

Support Guide

HELP FOR SPOUSES AND FAMILY OF THOSE IN RECOVERY



SUPPORT GUIDE

Help for Spouses and Family of Those in Recovery

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INTRODUCTION



This guide provides resources and support to spouses and family members of individuals who are displaying compulsive behaviors. The purpose of this guide is to highlight gospel principles and doctrine that can help a spouse or family member find peace and healing through the power of Jesus Christ and His Atonement. This guide does not include a prescriptive list of steps that will lead to healing for all people; rather, it will help you learn and apply gospel principles. You do not need to study the principles in sequential order, but do study all the principles in the guide, focusing on those that seem most important to you. As you study, the Spirit can direct you to apply these principles in the ways that will be the most helpful and relevant to your situation. Through this process, you will gain a better understanding of gospel principles, be introduced to specific ideas that will help you and your loved ones, and find greater peace and healing.

FINDING HOPE

If you have a loved one who is ensnared in compulsive behaviors, you may feel discouraged, hurt, or hopeless. You may worry about the significant consequences that seem to loom over you and your loved one. Perhaps you just feel concerned and want to help. No matter your circumstances, “with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). President Dieter F. Uchtdorf

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Often we focus our most desperate efforts on trying to help those we love. However, we also need the Lord's help, and He beckons us to come unto Him and be healed (see 3 Nephi 9:13). Our priority must be to personally draw closer to the Lord. We must place our burdens at His feet, rely on His enabling power, and patiently wait upon Him. As we do so, He will succor us, and we will experience His light and hope in our lives. This will place us in a better position to support our loved ones. No matter what they may choose to do, the peace and hope of the Savior can be with us. President Howard W. Hunter said: "Peace can come to an individual only by an unconditional surrender—surrender to him who is the Prince of Peace, who has the power to confer peace. One may live in beautiful and peaceful surroundings but, because of inner dissension and discord, be in a state of constant turmoil. On the other hand, one may be in the midst of utter destruction and the bloodshed of war and yet have the serenity of unspeakable peace. If we look to man and the ways of the world, we will find turmoil and confusion. If we will but turn to God, we will find peace for the restless soul" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Howard W. Hunter* [2015], 53, 56). Our journey toward healing and peace begins with turning our hearts and our will over to the Savior.

The gospel teaches us that we are all responsible and accountable for our own actions—not for the actions of others. In order to heal

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completely, we must rid ourselves of any unnecessary guilt and hold our loved ones accountable for their choices. It is natural for us to feel that our loved ones' bad choices are somehow our fault, but those feelings are inaccurate. We may worry over the things we could have done better or differently. We may assume that we could have prevented the bad choices from happening. But the truth is that we are not responsible for our loved ones' bad choices. We are responsible only for how we respond to their choices.

An essential part of our healing is coming to accept and understand that our loved ones are responsible for their own recovery and healing. We too often incorrectly assume that we have to fix their problems for them. We may be afraid that unless we take control, the situation will continue to get worse. While our efforts may be helpful—and even lifesaving at times—it is our loved ones who must come unto the Savior, repent, become clean, and receive healing through Him. We simply cannot do that for them, and our attempts to coerce or control their choices may actually prevent or delay their recovery. When we understand that we are not responsible for and that we cannot fix our loved ones' choices, we have taken an important step in our own healing.

CHEERFULLY DOING ALL THINGS IN OUR POWER

When the early Saints were enduring trials and persecutions, the Prophet Joseph Smith counseled them: “Therefore, . . . let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed” (D&C 123:17). Just as those early Saints persevered, we can accomplish much as we patiently work to improve our situation and give help to our loved ones. We can reach out for support from others, attend support group meetings, learn more about compulsive behaviors and healing, and set boundaries and limits so that we do not enable the poor choices of those we love. Furthermore, we can learn how to rely on the Lord, even when we feel that our hearts might break. As we do our part, the Lord will reach down and make more of our situations and lives than we ever could alone.

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you. As you study, keep a journal to record your thoughts, feelings, and impressions.

UNDERSTANDING HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is used in spouse and family support group meetings and can also be used for personal study. Attending the support meetings will help you find greater peace and hope. Visit arp.lds.org for more information.

Finding the Resources Online

Throughout *Support Guide: Help for Spouses and Family of Those in Recovery*, you will see references to scriptures, conference talks, and media material. To access this material online, go to arp.lds.org/spouses-and-families and find links to the material in the online version of the guide.

Principle 1

GOD WILL CONSOLE US IN OUR AFFLICTIONS



“Look unto God with firmness of mind, and pray unto him with exceeding faith, and he will console you in your afflictions” (Jacob 3:1).

RECEIVING GOD’S HELP IN ANY DIFFICULT SITUATION

Harmful behaviors (such as viewing pornography) and using harmful substances hurt not only our loved ones but also us as well. Below are some of the feelings that many spouses and family members or friends experience who have loved ones who are ensnared:

- Fear that our loved ones will never get better.
- Fear of the possibility that our loved ones may die physically as well as spiritually.
- Fear of the harm our loved ones might do to others around them, especially children.
- Physical weariness caused by sleeplessness, stress, and anxiety.
- Confusion about why our loved ones behave so irrationally and why nothing we say or do seems to make any difference.

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- o Loss of trust and confidence in our loved ones as a result of their lying, deception, and manipulation.
- o Shame and hopelessness as we improperly assume responsibility for our loved ones' choices.
- o Anger that we have been betrayed and hurt by our loved ones.
- o Loneliness and isolation as we try to keep our loved ones' choices a secret to protect others.
- o Fear that baptismal and temple covenants may be irreparably broken and eternal family ties severed.
- o Pain and hurt associated with a spouse's physical or virtual infidelity.
- o Bitterness over financial challenges as we deal with excessive spending, treatment programs, legal expenses, fines, or destruction of property.
- o Fear that our loved ones' continued bad choices somehow reflect our own lack of faith or inability to access God's help on their behalf.
- o Fear of consequences resulting from our loved ones' potential incarceration or other legal issues.

Each of these concerns is valid, and with faith and support from others they can be worked through with care and time. God can help us through any difficult situation, if we will let Him.

- How have your loved one's bad choices impacted you?
- Which of the feelings listed above have you experienced? What other feelings have you experienced as a result of your loved one's bad choices?

UNDERSTANDING THAT GOD IS AWARE OF OUR SITUATION

There may be times when we wonder if God knows what we are going through as our loved ones struggle. As we turn our hearts and minds to God, we can sense His presence and guidance. Elder Kevin W. Pearson of the Seventy said, “He loves each of us perfectly and is full of mercy and understanding. He knows everything about us. He knows what we

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KNOWING GOD SUPPORTS US DURING OUR AFFLICTIONS

The Lord always provides comfort, guidance, and strength, even when we may not realize it. These subtle and tender evidences of God's love and support come in a variety of ways; for example, they might come through the helping hands of others (principle 6, "Thy Friends Do Stand by Thee") or during lessons, talks, or hymns that speak directly to us. At other times, an idea or impression can help us gain greater understanding and direction and feel increased love. It is also helpful to remember the countless times the Lord has blessed and guided us in the past. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught, "Christ and His angels and His prophets forever labor to buoy up our spirits, steady our nerves, calm our hearts, [and] send us forth with renewed strength and resolute hope" ("The Peaceable Things of the Kingdom," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 83). As we continue in faith to put one foot in front of the other, we acknowledge the Lord as the source of our support. We recognize that our loving Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, do support us in our time of need.

- o How has Heavenly Father supported you in your trials?
- o What would you say to help someone who feels that Heavenly Father is not supporting him or her?



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“Again, my brothers and sisters, our Heavenly Father is aware of our needs and will help us as we call upon Him for assistance. I believe that no concern of ours is too small or insignificant. The Lord is in the details of our lives.”—President Thomas S. Monson

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RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Gospel Study

As you study the resources listed below, prayerfully consider how you can apply the principles they teach.

2 Nephi 2:2 (The Lord will consecrate afflictions for our gain.)

2 Nephi 4:17-35; Alma 36:3 (God supports us during our trials.)

M. Russell Ballard, "O That Cunning Plan of the Evil One," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 108-10

Henry B. Eyring, "Where Is the Pavilion?" *Ensign* or *Liahona*,
Nov. 2012, 72-75

Jeffrey R. Holland, "None Were with Him," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 86–88

Thomas S. Monson, "We Never Walk Alone," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 121–24

Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "The Love of God," *Ensign* or *Liahona*,
Nov. 2009, 21–24

Personal Learning and Application

The following activities are to enhance your learning and application of these principles. Keep a journal of your thoughts, feelings, insights, and plans to implement what you learn. As the needs and circumstances in your life change, repeating these activities will provide you with new insights.

- Study Elder M. Russell Ballard's talk "O That Cunning Plan of the Evil One" (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 108–10). What did you learn? How has your loved one's compulsive behavior impacted you? What do you feel prompted to do? Speak with someone you trust about your situation. Seek counsel from the person, and make a plan to act on what you learn.
- Study and ponder President Thomas S. Monson's talk "We Never Walk Alone" (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 121–24). What did you learn? What evidences do you have that God is aware of your

challenges and is supporting you? Make a list of the evidences you have received that God knows you. How do these evidences strengthen your faith? How can you better recognize His help?

- Study and ponder President Henry B. Eyring's talk "Where Is the Pavilion?" (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 72–75) or Elder Jeffrey R. Holland's talk "None Were with Him" (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 86–88). What assurances do you have that God is aware of you personally and what you are going through? What will you do to draw closer to God and seek to know that He knows and cares about you?
- Study and ponder the scriptures in this outline. What did you learn? What other scriptures would you add to the outline? How has God supported you in the past? How is He supporting you now? What can you do to better feel His love and support?
- Consider the principles, promises, and peace found in these hymns: "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" (*Hymns*, no. 68); "Abide with Me!" (*Hymns*, no. 166); "As Now We Take the Sacrament" (*Hymns*, no. 169); "Come, Ye Disconsolate" (*Hymns*, no. 115); "I Need Thee Every Hour" (*Hymns*, no. 98); "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me" (*Hymns*, no. 104); "Oh, May My Soul Commune with Thee" (*Hymns*, no. 123); "Our Savior's Love" (*Hymns*, no. 113); "Precious Savior, Dear Redeemer" (*Hymns*, no. 103); "The Lord Is My Shepherd" (*Hymns*, no. 108).

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Principle 2

SHAKE OFF THE CHAINS WITH WHICH YE ARE BOUND



“Awake . . . put on the armor of righteousness. Shake off the chains with which ye are bound, and come forth out of obscurity, and arise from the dust” (2 Nephi 1:23).

REALIZING WE ARE NOT TO BLAME FOR OUR LOVED ONES’ CHOICES

It is common as we try to make sense of our difficult situation to wonder why our loved ones started down the wrong path. We may feel we are somehow responsible. As parents, we may worry about what we could have done differently. As spouses, we may wonder if we failed to meet the needs of our husband or wife and ask ourselves such questions as “Am I not good enough?” and “What more could I have done?” When things do not turn out well, we are tempted to blame ourselves. This type of thinking may lead us to improperly feel responsible for other people’s choices, resulting in undeserved guilt and despair.

A vital element in Heavenly Father’s plan is the principle of agency—the ability and privilege to make our own choices. As we study and understand this principle, the Spirit will testify to us that we are not the cause of our loved ones’ poor choices. Elder Richard G. Scott said, “If you are free of serious sin yourself, don’t suffer needlessly the consequences of another’s sins. As a wife,

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- ## UNDERSTANDING WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD

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- o In what way does the knowledge that you are a child of God help you?
- o How will you strengthen your relationship with God through such things as prayer, scripture study, pondering, fasting, and obedience to His commandments?

RECOGNIZING WE ARE FREE TO ACT FOR OURSELVES

We may feel powerless because we have little control over what our loved ones choose to do or the consequences of those choices. But the gospel teaches us that we are “free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil” (2 Nephi 2:27). We can use our agency to better our situation and make righteous choices regardless of our circumstances. Elder David A. Bednar counseled, “As you and I come to understand and employ the enabling power of the Atonement in our personal lives, we will pray and seek for strength to change our circumstances rather than praying for our circumstances to be changed. We will become agents who act rather than objects that are acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:14)” (“The Atonement and the Journey of Mortality,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Apr. 2012, 44).

- How will you use your agency to act and to improve your situation?
- How does the second article of faith apply to your situation?

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David A. Bednar, "The Atonement and the Journey of Mortality,"
Ensign or Liahona, Apr. 2012, 40–47

D. Todd Christofferson, "Moral Discipline," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 105–8

Robert D. Hales, "Agency: Essential to the Plan of Life," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 24–27

Video: "The Freedom To ..."

Personal Learning and Application

The following activities are to enhance your learning and application of these principles. Keep a journal of your thoughts, feelings, insights, and plans to implement what you learn. As the needs and circumstances in your life change, repeating these activities will provide you with new insights.

- Watch the video “The Freedom To . . .,” and write in your journal what you learned. What are people free to do? What are they not free to do? How can applying the principle of agency empower you to find peace and help from the Savior?
- Study and ponder the scriptures mentioned in the lesson outline. Write in your journal what they teach about agency. Which scriptures are most meaningful to you? Why? How can what you learned help you?
- Ponder the following quote by Elder Robert D. Hales: “In these latter days, as in the times of old, we must avoid being acted upon by acting for ourselves to avoid evil” (“To Act for Ourselves: The Gift and Blessings of Agency,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2006, 6–7). (See 2 Nephi 2:14.)
- How do you feel about being an agent who acts rather than an object that is acted upon? Write how you can apply Elder Hales’s counsel to act for yourself and to find greater peace and healing.

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Principle 3

HE WILL TAKE UPON HIM THE PAINS AND THE SICKNESSES OF HIS PEOPLE



“He will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people. . . . And he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities” (Alma 7:11–12).

REALIZING THAT NO BLESSINGS WILL BE DENIED

We want to have eternal families, but our loved ones’ choices can threaten our hopes. Fearing we may lose our eternal family may cause us to experience significant feelings of grief. We may find ourselves in a crisis of faith and be tempted to give up on Heavenly Father’s plan. Many of us feel that we are just hanging on, clinging to God out of habit, reflex, or desperation. It can be hard to move forward through the pain of broken promises and threatened dreams. The choice we face is whether or not to have faith in God, even when we can’t see how God’s promises will be kept. Elder Dallin H. Oaks said:

“We cannot control and we are not responsible for the choices of others, even when they impact us so painfully. I am sure the Lord loves and blesses husbands and wives who lovingly try to help

spouses struggling with such deep problems as pornography or other compulsive behavior or with the long-term consequences of childhood abuse.

“Whatever the outcome and no matter how difficult your experiences, you have the promise that you will not be denied the blessings of eternal family relationships if you love the Lord, keep His commandments, and just do the best you can” (“Divorce,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 73).

- How have your expectations and dreams been impacted by the choices of your loved one?
- Why do you need to believe the promises of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and not just believe in Them?

ALLOWING JESUS CHRIST TO HEAL OUR DEEPEST PAIN AND SORROW

If we allow it to, the pain and sorrow resulting from our loved ones' choices can lead us to the Savior. The Atonement is not only for overcoming death and sin, but it is also for healing our pain, sorrow, and every other affliction. Elder C. Scott Grow said, "Through His Atonement, He heals not only the transgressor, but He also heals the innocent who suffer because of those transgressions" ("The Miracle of the Atonement," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 109). The Spirit will help us understand that Christ knows our pain because He has literally taken upon Himself our pains and sicknesses (see Alma 7:11). We can find hope through the enabling power of Jesus Christ that we will be healed and supported in our trials no matter the choices and actions of our loved ones. Elder Dallin H. Oaks said, "The healing power of the Lord Jesus Christ—whether it removes our burdens or strengthens us to endure and live with them like the Apostle Paul—is available for every affliction in mortality" ("He Heals the Heavy Laden," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 8). Real healing does not become complete until we turn to the Savior.

- When have you felt peace and hope through the Savior despite heavy burdens?
- What might prevent you from coming unto Christ and exercising faith in Him so that He can heal you?

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GIVING OUR BURDENS TO THE LORD

As we come unto Christ in faith and rely upon Him to bear our heavy burdens, we can experience His healing power. Elder Richard G. Scott counseled, “Many of you suffer needlessly from carrying heavy burdens because you do not open your hearts to the healing power of the Lord. . . . Lay the burden at the feet of the Savior” (“To Be Free of Heavy Burdens,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2002, 86, 88). The Lord is anxious to bless us. We can find great strength as we give our burdens to the Lord, “relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save” (2 Nephi 31:19). Unfortunately, we may still suffer the consequences of our loved ones’ poor choices. Yet we can receive His peace—that peace “which passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7)—despite our circumstances.

As we strive to come unto Christ and exercise our faith in Him, He will give us strength beyond our own. Jesus said, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matthew 17:20). When we remember that our Savior is there to help us, our simple faith will grow and increase. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught, "The size of your faith or the degree of your knowledge is not the issue—it is the integrity you demonstrate toward the faith you do have and the truth you already know" ("Lord, I Believe," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 94).

- o What do you feel it means to lay your burdens at the feet of the Savior?
- o What burdens will you lay at His feet?

UNDERSTANDING THAT CHANGE TAKES TIME

We may find ourselves impatient for change to occur because we are anxious to stop hurting. Even though we do all that we can to seek healing and we acknowledge that the Lord is helping us, we still recognize that the healing and recovery process takes time. While continuing to have hope for changes in the near future, we also need to be willing to accept that some changes may take a lifetime or longer.

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- This is a detail from a religious painting, likely a scene from the Bible. It shows a man with a dark beard and a green cloak, looking down with a somber expression at a small object held in his hands. Another person's hand is visible on the left, also holding the object. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, emphasizing the emotional weight of the scene.

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RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Gospel Study

As you study the resources listed below, prayerfully consider how you can apply the principles they teach.

Isaiah 49:13–16 (The Savior will not forsake us.)

Hebrews 4:14-16 (We can find help in times of need through the Savior's grace and mercy.)

2 Nephi 9:21; Alma 7:11–13 (The Savior took upon Himself our pains and afflictions.)

3 Nephi 9:13–14 (Christ heals us as we come unto Him.)

3 Nephi 17:5–20 (Christ desires and offers to heal us.)

C. Scott Grow, "The Miracle of the Atonement," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 108–10

Kent F. Richards, "The Atonement Covers All Pain," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 15–17

Chapter 5, "Accepting the Atonement of Jesus Christ," *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 37–40

Video: "Lifting Burdens: The Atonement of Jesus Christ"

Video: "My Joy Is Full"

Personal Learning and Application

The following activities are to enhance your learning and application of these principles. Keep a journal of your thoughts, feelings, insights, and plans to implement what you learn. As the needs and circumstances in your life change, repeating these activities will provide you with new insights.

- Study and ponder scriptures about Jesus Christ and His Atonement. What do these scriptures teach about the power of the Savior? Why are these passages meaningful to you? How can the Savior strengthen you even if your loved one continues making poor choices? Consider sharing these scriptures and your thoughts with someone and discussing how the Savior has strengthened you.

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Principle 4

DRAW NEAR UNTO ME



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

RELYING UPON GOD'S GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION

Many times we are confronted with problems that seem beyond our own capability and understanding to overcome. Our need for help can lead us to ask our loving Heavenly Father for guidance and direction. We have been counseled, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God" (James 1:5). The Lord desires to answer our prayers and will speak to us through the Holy Ghost. Elder Richard G. Scott taught, "Impressions of the Spirit can come in response to urgent prayer or unsolicited when needed. Sometimes the Lord reveals truth to you when you are not actively seeking it, such as when you are in danger and do not know it" ("To Acquire Spiritual Guidance," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 8).

Receiving revelation will require effort on our part. President Harold B. Lee said: "We develop our spiritual selves by practice. . . . We must train our spiritual selves with the same care . . . as we train our physical bodies." He counseled, "Take time to be holy each day of your lives" (*Teachings*

of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee [2000], 175–76). It is important to set aside time to meditate, ponder, and turn our hearts toward heaven. This will help us receive, recognize, and understand the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

The situations with our loved ones can require our urgent attention and can cause us to desperately seek answers or direction. Our sense of urgency might cause us to expect immediate spiritual help. While the Lord's responses come quickly at times, the scriptures teach us that revelation is given "line upon line" (Isaiah 28:10). We can patiently "wait upon the Lord" (Isaiah 40:31) and trust that He will speak to us. This is one way that our patience and character are refined. Just as the people of Nephi "understood not the voice which they heard" until the third time (see 3 Nephi 11:3), it might take time for us to recognize personal revelation.

- o How have you felt the Lord guide and direct you in your relationship with your loved one?
- o What will you do to seek revelation from the Lord to guide you?

STUDYING THE WORD OF GOD

When we want to know what the Lord would have us do, we can search and ponder the scriptures. As Nephi taught in the Book of Mormon, “the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3). Elder Richard G. Scott has said, “Scriptures are like packets of light that illuminate our minds and give place to guidance and inspiration from on high. They can become the key to open the channel to communion with our Father in Heaven and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ” (“The Power of Scripture,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 6). The scriptures can be a means through which the Lord can speak to us and help us on our journey of peace and healing. As we ponder the scriptures and their teachings in our lives, we can seek guidance from the Spirit to understand how to seek healing from the Savior.

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PARTAKING OF THE SACRAMENT

The sacrament is a time for reflection. We partake of the sacrament in remembrance of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ for us and to renew our covenants. The sacrament can be a sacred time for us to reconcile and submit our will to God's and be spiritually strengthened. This may require us to suspend thinking about our loved ones and focus on our own spiritual strength. While it is natural to turn our thoughts during the sacrament to our loved ones and how their challenges are impacting us, we need to take the time during the sacrament to strengthen our relationships with God and the Savior. We, in turn, are spiritually strengthened through the enabling power of the Savior Jesus Christ. It is important to not let anything distract us from renewing our covenants with the Lord, not even the actions and choices of our loved ones.

Although we desire our loved ones to come unto Christ and be healed, this is something that they must do for themselves. Heavenly Father waits patiently for them to exercise faith in Christ and take the necessary steps toward recovery. We too must be patient and align our will to God's. The sacrament provides an opportunity to demonstrate that we are willing to submit to Heavenly Father while we endure in faith. Replacing our desires with trust in His will is one way that we take upon ourselves the name of Christ and always remember Him (see D&C 20:77, 79).

- How can the ordinance of the sacrament strengthen you?

ATTENDING THE TEMPLE

We may struggle in going to the temple because some of our loved ones are not able to be with us. However, the weaknesses and choices of a loved one do not affect the right of a spouse or family member to attend the temple, nor should they affect our sense of worthiness to attend. Temple worship and service can provide us with the strength and blessings we need to press forward and keep an eternal perspective. President Boyd K. Packer said, “Temples are the very center of the spiritual strength of the Church. We should expect that the adversary will try to interfere with us as a Church and with us individually as we seek to

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difference between our own emotions telling us what we want to hear and the Holy Ghost telling us what we need to hear” (“Receiving, Recognizing, and Responding to the Promptings of the Holy Ghost” [Brigham Young University–Idaho devotional, Aug. 31, 1999], byui.edu). The Holy Ghost provides us with peace and direction as we seek guidance and press forward in faith.

- How has the Holy Ghost comforted you in affliction?
- How have you learned to recognize the promptings of the Holy Ghost?
- What promptings have you received from the Holy Ghost? How will you act on them?



As the soothing voice of a loving parent can quiet a crying child, the whisperings of the Spirit can calm our fears, hush the nagging worries of our life, and comfort us when we grieve.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Gospel Study

As you study the resources listed below, prayerfully consider how you can apply the principles they teach.

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temple help you draw near unto the Lord? How will attending the temple bless you?

- How do you receive personal revelation? What does it feel like? How does it come? Watch “Patterns of Light: Spirit of Revelation,” and look for additional insights about receiving revelation.
- Watch “Voice of the Spirit” or “Feeling the Holy Ghost” and think about how you can strengthen the influence of the Holy Ghost in your life. What will you do to have the Holy Ghost with you more abundantly? How can the Holy Ghost help you at this time?
- Study and ponder Elder Richard G. Scott’s talk, “How to Obtain Revelation and Inspiration for Your Personal Life.” What things distract you or hinder your ability to receive revelation? What actions will you take that will help you obtain revelation?
- Consider the principles found in these hymns and songs: “In Humility, Our Savior” (*Hymns*, no. 172); “Father in Heaven, We Do Believe” (*Hymns*, no. 180); “Let the Holy Spirit Guide” (*Hymns*, no. 143); “Oh, May My Soul Commune with Thee” (*Hymns*, no. 123); “Search, Ponder, and Pray” (*Children’s Songbook*, 109).

Principle 5

TAKE HEED UNTO THYSELF



“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (1 Timothy 4:16).

ACCEPTING THAT WE CANNOT CONTROL OUR LOVED ONES OR HEAL THEM

Our ensnared loved ones often make poor choices and may suffer significant consequences. It is hard to watch this happen and to feel helpless to prevent it. We might believe that things won't get better unless we step in and fix it. We may try to persuade, reason, bargain, punish, manipulate, or shame our loved ones into recovery. These attempts may seem effective for a time, but in the end they are not enough. We learn from experience that trying to exercise control only creates a climate of tension, fear, and resentment. Elder Richard G. Scott counseled, “Do not attempt to override agency. The Lord himself would not do that. Forced obedience yields no blessings” (“To Help a Loved One in Need,” *Ensign*, May 1988, 60).

It is natural for us to want our loved ones to experience the healing power of Jesus Christ, and we strive to help them in any way we can. However, it is important to understand that we cannot

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save them. If we try to save them from the consequences of their poor choices, we are wrongfully attempting to usurp the role of our Savior and Redeemer. Some of our efforts and intentions in their behalf may actually postpone their turning to the Savior. For the Lord to heal them, they need to exercise faith and be obedient to His commandments. We cannot do that for them. The Savior asks, “Will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?” (3 Nephi 9:13). All people must choose for themselves to come unto the Savior. In the case of a person struggling, he or she is the only one who can choose to do what is necessary to find recovery.

- o How can we prevent a desire to support a loved one from turning into an attempt to override agency?

FOCUSING ON OUR HEALING

A primary motivation in seeking help may be to better understand how to help our loved ones. We may believe or expect that our loved ones' recoveries will lead to our own healing. We come to a vital turning point as we realize that we need to focus instead on our own healing. This does not mean that we stop supporting our loved ones or desiring their recoveries. Rather, we realize that our own peace and healing is our first priority. Our loved ones' choices need not interfere with our coming to the Savior. The Lord invites us to come unto Him regardless of our circumstances: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

- How will you focus on your own peace and healing?

TAKING CARE OF OURSELVES

One important aspect of our healing is to take time to find balance and to take care of ourselves. If we are not careful, we can allow our loved ones' choices and related issues to consume us or cause us to neglect our own well-being. The Lord asks us to be "temperate in all things" (Alma 7:23) and to not "run faster than [we have] strength" (Mosiah

4:27). It is important to make sure that our own needs are met. This will allow us to better support our loved ones and others around us. Sister Neill F. Marriott taught: “We build the kingdom when we nurture others. However, the first child of God we must build up in the restored gospel is ourselves” (“What Shall We Do?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2016, 10).

- What specific actions will you take to care for yourself physically, emotionally, and spiritually?
- How can caring for yourself better enable you to help your loved one?

UNDERSTANDING COMPULSIVE BEHAVIORS

Learning about compulsive behaviors can help us better understand our loved ones' choices. The Lord has counseled, "Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118). There is much good information available about what we can do to help ourselves and our loved ones. One way to find answers is to listen to others' experiences, which can help us feel validated and not so alone. There are also many gospel-related resources that can be helpful, including scriptures, words of the prophets and other Church leaders, the Addiction Recovery Program (addictionrecovery.lds.org), the Overcoming Pornography website (overcomingpornography.org), articles on LDS.org, BYU Campus Education Week lectures, and many other materials. Knowing what to expect in a situation involving compulsive behaviors can empower us to better help ourselves and our loved ones.

- How has seeking a better understanding helped you?

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One important aspect of our healing is to take time to find balance and to take care of ourselves. If we are not careful, we can allow our loved ones' choices and related issues to consume us or cause us to neglect our own well-being.

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- o Study and ponder the chapter titled “Priorities and Balance” from the *Eternal Marriage Student Manual*. What do you learn about balance and priorities? Why is it important to seek your own healing? What has prevented you or is preventing you from coming to the Savior to be healed?

Principle 6

THY FRIENDS DO STAND BY THEE



*“Thy friends do stand by thee, and they shall hail thee again with warm hearts and friendly hands”
(D&C 121:9).*

SEEKING SUPPORT FROM OTHERS

In addition to relying on the Lord, seeking support from others can be helpful as we face our loved ones' choices. We don't need to suffer alone. President Henry B. Eyring said, “All of us will be tested. And all of us need true friends to love us, to listen to us, to show us the way, and to testify of truth to us so that we may retain the companionship of the Holy Ghost” (“True Friends,” *Ensign*, May 2002, 29). Sharing our struggles may be an uncomfortable and vulnerable experience. Many of us feel fearful or ashamed about our loved ones' choices and do not want others to know about the problem. We may be concerned that others will judge us or our loved ones. Our loved ones who are struggling may ask that we not tell anyone, even ecclesiastical leaders. However, it is acceptable and important to ask for the help we need or desire.

The Lord will guide us to the support we need. He has promised, “I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee” (Isaiah 41:13). He has promised that He

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will “lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers” (D&C 112:10). President Spencer W. Kimball said this about how God often answers our prayers: “God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another person that he meets our needs” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* [2006], 82). God has and will put people into our lives to help us and support us during our trials.

- What support or assistance do you feel you need?
- How will you seek support from others?

SEEKING THE RIGHT SUPPORT

We may not always have a positive experience as we reach out to others. While an individual may love us, he or she may also be misinformed, misguided, or unable to help. However, a bad experience should not deter us from finding the support we need. It is important to consider what resources or individuals are appropriate sources of help, when and how to share personal struggles with others, and how to use wisdom in deciding what is safe to share. Some questions to consider include: Will the person I'm sharing with be able to provide me with support? Will he or she have my best interests at heart as well as those of my loved ones? Will he or she keep the information confidential and be nonjudgmental? Is he or she mature enough and ready to receive the information, or will it be harmful to him or her?

- What obstacles get in the way of you seeking support?
- Whom do you feel prompted to reach out to for support?

IDENTIFYING SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Consider the following individuals as you reach out for comfort and support.

Family

Our families have the potential to provide a tremendous source of love and support. One reason the Lord has provided us with families is to listen and be available when it feels like there is no one else. Trusted family

members may provide the validation and support we need to continue to face our challenges with determination.

Friends

True friends stand by us through difficult times. They listen to our problems and experiences with understanding and love. They give us ideas and suggestions that we may not think about. Genuine friends will tell us the truth even when it is hard, and they will respect our agency and not tell us how to live our lives.

Priesthood and Relief Society Leaders

Our priesthood and Relief Society leaders are called by revelation and the laying on of hands by those who have proper authority (see Articles of Faith 1:5). As the Lord's representatives, they can "use their time, skills, talents, spiritual and emotional support, and prayers of faith to help others" (*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 9.6.2). Our loving Heavenly Father gives guidance and direction to our leaders in our behalf. Bishops, in particular, have priesthood keys and the power of God to bless us. Nevertheless, when speaking with Church leaders, be mindful that, because leaders have different levels of knowledge, it may be necessary to help them understand what we are going through.

Mentors

Those who have been through experiences with loved ones who have made bad choices may provide valuable insight and guidance. Though not everything that worked for them will work for us, we can still learn from their experience. Their insight and understanding can help us find greater healing and peace.

Support Groups

The Church's spouse and family support group meetings are free and provide confidential settings where people gather to share their faith and hope. Having a safe place to share our feelings openly and honestly with others who understand or who are going through similar challenges is a great blessing to us. If Church support groups are not available,

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there may be other appropriate support groups in the community that we can attend that provide help in harmony with gospel principles.

Professional Help

Many of us face significant emotional challenges as we strive to find peace and healing. If therapy is available, a compassionate therapist who is supportive of gospel principles may help us face unresolved issues and view them with a new degree of courage or perspective. Therapy is not necessary for everyone, but it is one helpful option to consider as we strive to find ultimate peace and healing through the Savior. Bishops and other Church leaders have access to resources that can be useful in finding professional help.

- What types of support have made the biggest difference to you?
- What kind of support would make the most difference in your life at this time?
- How can you be a support to others passing through similar difficulties?



Our families have the potential to provide a tremendous source of love and support. One reason the Lord has provided us with families is to listen and be available when it feels like there is no one else.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Gospel Study

As you study the resources listed below, prayerfully consider how you can apply the principles they teach.

1 Samuel 20:16–17 (Our friends can support us and love us.)

Mosiah 24:13–15 (God will support us in our afflictions.)

Doctrine and Covenants 81:5 (The Lord asks others to help us.)

Doctrine and Covenants 121:9 (Friends offer support and encouragement.)

Henry B. Eyring, “True Friends,” *Ensign*, May 2002, 26–29

James E. Faust, “Refined in Our Trials,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Feb. 2006, 2–7

Ronald A. Rasband, “Special Lessons,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 80–82

“Finding or Giving Support in Recovery,” OvercomingPornography.org

Personal Learning and Application

The following activities are to enhance your learning and application of these principles. Keep a journal of your thoughts, feelings, insights, and plans to implement what you learn. As the needs and circumstances in your life change, repeating these activities will provide you with new insights.

- Study and ponder the scriptures in this outline. What did you learn? Who do you have around you that could stand by you and support you? What support do you need from them?
- Study and ponder the following quote from President James E. Faust: “We can go to others for help. To whom can we go? Elder Orson F. Whitney (1855–1931) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles asked and answered this question: ‘To whom do we look, in days of grief and disaster, for help and consolation? . . . They are men and women who have suffered, and out of their experience in suffering they bring forth the riches of their sympathy and condolences as

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a blessing to those now in need. Could they do this had they not suffered themselves?" ("Refined in Our Trials," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Feb. 2006, 5). In what ways could someone who has been through a situation similar to yours help you? Who do you know who has been through a similar situation that you could turn to? Consider asking local leaders, such as your bishop, quorum leader, or Relief Society president, to refer you to someone who has overcome similar challenges.

- Study and ponder President Henry B. Eyring's talk "True Friends" and Elder Ronald A. Rasband's talk "Special Lessons." What principles did you learn? How can support from others help you? What sources of support are available to you? What do you feel prompted to do?
- Consider the principles found in these hymns: "Lord, I Would Follow Thee" (*Hymns*, no. 220); "Because I Have Been Given Much" (*Hymns*, no. 219); "Love One Another" (*Hymns*, no. 308).

Principle 7

IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS



“Verily I say unto you my friends, fear not, let your hearts be comforted; yea, rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks” (D&C 98:1).

OVERCOMING DISCOURAGEMENT, FEAR, AND ANGER

Life doesn't always turn out the way we hope or expect. It is easy to feel overwhelmed at times by discouragement, fear, and anger. Satan uses such feelings as an opportunity to attack us and lead us to self-criticism and finding fault in others. The more we focus on negative emotions, the stronger they become, until they begin to dominate our thoughts, diminishing our ability to feel the Spirit and find happiness. The proverb “As [a person] thinketh in his [or her] heart, so is he [or she]” (Proverbs 23:7) applies both to negative thoughts and positive thoughts. One way to counter our negative emotions is to ponder and express gratitude for the many ways in which we are blessed.

- How can we acknowledge our difficulties without becoming consumed by them?

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ACKNOWLEDGING THE HAND OF GOD IN OUR LIVES

In the midst of affliction, it may be hard to see the good around us when we feel weighed down with so much pain and sorrow. However, we have many reasons to be grateful. To those who struggle to see God's hand in their lives because of their challenges, President Henry B. Eyring gave this counsel: "The key . . . is receiving the Holy Ghost as a companion. It is the Holy Ghost who helps us see what God has done for us. It is the Holy Ghost who can help [us] see what God has done. . . . Tonight, and tomorrow night, you might pray and ponder, asking the questions: Did God send a message that was just for me? Did I see His hand in my life or the lives of my children? I will do that. And then I will find a way to preserve that memory for the day that I, and those that I love, will need to remember how much God loves us and how much we need Him" ("O Remember, Remember," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 68).

There are many tender mercies that enrich our lives and let us know that we have a Heavenly Father who loves us and is mindful of us in a very personal way. As we consistently take time each day to ponder and record the things for which we are grateful, the evidence of God's hand in our lives becomes clearer. We appreciate more fully the many blessings that have come to us in the past. We also watch for, recognize, and rejoice in the blessings that come each day. Elder Gerald N. Lund taught: "Sometimes . . . blessings come in such an unusual manner and with such precise timing that they accomplish something in addition to blessing us. They so clearly confirm the reality of God's existence that they buoy us up in times of trials" (*Divine Signatures: The Confirming Hand of God* [2010], 28). In our journey of healing, gratitude changes our hearts and helps us experience joy through the goodness of God and the redeeming power of Jesus Christ.

- How has being mindful of your blessings helped you see the hand of God in your life?
- What else helps you recognize the hand of God in your life?

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- o What difference does looking for the good make in your relationships?

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE FOR THE SAVIOR AND HIS ATONEMENT

Above all things, we are grateful for the Savior and His Atonement. He has been by our side, walking with us through good and bad times. Every good thing in our lives is a blessing from the Savior. In the words of Isaiah, “God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation” (Isaiah 12:2). As we ponder the many blessings we have, our gratitude may become like Ammon’s: “Behold, my joy is full, yea, my heart is brim with joy, and I will rejoice in my God. Yea, I know that I am nothing; as to my strength I am weak; therefore I will not boast of myself, but I will boast of my God, for in his strength I can do all things; yea, behold . . . [I] will praise his name forever” (Alma 26:11–12). Our gratitude for the Savior inspires us to be a little better, love a little more, and become more like Christ.

- o How do you feel about the Savior? How has His Atonement blessed you?
- o How can you show your gratitude to Him?

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Richard G. Scott, "How to Live Well amid Increasing Evil," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2004, 100–102

Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Grateful in Any Circumstances," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 70, 75–77

Video: "Thanksgiving Daily"

Video: "In the Spirit of Thanksgiving"

Personal Learning and Application

The following activities are to enhance your learning and application of these principles. Keep a journal of your thoughts, feelings, insights, and plans to implement what you learn. As the needs and circumstances in your life change, repeating these activities will provide you with new insights.

- Study and ponder President Henry B. Eyring's talk "O Remember, Remember," and look for ways to recognize God's hand in your life. Each day, ponder the question "Have I seen the hand of God reaching out to touch us, our children, or our family today?" and record your thoughts.
- Think of a trial or difficulty you are currently experiencing. Study and ponder the picture of Adam and Eve in the *Gospel Art Book* ([2009], no. 5) and read Moses 5:10–12. What impresses you about their reaction to adversity? What do you learn from their example?
- Watch the videos "Thanksgiving Daily" and "In the Spirit of Thanksgiving," and consider what they teach about gratitude. Read this statement from President Thomas S. Monson: "To express gratitude is gracious and honorable, to enact gratitude is generous and noble, but to live with gratitude ever in our hearts is to touch heaven" ("The Divine Gift of Gratitude," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 90). How can you show increased gratitude?
- Why it is important to show gratitude? What blessings come from feeling and expressing gratitude? Read and ponder Doctrine and Covenants 78:19. Read the story of the "blessing basket" from Sister Bonnie D. Parkin in "Gratitude: A Path to Happiness," and write down

the blessings for which you are thankful. Share your feelings about this experience with a friend or loved one.

- Study and ponder Elder Richard G. Scott's talk "How to Live Well amid Increasing Evil," and look for patterns he suggests to live more hopefully and to look for the good in a world filled with evil. How can you use what you have learned to help you appreciate more fully the good in your life?
- Study and ponder your patriarchal blessing, and look for specific gifts and talents Heavenly Father has given you. If you have not received your patriarchal blessing yet, consider counseling with your bishop and preparing to receive it.
- Consider the principles found in these hymns: "Count Your Blessings" (*Hymns*, no. 241); "Come, Come, Ye Saints" (*Hymns*, no. 30); "Now Thank We All Our God" (*Hymns*, no. 95); "Savior, Redeemer of My Soul" (*Hymns*, no. 112); "Because I Have Been Given Much" (*Hymns*, no. 219).

- o Study and ponder your patriarchal blessing, and look for specific gifts and talents Heavenly Father has given you. If you have not received your patriarchal blessing yet, consider counseling with your bishop and preparing to receive it.

- o Consider the principles found in these hymns: “Count Your Blessings” (*Hymns*, no. 241); “Come, Come, Ye Saints” (*Hymns*, no. 30); “Now Thank We All Our God” (*Hymns*, no. 95); “Savior, Redeemer of My Soul” (*Hymns*, no. 112); “Because I Have Been Given Much” (*Hymns*, no. 219).

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Principle 8

BE FIRM AND STEADFAST



"Therefore, as many as have come to this, ye know of yourselves are firm and steadfast in the faith, and in the thing wherewith they have been made free" (Helaman 15:8).

SETTING BOUNDARIES TO PROTECT OURSELVES AND OUR FAMILIES

We often feel torn between supporting our loved ones and trying to meet our own needs for well-being and safety, especially when our loved ones continue to struggle with destructive behaviors. We want to show our love for them while at the same time protecting ourselves and others. Learning how to love and protect ourselves will not only be vital to preserving our understanding of our own individual worth but will also be a blessing to our loved ones.

Setting boundaries means that we indicate a border or a limit around certain actions or individuals that we then do not allow others to cross. Understanding this concept and being able to set boundaries helps us avoid feeling like we are victims.

The boundaries we set will help us meet our spiritual, emotional, and physical needs and ultimately help us feel safe and at peace. We need to feel safe and well in order to fully love

and serve others. However, when our needs are not adequately met, we have a responsibility to speak with our loved ones in a way that allows them the agency to decide whether they will help us or not.

- o How do your boundaries help you to feel safe and well? How do they help you show love to yourself and others?

BEING OPEN AND HONEST

Being open and honest with our loved ones about our pain and how we need their help can be difficult. However, our vulnerability helps us be more authentic and helps our loved ones relate to us better. If our loved ones continue to cross our boundaries by being unkind or unloving as a result of their choices, then enforcing consequences becomes our best next course of action. President Russell M. Nelson taught that “real love for the sinner may compel courageous confrontation—not acquiescence! Real love does not support self-destructing behavior” (“Teach Us Tolerance and Love,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 71).

We have a responsibility to set and clearly communicate boundaries, make rules, and hold family members accountable for their choices. This is not done to control others but rather to minimize their negative impact and to help our families stay safe and well. Setting boundaries also helps us to remember our worth as children of God and know that we are worthy of love and kindness in our lives. Many spouses and family members find that when they communicate openly about their feelings and experiences and then set firm boundaries and consequences, their loved ones understand more fully the damaging effects of their choices and actions. Experiencing consequences can provide our loved ones with the very motivation they need to find healing and recovery. Setting limits can also help invite the Spirit into our homes and into the lives of our family members because it will help us be open, honest, humble, and assertive and it allows our loved ones to better exercise their own agency.

- How has being honest and open in your relationship with your loved one blessed your life?

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- o If you have not felt able to be as open or honest with your loved one as you would like, what can you do to be able to communicate more candidly?

ENFORCING CONSEQUENCES WHEN A BOUNDARY IS CROSSED

If our loved ones continue to disrespect our boundaries, we need to provide consequences. As we do so, we should seek the Lord's guidance. The Spirit can help us know what is best for our loved ones and for us. There is not one approach that is right for everyone.

There are, however, certain principles that can guide us in setting boundaries and consequences for our family members. For example, our boundaries and consequences should be based on the principle of agency—they must be centered on what we can and will do rather than on what we want or expect someone else to do. Boundaries and consequences should be clear and concrete. They should be inspired by and communicated with love, not with anger or as punishment. They may involve a natural result of actions taken. We can start with simple and specific limits we can carry out. For example, an appropriate boundary to begin with is to insist that our homes be free from pornography, harmful substances, or related negative influences. If our loved ones cross one of these boundaries, then we enforce the related consequences. This lets our loved ones know that we have limits and that we will not allow inappropriate behavior.

The gospel teaches us a pattern of our Father providing commandments and then allowing consequences for disobedience. For example, the scriptures teach us that if we disobey the commandments, we cannot have the Spirit as our constant companion (see Mosiah 2:36). In our lives, setting limits on our loved ones' bad behavior reminds us that we are worth being loved and respected. Our loved ones need to understand that our boundaries are about our obligation to keep the second great commandment of loving ourselves as well as loving our neighbors (see Matthew 22:39).

We should anticipate that our boundaries will be challenged and that consequences will need to be enforced. But we can also keep in mind

that mistakes are learning opportunities. When we establish a consequence for some action, it must be something we are willing and able to carry out in the spirit of love and learning. The boundaries and consequences we establish should be set in wisdom, in harmony with the gospel, and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We can also seek help by consulting with a trusted support person, ecclesiastical leader, or professional counselor. This helps us to evaluate our thinking and to be alert to any boundary or consequence that is not motivated by true and loving principles.

The Lord will help us and sustain us as we set limits and carry out consequences for the safety and well-being of our families. As we do so, His influence will bring increased peace into our lives and the lives of our loved ones.

- o How can boundaries and consequences help both you and your loved one find recovery and healing?
- o What are some consequences that can be enforced if your loved one crosses a boundary?
- o How can you appropriately respond to a loved one who repeatedly fails to respect boundaries you set?

DOING WHAT WE CAN TO PRESERVE OUR RELATIONSHIPS

The pain we feel as a result of our loved ones' choices may seem unbearable. We may find ourselves wondering, "How long can I keep on enduring this?" At times, the only option for relief may seem to be to separate ourselves from our loved ones or even end our relationships with them. On the other hand, we should make every reasonable effort to preserve our family relationships.

The sanctity of marriage and families has been taught repeatedly by ancient and modern prophets and apostles. Elder M. Russell Ballard taught:

"I call upon members of the Church and on committed parents, grandparents, and extended family members everywhere to hold fast to [the

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family] proclamation, to make it a banner not unlike General Moroni's 'title of liberty,' and to commit ourselves to live by its precepts. . . .

"In today's world, where Satan's aggression against the family is so prevalent, parents must do all they can to fortify and defend their families" ("What Matters Most Is What Lasts Longest," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2005, 42, 43).

We should seek the Lord's direction and strength to sustain us while we strive to know His will regarding our family relationships.

- o What can you do to show commitment to your relationship by maintaining clear limits?
- o How does maintaining boundaries help preserve your self-worth?

RECOGNIZING WE NEED NOT ENDURE OUR LOVED ONES' ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR

Any abuse we experience at the hands of our loved ones is unacceptable. "Abuse is the physical, emotional, sexual, or spiritual mistreatment of others. It may not only harm the body, but it can deeply affect the mind and spirit, destroying faith and causing confusion, doubt, mistrust, guilt, and fear" (*Responding to Abuse: Helps for Ecclesiastical Leaders* [1995], 1). Those who suffer from compulsive behaviors sometimes participate in abusive behavior. While we pray that our hearts will be filled with "tolerance and love" ("In Humility, Our Savior," *Hymns*, no. 172), we know the Lord does not expect or want us to endure abuse. It is important for us to take necessary steps to preserve our well-being, remain safe, and stop the abuse. We may need to seek help from Heavenly Father, Church leaders, or other trusted individuals about how to protect ourselves.

In some instances separation or divorce may be justified. Elder Dallin H. Oaks has said:

“We know that many of you are innocent victims—members whose former spouses persistently betrayed sacred covenants or abandoned or refused to perform marriage responsibilities for an extended period. Members who have experienced such abuse have firsthand knowledge of circumstances worse than divorce.

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John K. Carmack, "When Our Children Go Astray," *Ensign*, Feb. 1997, 6–13

Russell M. Nelson, "Teach Us Tolerance and Love," *Ensign*, May 1994, 69–71

Dallin H. Oaks, "Divorce," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 70–73

Dallin H. Oaks, "Love and Law," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 26–29

Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Continue in Patience," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 56–59

"Family Responsibilities," *Gospel Principles* (2011), 212–17

"Responding to Challenges in Marriage," *Marriage and Family Relations: Instructor's Manual* (2000), 18–22

Personal Learning and Application

The following activities are to enhance your learning and application of these principles. Keep a journal of your thoughts, feelings, insights, and plans to implement what you learn. As the needs and circumstances in your life change, repeating these activities will provide you with new insights.

- Study and ponder Elder Dallin H. Oaks's talk "Love and Law" and President Russell M. Nelson's talk "Teach Us Tolerance and Love," and look for principles relating to setting limits and showing love. Consider the limits you have set or plan to set. Evaluate them in the context of these gospel principles. In your journal, record your thoughts and ideas for applying these principles.
- Consider speaking to someone you trust about your current situation, such as a Church leader or someone with personal or professional experience related to the situation you are facing. Counsel with this person regarding what limits or consequences may be necessary and justified. In addition, seek Heavenly Father's guidance through prayer. What actions do you feel impressed to take?
- Study and ponder Elder John K. Carmack's talk "When Our Children Go Astray." Think about how parents can show love without condoning sin. Which principles outlined in this talk particularly apply

to your situation? Outline a plan of action based on the promptings you receive.

- o Consider the principles found in these hymns and songs: “Dare to Do Right” (*Children’s Songbook*, 158); “The Lord Gave Me a Temple” (*Children’s Songbook*, 153); “In Humility, Our Savior” (*Hymns*, no. 172); “Love At Home” (*Hymns*, no. 294); “Father, Cheer Our Souls Tonight” (*Hymns*, no. 231); “Do What Is Right” (*Hymns*, no. 237).

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Principle 9

WE HAVE RENOUNCED DISHONESTY



"[We] have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Corinthians 4:2).

FOSTERING TRUST

Bad choices thrive in secrecy, and deceit is its lifeblood. A turning point for our loved ones occurs when they recognize the role secrecy and deceit play in enabling their bad choices. When our loved ones lie to us or deceive us and minimize their bad behavior, we lose trust in them. Without trust, it is hard to overcome our fear and worry about what our loved ones may be doing in our absence. For example, if they tell us they are going to the store, we may wonder whether they are lying and actually intend to engage in inappropriate behavior. This distrust creates barriers in our communication and in our relationship. We may find ourselves constantly worrying about what our loved ones are doing and may take steps to monitor their behavior.

But while we may not now be able to fully trust our loved ones, we can trust the Lord and His protection. He helps us effectively cope with the many worries and fears we encounter. He

provides us with assurances through His Spirit that help us find peace and hope. Nephi declared, “O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever” (2 Nephi 4:34; see also Alma 58:11).

- How will trusting the Lord help you when you struggle to trust your loved one?

ENCOURAGING HONESTY FROM OUR LOVED ONES

For many of us, discovering our loved ones' poor choices causes shock and alarm. Naturally, we have many questions regarding their actions and behaviors. To what extent have we been deceived? What else don't we know? We are anxious to get answers and find out the truth. Often, our loved ones are in denial or are so embarrassed and ashamed that they will share only a little at a time. While it is vitally important for them to be honest and accountable for what they have done, full disclosure is usually a process that takes time, especially where patterns of secrecy and deceit have been in place for long periods of time.

It is difficult to learn all the secret and painful things that our loved ones have done. We may not want to know, or we may not be ready to hear everything—it may be hurtful and damaging for us to hear some specific details. While it is essential for us to hear the facts, all things should be done “in wisdom and order” (Mosiah 4:27). Everyone’s circumstances differ regarding how much detail will satisfy the need for truth. A bishop, a friend, a counselor—and above all, the Spirit—can help guide us in balancing what we need to know and what might actually further harm us. Even though we may feel angry or hurt because of what our loved ones share, it is important not to act in anger or to shame our loved ones. Remember that disclosure is part of recovery and healing and that our loved ones may already be experiencing shame and self-loathing—feelings which will need to be overcome as they progress toward recovery.

- What level of detail might you need in order to build a foundation for trust?
- How will you decide what is important to know and what should be left unsaid?

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MAINTAINING REGULAR COMMUNICATION

Our loved ones may be hesitant or unwilling to speak with us about their struggles or challenges. Likewise, we may not be comfortable sharing our feelings with them. Although it may be difficult, we can find ways to be open and honest with our loved ones. Both we and our loved ones will benefit from talking to each other regularly about our journey toward recovery and healing. This includes discussing times or circumstances in which our loved ones become tempted or experience a relapse.

Elder Richard G. Scott said, “A [spouse or family member] must have no private, hidden agenda that is kept secret from [his or her loved one]. Sharing everything about each other’s personal life is powerful spiritual insurance” (“The Sanctity of Womanhood,” *Ensign*, May 2000, 37).

It may be difficult to know when, how often, and what kinds of things we should ask our loved ones to share with us. The method and frequency of our communication may differ depending on our role as a spouse, a parent of a minor child, or a parent of an adult child. Again, a bishop, friend, or counselor can help us find the right balance. Open and honest communication is the beginning of rebuilding trust. As we patiently speak with our loved ones, if they are willing, the Spirit will guide and support us.

- o How has regular, open, and honest communication blessed your relationship with your loved one?
- o In what specific ways can you and your loved one improve your communication?

REBUILDING TRUST

Our loved ones may need to learn how to be honest and trustworthy again. While they may say all the right things, it may be more important to observe their actions. This can help us understand the sincerity of their efforts toward recovery. They may not yet be willing to do what is necessary to find recovery or may relapse. In such instances, we may choose to be patient and love them without extending our full trust to them yet.

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Even though we may feel angry or hurt because of what our loved ones share, it is important not to act in anger or to shame our loved ones. Remember that disclosure is part of recovery and healing.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Gospel Study

As you study the resources listed below, prayerfully consider how you can apply the principles they teach.

James 1:19–20 (Be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger.)

James 3:2 (A perfect man does not offend others through his words.)

Mosiah 2:32; 3 Nephi 11:29 (Beware of contention; it is not of the Lord.)

Alma 12:14 (Our words will condemn us.)

Doctrine and Covenants 51:9 (Let everyone deal honestly.)

Doctrine and Covenants 136:23–24 (Let our words be edifying one to another.)

Rosemary M. Wixom, “The Words We Speak,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 81–83

“Communication,” *Eternal Marriage Student Manual* (Church Educational System manual, 2003), 31–37

Personal Learning and Application

The following activities are to enhance your learning and application of these principles. Keep a journal of your thoughts, feelings, insights, and plans to implement what you learn. As the needs and circumstances in your life change, repeating these activities will provide you with new insights.

- Study the chapter titled “Communication” in the *Eternal Marriage Student Manual* (pages 31–37). What do you learn about trust? What may be necessary for your loved one to earn back your trust? What do you feel prompted to do?
- Study either Randy Keyes’s article “Counseling Together in Marriage” (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, June 2012, 10–13) or Val Johnson’s article, “Obtaining the Spirit through Counseling Together” (*Ensign*, June 2012, 36–39). What do you learn about the importance of counseling with your loved one? What principles do you learn that may help you?

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What changes will you make to more effectively counsel together with your loved one?

- Study and ponder the scriptures listed above. What did the Spirit teach you? How can you better communicate with your loved one? What changes do you feel you need to make?
- Consider the principles found in these hymns: “Truth Reflects upon Our Senses” (*Hymns*, no. 273); “I Am a Child of God” (*Hymns*, no. 301); “Teach Me to Walk in the Light” (*Hymns*, no. 304).

Principle 10

LIFT UP THE HANDS WHICH HANG DOWN



“Wherefore, be faithful; stand in the office which I have appointed unto you; succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees” (D&C 81:5).

SUPPORTING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

We support our loved ones in righteousness by reinforcing their efforts to come unto Christ and recover from their poor choices. When our loved ones make poor choices that result in severe consequences, it is natural to want to protect them from those consequences. We may try to repair the damage ourselves and make restitution in their behalf. In some instances our help can be very beneficial and even lifesaving; however, we must be careful not to support them in their poor choices or enable them to commit sin. If we fall into a trap of consistently rescuing them, we may hinder their recovery and delay them from turning to the Lord for help.

It is important to remember that “the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance” (D&C 1:31). Experiencing the negative consequences of their actions can help our loved ones determine to change (see Luke 15:17). The prophet Alma counseled his son, “I would not dwell upon your crimes, to harrow up your soul, if it were not for your good” (Alma 39:7). We are

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all accountable for our own words, deeds, and thoughts (see Mosiah 4:30); we cannot remove our loved ones' accountability for their actions. Only by repentance and obedience to the commandments can our loved ones be healed, receive forgiveness for their mistakes, and stand uprightly before the Lord.

- Why is it important for your loved one to be accountable for his or her actions?
- How can you determine if you are really supporting your loved one in recovery, rather than enabling his or her misbehavior?

GIVING OUR SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT

Our loved ones face many trials in their efforts to recover. They may feel broken, defective, and unworthy of God's love and our love. They can lose hope that they will ever be clean again. In order to change, they need hope for the future and reassurance that they are worth the required effort. Our role isn't to recover for them but to encourage and love them as they work toward recovery. Expressing our faith in the Savior and supporting our loved ones in their honest efforts to change can help them progress toward recovery.

The Savior is the perfect example of support and encouragement. He was “filled with compassion” toward those around him (see 3 Nephi 17:6; Matthew 9:36; 14:14). Sister Barbara Thompson, a former counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, explained: “Compassion means to feel love and mercy toward another person. It means to have sympathy and desire to relieve the suffering of others. It means to show kindness and tenderness toward another” (“And of Some Have Compassion, Making a Difference,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 119). When we are compassionate, we strive to understand the shame or despair our loved ones may feel and consider all the efforts they are making. We “bear one another’s burdens, . . . mourn with those that mourn; . . . and comfort those that stand in need of comfort” (Mosiah 18:8–9). Compassion doesn’t mean we support their poor choices or excuse their behavior. However, we extend a loving hand and give encouragement.

- Why is it important to show compassion while supporting your loved one?
- How can you express your compassion?

CONTINUING TO MINISTER

Our loved ones are the ones responsible for their recovery, and they may not yet be ready for our support. In some cases, they might even reject or resent our efforts to help. We may feel discouraged and powerless when we watch them continue in their poor choices. But we can still love them and pray for them. Speaking of those who are struggling spiritually, the Lord counsels us to not “cast [them] out” but to “continue to minister; for ye know not but what they will return and repent, and come unto me with full purpose of heart, and I shall heal them; and ye shall be the means of bringing salvation unto them” (3 Nephi 18:32). Patiently waiting may be the best approach for some circumstances.

In the meantime, we can pray for our loved ones and support them in appropriate ways. The Lord uses our prayers and faith to bless our loved ones. Elder Robert D. Hales said that a family member's "faith, prayers, and efforts will be consecrated to the good of their [loved one]" ("With All the Feeling of a Tender Parent," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2004, 88). Our loved ones may not always choose to change their destructive behavior, but we know that our prayers in their behalf are heard by a loving Heavenly Father.

- o How can you respond to a loved one who does not seem ready or willing to accept your support?

SERVING OTHERS

When our challenges seem overwhelming or our situation seems hopeless, we can find spiritual renewal in giving service to others. Service provides an opportunity to look beyond our personal difficulties or challenges. Of course, we can't serve everyone, and we should be careful not to run faster than we have strength (see Mosiah 4:27). However,

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even the simplest acts can bless and encourage others—and lift our own spirits. Helping others is also one way we show our love and appreciation to our Heavenly Father and the Savior. We know that “when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17). Elder M. Russell Ballard taught that the Spirit can be our guide in such efforts: “In all of our service, we need to be sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Ghost. The still, small voice will let us know who needs our help and what we can do to help them” (“Finding Joy through Loving Service,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 48).

- How has serving others helped you bear your own challenges and struggles?
- What opportunities do you have to serve?
- How does the Spirit guide you in your efforts to serve?



In order to change, they need hope for the future and reassurance that they are worth the required effort. Our role isn't to recover for them but to encourage and love them as they work toward recovery.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Gospel Study

As you study the resources listed below, prayerfully consider how you can apply the principles they teach.

Mosiah 18:8–10 (We have made a covenant to bear each other's burdens.)

Mosiah 18:29; 3 Nephi 26:19 (The Nephites ministered to the temporal and spiritual needs and wants of one another.)

3 Nephi 18:23, 30–32 (As we continue to minister, we can help bring salvation to others.)

David L. Beck, "Your Sacred Duty to Minister," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 55–57

"Family Responsibilities," *Gospel Principles* (2011), 212–17

"Responding to Challenges in Marriage," *Marriage and Family Relations: Instructor's Manual* (2000), 18–22

Appendix: "Support in Recovery," 79–85 in this book

Video: "Ministering to Others"

Video: "Watching Over the One"

Video: "The Errand of Angels"

Personal Learning and Application

The following activities are to enhance your learning and application of these principles. Keep a journal of your thoughts, feelings, insights, and plans to implement what you learn. As the needs and circumstances in your life change, repeating these activities will provide you with new insights.

- o Watch one or more of the following videos: “Ministering to Others,” “Watching Over the One,” and “The Errand of Angels.” What did you learn? How can you support someone’s spiritual growth? What do you feel prompted to do?

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- o Study and ponder “Family Responsibilities” and “Responding to Challenges in Marriage.” What principles do they teach that you feel are important to guide you in supporting your loved one’s spiritual growth? How can you better minister to him or her?
- o Study the appendix, “Support in Recovery.” What did you learn? What did you feel? How will you apply what you learned to better support your loved one?
- o Consider the principles found in these hymns: “Be Still, My Soul” (*Hymns*, no. 124); “Each Life That Touches Ours for Good” (*Hymns*, no. 293); “Have I Done Any Good?” (*Hymns*, no. 223).

Principle 11

BEAR ALL THESE THINGS WITH PATIENCE



"For I know that thou wast in bonds; yea . . . thou didst bear all these things with patience because the Lord was with thee; and now thou knowest that the Lord did deliver thee" (Alma 38:4).

RECOGNIZING THAT RECOVERY IS A PROCESS

Elder David A. Bednar taught that spiritual change "does not occur quickly or all at once; it is an ongoing process—not a single event. Line upon line and precept upon precept, gradually and almost imperceptibly, our motives, our thoughts, our words, and our deeds become aligned with the will of God. This phase of the transformation process requires time, persistence, and patience" ("Ye Must Be Born Again," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 21). Similarly, all change takes energy and sustained effort. Our loved ones must go through a process of emotional, spiritual, and physical change, and this process requires time and patience.

Preach My Gospel (2004) teaches this about the recovery process:

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“Repentance may involve an emotional and physical process. People must stop ongoing, ingrained ways of inappropriate acting. Undesirable actions must be replaced with healthy and appropriate behaviors.

“Thus, both repentance and recovery may take time. Sometimes [people], even with the best of intentions, give in to temptation as they progress toward greater self-discipline. . . .

“Through baptism and confirmation people receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, which will strengthen their ability to overcome these challenges. But baptism and confirmation may not fully do away with the emotional and physical urges that go along with these behaviors. Even though a person may have some initial success, further emotional healing may be necessary to completely repent and recover” (189–91).

- How can these truths about repentance and recovery influence your efforts to support your loved one's recovery?

RESPONDING APPROPRIATELY TO RELAPSE

Relapse occurs when a person slides back into bad choices after partial recovery. Relapse is very common and may range from a single incident to a complete return to former patterns. Because relapse is so common, some may rationalize that it is part of recovery as long as they are doing their best. However, it is important to remember that relapse is not part of the recovery process. We should be careful not to condone our loved ones' excuses or justifications for their poor choices. Chronic relapse indicates that our loved ones have not yet fully recovered. It may mean that loved ones need to make greater efforts and receive more intensive treatment. We may need to set additional boundaries or limits with them. If our loved ones try to minimize the seriousness of a relapse, our clear and honest perspective can help them see that they are deceiving themselves and need additional help.

When our loved ones relapse, we may experience hopelessness, doubt, low self-worth, and anger. These feelings may be intense and at times overwhelming. Even if this issue is an old one to us, the pain can still be fresh and intense. And sometimes, if our loved ones relapse after a significant amount of time in recovery, the hopelessness and pain can

become even more pronounced. Part of our healing is to learn how to deal with and overcome the painful feelings that arise because of our loved ones' poor choices. We can use the healthy coping skills we have learned and boundaries we have set so far in our journey and build on that foundation. We can also reach out to those who love us and are supporting us. We can surrender our hearts and rely on the Lord to take our burdens from us and provide us with His peace. Our loved ones' relapses need not cause us to despair, because of our relationship with the Savior Jesus Christ.

It is important to respond appropriately to our loved ones' relapses, not only to help us heal but also to help them in their recovery. Enabling or ignoring their behavior may perpetuate their behavior and increase our suffering. They need to understand that we love them but that we cannot condone continued poor choices and their rationalizing their decisions. We can lovingly and honestly respond to their relapse and rationalizations to help them understand how their actions affect us and themselves. We can support others with "love unfeigned" (D&C 121:41) while also clearly communicating our feelings of disapproval of their behavior "when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love" (D&C 121:43).

- How has God helped you to cope with your loved one's relapses?
- How can you respond to relapse appropriately?

HELPING OUR LOVED ONES THROUGH THEIR RELAPSES

While some try to justify their relapses, others become overly discouraged and give up if they relapse, mistakenly believing that they have destroyed all of their progress toward recovery. But relapsing doesn't negate all their efforts toward recovery. Progress may still be happening in other ways, such as their honesty about their challenges or the frequency or intensity of their relapses. They need to learn from their mistakes, correct them, and press forward. Our encouragement and support are vital in this process. Our loved ones need us to acknowledge the progress they are making and to help them continue toward recovery. While we cannot discern if they have fully repented or not, we can testify that the Lord wants to forgive them and that there is still hope, and we can

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encourage them to work with their ecclesiastical leaders, support people, and others who can best assist them. Successful recovery is possible for those who are humble and exercise faith in Jesus Christ as they continue to work through their challenges and make lasting changes in their lives.

- How can you support your loved one during a relapse?



Our encouragement and support are vital. . . . [They] need us to acknowledge the progress they are making and to help them continue toward recovery.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Gospel Study

As you study the resources listed below, prayerfully consider how you can apply the principles they teach.

Ezekiel 3:21; Ephesians 6:18; Doctrine and Covenants 88:81 (Our warnings can strengthen our loved ones.)

Doctrine and Covenants 121:8 (If we endure our challenges well, God will exalt us on high.)

David A. Bednar, "Watching with All Perseverance," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 40–43

Craig A. Cardon, "The Savior Wants to Forgive," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 15–17

James E. Faust, "The Power to Change," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 122–24

Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Continue in Patience," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 56–59

"Repentance and Addiction Recovery," "Helping Investigators and Recent Converts Understand Repentance and Addiction Recovery," and "A Plan for Overcoming Addictive Behavior" sections, *Preach My Gospel* (2004), 189–91

Video: "Continue in Patience"

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Personal Learning and Application

The following activities are to enhance your learning and application of these principles. Keep a journal of your thoughts, feelings, insights, and plans to implement what you learn. As the needs and circumstances in your life change, repeating these activities will provide you with new insights.

- Study and ponder President James E. Faust's talk "The Power to Change" and the sections "Repentance and Addiction Recovery," "Helping Investigators and Recent Converts Understand Repentance and Addiction Recovery," and "A Plan for Overcoming Addictive Behavior" (pages 189–91) in *Preach My Gospel*. What do you learn about the process of recovery? What are your expectations for your loved one's recovery? What can you do to help him or her be successful during and after a relapse?
- Study and ponder President Dieter F. Uchtdorf's talk "Continue in Patience," or watch the video "Continue in Patience." Why is it important for both you and your loved one to be patient during the recovery process? How can the Lord assist you in being patient? What do President Uchtdorf's words teach you about how to respond appropriately to a relapse?
- Study and ponder Elder David A. Bednar's talk "Watching with All Perseverance." What does Elder Bednar teach that can help you and

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your loved one be watchful for the signs of a potential relapse? What help has your loved one asked for? What will you do to better work together and help each other?

- o Do the following activity from *Preach My Gospel* (page 191), and consider what your loved one may be experiencing as he or she strives for recovery: “Think of some habit you have—something you do frequently, without thinking, such as cracking your knuckles, adjusting your glasses, eating too much, or sleeping too late. Now try to go one day without doing it once. When you succeed, try to go a whole week without doing it.” Imagine how much harder it is for your loved one to change his or her compulsive behavior than it is for you to give up a bad but nonaddictive habit. How will this experience help you support your loved one in recovery? Write in your journal about your experience.
- o Consider the principles found in these hymns: “Press Forward, Saints” (*Hymns*, no. 81); “Be Thou Humble” (*Hymns*, no. 130); “When Faith Endures” (*Hymns*, no. 128).

Principle 12

MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU



“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

FINDING PEACE

When faced with the consequences of our loved ones’ poor choices, we may complain or become bitter. We sometimes ask questions such as “Why does this have to happen to me?” “Why do I have to suffer this now?” or “What have I done to deserve this?” Although these questions may initially dominate our thoughts and absorb our energy, we can choose to respond differently to our circumstances. We can ask ourselves, “What does the Lord want me to learn from this?” “What would He have me do? Who can I serve?” and “How can I remember my blessings?” Heavenly Father loves us and wants us to be free from the consequences of our loved ones’ poor choices. It is important to remember that He did not give us these trials—rather, they are a result of our loved ones’ poor choices. But Heavenly Father can use our trials to help us grow, progress, and become more like Him (see D&C 122).

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As we exercise faith, we can feel the purifying influence and peace of His Spirit, and He will replace “beauty for ashes” (Isaiah 61:3).

As we cry unto the Lord, He will bless and comfort us in significant ways. While we may not always receive exactly what we ask for, the Lord is still blessing us. The people of Alma were not immediately released from bondage, but “the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens” (Mosiah 24:15). With the Lord’s help, we can find peace.

- o What will you do to find peace?
- o How have you found peace from Heavenly Father and the Savior?

EXTENDING FORGIVENESS

Part of the process of offering forgiveness is letting go of burdens that keep us from experiencing the Savior's peace. President Gordon B. Hinckley said, "A spirit of forgiveness and an attitude of love and compassion toward those who may have wronged us is of the very essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ" ("Of You It Is Required to Forgive," *Ensign*, June 1991, 2). We will find healing as we forgive others. President James E. Faust taught: "It will take humility to do this, but if we will get on our knees and ask Heavenly Father for a feeling of forgiveness, He will help us. The Lord requires us 'to forgive all men' [D&C 64:10] for our own good because 'hatred [hinders] spiritual growth' [Orson F. Whitney, *Gospel Themes* (1914), 144]. Only as we rid ourselves of hatred and bitterness can the Lord put comfort into our hearts" ("The Healing Power of Forgiveness," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 69).

Forgiveness does not mean that we condone our loved ones' poor choices or allow them to mistreat us. But forgiveness does allow us to move forward spiritually, emotionally, and physically. Just as our loved ones are in bondage, our unwillingness to forgive can hold us captive. As we forgive, we leave behind feelings that, in the words of President Thomas S. Monson, have the power to "canker, fester, and ultimately destroy" ("Hidden Wedges," *Ensign*, May 2002, 20). In this way, we eliminate barriers to having the Spirit more abundantly and we can continue on the path of discipleship. As President Dieter F. Uchtdorf reminds us,

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“A spirit of forgiveness and an attitude of love and compassion toward those who may have wronged us is of the very essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”
—President Gordon B. Hinckley

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Gospel Study

As you study the resources listed below, prayerfully consider how you can apply the principles they teach.

Matthew 18:21-35 (We should forgive others as the Lord freely forgives us.)

Luke 7:36–50 (We can feel the love of the Savior when we are forgiven.)

Alma 5:12-14 (The Lord can bring about a mighty change in our hearts.)

Doctrine and Covenants 45:3–5 (Because of Christ's atoning sacrifice, we can be forgiven.)

Doctrine and Covenants 64:10 (We are required to forgive everyone.)

James E. Faust, "The Healing Power of Forgiveness," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 67-69

Yoshihiko Kikuchi, "The Healer's Art," *Ensign*, Mar. 2011, 44–49; *Liahona*, Mar. 2011, 18–23

Richard G. Scott, "Healing the Tragic Scars of Abuse," *Ensign*, May 1992, 31–33

Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "The Merciful Obtain Mercy," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 70, 75–77

Video: "Forgiveness: My Burden Was Made Light"

Video: "Come What May, and Love It"

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Personal Learning and Application

The following activities are to enhance your learning and application of these principles. Keep a journal of your thoughts, feelings, insights, and plans to implement what you learn. As the needs and circumstances in your life change, repeating these activities will provide you with new insights.

- Study and ponder President Dieter F. Uchtdorf's talk "The Merciful Obtain Mercy," and look for principles about forgiveness. What did you learn? How will the Lord help you forgive your loved one? What do you feel prompted to do?
- Watch the video "Forgiveness: My Burden Was Made Light." What did you learn about forgiveness? How will forgiveness be a blessing to you? How can forgiveness be a blessing to your loved one?
- Answer the following questions: "Why is it sometimes hard to forgive? How can we overcome these difficulties?" Look for additional insights to answer these questions in Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi's talk "The Healer's Art." Ponder how the Lord helped others forgive and how He can help you. Record your thoughts in a journal.
- Watch "Come What May, and Love It." What do you learn that applies to your current situation? How can you endure well? What is the purpose of adversity? How can you find peace amid affliction?
- Study Elder Richard G. Scott's talk "Healing the Tragic Scars of Abuse," and ponder the following passage: "During prolonged recovery from massive surgery, a patient anticipates complete healing in patience, trusting in others' care. He does not always understand the impor-

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tance of the treatment prescribed, but his obedience speeds recovery. So it is with you. . . . You cannot erase what has been done, but you can forgive (see D&C 64:10). Forgiveness heals terrible, tragic wounds, for it allows the love of God to purge your heart and mind of the poison of hate. It cleanses your consciousness of the desire for revenge. It makes place for the purifying, healing, restoring love of the Lord" ("Healing the Tragic Scars of Abuse," *Ensign*, May 1992, 32–33). What do you learn about forgiveness from Elder Scott's words? How does it relate to your ability to extend forgiveness to your loved one?

- o Consider the principles found in these hymns and songs: “Where Can I Turn for Peace?” (*Hymns*, no. 129); “Father in Heaven” (*Hymns*, no. 133); “As the Shadows Fall” (*Hymns*, no. 168); “Master, the Tempest Is Raging” (*Hymns*, no. 105); “Did You Think to Pray?” (*Hymns*, no. 140); “Help Me, Dear Father” (*Children’s Songbook*, 99).

APPENDIX

Support in Recovery

SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR PARTICIPANTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Receiving love and support from others is essential in helping you overcome destructive habits. Connecting with others not only provides the nurturing you need but also helps you remember that you are worthy of love as a child of God. As you reach out for support to your spiritual brothers and sisters, you allow them to practice Christlike attributes in their interactions with you. As they do this, they follow the admonition of the Savior to “succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees” (D&C 81:5).

As you use the 12 steps of recovery and seek out support from others, you will benefit from the following sources of support:

1. *Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost.* Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost are your greatest sources of support. Recovery and healing are made possible through Jesus Christ and His Atonement. In the Book of Mormon, the prophet Alma shares that Christ will “take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities” (Alma 7:12). You will feel succored and nurtured when you humbly go to your Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. It is important not to overlook the help of the Savior. He has taught us, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). The Holy Ghost can give us comfort, peace, and spiritual strength to keep moving forward.
2. *Family members.* Family members can be a source of support by offering love and acceptance and by applying the same 12 steps and the principles of the gospel to their own lives. Everyone can benefit by learning and applying the gospel principles taught in *Addiction Recovery Program: A Guide to Addiction Recovery and Healing* and *Support Guide: Help for Spouses and Family of Those in Recovery*. (Note: Participants may decide not to share their personal inventories with immediate family members or people who might be hurt by hearing those inventories. Though not all family members will be in an emotional position to provide comfort, those who can will be blessed as they do so.)
3. *Friends.* Friends can provide love and support when you talk with them about your struggles, whether or not you confide in them about your problems. Their courage can help you know when you need to change and can move you forward in your recovery. When they care enough to support you in your struggles, it can remind you of your worth and value.

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4. *Ecclesiastical leaders.* Ecclesiastical leaders can provide essential support in the recovery process. Never forget or underestimate the power of priesthood leadership. “While only the Lord can forgive sins, these priesthood leaders [bishops and branch, stake, and mission presidents] play a critical role in the process of repentance” and healing (see *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* [2004], 134). But stake or ward priesthood leaders are not your only support; a dedicated quorum leader, Relief Society leader, or home or visiting teacher can also guide and nurture you. President Joseph F. Smith said, “I don’t know of any duty that is more sacred, or more necessary, if it is carried out as it should be, than the duties of the teachers who visit the homes of the people, who pray with them, who admonish them to virtue and honor, to unity, to love, and to faith in and fidelity to the cause of Zion” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1915, 140). Elder L. Tom Perry also taught, “The home teacher is the first line of defense to watch over and strengthen [the family] unit” (“Home Teaching—a Sacred Calling,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 70).
5. *Recovery meetings.* Recovery meetings provide support in a group setting. Participants include LDS Family Services missionaries or volunteers, facilitators experienced in recovery, and other individuals who are practicing recovery principles. In these meetings, participants hear others describe how they apply recovery principles and practices. Sharing personal recovery experiences can help you work toward recovery and have hope that recovery is possible.
6. *Professional counselors.* Counselors are often sources of insight and perspective for those dealing with self-destructive choices. When seeking professional help, Church members should choose someone who is supportive of gospel principles.
7. *Support people.* Support people are those who can walk with you as you strive to find peace. Particularly, a support person who is experienced in 12-step recovery can be helpful because he or she has overcome denial and other challenges. Because of that experience, the support person can usually recognize the dishonesty that traps those with compulsive behaviors and understand the other difficulties they face. Support people help those in recovery put their “lives into perspective and avoid exaggerating or minimizing

[their] accountability" (*Addiction Recovery Program: A Guide to Addiction Recovery and Healing*, 29). When the support person is someone who has worked to overcome a compulsive behavior, both the giver and receiver of support are blessed by making progress in their own recovery. Giving and receiving support is one of the benefits of participating in the addiction recovery program and can help prevent relapses.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORT PEOPLE

Support in recovery from compulsive behaviors is vital, and having a support person you can lean on can be an essential part of receiving that support. President Gordon B. Hinckley often emphasized the value of having someone to turn to in any situation in life. He counseled members to have “a friend in the Church to whom you can constantly turn, who will walk beside you, who will answer your questions, who will understand your problems” (“A Perfect Brightness of Hope: To New Members of the Church,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Oct. 2006, 4). People recovering from compulsive behaviors particularly need that kind of friend.

In addition, President Hinckley counseled: “I want to say to you, look for your friends among members of the Church. Band together and strengthen one another. And when the time of temptation comes you will have someone to lean on to bless you and give you strength when you need it. That is what this Church is for—so that we can help one another in our times of weakness to stand on our feet tall and straight and true and good” (address given at the regional conference for Eugene, Oregon, Sept. 15, 1996; in “Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley,” *Ensign*, July 1997, 73). President Thomas S. Monson similarly taught: “We can strengthen one another; we have the capacity to notice the unnoticed. When we have eyes that see, ears that hear, and hearts that know and feel, we can reach out and rescue those for whom we have responsibility” (“The Call to Serve,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 47).

Living in recovery requires absolute honesty. Denial and isolation are hallmarks of bad choices. These behaviors are easy to fall into without the support and perspective of others, and they make it difficult to achieve lasting and stable progress in recovery. It is important to enlist

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the help of appropriate and effective supporters as soon as possible. “By being humble and honest and calling upon God and others for help, you can overcome your weaknesses [with the help of the Savior]” (*Addiction Recovery Program: A Guide to Addiction Recovery and Healing*, vi).

CHOOSING A SUPPORT PERSON

In the Church's program, like other 12-step recovery programs, you are not assigned specific support people. Deciding when and from whom to ask for support is a personal decision. Initially, it may be difficult to reach out to family or friends for help; it may be easier to identify someone in a recovery meeting whom you can lean on for support. Generally, the more people you have as a support, the better recovery will be. Once you identify a potential support person, it can be humbling and scary to ask him or her for help. However, as you do, you may be surprised at the amount of love and acceptance you feel. The more you connect with others, the more opportunities you will have to receive love and understand that you're worthy of it.

When choosing a support person, *Addiction Recovery Program: A Guide to Addiction Recovery and Healing* cautions, “Do not share . . . sensitive information with individuals you suspect might extend improper guidance, provide misinformation, or have difficulty maintaining confidences. [A support person] must be extremely trustworthy in both word and deed” (30). Some of the most effective support people are those who are fully active in the Church and who have worked through the principles in each of the 12 steps to overcome these behaviors. When seeking support, it is essential to find people who have explored their weaknesses, confessed them, and worked on overcoming them through various resources, especially through the Savior Jesus Christ and His Atonement. These actions demonstrate a personal commitment to stable, long-term recovery: “By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them” (D&C 58:43).

A support person who has overcome his or her own weaknesses can have empathy for the emotional pathway that others are traveling. Moreover, those people who have been through or are finishing the program “have a message of hope for other addicts . . . who are willing to consider

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to your time and resources. You can set an example of the importance of healthy boundaries by honoring your other commitments, including to your family, the Church, professional endeavors, and personal time.

5. *Serve selflessly.* Selfless service requires giving without expecting anything in return. You should avoid seeking praise, admiration, loyalty, or other emotional rewards from those you serve. “Be sure to give freely, not expecting a particular result” (*Addiction Recovery Program: A Guide to Addiction Recovery and Healing*, 71).
6. *Be patient.* Each individual’s journey of recovery is unique. The person you are helping may not yet be ready to move forward. He or she may repeat unhealthy behaviors and be slow to adopt the principles and practices of recovery. Remember, “most of us had to ‘hit bottom’ before we were ready to study and apply these principles” (*Addiction Recovery Program: A Guide to Addiction Recovery and Healing*, 71).
7. *Provide gentle yet firm encouragement.* Effective support comes “by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; by kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile” (D&C 121:41–42).
8. *Place God before yourself.* Constantly remember to rely on God as you offer support, and remind the people you support to do so as well. “When you do something for someone else or share the message of hope and recovery, you must not allow another person to become too dependent on you. Your responsibility is to encourage others who struggle to turn to Heavenly Father and the Savior for guidance and power” (*Addiction Recovery Program: A Guide to Addiction Recovery and Healing*, 71). Your role is to share your experiences of faith and hope to assist the people who you support through the 12-step process to feel loved and supported by God’s grace.
9. *Be prayerful.* Each time you offer support, seek Heavenly Father’s help to know which principles or practices of the 12-step program will be most helpful for the participant’s current needs. “Be prayerful as you consider ways to serve, seeking always to be led by the Holy

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THE CHURCH OF
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