

## Step 2: Come to believe the power of God can restore us to complete spiritual health.

### Key Principle: Hope

When we realized our powerlessness over our addictions, most of us felt stripped of any hope. We had tried to quit so many times. Some of us had prayed to God countless times. We had apologized for our behavior and promised to change. But after failing again and again, we began to think that God was disappointed in us and wouldn't help us. Those of us who grew up with no concept of God were certain we had exhausted every avenue of help. Either way, step 2 presented us with an answer we had either abandoned or never considered—to find hope in Jesus Christ and the power of His Atonement.

Finally humbled, we asked for help. Following what felt like the tiniest ray of hope, we began to attend recovery meetings and work with sponsors. When we first came to meetings, we were filled with doubts and fears. We were frightened, tired, and possibly even cynical, but at least we came.

In recovery meetings, people honestly described what their lives had been like, what happened to change them, and what it was like to live in recovery. We found that many of the people we met in these meetings had once felt as hopeless as we felt. But as we continued to attend, we saw many of them genuinely laughing, talking, smiling, and feeling optimistic about the future. We saw many who had experienced a powerful change in their lives, a change that we also desired.

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—hope. If there was hope for others who had been at the very brink of destruction, maybe there was hope for us too. We began to believe that if we turned to Jesus Christ, there would be “no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no offense exempted from the promise of complete forgiveness” (Boyd K. Packer, “The Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness,” *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 examples of our recovering friends. We began working the steps, getting support from others—including our sponsors—and attending recovery meetings. As we prayed, pondered, and applied the scriptures, over time we began to renew our activity in the Church. Our own miracles began to happen, and we found ourselves blessed with the grace of Jesus Christ to help us maintain our abstinence one day at a time.

As we worked through step 2, we became willing to replace trust in ourselves and our addictions with faith in the love and power of Jesus Christ. We worked this step in our minds and hearts with the support of others, and we learned that the foundation of recovery from

addiction must be spiritual. Then, as we pressed forward and worked each of the steps recommended in this guide, the spiritual nature of recovery was affirmed to us repeatedly.

This program is spiritual, and it's a program of action. For us and countless others, recovery work has been worth every effort. As we apply these principles and allow them to work in our lives, we are restored to sound mind and complete spiritual health. We find a genuine relationship with ourselves, with others, and with the Savior Jesus Christ.

For some of us, the miracle of recovery seemed to come quickly; for others, recovery has been more gradual. Either way, the important thing is that we continued to *practice* believing and trusting that God would do for us that which we couldn't do for ourselves. Over time we were eventually able to say that through "steadfastness in Christ," we have been rescued from addiction and enjoyed a "perfect brightness of hope" (2 Nephi 31:20).

Our loving Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, are with us every step of the way. They help nurture and expand our hope in Christ. President M. Russell Ballard taught:

"For those of you who have fallen prey to any kind of addiction, there is hope because God loves all of His children and because the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ makes all things possible.

"I have seen the marvelous blessing of recovery that can set one free from the chains of addiction. The Lord is our Shepherd, and we shall not want as we trust in the power of [His] Atonement. I know the Lord can and will free the addicted from their bondage, for as the Apostle Paul proclaimed, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me' (Philippians 4:13)" ("O That Cunning Plan of the Evil One," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 110).

If we relapse, we find great value in turning to God and speaking with our sponsors. We may be tempted to give up all hope. But a relapse does not destroy the progress we have made, and it need not destroy our hope. Relapse is a powerful reminder of our need to continue to go to recovery meetings, find the support of sponsors and others, surrender to God, and work through these steps. As we keep pressing forward, we begin to feel the power of Jesus Christ in our lives. We are better able to abstain, and our hope increases.

Elder David A. Bednar taught: "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" ("The Tender Mercies of the Lord," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2005, 101). Jesus Christ will give us many tender mercies in our journey toward recovery, one of the most important being the hope that the power of God can restore us to complete spiritual health.

## 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 power necessary to take the next step in our recovery.

### **Develop a correct understanding of God’s character**

Our shame often gets in the way of understanding God’s character and love for us. Blinded by our pain and addictions, we often see Him as someone who is vengeful, disappointed, or angry with us. The purpose of this action step is to set aside incorrect ideas about God and develop a better understanding of His love, mercy, and willingness and desire to bless us.

First, it’s important to understand that God is there even if we don’t feel His presence. Coming to know God is hard work and requires patience. It can be difficult when we’re used to instant gratification, but over time we can start to see and experience His divine characteristics. We come to know God better.

We can ask Heavenly Father to help us better understand His nature. We can look for the hand of God in our lives and how much He does for us. We can study scriptures about the Savior’s mercy and grace and then discuss these scriptures with our sponsors and others who support us.

As we start gaining a better understanding of God’s love and mercy, we start to experience greater confidence and hope in God’s power to deliver us. President J. Reuben Clark Jr. testified of our Heavenly Father’s mercy by stating: “I believe that our Heavenly Father wants to save every one of his children. ... I believe that in his justice and mercy he will give us the maximum reward for our acts, give us all that he can give, and in the reverse, I believe that he will impose upon us the minimum penalty which it is possible for him to impose” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1953, 84).

### **Pray and study the scriptures**

President M. Russell Ballard stated: “If anyone who is addicted has a desire to overcome, then there is a way to spiritual freedom—a way to escape from bondage—a way that is proven. It begins with prayer—sincere, fervent, and constant communication with the Creator of our spirits and bodies, our Heavenly Father” (“O That Cunning Plan of the Evil One,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 110).

As we let go of pride and strive to do our best each day, we desire to pray for guidance and direction from a loving Heavenly Father. Some of us had never really prayed or pondered the scriptures. Some of us were tempted to stop praying or studying. We mistakenly thought these efforts were not working because we didn’t feel close to God or because we still struggled with addiction.

We found that one of the keys to success was to continue using these spiritual tools. Praying aloud, praying in simple gratitude throughout the day, and praying for others were powerful new practices for many of us. One of the ways to increase the power of prayer is by more

honestly expressing our struggles to God. Even as we shared with Heavenly Father our lack of willingness to change, our willingness was strengthened. We also experienced more frequent, quiet, small impressions from the Holy Ghost. We began to ask God what small steps we could take each day, instead of merely asking for Him to instantly remove our challenges and addictions.

Finally, the desire to communicate with God leads us to study the words of modern and ancient prophets. Prayerfully studying the scriptures, seeking answers to our questions, and recording impressions from the Spirit can be helpful in coming to believe that God can and will help us.

A great place to begin studying the word of God is with the scriptures and quotes at the end of each chapter in this guide. Each scripture and quote was selected with recovery in mind, and each question is asked with the hope that it might help us apply the scriptures and quotes to our lives. We have found that taking even a few minutes every day to seek what God desires to communicate to us yields great rewards. We give our witness to this truth: “Yea, we see that whosoever will may lay hold upon the word of God, which is quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil” (Helaman 3:29).

## Study and Understanding

The following scriptures and statements from Church leaders can help in our addiction 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.

### **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” (Mosiah 4:9).

- Many witnesses in heaven and on earth testify of God’s existence. What evidence of God and His love have I experienced?

Create a Note

### **Increase faith in Jesus Christ**

President Russell M. Nelson taught: “Start today to increase your faith. Through your faith, Jesus Christ will increase your ability to move the mountains in your life” (“Christ Is Risen: Faith in Him Will Move Mountains,” *Liahona*, May 2021, 101).

Many of us tried to recover from our addictions through sheer willpower or through having faith in a friend or therapist. Sooner or later, we found that faith in ourselves or others did not enable us to overcome our addictions fully. Faith in Jesus Christ and His ability to heal us is the foundation of our recovery.

- How do I feel today about turning to the Savior in my recovery efforts?

Create a Note

- What has helped me have faith in Jesus Christ?

Create a Note

- What do my sponsor, Church leaders, and others suggest I do to help increase my faith?

Create a Note

### **The power and strength of hope**

When we have hope in our hearts and minds, we'll have a bright focus on our future actions. Hope brings stable strength and confidence rather than temporary optimism. Hope can also be a source of peace, calm, and emotional stability as we progress through our recovery from addiction.

Regarding this principle, President Russell M. Nelson stated, "Hope is mightier than a wistful wish. Hope, fortified by faith and charity, forges a force as strong as steel. Hope becomes an anchor to the soul. ... If we will cling to the anchor of hope, it will be our safeguard *forever*" ("A More Excellent Hope" [Brigham Young University devotional, Jan. 8, 1995], 3, [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu)).

- When have I felt power and confidence because of hope in Christ?

Create a Note

- What daily spiritual practices and actions was I doing during that time?

Create a Note

- How did being hopeful affect my mind, mood, and spirit? How did it affect my future goals and plans?

Create a Note

- How did it affect my relationships and interactions with people who love and care about me?

Create a Note

## Gratitude list

One way to see God in our lives is to frequently ponder and write about our blessings. We can better understand Heavenly Father's love for us by looking for evidence of His love and power in our lives.

- What am I grateful for?

Create a Note

- What good things have happened in my life?

Create a Note

- How have I seen God's hand in my life?

Create a Note

## Hold on to hope amidst relapse

Elder Dale G. Renlund taught: "A saint is a sinner who keeps on trying.' ... God cares a lot more about who we are and who we are becoming than about who we once were. He cares that we keep on trying" ("Latter-day Saints Keep on Trying," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 56). All of us experience feelings of hopelessness from time to time as we strive for recovery. This is especially true if or when we relapse. But our hope and recovery are rooted more in progress than perfection. A relapse does not erase our prior efforts or momentum in turning to Jesus Christ. We can learn to maintain our hope in Christ even when we relapse.

- In what ways am I trying to change, get better, and progress?

Create a Note

- What are some of the victories or successes I've had in my life recently?

Create a Note

- What do my sponsor, Church leaders, family members, and friends say about my efforts and progress?

Create a Note

## He can deliver us from bondage

"But if ye will turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart, and put your trust in him, and serve him with all diligence of mind, if ye do this, he will, according to his own will and

pleasure, deliver you out of bondage” (Mosiah 7:33).

- What helps me have more faith in the promise that Jesus Christ will deliver me?

Create a Note

- How can I better turn to Jesus Christ, put my trust in Him, and serve Him with all diligence of mind? What specific things can I improve upon?

Create a Note

- What does it mean to me to wait upon Jesus Christ to deliver me “according to his own will and pleasure?”

Create a Note

Create a Note