

Step 11: Seek through prayer and meditation to know the Lord's will and to have the power to carry it out.

Key Principle: Personal Revelation

In step 11 we make a daily commitment to seek to know the Lord's will and pray to receive the power to carry it out. We found that God wants to speak to us and that we can learn how to hear Him. President Russell M. Nelson declared, "Does God really *want* to speak to you? Yes!" ("Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 95). The purpose of this step is to improve our abilities to hear Jesus Christ, receive personal revelation, and receive the power to conduct our lives accordingly. This desire for personal revelation is in great contrast to the cravings we experienced when we were lost in our addictions.

In the past we thought hope, joy, peace, and fulfillment would come from earthly sources such as alcohol, drugs, lust, unhealthy eating, or other addictive or compulsive behaviors. Our pattern was to avoid negative emotions by numbing them with our addictions. Some of us were trying to fill the emptiness in our lives with anything but God. Over time we discovered that any positive effects of our addictions were short-term, counterfeit solutions that left us empty.

Seeking revelation is an important step in achieving lasting recovery. President Nelson said: "I urge you to stretch beyond your current spiritual ability to receive personal revelation, for the Lord has promised that 'if thou shalt [seek], thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal' [Doctrine and Covenants 42:61]" ("Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," 95).

We have started to appreciate our need for the Savior, Jesus Christ, and understand His role in our lives. Some of us felt clumsy and unpracticed as we prayed, but we began to pray to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ for a closer relationship with Him. We know that we can do much more with Him than we ever could without Him. We began to learn that recovery is not focused only on addiction or sobriety; it encompasses inviting the Lord's guidance into all aspects of our lives.

Prayer, meditation, and scripture study are essential in coming unto Christ. They can help us hear His voice and receive power to carry out His will. We try to pray in humility, knowing that we are dependent on the Lord's divine direction and strength. We pause and meditate throughout the day, striving to quiet our minds and hear the still, small voice. We study the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon, because they testify of the Lord's willingness to give us direction and power. As we do these things, we experience personal revelation and

receive the blessing of “always [having] his Spirit to be with [us]” to guide, direct, and comfort us (Moroni 4:3).

For many of us, the idea of receiving personal revelation was difficult because we believed we were unworthy of God’s love. In our addictions, we either thought that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ didn’t care enough to communicate with us or that we had forfeited the right to receive revelation because of our pasts. Some of us thought we had never received personal revelation. We prayed or meditated, and nothing seemed to happen. We didn’t feel anything special or receive any recognizable answers. When this happened, our old way of thinking surfaced: “God may help others, but He doesn’t help me.”

Many of us still struggle with these feelings. But as we became conscious of His love and mercy, these false beliefs were shattered. Our confidence that He loves us enough to communicate with us can increase as we apply step 11 to our lives.

Our work in step 11 requires us to have faith that He will answer us, and we can learn to recognize His voice. It may not happen quickly or with a miraculous sign from heaven. But we can listen and be patient. We all hear Him in different ways. Sometimes we don’t get a specific direction right away. This does not mean He doesn’t love us. Rather, it may mean He wants us to learn to trust Him and apply the truths He has already given us. Our trust in Him helps us be willing to wait upon Him and grow in the ability to hear His voice (for more information, see Richard G. Scott, “Learning to Recognize Answers to Prayer,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 30).

The Lord often answers our prayers through others. President Spencer W. Kimball taught: “God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another person that he meets our needs” (“Small Acts of Service,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1974, 5). It is important for us to connect with others, especially those in our support systems. We can hear His voice through our Church leaders, family members, and friends as well as through reading the scriptures, studying conference talks, and listening to sacred music. We can also receive inspiration and guidance regularly as we attend recovery meetings and work the steps of recovery with our sponsors.

Improving our ability to seek and receive revelation takes practice and patience. “To be sure, there may be times when you feel as though the heavens are closed. But I promise that as you continue to be obedient, expressing gratitude for every blessing the Lord gives you, and as you patiently honor the Lord’s timetable, you will be given the knowledge and understanding you seek. Every blessing the Lord has for you—even miracles—will follow. That is what personal revelation will do for you” (Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” 95–96).

Action Steps

This is a program of action. Our progress depends on consistently applying the steps in our daily lives. This is known as “working the steps.” The following actions help us come unto Christ and receive the direction and the power necessary to take the next step in our recovery.

Come unto Jesus Christ through prayer, fasting, and meditation

For those of us who have little experience with prayer, Elder Richard G. Scott's words are reassuring: "Don't worry about your clumsily expressed feelings. Just talk to your Father. He hears every prayer and answers it in His way" ("Learning to Recognize Answers to Prayer," *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 31). It was also helpful to review the parts of prayer. We address Heavenly Father by name, tell Him what we are thankful for, ask for the blessings we need, and then close in the name of Jesus Christ. We kneel if we are physically able. We pray, often aloud, to the Father, seeking His guidance through the Holy Ghost (see Romans 8:26). We don't have to use flowery language. We can be honest and share our hearts with Heavenly Father.

Many of us learned to rise early and spend time in quiet solitude for study and prayer. We schedule time for prayer and meditation, usually in the morning. During this time, we can put God first, before anyone or anything else in the day. Then we study, using the scriptures and the teachings of modern prophets to guide our meditations. Fasting can be a powerful tool to add to this effort. Then we listen to our hearts and minds to try to hear or feel Him. We write down our thoughts and impressions as we pray and meditate.

When this precious, private time has ended, we do not cease to pray. Silent prayer, in the depths of our hearts and minds, becomes our way of thinking throughout the day. We counsel with the Lord as we interact with others, make decisions, and deal with emotions and temptations. We continually invite and seek His Spirit to be with us, that we might be guided to do the right thing (see Psalm 46:1; Alma 37:36–37; 3 Nephi 20:1).

Meditate in stillness and quiet

Many of us find that meditation helps as we seek revelation and guidance from the Lord. We look for a quiet place, free from distraction. President Russell M. Nelson has stated, "Quiet time is sacred time" ("What We Are Learning and Will Never Forget," *Liahona*, May 2021, 80). It may help to get in a comfortable position. We clear our minds and relax. We take some slow, deep breaths.

Next we think and ponder about what is important to us and listen to the thoughts that come into our minds. We can think about the challenges we are facing, especially those in our recovery or relationships. We can think about the verses of scripture or the general conference talk we are studying. We can simply think about the day ahead and the direction we need. We can even record the thoughts that come into our minds in a journal for greater clarity. After this quiet time, we continue to seek the Lord's direction and power throughout the day as we strive to "look unto [Him] in every thought" (Doctrine and Covenants 6:36).

President M. Russell Ballard has taught: "It is important to be still and listen and follow the Spirit. We simply have too many distractions to capture our attention, unlike any time in the history of the world. Everyone needs time to meditate and contemplate. ... We all need time to ask ourselves questions or to have a regular personal interview with ourselves. We are often so busy, and the world is so loud that it is difficult to hear the heavenly words 'be still, and know that I am God' [Psalm 46:10]" ("Be Still, and Know That I Am God" [Church Educational System devotional for young adults, May 4, 2014], broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

Study and Understanding

The following scriptures and statements from Church leaders can help in our recovery. We can use them for meditation, study, and journaling. We must remember to be honest and specific in our writing to gain the most benefit from it.

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” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:63).

The Lord respects our will and our agency. He allows us to choose to approach Him without compulsion. He draws near to us when we invite Him to do so.

- How will I draw near to Him today?

Create a Note

Express 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 we remember to be grateful for everything in our lives, even the things we don't understand, we 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 of gratitude affect my closeness to the Spirit?

Create a Note

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 we feast on the words of Christ, these words will guide us in all we need to know and do. Picture how it would be to have Jesus Christ walk and talk with you all day.

- What do I feel when I meditate on this image?

Create a Note

Receive personal revelation

“The Savior said, ‘I will tell you in your *mind* and in your *heart*, by the Holy Ghost’ (D&C 8:2, italics added). ... An impression to the *mind* is very specific. Detailed words can be heard or felt and written as though the instruction were being dictated. A communication to the *heart* is a more general impression” (Richard G. Scott, “Helping Others to Be Spiritually Led” [address given at the Church Educational System Symposium, Aug. 11, 1998], 3–4).

As our understanding of personal revelation increases, we will recognize it more often and in a greater variety of ways.

- How have I received impressions and revelation from the Lord?

Create a Note

“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).

Fasting in the way the Lord has ordained can bring great power that we would otherwise not have (see Matthew 17:14–21). In fact, we can fast specifically to overcome addiction. Isaiah taught, “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free and that ye break every yoke?” (Isaiah 58:6).

- How have fasting and prayer increased my ability to receive revelation?

Create a Note

“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 ourselves in them—to read and study them every day.

- When have I received revelation from a passage of scripture?

Create a Note

Receive 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—rather than seeking His will about our decisions and conduct.

- Have I had a recent experience with prayer? If so, was it full of counsel to the Lord or from the Lord?

Create a Note

- Am I willing to listen for and receive His counsel?

Create a Note

Create a Note