does understanding this change your feelings toward God? Does it soften your heart towards Him?

1.7 Alma 32:6—“Afflictions...humbled them...in a preparation to hear the word.”

Here we catch another glimpse of God’s purpose in allowing us to be afflicted by insurmountable experiences. It is to get our attention, to pull us back from the distractions of this world. It brings us to our self, brings us to a consciousness of what is true. He allows all this to prepare us to hear “the word” that will lead us to know *the Word*, even Jesus Christ—that we may recover and be at one with Him and with our Father who sent Him.

Application:

As you come to the end of this week’s study of Step One and the principle of powerlessness, prayerfully summarize your thoughts concerning “powerlessness,” “nothingness,” and “humility.” Realizing that “few people will sincerely try to [embrace and internalize these principles] unless they have hit bottom” (12 & 12, 24), describe how this week’s study has increased your willingness to define the bottom you’re at now. Is it sufficiently deep enough and hard enough to be the “firm bedrock” from which to rebound, repent and recover a spiritually believing, trusting life?

Step One: Week Two

- 2.1 Helaman 4:13—**“And because of...their boastings in their own strength, they were left in their own strength; therefore they did not prosper, but were afflicted and smitten.”**

The Lord is so agency oriented that He'll give us only as much strength as we are willing to acknowledge that we need. If we are determined to live by self-sufficiency and a standard of “I must do this myself” or “I *will* do this myself,” He'll let us—even if, like the two-year-old who insists on tying his own shoes, we are a little premature in our estimation of our own ability. And like the wise parent of a two-year-old, He lets us keep trying until we finally are willing to submit ourselves to Him and let Him guide our hands and our hearts and our minds. While it is true that **“this life is the time for men to prepare to meet [i.e. be like] God” (Alma 34:32)**, He never intended that we do that learning and preparing alone, without His constant counsel (**Alma 37:37**).

Application:

The common way to define those days when we do not participate in our addictive or compulsive behavior is in terms of abstinence—in other words, in terms of our ability to abstain. Ponder and prayerfully write about what it would mean to our humility if we were to think in terms of “days of *deliverance*” rather than “days of abstinence.” How would this shift in focus from abstinence to deliverance help us to avoid boasting (even to ourselves) of our own strength?

2.2 Mosiah 29:19 – “They must unavoidably remain in bondage until now.”

There is no way we can avoid, by ourselves, the bondage of our addiction. “No amount of human willpower [can] break it” (12 & 12, p. 22). Our will *must* be connected to God’s power if we are ever to be free.

Application:

Ponder and prayerfully write about your experience at exerting willpower to overcome your weakness. Was willpower ever enough? It may seem to work for awhile, but then what happens? Do you know someone who seems to have tremendous willpower? They “make up their mind” and they do it—whatever *it* is—never looking to the left, or to the right, or to *the heavens*. Are you, or were you, ever like that? Write about what is missing from this approach to recovery. What might these people still have to learn?

2.3 2 Nephi 9:42 – “And save they shall...consider themselves *fools* before God, and come down in the depths of humility, he will not open unto them.” (emphasis added)

By the time addiction has “had its way” with us, most of us have come to a place of “pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization” (AA, 30). We don’t want to try again, just to end up a failure, looking like a fool. We come to a place of complete defeat, of “absolute humiliation” (12 & 12, p. 21). At this point, we have nothing left to bargain with the Lord. It is a state of *total surrender*, from which we seek Him with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. It is then, and only then, that He can “open” to us.

Our human resources [within ourselves and others], as marshaled by the will, were not sufficient; [sooner or later] they failed utterly. (AA, 45)

Application:

This verse speaks of those who are prone to put more faith in the learning and wisdom and riches of the world than in God. Ponder and prayerfully write about how many arm-of-flesh psychological or physical cures you've tried. How many, if any, gave more than a passing mention to the spiritual life?

A Twelve Step program of recovery defines Step One as a crisis of the most life-changing proportions. It challenges us to "face the proposition that either God is everything or else He is nothing. God either is, or He isn't. What [is] our choice to be?" (AA, 53) Write about your readiness to make this choice, and what that choice will be.

Consider the following:

The spiritual life is not a theory. *We have to live it.*
(AA, 83)

How do you feel about living life from the inside out? Has living from the outside in brought much genuine peace or happiness? (Read "Born of God," Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, July 1989, 4)

2.4 Alma 15:5— "And they went in unto the house unto Zeezrom; and they found him upon his bed, sick, being very low with a burning fever; and his mind also was exceedingly sore because of his iniquities; and when he saw them he stretched forth his hand, and besought them that they would heal him."

Zeezrom was powerless to help himself. He could not free himself from the pain of his iniquities, the pain that manifested itself in the form of physical illness. Many illnesses presented to medical doctors for treatment are caused or aggravated by mental or emotional stress. Only God can still these tempests within.

To get the most from your participation in a Twelve Step program of recovery, you have to admit that "...you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer." (AA, 44).

Application:

Ponder and prayerfully write about any physical ailments that you suspect, or outright *know*, were magnified and/or caused by the same fears and inner turmoil that drove you to your addiction. Have you found yourself caught in a terrible spiral of various illnesses brought on by your addiction? Describe how this spiral has manifested itself in your life.

2.5 Alma 13:28 – “That ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear.”

Before taking Step One, we may find that we constantly put ourselves in the way of temptation. We experiment with “countless vain attempts to prove” we can behave like a non-addicted person in relationship to our addictive behavior (AA, 30). It is only God’s power that relieves us of this “insane urge” to continue to “ultimately destroy ourselves” (12&12, 22).

Application:

Ponder, remember and prayerfully write about some of the times in the past when you have played with fire, trying to prove that this time you could handle it, that you could stop whenever you wanted. *Alcoholics Anonymous* compares this to a person with an insane compulsion to jaywalk in front of traffic – the bigger and the faster the vehicle, the better. Over and over he gets hit and put in the hospital, only to get out and try it again (AA, 37–38). One of the signs of an addiction is that, while you might be very functional and sane in every other area of your life, in *this* area you have *no* lasting control. Write about whether you’re really ready to give up that pretense of control over your addiction.

2.6 Alma 22:14 – “[Man] could not merit *anything of himself.*” (emphasis added)

Sometimes we think that self-knowledge – such as what we gain from psychology and medical science – will cure us of our need to use our addictive behavior. However, true addicts soon learn differently:

[Someone who is truly addicted] will be *absolutely unable to stop... on the basis of self-knowledge*. This is a point we wish to emphasize and re-emphasize... (AA, 39)

We are *all* part of the fallen condition of man. We cannot merit anything of ourselves. Our situation is hopeless without the Savior. It is not through a relationship with alcohol, or excess food, or illicit sex, or overworking, or overspending – but through a relationship with our Savior that we can be restored to “**a perfect brightness of hope**” (2 Nephi 31:20). How crazy is it, then, that in our pride and rebelliousness, we keep trying to bring about our own recovery through “every form of self-deception and experimentation,” even using our outward behavior as active members of the Church to “prove [ourselves] exceptions to the rule?” (AA, 31)

Application:

Ponder and prayerfully write about self-knowledge. To what lengths have you gone, what kind of money have you spent seeking to know yourself or to find yourself? Joseph Smith made the statement, “If men do not comprehend the character of God, they do not comprehend themselves.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 343) What does this imply about the importance of coming to God and learning to know Him? How does knowing God have an impact upon knowing yourself?

2.7 Ether 3:2—“We are unworthy before thee; because of the fall our natures have become evil continually.”

To *be evil* is most broadly and yet most precisely defined as *being separated from God*. Thus, because of the fall we are all separated from God—at least in the physical sense. Remembering this helps us to realize why the brother of Jared would make such an inclusive statement. His statement takes in all of us, even the most feverishly active saint. We are all *continually* separated from God while in this physical realm of life, and we must all learn to rely completely upon the spiritual realm and to develop a spiritual life.

Application:

Ponder and prayerfully write about what it means to be unworthy and in a state of “evil continually.” Can you do anything about the fall or about your own fallen nature?

Sometimes we wonder how we got ourselves into such “**a dark and dreary waste,**” as our life seems to be at times. Paradoxical as the answer may be, Lehi’s dream can be likened unto each of us. Read and ponder **1 Nephi 8: 5–7**. Who is the man “**dressed in a white robe**”? How is it that we apparently followed Him in entering mortality, *and* that it is only by following Him that we can be led out of the effects of the fall?

Step One—Week Three

3.1 Mormon 2:26—“Nevertheless the strength of the Lord was not with us; yea, we were left to ourselves, that the Spirit of the Lord did not abide in us.”

In the “old days,” I would read the Book of Mormon and be so perplexed and put off by all the accounts of wars and bloodshed. Then came the day I realized the whole

book is about the absolutely universal natural man tendency to turn away from God and try to live life without Him. I have come to realize that God *never* initiates a separation between us. If He has left me to myself, it is because I have already, however subtly, started looking to my addiction for what only God can supply — the strength to stand against my life’s challenges (enemies).

Application:

Write a history of your relationship with the Book of Mormon. When, and at what age, and to what effect have you read it in the past? Has your reading always been for the purpose of completing an assignment, or a goal of quantity? How are these study-guide questions helping you to focus more upon quality?

3.2 Mormon 5:23 — “Know ye not that ye are in the hands of God? Know ye not that he hath all power?”

This verse rehearses again, in harmony with **Mosiah 4:9**, the stark fact that God has *all* power — not just *part*, not just *some* — but *all*.

Alcoholics Anonymous reflects this same true principle:

Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a *Power greater than ourselves*. Obviously. But where and how were we to find this Power? Well, that’s exactly what this book is about. Its main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem....And [that] means, of course, that we are going to talk about God. (*AA*, 45)

Application:

If *all* power in heaven and on earth is really *God’s* power, where is the power you are using — even at this moment to breathe and to read these words — coming from? When

we think of willpower, to whom do we usually give the credit for whatever gets accomplished – self or God? Prayerfully write about the idea that even though all power is God’s, He honors the supreme principle of agency and allows us to use it according to *our own will* (Alma 29:4).

3.3 Alma 38:14 – “Acknowledge your unworthiness before God at all times.”

Alma reminds his son, Shiblon, to be “**not lifted up unto pride**” (Alma 38:11). And again, he advises him, “**Do not say: O God, I thank thee that we are better than our brethren; but rather say: O Lord, forgive my unworthiness**” (Alma 38:14). Often we disguise our powerlessness in a very strange way. We say, in effect, “Oh, I would have plenty of power to do what I want *if it just weren’t for _____*” and then we fill in the blank with the name of a person, or the description of a set of circumstances, or an event that we blame for our poor choice(s).

Application:

Ponder and prayerfully write about your excuses – the other people and events that you’ve used to explain why you couldn’t make a right choice; why you *had* to make a poor choice; why you *had* to use your addiction. Think of at least one specific incident and write a short narrative or story about it.

3.4 Helaman 13:6 – “*And nothing can save this people save it be repentance.*” (emphasis added)

Nothing can save this people unless they repent, or in other words, return to God. Why? Because without God we are nothing, helpless and pitifully adrift on the raging sea of mortality.

Application:

Ponder and prayerfully write about how listening to the evening news on television can make you feel as if you're adrift on the raging sea of mortality. Now look closer to home. How do the events or choices made in the lives of your family members make you feel? What about events or choices in your own life? Does self-pity help you deal with these realities, or does it make it worse? How does self-pity stop you from seeking God?

3.5 Moroni 9:22—“For I know that they must perish *except they repent and return unto him.*” (emphasis added)

It's interesting that this verse is worded so that repenting and turning unto God are mentioned in sequence. It teases out the truth that many people do the one, but not the other. Many people picture repenting as stopping the detrimental behavior. They do not realize that repenting also includes turning to God. “Repent” does not mean to turn *away*, but rather to turn *to*. Sometimes we try to turn to something else—like service to others, or a worthwhile hobby or interest. We usually find that these things are good *as far as they go*—but they don't go far enough. Only returning *to God* has the power we need.

Application:

Ponder and prayerfully write about the many times you have tried to repent by turning *away* from your addictive behavior or other weaknesses. How have you tried to fill your time and attention in service to others, or in another worthwhile project? Have these activities helped? For how long?

3.6 Helaman 6:5—“Unto the bringing down many of them into the depths of humility, to be the humble followers of God and the Lamb.”

There are many who are **“followers of God and the Lamb”** in name, but not nearly so many who are **“humble followers.”** I know this was certainly true of me for the first twenty years I was in the Church. This brings to mind the Savior’s own words:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. (3 Nephi 14:21)

Application:

Ponder this idea of being a follower of Christ—not just in name only, but in deep humility. How do you feel this applies to your membership in the Church? Has your membership in His Church been in name only? Or do you feel you have truly come to know Him personally? If you were a disciple of Christ during His earthly ministry, how close to Him would you try to position yourself? Would you seek to sit at His knee, trusting His acceptance and love for you, or would you hang back, sitting at a distance?

3.7 Alma 37:33—“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.” (emphasis added)

We can only withstand *every* temptation when our faith is firmly planted upon *the Lord Jesus Christ*. Faith in any other source of strength or comfort will eventually fail us. “Grace” is defined as the “enabling power” of Christ that gives us the “strength and assistance” to “*maintain*” good works (Bible Dictionary, “Grace,” 697, emphasis added). We, by ourselves, are great at *starting* good works, but it is

only through He who has answered “the ends of the law” that we can maintain these good works “unto perfection.” (2 Nephi 2:7).

Application:

Find “*grace*” in the Bible Dictionary and underline the phrases “enabling power” and “strength and assistance” to “maintain” a good work. Christ is often called “**the author and the finisher of our faith.**” (Moroni 6:4) In fact, we are taught that true discipleship exists only for those who know that they are “**relying alone upon the merits of Christ.**” (Moroni 6:4) Ponder and prayerfully write about grace as an enabling power. What does the word “alone” in the preceding phrase from **Moroni 6:4** convey to your mind? Do *we* have any merits that we can rely on?

Step One—Week Four

4.1 Enos 1:4—“And my *soul* hungered.” (emphasis added)

The spirit and the body are both components of the soul. It’s obvious to all of us that it is possible for the body to hunger and thirst—and even to *crave* some certain substance if it has become dependent upon that substance for chemical functioning. The spirit hungers and thirsts, too. It hungers and thirsts for that state of peace and surety that it knew in the premortal life, while in the presence of God. It hungers for the sense of being at one with God and with all of creation. In other words, it hungers and thirsts for a restoration, or *recovery*, of that state of existence. This is the deepest application of the concept of recovery: to be recovered by the Spirit and presence of God; to be able to discern His influence in your own heart and mind—and this is a state of being that we are absolutely powerless to create on our own. It

is also a state of being for which there is no substitute in the things of this world – even the most righteous things.

Application:

Ponder and prayerfully write your thoughts and feelings concerning *recovery*. What level of recovery are you honestly desiring to attain at this point in your journey? Recovery of sobriety? Of a healthy body weight? What about recovery of financial solvency? Recovery of healthy, wholesome sexual relations with your spouse? What is it that is missing in your life that your soul hungers for? Do you long for (crave) to be returned to the presence of God?

You *can* attain that state of existence your soul hungers for, *even while mortal*. Read **Moroni 7:3** and write about the meaning of the phrase, “**from this time henceforth.**” According to this verse, when are we promised to be rescued from our frantic need for our addictions?

4.2 2 Nephi 4:18 – “I am encompassed about, because of the temptations and the sins which do so easily beset me.” (emphasis added)

Step One showed us an amazing paradox: We found that we were totally unable to be rid of the [addictive tendency] until we first admitted that we were powerless over it. (12 & 12, 107)

Some people really balk at the idea of admitting they are powerless, overwhelmed, undone. There are also people who object to the practice of stating that they are an alcoholic, or an addict, or a compulsive eater, or any other label of addiction. These people do not understand that this admission of powerlessness – which sounds like defeat – is really ground zero. It’s the moment when everything in our lives can launch off in a new and wonderful direction. Until we come to this point, we are trudging aimlessly around in the wilderness of self-sufficiency, self-will, self-rightness, and self-pity.

Application:

Read the Psalm of Nephi in its entirety (**2 Nephi 4:16–35**). These verses are such a beautiful expression of our mortal circumstances. Ponder and prayerfully write your feelings of being “**encompassed about**” by your problems or addictions. How have you tried to save yourself, to be victorious over your addictions—only to find yourself, once again, “**droop[ing] in sin?**” (v. 28)

4.3 Moroni 9:18—“Behold, I am but a man, and I have but the strength of a man, and I cannot...enforce my commands.”

In these words, we find Mormon admitting the same truth that Alma admits in **Alma 29:3**. Like both of them, we are also “**but a man,**” in other words, but mortal people. No matter how righteous our desires, our commands to ourselves, or the wishes of our hearts, *we cannot bring our desires, commands, or wishes to pass*. Unlike Alma, we resist accepting this truth. We refuse to be satisfied with things as they are. We turn to our addictions, trying to *make* our world fit our desires. Sometimes, in fact, we turn to our addictions because we feel it is the *only* thing we can control and have our way. At least, we *think* we can control it. Unfortunately, all too soon, it ends up controlling us.

Once we admit we are powerless, we can let go of the lie that tells us we can accomplish the things we wish, desire, or try to command. Only then are we finally in a position of humility where God can open His power and His guidance to us.

Application:

Ponder and prayerfully write about the frustration of wanting something to happen—something that from all outward appearances would seem to be for the best (for example: wanting someone to love you; someone to learn to love God; to stop their course of self-destruction; to

stop being abusive; or wanting a better job for yourself; wanting a particular spouse; wanting to stay married). Did those feelings of frustration trigger your desire to “use” your addiction? Do they still? Write about what it means to let go and to let God be in charge of it all – to let God decide when, or if, your wishes or desires will be fulfilled.

4.4 **Alma 26:12 – “I know that I am *nothing*; as to my strength I am weak.” (emphasis added)**

This requires no comment. This truth is as plain and sharp as a surgical blade.

Application:

Read this verse in the context of **Alma 26:11–16**. It is part of a beautiful statement by Ammon about whose power it was that brought him the success he was desiring. Ponder and prayerfully write about how the meaning of being “**nothing**,” when used in relationship to others, is a negative, abusive thing to say; but, when used in relationship to our total, absolute need for God, it becomes a wonderful, freeing experience.

4.5 **Ether 12:27 – “And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness...for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.”**

There are so many people, in and out of the Church, who absolutely go ballistic at the thought of us confessing our weaknesses. They insist that, even in private, we should do nothing but chant positive affirmations and give no attention to our weaknesses. It is absolutely true that it does us no good to dwell, ruminate about and recycle or rehash our weaknesses *without* taking them to Christ. However, *just the opposite is true* if we are looking at and baring our weaknesses in order to *bring them to* Christ.

Admitting our weaknesses and becoming humble is truly the first step to the strength the Lord has waiting for us.

Application:

Ponder and prayerfully write a list of all the things that you are powerless over in your life – not just your addictive or compulsive behaviors. Now list the things that *you* are sovereign and have decisive power over. I would suggest that the only thing that we can put on this second list is our willingness to surrender and trust God. (More about this in Step Three.)

4.6 1 Nephi 16:5 – “And it came to pass that they did humble themselves before the Lord; insomuch that I had joy and great hopes of them, that they would walk in the paths of righteousness.”

For years and years, I had heard that the first principle of the Gospel is “faith in the Lord Jesus Christ” (Articles of Faith 1:1). Of late, I’ve come to realize that “Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ” is the first principle of *conversion* to the Gospel of Christ. Before the principle of faith, though (as illustrated in **Alma 32:26–34**) there must be a “desire to believe.” And as Alma is trying to say, people being humbled by their afflictions is the first baby step that leads to a desire to change, to believe we can be changed, or redeemed. When that desire is acted upon, we exercise faith – and eventually come to a sure knowledge. And *then*, because life is an ongoing process, we have to repeat the sequence again and again. Humility is teachableness, and it is never outgrown. Being teachable means remaining in a state of mind that keeps us in a state of humility – a state of acknowledgment of our continual nothingness without God. Only through “utter [not temporary] defeat are we able to take our first steps toward liberation and strength.” (12 & 12, 21)

Application:

Ponder and prayerfully write about this process of coming to know for sure. At what point in the process are

you, right now? Still being humbled? Humbled enough? Desiring to change? Desiring to believe you could change? Willing to take some action—to exercise faith? Willing to do some experimenting upon these words? This is the process of taking Step One. Write about how much or how little you feel ready.

4.7 **Alma 13:13—“I would that ye should humble yourselves before God, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance, that ye may also enter into that rest.”**

Here is another reference to that “rest” which we discussed previously in **Moroni 7:3**. Once we have given up the fight to be right or to be self-powered, it is as if we ourselves become a seed. It seems that a seed is a dead, lifeless thing when it is buried in the ground. But then, after such a humbling experience, the seed begins to change, even while still underground, great and miraculous changes are occurring. Eventually—sometimes sooner, sometimes later—the humble little seed bears observable growth—and then fruit. All of that can happen *here, now*, in this life. It is even as the Savior said: We must lose our life (our own self-centered way of coping) in order to find His Life—a life centered in and led by Him (**Matthew 10:39**). In Him, there is all power. With Him, nothing is impossible. (More about that in Step Two’s references and comments.)

Application:

Ponder and prayerfully write about the phrase “fruit meet for repentance.” That’s an old-fashioned way of wording the thought, but I don’t believe it means, “*You* bring forth fruit (on your own) to *prove* you’ve repented.” In the light of the principle of powerlessness and nothingness without God that we have just studied, I think it is more correct to interpret this phrase to mean that after you have humbled yourself before Him, you will begin to see *His* power manifest itself in your life and bring forth fruit. That fruit will give you the assurance you need to enter

into that rest of hope and peace, that can only come from knowing Him and His personal love for you.

Supplemental Scriptures for Step One

The following are additional scriptures which support Step One:

2 Nephi 12:11 “The Lord *alone* shall be exalted in that day” (emphasis added). The Lord *alone* will be exalted. Our lofty looks and haughtiness fail us as we realize that we owe *everything* to Him.

2 Nephi 28:7-9 “There shall be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry.” This could just as easily have been worded, “Eat, drink, and be numb” – numb to all the kinds of lies these three verses enumerate.

2 Nephi 31:7 “Know ye not that he was holy? But notwithstanding he being holy...according to the flesh he humbleth himself before the Father.” Our perfect exemplar showed us the way to humility.

Mosiah 1:13 “And *he* will no more preserve them by *his* matchless and marvelous power” (emphasis added). It is *God’s* power that preserves us, not our own, even when we are “highly favored people.”

Mosiah 2:21 “If ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be *unprofitable servants*” (emphasis added). God is always pouring His support and power into us, lending us our very breath. No amount of works we can do qualify us. The most active member of the church is just as in need of His redemptive power as the most notorious rebel.

Mosiah 2:24-25 “Therefore, of *what* have ye to boast?” (emphasis added). This is just more of the same truth – the same reality – that *we* have *nothing* to boast of. Even if we’ve lived a nearly perfect, exemplary life, who do we think we have to thank for the power to do that? God. So what do we have to boast about? Nothing of ourselves. Only as we connect with Him are we able to do anything of true worth.

Mosiah 3:19 “For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless...” The natural man, the natural woman—I, *personally*, am powerless over my own natural, mortal being. The remainder of this verse gives us the rest of the steps we need to take.

Mosiah 4:10 “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.” King Benjamin gives us the whole process in a nutshell.

Mosiah 4:11 “I would that ye should remember...your own nothingness, and his goodness and long-suffering towards you, unworthy creatures, and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility.”

Mosiah 23:11 “For I am *unworthy* to glory of *myself*” (emphasis added). More of the same testimony, this time from Ammon.

Alma 4:6 “The people of the church began to wax proud, because of their exceeding riches...and all manner of precious things, which they had obtained by their industry.” Like the people of the church in Alma’s day, we, too, tend to wax proud and give ourselves the credit for our own industry.

Alma 4:15 “Alma, having seen the afflictions of the humble followers of God, and the persecutions which were heaped upon them by the remainder of his people, and seeing all their inequality, began to be very sorrowful.” Seeing persecution and inequality produces sorrow in all of us, but we, like Alma, can know that “**the Spirit of the Lord [will] not fail [us].**”

Alma 5:54 “Yea, will ye persist in supposing that ye are better one than another?” Many of us come to a Twelve Step program with the idea that we are either better than

others, or much worse than anyone else. We may believe that we are terribly victimized or terribly guilty. In truth, each of us is neither better nor worse than any other individual, in the sense that we are all children of God. We are all here to be tested, and the same principles of the Gospel pertain to all.

Alma 7:3 *“I have come having great hopes and much desire that I should find that ye had humbled yourselves before God, and that ye had continued in the supplicating of his grace, that I should find that ye were blameless before him.”* Continued supplication for His grace is the only true path to getting rid of the toxic blame and shame many of us are burdened with.

Alma 30:17 *“And many more such things did he say unto them, telling them that...every man fared in this life according to the *management* of the creature; therefore every man prospered according to *his genius*, and that every man conquered according to *his strength*”* (emphasis added). These teachings of Korihor truly reveal his position as antichrist. Too often we insist that our success has come—or can come—by our own good “management, genius, or strength.” When we are ready to admit that our life is unmanageable—no matter how much we strive or do on our own—we have taken Step One.

Alma 32:8 *“I behold that ye are lowly in heart; and if so, blessed are ye.”* To be brought down into the depths of humility and to be made **“lowly in heart”** doesn’t feel like much of a blessing while it is happening, but by God’s standards it will bring us to the greatest blessing of all—the ultimate recovery—eternal life.

Alma 32:25 *“For I do not mean that ye all of you have been compelled to humble yourselves; for I verily believe that there are some among you who would humble themselves, let them be in whatsoever circumstances they might.”* We always have our agency and the opportunity to choose at any time to turn to God. We may

each be at different levels of unmanageability. What is important is the decision we make to admit our own powerlessness.

Alma 42:30 “Let the justice of God, and his mercy, and his long-suffering have full sway in your heart; and let it bring you down to the dust in humility.” Focusing on God, rather than self, and considering His constancy in justice, mercy and long-suffering can bring us to the correct understanding of ourselves in relationship to Him (humility).

Alma 48:20 “And thus they [Helaman and his brethren] went forth, and the people did *humble themselves because of their words...and thus they were free from wars and contentions among themselves*” (emphasis added). We can be brought to this correct understanding of our relationship to God (our need for humility) by heeding the words of His prophets, thus saving us from needing to be compelled.

Alma 51:21 “Thus he put an end to the stubbornness and the pride of those people...but they were brought down to humble themselves like unto their brethren, and to fight valiantly for their freedom from bondage.” Pride is the enemy we are valiantly fighting against for our freedom. Submission and willingness to turn this sin of stubbornness and pride to God is the means to freedom.

Alma 62:49 “But notwithstanding their riches, or their strength, or their prosperity, they were not lifted up in the pride of their eyes; neither were they slow to remember the Lord their God; but they did *humble themselves exceedingly before him*” (emphasis added). Humility prepares us to be taught and gives us the *willingness* to do God’s will.

Helaman 12:7 “O how great is the nothingness of the children of men.” Can it be said any plainer?

3 Nephi 6:13 “Some were lifted up in pride, and others were exceedingly humble; some did return railing for railing, while others would receive railing and persecution and all manner of afflictions, and would not turn and revile again, but were humble and penitent before God.” The difference between these two groups of people illustrates the difference in how we can choose to react to the “railing, persecution and afflictions” that occur in our own lives.

Mormon: Chapters 2-4 These chapters read like a parable or metaphor for the struggle waged against our greatest enemies – our addictions and compulsions. As we read these chapters, we may think of them as symbolizing the manner in which we mortals insist upon relying on our own strength to win our battles in life.

Mormon 3:3 “And they did not realize that it was the Lord that had spared them...” Are we possessed of the same pride that possessed these people? Are we going to go through our lives refusing to acknowledge that it is the Lord who has spared us, preserved us and upheld us, even when it *looked* like we had conquered or succeeded on our own?

Mormon 9:5 “For behold, when ye shall be brought to see your nakedness before God...” This verse reminds me of **Mosiah 4:19** in which King Benjamin nails the point: “**Are we not all beggars...?**” When are we going to realize that whatever we’re clothed with – our positions, our possessions, our very bodies themselves – it is all *given* to us and *sustained* for us by God?

Mormon 9:26 “Behold, all ye who are despisers of the works of the Lord, for ye shall wonder and perish.” That’s pretty strong language, “**despisers of the works of the Lord,**” but most of us fit into that category in a subtle, but very real, way. Almost without exception, when we try to give the Lord credit for something it *appears* we have done by our own industry or genius, we receive the reply: “But *you* had to do it. *He* couldn’t have done it

without *you*.” Does the blasphemy in those words show up when it’s written in black and white?

Ether 9:35 “When they had humbled themselves sufficiently before the Lord he did send rain...And the Lord did show forth his *power* unto them in preserving them from famine” (emphasis added). Another reminder of our *lack* of power compared to the Lord’s. Yet, in our humility, He *does* deliver us.

Moroni 7:24 “And all things which are good cometh of Christ; otherwise men were fallen, and there could no good thing come unto them.” All good that has *ever* been done, anywhere in *all* the world, by *any* mortal (whether Christian, Buddhist, agnostic, or atheist) has come “**of Christ.**” Without His light shed abroad among all men, even among those who do not acknowledge or accept Him, “**no good thing [would] come unto them.**”

Moroni 7:44 “For none is acceptable before God, save the meek and lowly in heart.” To be “meek and lowly in heart” is to take pride in nothing. It is to gain absolutely *none* of our self-esteem from anything that we’ve done, or that we own—but simply to esteem ourselves because we are *His* children. *That* is the *only* reason we should esteem ourselves.

What Is Capturing?

What does “capture” mean? It means to get hold of something, really get hold of it, and make it your own. Here’s how you capture thoughts from any source.

1. If your source is in the form of written material, underline the words or phrases that stand out to you. If it’s in the form of a lecture, take notes as you listen. (Remember, taking notes is not the same as taking dictation. The goal is not to recreate every word the speaker says. The goal is to note those single thoughts that stand out to you.)

Most people think that this is the entire procedure, that this constitutes “capturing.” Sorry. This is only the step of identifying what it is that you want to capture. (If you were an old-time cowboy and were sitting up on a ridge watching a herd of wild mustangs below you, just picking out the ones that look good to you is not the same as making them your own.)

2. Get a notebook of some sort (maybe a journal) and a pen and then rewrite the words, phrases, sentences or whatever you underlined or noted into that notebook. When I copy quotes, I usually underline them as well as put quote marks around them so they stand out from the rest of what I write.

Some people think this is the end of the procedure, that this constitutes capturing a thought, making it your own. After all, you have written it down in your own notebook or journal. Sorry, that does not make it your own. There is a third and final step. Without this last step you are only a collector of thoughts, not a captor.

3. Now write all that comes into your mind about the thought or quote that you have previously copied into your notebook. Why was it important to you? How did it

connect for you? What does it say to you? How do you see that it applies to your life? This is capturing.

For me, this process of capturing thoughts, scripture and quotes has also become a way of praying. I often find that I have just naturally entered into a prayer mode somewhere during this process, writing prayerful thoughts, expressing myself directly to God. And in just as easy and simple a manner I nearly always find myself realizing that what I am hearing in my thoughts is the voice of the Lord through the Holy Spirit's mediation, speaking to my mind and heart.

Excerpted from *He Did Deliver Me from Bondage*.
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Some people have found the *Scripture Marking Chart* (pgs. 41–42) helpful in correlating the Twelve Steps with the scriptures. Copy the chart onto white cardstock, double-sided; then trim to fit in your scriptures. Select a different color plastic scripture-marking crayon or colored pencil for each step. Color in the boxes on the chart with the corresponding color for that step. As you study the scriptures, mark the verses with the color of the step that correlates with the scripture. Some people choose to mark the scripture itself, while others choose to make a dot or square of color in the margin by the scripture.

The Twelve Steps of Heart t' Heart

Scripture Marking Chart

1. We admitted we were powerless over compulsive addictive behaviors* – that our lives had become unmanageable. *Admitted that we of ourselves are powerless, nothing without God. (Mosiah 4:5; Alma 26:12)*
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. *Came to believe that God has all power and all wisdom and that in His strength we can do all things. (Mosiah 4:9; Alma 26:12)*
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. *Made the decision to reconcile ourselves to the will of God, offer our whole souls as an offering unto Him, and trust Him in all things forever. (2 Nephi 10:24; Omni 1:26; Mosiah 3:19; 2 Nephi 4:34)*
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. *Made a searching and fearless written inventory of our past in order to thoroughly examine ourselves as to our pride and other weaknesses with the intent of recognizing our own carnal state and our need for Christ's Atonement. (Alma 15:17; Mosiah 4:2; Jacob 4:6–7; Ether 12:27)*
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. *Honestly shared this inventory with God and with another person, thus demonstrating the sincerity of our repentance, and our willingness to give away all our sins that we might know Him. (Mosiah 26:29; Alma 22:18)*
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. *Became humble enough to yield our hearts and our lives to Christ for His sanctification and purification, relying wholly upon His merits, acknowledging even our own best efforts as unprofitable. (Helaman 3:35; 2 Nephi 31:19; Mosiah 2:20–21)*
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. *Humbly cried unto the Lord Jesus Christ in our hearts for a remission of sins that through His mercy and His grace we might experience a mighty change of heart, lose all disposition to do evil, and thus be encircled about in the arms of safety because of His great and last sacrifice.*

(Alma 36:18; Alma 38:8; Moroni 10:32; Mosiah 5:2; Alma 34:15–16)

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all. *Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make restitution to all of them (even those we had harmed in what we might have considered righteous anger), desiring instead to be peacemakers and to do all that we could to come unto God by being first reconciled to others.* (3 Nephi 12:9; 3 Nephi 12:24; 3 Nephi 12:44–45)
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others. *Made restitution directly to those we had harmed, confessing our own wrongdoing in each instance except when to do so would further injure them or others.* (Mosiah 27:35; 3 Nephi 12:25; Mosiah 26:30)
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. *Realizing that the weakness to be tempted and to sin is a part of the mortal experience, we continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it, being willing to repent as often as needed.* (2 Nephi 4:18; 2 Nephi 10:20; Mosiah 26:30)
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. *Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, seeking the words of Christ through the power of the Holy Ghost that they might tell us all things that we should do, praying only for a knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.* (2 Nephi 32:3; Alma 37:37; Helaman 10:4)
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others still suffering from the effects of compulsive behaviors and to practice these principles in all our affairs. *Having experienced a mighty change and having awakened unto God as a result of our sincere repentance demonstrated in taking these steps, we were willing to become instruments in carrying this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.* (Alma 5:7; Mosiah 27:36–37; Moroni 7:3)

*Any problem may be inserted here, in place of “compulsive addictive behaviors.”

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