

*Spiritual* EXODUS

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A LATTER-DAY SAINT  
GUIDE TO RECOVERY FROM  
BEHAVIORAL ADDICTION

MARK H. BUTLER



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*Spiritual Exodus* provides a comprehensive road map of how to recover from addictions. Most important, it includes all levels of recovery: Individual, relationship, and spiritual. I highly recommend it for both individuals and couples struggling with addictions as well as the therapists who treat them.

— Jeffrey H. Larson, Ph.D., Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy, School of Family Life, Brigham Young University, and Editor, *Journal of Couple and Relationship Therapy*

The topics in *Spiritual Exodus* helped us to better understand the problems we were dealing with. They gave us a reference point from which we could begin to solve them. We learned how to react to situations such as relapse in a way that helped recovery. Most importantly, we learned that we weren't alone. There are others that have had the very same problems and frustrations, yet they have overcome them. It gave us hope!

— Married couple in recovery from behavioral addiction

As a spouse to someone dealing with addiction, *Spiritual Exodus* was helpful to me in many ways. Not only did this book help me see what my spouse was dealing with and where he needed help to accomplish his goals, it helped me to feel validated in my feelings and find peace and direction in my own healing as well. Though it was a tough time for both of us, *Spiritual Exodus* helped us understand addiction and then how to overcome it.

— Wife of partner in recovery from behavioral addiction

Coming into therapy with my wife was a big turning point both for me personally and for our relationship. The *Spiritual Exodus* curriculum helped me to see not only the consequences of my addiction, but also the consequences of the way I was dealing with my wife's feelings about my addiction. After reading the material, it became clear how my addiction, and the way I dealt with my wife's feelings about my addiction, were destroying our marriage. Reading *Spiritual Exodus* and applying the things I was learning helped me to get out of a seemingly perpetual dead end and helped me to see how my relationship with my wife could be the one thing that would break my vicious addictive pattern. Thank you so much for the tools you gave me—in my struggle to overcome pornography addiction—and my wife—who was struggling with the pain caused by my addiction.

— Husband in recovery from behavioral addiction

While reading *Spiritual Exodus* I found and confirmed many things that I had thought were a contributing factor to my problem. This was a great reassurance in showing me that I was on the right path, but most of the book shined light on areas of my addiction that I had never considered. I found direction in a storm of struggle by not simply reading *Spiritual Exodus*, but studying it. As you read *Spiritual Exodus* I hope that you will also find new inspiration and enlightenment in your effort to overcome addiction.

— Young adult in recovery from behavioral addiction

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MARK H. BUTLER



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*We are all in need of spiritual exodus from every mortal weakness,  
and none of us can attain it alone.*

*Hence, I dedicate this work  
to the eternal Author of spiritual exodus in all our lives (Hebrews 12:1–2),  
and to ancillary co-authors of spiritual exodus in my own life,  
Shelly, Martena, and Heber.*

*In my every mortal weakness, and in every triumph and joy,  
these have been for me as the old Quaker proverb—  
“Thee lift me, and I’ll lift thee, and we will ascend together”—forever family.*



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## Chapter 1

# Panoramic Perspective for a Spiritual Exodus

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

*Spiritual Exodus* is intended for active addicts, persons in recovery, their spouses and other family helpers, therapists, and priesthood leaders. *Panoramic Perspective for a Spiritual Exodus* opens with an explanation of *Spiritual Exodus*, followed by a warning concerning appetite and addiction, together with hope and promise for recovery. The chapter then provides a broad overview of the four critical dimensions of recovery—desire for recovery, individual will and work for recovery, relationships in recovery, and grace for recovery. Altogether, *Spiritual Exodus* covers the indispensable contribution to recovery of each of these dimensions.

Recovery from addiction and its seismic effects throughout one's life and relationships is possible as one reaches out for help and healing in relationships, fortifies desire for recovery, exercises individual will and work, and seeks divine help. Read *Panoramic Perspective for Spiritual Exodus* to get the big picture of recovery.

*"I have been supported under trials and troubles of every kind, yea, and in all manner of afflictions; yea, God has delivered me from prison, and from bonds, and from death; yea, and I do put my trust in him, and he will still deliver me"* (Alma 36:27).

Life is a spiritual exodus. As we journey through the wilderness of mortality, heaven-sent experiences invite us and help us to leave behind our fallen, carnal nature and to take up our divine, spiritual nature. The inheritance of those who complete their spiritual exodus is a promised land and an abundant life.

Juxtaposed to spiritual exodus is addiction. Addiction, in its broadest sense, is the essence, enactment, and emphasis of our carnal, fallen nature. Addiction is the obsession of hedonism—a sensual orientation to life, seeking satisfaction through sensory stimulation beyond the bounds the Lord has set. A life of addiction only leads to emptiness, loneliness, and spiritual death. Hence, overcoming addiction and hedonism—in any of its various forms—is key to our spiritual exodus and the truly abundant life. The *Spiritual Exodus* curriculum is written for that journey.

### PATHS OF SPIRITUAL EXODUS

There are many paths to recovery. There are many paths of spiritual exodus, each passing through Christ and anchored in the Atonement. Whatever particular path we take, spiritual exodus is a journey to joy, as we overcome all things and become more like Him who created us, whose life is the only life that brings lasting happiness (Alma 41:10).



## Chapter 2

# The Bounds the Lord Has Set

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

All men and women are spirit children of a loving God, possessing divine potential. Our mortal and eternal experience includes physical, mental, social, and spiritual dimensions. Our fullness of joy is found in the divine harmony of our multi-faceted existence within eternal marriages and families. These mortal realities and eternal possibilities necessarily place limits on our license with our bodies and souls, appetites and passions. These limits are the bounds the Lord has set and are for our happiness. Our submission to divine counsel determines our happiness here and hereafter.

“Why is looking at a few pictures such a big deal?” “Why is masturbation harmful?” Read *The Bounds the Lord Has Set* to learn why sexual self-indulgence—including viewing pornography and associated sins—is destructive to ourselves, our loved ones, and to our shared potential for eternal growth and joy in covenant relationships. Learn how the Lord’s law of chastity brings the various dimensions of our existence into divine harmony.

*“For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the Atonement of Christ the Lord” (Mosiah 3:19).*

*“There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—*

*“And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated” (D&C 130:20–21).*

*“I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:10).*

Obedience to eternal law assures our enjoyment of the blessings of personal peace and joy, exalted marriage and family relationships, and a sanctifying relationship with Deity. These blessings are the fulfillment of the measure of our creation (see 2 Nephi 2:25).

The Restoration reveals and reiterates God’s direction and commandments for our happiness in life and in relationships. Understanding our multifaceted identity and existence helps us comprehend the wisdom and love inherent in God’s law of chastity. Physical, psychological, relationship, and spiritual experience and connections are each inherent to our nature and essential to our well-being and fulfillment in life. God’s law of chastity harmonizes these several dimensions of our existence so as to safeguard our own and others’ happiness, well-being, and relationships through time and eternity. Restoration perspective on the nature of our existence thus helps us comprehend the bounds the Lord has set upon our sexual behavior and the virtue



## Chapter 3

# The Baited Hook of Addiction

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

Carnal appetite baits the soul, hiding the barbed hook of dependency on psychological intoxication—which is the essence of addictive experience. Psychological intoxication preoccupies attention, detours conscious awareness, and manipulates perceived reality, enabling the user to enjoy a pleasing escape from reality or a fantasy reality. In consequence of addictive indulgence, nothing really changes, but everything is changed.

In terms of this core nature, sexual and substance intoxication and addiction are remarkably similar. Sexual addiction is more psychological than sexual. Depersonalizing and externalizing addiction helps both spouses keep a safe distance between them and addiction, thereby helping them to unite for recovery and healing. Nevertheless, while neither your marriage nor your spouse are the *cause* of your addiction, they both will certainly be affected, even devastated by your addiction.

“How does addiction work?” “Why does a person make addictive choices?” “Is the viewing of pornography and sexual indulgence really addicting?” Read *The Baited Hook of Addiction* to understand addiction. Learn the reality of sexual addiction. Learn about the help and limits of depersonalizing and externalizing addiction.

*“Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they 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; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:27).*

*“... he leadeth them by the neck with a flaxen cord, until he bindeth them with his strong cords forever” (2 Nephi 26:22).*

*“Then is the time when their torments shall be as a lake of fire and brimstone, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever; and then is the time that they shall be chained down to an everlasting destruction, according to the power and captivity of Satan, he having subjected them according to his will” (Alma 12:17).*

There are many who wonder about addiction: What does it mean to say a person is addicted? How does addiction come about? Why do people make choices leading to addiction? If addiction is a baited hook, what is the bait, and how does swallowing it hook the soul?

Many have wondered as well whether there really is such a thing as sexual addiction, including addiction to pornography. While many people have observed and can testify concerning the addictive potential of substance abuse, some wonder about the addictiveness of pornography and unchaste indulgences of sexual appetite. To answer these questions, we need to understand the walk and talk of addiction—the component elements and underlying nature common to all addictive indulgences.

### THE BAITED AND BARBED HOOK COMMON TO ADDICTIONS

As we learn about addictive intoxication and its results, we will see that while the “drug” or experience



## Chapter 4

# The Awful Chains of Addiction

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

Possession and righteous exercise of moral agency is the very key to our progression and happiness. Addiction erodes agency, bringing dependency and powerlessness. *The Awful Chains of Addiction* describes diverse ways addiction does this. So-called “casual” indulgence initiates dangerous progression to an addictive “lifestyle,” then to deepening dependency, and finally to entrapment in a vicious cycle. In turn, deterioration in your environment, emotions, thinking, learning, habits, and spirituality all contribute to powerlessness.

“Can using pornography really lead to addiction—to ‘consuming appetite, dominating habit, overwhelming dependency, and frightening powerlessness’ to stop?” “How can pornography take such control in my life?” Read *The Awful Chains of Addiction* to learn how addictive behavior overtakes moral agency by degrees and takes possession of the soul. See that moral agency is a gift of God, and so also is its restoration (see Moses 4:3; D&C 101:78; JST Genesis 3:4). Learn how you must muster your will and work for recovery to qualify for the divine restoration of agency, “after all [you] can do” (2 Nephi 25:23).

*“And there are also secret combinations, even as in times of old, according to the combinations of the devil, for he is the founder of all these things; yea, the founder of . . . works of darkness; yea, and he leadeth them by the neck with a flaxen cord, until he bindeth them with his strong cords forever” (2 Nephi 26:22).*

*“O that ye would awake; awake from a deep sleep, yea, even from the sleep of hell, and shake off the awful chains by which ye are bound, which are the chains which bind the children of men, that they are carried away captive down to the eternal gulf of misery and woe” (2 Nephi 1:13).*

Moral “agency is too fundamental a doctrine to be left in . . . jeopardy” (Packer, 1989, p. 14) to addiction. Moral agency is the greatest gift that God has given us, next to life itself. Without the power to direct our lives, we do not really live at all—we exist as mere pawns and puppets, possessing the animation of a living being, but dispossessed of *personal identity* and *individuality*, which only exist where there is independent choice. Without agency, there is no growth, enlargement, or exaltation, and no peace, joy, or happiness (see 2 Nephi 2:11). The loss of moral agency, then, means the destruction of meaningful existence.

The Adversary knows that he cannot destroy our immortal souls; we are eternal beings. But a living death more appalling than annihilation is possible by the erosion, desolation, and ultimate annihilation of our moral agency. To continue to have a conscious, sentient existence under these conditions is the greatest torment imaginable, a living hell. No surprise, then, that the scriptures use such graphic metaphors to describe such possession, and dispossession—“outer darkness; [where]



## Chapter 5

# Personal Political Spin

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

*Personal Political Spin* is about the self-deceiving lies and rationalizations that are a gateway to addictive indulgence. Rationalizations are reliable indicators of relapse momentum.

There are many common self-deceptions enabling relapse—the “extreme makeover” of past experience with addiction, “this time it’ll be different” consequence denial or minimizing, entertaining the half-truth of selective (euphoric) recall, personal entitlement scripts, “I’m-invincible” sales pitches, “everybody-does-it” lemming mentality, “just this once” delusions, and undeniable drive or “it’s not my fault” beliefs. Personal political spin eases the way to relapse by easing conscience, or fighting it!

“How do I recognize and red-flag rationalizations as warning signs of an endangered recovery?” “What self-deceiving self-talk sets me up for relapse?” “How do I create automatic self-talk rebuttals to counter rationalizations?” Read *Personal Political Spin* to help you develop a list of your own rationalizations and then script self-talk to counter lies and keep recovery on track. Learn to make truth your ally in recovery and your counter-attack to personal political spin.

*“Do not endeavor to excuse yourself in the least point because of your sins” (Alma 42:30).*

*“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isaiah 5:20).*

*“And behold, others he flattereth away, . . . until he grasps them with his awful chains, . . .” (2 Nephi 28:22).*

*“Thus we see how quick the children of men do forget the Lord their God, yea, how quick to do iniquity, and to be led away by the evil one” (Alma 46:8).*

*“And in the eighty and second year they began again to forget the Lord their God. And in the eighty and third year they began to wax strong in iniquity. And in the eighty and fourth year they did not mend their ways” (Helaman 11:36).*

When vigilant effort for recovery wanes, one begins to make choices that initiate a slide toward relapse.<sup>1</sup> There are common biological, psychological, ecological, relationship, and spiritual-existential risk factors for relapse. These risk factors provoke appetite for addictive numbing and escape, pleasure and fantasy. While these risk factors *provoke* appetite, it is personal political “spin” that *rationalizes* it. Personal political spin is self-deceiving rationalization concerning addiction and is an essential catalyst to addictive degeneration. Personal political spin obscures and buries the truth of addiction until one is “in complete denial” about addiction’s cost and consequences.

Playing such a central, enabling role in relapse, the cognitive risk factor of political spin deserves special

<sup>1</sup> See *Staying Away from the Slippery Slope* for the big picture of the process of relapse, of which rationalization (personal political spin) is but a small part. *Staying Away from the Slippery Slope* also teaches you to develop an early warning system and early intervention to safeguard recovery.



## Chapter 6

# Pushing Past Feeling

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

Addiction is a choice to live in a carnal state contrary to divine nature. Addiction thus perturbs conscience and produces guilty feelings. The healing response is repentance. The deceitful and damning alternative is to push past feeling and thereby evade guilt and enable addiction. Hardening one's heart, however, is a progressively debilitating moral and spiritual disease—from desensitization, to denial, to disassociation.

Damning lies promulgated by pornography hasten desensitization and moral disability. Pushing past feeling, while promising an easy escape, brings personal, relationship, and spiritual devastation. Life's vital spiritual and relationship sentiments and experiences—love, joy, peace, purpose, enthusiasm, and faith; connection, affection, belonging, and intimacy—as well as sweet communion with God through the companionship of the Holy Spirit—are forfeit as the Spirit withdraws and feelings are shut down. Disabling moral disorientation and stagnation also ensue. Relationships disintegrate as one's empathy erodes and spouses distance themselves for self-protection, developing their own heart calluses.

“Why has addiction left me feeling less and less alive?” “How did addiction bring on depression?” “Why can't I recover without having to suffer?” Read *Pushing Past Feeling* to

see how addiction numbs moral sensibility. Learn how living in denial sells the soul. Understand the empowering and healing influence of “the feeling of our infirmities.”

*“For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved” (John 3:20).*

*“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:*

*“Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness” (Ephesians 4:18–19).*

*“. . . they are without principle, and past feeling . . .” (Moroni 9:20).*

*“Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God” (Joseph Smith, in Smith, 1977, p. 255).*

In a moment of extreme anger, have you ever let go the restraining influence of your feelings—your humanity, empathy, and love—upon your actions? In such a moment, have you found yourself selfishly obsessed, even possessed by a wholly foreign spirit indifferent to the feelings and suffering of another? With a heart temporarily, even momentarily hardened, did you become capable of hurting another deeply in ways that you later painfully regretted? Such is the jeopardy and such are the consequences of allowing oneself to become “past feeling” (1 Nephi 17:45), even momentarily.

Our God-given endowment of feelings is the basis



## Chapter 7

# Dangerous Deception

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

Truth is the ally of recovery while deceit is the enabler of addiction. Deceit and addiction are close companions, each egging on the other, leading to increasing destruction.

Various degrees of deceit commonly accompany addiction—crazy-making denial, under-oath forced confession, “don’t ask don’t tell” evasion, strategically timed and/or piecemeal admission, and morning-after voluntary confession. All degrees of deceit (1) offer “credit-card” postponement of addiction’s costs and consequences and (2) shield relapse temptation and opportunities from exposure and obstruction.

Deceit is deadly—it enables addiction, forfeits essential relationship help and divine grace, compromises couple intimacy, devastates relationships and one’s self esteem, and risks personal, relationship, and spiritual bankruptcy. Only open-book truthfulness perfectly empowers recovery work.

“Why is a little lie such a big deal?” “Why can’t I protect her from the pain by keeping my problem to myself?” “Why can’t I get over this on my own?” Read *Dangerous Deception* to learn how deception devastates relationships and cripples recovery, and to strengthen your commitment to a transparent recovery.

*“And they heard the voice of the Lord God, as they were walking in the garden, in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife went to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.*

*“And I, the Lord God, called unto Adam, and said unto him: Where goest thou?”*

*“And he said: I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I beheld that I was naked, and I hid myself” (Moses 4:14–16).*

*“Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?”*

*... shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?” (Isaiah 29:15–16).*

Standing alongside the appetite for addiction is the compatriot temptation to deception. Indeed, deception is addiction’s closest ally and enabling companion. While deception appears on the scene only after addiction, in many ways it is the more dangerous of these two partners in sin.

### “QUICK, HIDE!”-SATAN’S SECRET COMBINATION

Even as Satan tempted our first parents after their transgression, so he still tempts today. “Quick, hide!” he entices. His inducement? “You don’t have to suffer for sin. Take the easy way out.” The Adversary tempts us to hide transgression in order to avoid the costs and consequences, shame and suffering of sin. Lying and hiding our sins is the secret combination the devil offers every person, his formula for sin without suffering



## Chapter 8

# Contrite Confession

## Inviting Relationships into Recovery

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

The rescue mission for which marriages and families are divinely designed is only possible where there is openness and honesty in covenant relationships. Confession is also necessary if you are to honor your spouse's right to choose for herself.

Confession of transgression brings seismic repercussions in marriage, yet it also brings necessary correction along the fault-line of deception and betrayal in the relationship. Thereafter, openness and honesty help prevent the development of further friction along that fault-line. Confession invites the corrective influence of truth into recovery as well as the support of covenant relationships. Confession, therefore, is the gateway to repentance and a key to recovery.

Real repentance; authentic intimacy, acceptance, and attachment; and the best hope for relationship healing—all anchor in contrite confession and an open and honest recovery. Hence, one must “come clean” in order to become clean, and for relationships to be made whole.<sup>1</sup>

“Is confession really necessary for repentance to be complete?” “Is confession in all covenant relationships, including my marriage,

required?” “Won't confession hurt more than help?” “Is confession really the best path to healing?” “What things need to be confessed?” “Are there exceptions to confession?” Consider each of these questions as you read *Contrite Confession—Inviting Relationships into Recovery* and as you strive for complete repentance in covenant relationships.

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

### “QUICK, HIDE!”

The experience of Adam and Eve following their transgression in Eden illuminates a major potential pitfall in one's aim for recovery (see Moses 4:14–16). Prompted by the Adversary, who sought to divide and conquer, Adam and Eve tried to hide rather than face their transgression.

Unavoidably, though, hiding our sins means hiding from help! “Quick, hide!” is always deceitful that way. Yet the Adversary entices us to hide our transgressions in order to avoid blame, shame, and consequences. Our answer to the Adversary's enticement to, “Quick, hide!” must be a resolute and unwavering, “No, never!”

Secrecy and deceit play directly into the Adversary's divide and conquer plan, isolating those who struggle with addiction from the help of loving others and keeping the power of the priesthood beyond arm's length as well. Secrecy and deceit also further compromise us

<sup>1</sup> Portions of this chapter are revised from Butler and Butler (2005), and are used here with permission.



## Chapter 9

# An Open-Book Recovery

## Accessing the Power of Divinely Endowed Relationships

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

Truth is the unfailing ally of recovery—truthful experience of consequences, truthful relationships, and truthful testimony sustain and strengthen recovery. To receive the corrective influence of truth in recovery, the truth about one's addiction must first be confessed and one must become an open book in recovery. Confession precedes the course-correcting influence of truth. A transparent, open-book recovery is necessary to bring the sobering and steadying influence of truth into recovery and to enable your spouse, parents, and priesthood leaders to help you.

Paradoxically, in the long run, telling the truth, even the hard truth, rather than hurting relationships, helps them—providing critical reassurance for trust and hope for healing and recovery that helps partners hold on and hold together.

“How can an open-book recovery help?” “How are covenant relationships divinely designed and divinely endowed to help repentance and be a rescuing influence?” “How is an open-book recovery stronger than going it alone?” “How does an open-book recovery help the helpers?” *An Open-Book Recovery—Accessing the Power of Divinely Endowed Relationships* will help answer these questions.

*“And I, the Lord God, said unto mine Only Begotten, that it was not good that the man should be alone; wherefore, I will make an help meet for him” (Moses 3:18).*

*“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18).*

### “QUICK, HIDE!”

Even after contrite confession, the Adversary continues to entice us to justify hiding our transgressions in order to avoid blame, shame, and consequences. “I’ve been doing well; this is just a little glitch; it won’t last.” “I’ll get recovery back on track, then tell her.” Our steadfast answer to the Adversary’s enticements must remain a resolute and unwavering, “No, never again!”

Recovery and relationship healing are both found through open and honest living, inviting the light of truth to shine daily on our choices and actions. *Truth*—truthful experience of consequences, truthful relationships, and truthful testimony—must be the constant ally of recovery. A transparent, open-book recovery allows the corrective light of truth to shine upon your recovery work, guiding critical course corrections. Nevertheless, as couples negotiate and navigate an open-book recovery, the measure, means, and frequency of their transparency will vary from one couple to the next, according to the husband’s needs, the wife’s needs, and their relationship needs. What’s best for recovery is counterbalanced with what’s best for the wife and what’s best for their relationship.

In the previous chapter we affirmed that contrite confession is essential in opening the door to recovery,



## Chapter 10

# Custom-Fitting Your Open-Book Recovery

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

An open-book relationship helps furnish recovery with the many endowments of divinely designed relationships. Nevertheless, as couples organize, negotiate, and navigate an open-book relationship, the measure, means, and frequency of their transparency will vary from one couple to the next, according to the husband's needs, the wife's needs, and their relationship needs. What's best for recovery is counterbalanced with what's best for the wife and what's best for their relationship.

Through it all, the windows of heaven are open wide to couples and families as they engage in the rescue mission which marriages and families are divinely designed and endowed to fulfill. Specific approaches differ, but all who strive together are sanctified through their labors, regardless of final outcomes.

"How do my spouse and I custom fit my open-book recovery?" "How open should we be?" "How can we ensure that my open-book recovery helps far more than it sometimes hurts?" Read *Custom-Fitting Your Open-Book Recovery* to inform yourself of numerous nuances and cautionary concerns that will help ensure a successful shared recovery.

*"And I, the Lord God, said unto mine Only Begotten, that it was not good that the man should be alone; wherefore, I will make an help meet for him" (Moses 3:18).*

*"For this cause shall a man . . . cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh" (Matthew 19:5).*

### OUT OF THE SHADOWS INTO THE PIERCING LIGHT OF DAY

In the previous two chapters we first affirmed that contrite confession is essential to opening the door to recovery, relationship healing, and authentic intimacy (see also Butler, Harper, & Seedall, 2009), and then described many of the ways that covenant marriage, family, and priesthood relationships can support and strengthen recovery. In this chapter, we consider some of the challenges that can be encountered in an open-book recovery and the careful organization, negotiation, and navigation required to make it work.

Coming out of the shadows into the piercing light of day can be hard on the eyes and harsh on the heart. But light is truth, and truth is our ally in recovery. So we come clean through confession and step into the light. After a person struggling with addiction steps out of the shadows, relationships will need the divine endowments of covenants, Christlike love, and God's grace to ensure that they are organized and operate in rescuing, redeeming, and healing ways—for each and every person.

The testimony arising from my work with couples and families is that all covenant relationships—marriage, family, priesthood—are divinely designed and divinely endowed for this rescuing work. Those who turn to the Lord in their covenant relationships are



## Chapter 11

# Covenant Sponsor— “Here Am I, Send Me”

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

Sharing a loved one's struggle with addiction requires a heart for healing, one that is close-knit and close-kin to the Savior's own loving heart. Only such a heart is willing to suffer innocently, sacrifice, and endure in the hope of helping save another. Marriage, family, and priesthood relationships are divinely designed and divinely endowed for our help here in mortality. In these relationships God beckons us to be covenant “sponsors” to help sustain and secure loved ones' recovery. In turn, God promises heaven's help!

Surely the windows of heaven are never open wider than for a dear daughter or son of God who meekly follows in the Savior's Gethsemane footsteps in order to rescue a loved one. It is a miraculous witness of the love of God the way He helps His covenant helpers, magnifying their capacity and their understanding, their love and their peace—sanctifying their hearts and exalting their souls.

In the context of agency, there are no guarantees that one's service and sacrifice will be welcomed or fulfill its rescuing purpose, but love so given is never wasted, and hope endures and often bears precious fruit. “Why suffer?” “How can I endure?” “How can I be at peace?” “How can I still be happy amid this trial?” Read *Covenant Sponsor—“Here Am I,*

*Send Me”* to consider whether, why, and how you too may meekly offer, “Here am I, send me” (Abraham 3:27), and walk in the Savior's footsteps.

*“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end [in love], the same shall be saved” (Matthew 24:12–13, inserted text mine)*

*“And the Lord said: Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man: Here am I, send me” (Abraham 3:27).*

*“Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour” (John 12:27).*

*“ . . . come, follow me” (Luke 18:22).*

*“And the Lord provided for them that they should hunger not, neither should they thirst; yea, and he also gave them strength, that they should suffer no manner of afflictions, save it were swallowed up in the joy of Christ. Now this was according to the prayer of Alma; and this because he prayed in faith” (Alma 31:38, see also 31–38).*

*“And there were gathered together in one place an innumerable company of the spirits of the just, who had been faithful in the testimony of Jesus while they lived in mortality;*

*“And who had offered sacrifice in the similitude of the great sacrifice of the Son of God, and had suffered tribulation in their Redeemer's name.*

*“All these had departed the mortal life, firm in the hope of a glorious resurrection, through the grace of God the Father and his Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.*

*“I beheld that they were filled with joy and gladness. . . .” (D&C 138:12–15).*



## Chapter 12

# Staying Away from the Slippery Slope

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

The slippery slope of addiction depicts the increasingly relentless pull of appetite as one entertains gateway lusts, then takes first steps toward relapse, and finally sets in motion the relapse ritual. In this chapter, the several stages of relapse process are depicted along this slippery slope. As you consider the powerful gravity of addiction, you will learn how yielding to enticing gateway lusts—sexual preoccupation and objectification, imaginations, and fantasizing—followed by first-step behaviors, sets in seemingly inexorable motion a disabling descent to devastating relapse. This downward slide is almost imperceptible at first, but quickly gains overwhelming momentum.

The steepening slope also depicts a “point of no return” where appetite overtakes agency and even crisis intervention is comparatively futile. Trifling with temptation leads first to preoccupation and finally to futility.

“How can I stop addiction before it overpowers me?” “What are those first, small steps that lead so unfailingly to relapse?”<sup>1</sup> Read *Staying Away from the Slippery Slope* to understand the gradual descent to powerlessness

and relapse. Commit yourself to a successful recovery strategy focused on timely prevention rather than crisis intervention. Learn to map and “red-flag” your own early warning signs and secure recovery safety and confidence through heeding the counsel to “watch and pray continually, that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear” (Alma 13:28).

*“ . . . he leadeth them by the neck with a flaxen cord, until he bindeth them with his strong cords forever” (2 Nephi 26:22).*

*“And behold, others he flattereth away, . . . until he grasps them with his awful chains, . . .” (2 Nephi 28:22).*

*“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41).*

### WHAT LIES BELOW

*What lies below is only death.* Secure your safety here in mortality by remembering that truth and staying away from all the slippery slopes in life.

### EVERY BIG MISTAKE STARTS WITH LITTLE ONES

No man ever jumps off a cliff. We slip, stumble, and slide off—never having meant to get that close or take that chance. The mountains of my Utah home have taken many lives just that way, while others have found themselves in such precarious straits they had to call for search and rescue to extricate them from a deadly precipice.

<sup>1</sup> *Our Efficient Learning Brain* is a helpful companion chapter to this one, explaining how behavioral learning turns these small steps into powerful triggers to almost overwhelming relapse momentum.



## Chapter 13

# Escaping The Pendulum Swings of Addiction

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

Addiction produces painful and distressing pendulum swings of the soul as periods of abstinence are undermined by renewed appetite and followed by a return trip to addiction. Pendulum swings are the natural result of the dynamic interplay of addiction's short-term pleasures and long-term devastation, together with life's reciprocal joys and trials. Nevertheless, by understanding what propels these pendulum swings and then exploiting unique and specific recovery opportunities along the several points of its recovery-aimed arc, enduring recovery can be secured.

“Those who love me are as discouraged and confused as I am by my pendulum swings between addiction and an abstinence that never lasts—is there any hope?” “How can I propel recovery beyond transitory abstinence?” “How do I create recovery momentum that finally escapes the downward pendulum pull of addiction?” Read *Escaping the Pendulum Swings of Addiction* to see how to extend the upward arc of your recovery and finally, fully escape addiction.

*“And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him . . .” (1 Kings 18:21).*

Addiction produces painful and distressing pendulum swings of the soul as periods of abstinence are undermined by renewed appetite, followed by a return trip to addiction. But far less than a thrill, this sickening and morally disorienting carnival ride only leaves one pale and ill. When the promising ascent to recovery is followed once again by a precipitous, nearly calamitous tumble toward relapse, this free-fall pulls your stomach into your throat and leaves you sick. Yet once embarked on this gut-wrenching ride, many find it difficult to disembark as each ascending arc somehow fuels its opposite without any apparent end or exit.

These pendulum swings are confusing, disheartening, and depressing to addicted persons and loving others, as recovery momentum that felt so real and promising repeatedly disappears. Over time, these pendulum swings rob everyone of hope and faith for recovery. Chronic apprehension and anxiety, despair and despondency, often settle in. Pendulum swings often precipitate negativity and condemnation as well—both self-condemnation and condemnation from others also injured by addiction.

Propelled from beginning to end, then end to beginning, again and again, this recycling of addiction and abstinence is like a mysterious form of perpetual motion. In this chapter, though, the seeming mystery behind this perpetual motion will be unveiled. We will discover that pendulum swings are the natural result of the dynamic interplay of addiction's short-term pleas-



## Chapter 14

# Creating Sanctuary and Building Scaffolding for Recovery

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

A sanctuary is a place of refuge and rest, protection and peace, where the enemy is not permitted entry. Without a place of sanctuary, the battle for recovery can be unrelenting to the point of exhaustion and surrender. *Creating Sanctuary and Building Scaffolding for Recovery* teaches how we can create places of recovery refuge, where the environment is conducive to virtue and temptation is effectively barred from entering.

For Latter-day Saints, temples and homes can both be sacred sanctuaries. Furnished throughout with virtuous influences and set apart from the outside world, these edifices can shield and protect the recovering person from the assault of appetite and the torment of temptation.

Creating sanctuary is about learning to create a home that is a refuge from the storm of temptation in the world we live in. Consent and collaboration are important as you eliminate portals that provide the enemy access and which are a conduit for recurring temptation. Beyond barring evil, sanctuary homes are filled with virtuous things (Articles of Faith 1:13) that invite and entice one to do good (Moroni 7:13). Creating a sanctuary and a refuge from the storm empowers recovery.

“How do I give my recovery a fighting chance?” “How can I find respite from temp-

tation?” “What can I do to make my home a sanctuary and a haven?” Read *Creating Sanctuary and Building Scaffolding for Recovery* to learn how to create a safe sanctuary for recovery and place a splint on fractured agency that together will safely scaffold your recovery.

*Wherefore, stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come;” (D&C 87:8)*

*“And go ye out from among the wicked. Save yourselves. Be ye clean. . . .” (D&C 38:42)*

*“Go ye out from Babylon. Be ye clean. . . .” (D&C 133:5)*

*Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God;” (D&C 88:119)*

The end and the aim of recovery is the transformation of our hearts, sanctification of our spirits (Helaman 3:35), and renewing of our bodies (D&C 84:33). All sincere recovering persons anchor their daily labors in the hope of one day experiencing “a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually” (Mosiah 5:2). They hope for a soul—body and spirit—conformed to its original divine creation and nature. They yearn for a renewed and someday resurrected body no longer creased with the hard lines of sin, no longer actuated by appetite, no longer habituated by the programming of transgression.



## Chapter 15

# Tips for the World Traveler

## One-Day-at-a-Time Recovery

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

Here in mortality, we are all world travelers—strangers in a dangerous and hostile world. Additionally, sometimes circumstances separate us from home and family here, too. Away from home, some lose their sense of who they are and whose they are. Away from home, some also lose sight of or let go of the lifeline comfort and support of covenant relationships. Away from home, the Adversary and other conspiring men besiege the road-weary, heart-lonely traveler with all the counterfeit “feel-good” experiences of addiction. Self-indulgence is rationalized with foolhardy lies like, “What happens here, stays here.” Or, “After all your work, you deserve to indulge.” Some soon “cut loose” from covenant connections and consecrated living. Subsequent spiritual drift is disorienting, devastating, and brings high risk for relapse.

Combating the acute risk of travel requires preventative planning and action—carrying meaningful personal identification, planning for wholesome recreation, reaching out for refreshing and reassuring connection with home and family, and daily planning for and commitment to recovery success through positive activities.

“How can I be so strong at home and so weak away from home?” “What can I do to

stay strong and return with honor?” Spouses may have questions they want answered, too. “When he’s away from home he falls back into old ways. Is he just waiting for the chance to get away so he can indulge?” “How can we work together to keep him strong?” Read *Tips for the World Traveler* to comprehend the acute risk attending separations from home and family and to learn how to develop antidote experiences and practices.

*“Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, ye must watch and pray always lest ye enter into temptation; for Satan desireth to have you, that he may sift you as wheat” (3 Nephi 18:18).*

*“ . . . my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

*“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. . . .*

*“ . . . take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Ephesians 6:10–11, 13).*

*“The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts” (Psalms 119:10).*

*“ . . . if ye are prepared ye shall not fear” (D&C 38:30).*

Here in mortality, we are all world travelers—strangers in a lone and dreary world far from our home. Separated from our eternal home and family, we are lonely and vulnerable. Additionally, from time to time the circumstances of our lives separate us from our home and family here, too. Only the love of God and



## Chapter 16

# The Feeling of Our Infirmities

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

The feeling of our infirmities—including appropriate guilt and shame—is a critical influence for recovery. Paradoxically, the inspired, just-right measure of guilt and shame that helps repentance is anchored to a witness of our divine nature, including our divine potential and God's redeeming love.

Our witness of our divine nature pricks our hearts when we live beneath ourselves and stirs our souls to rise to our divine potential. Our witness of God's redeeming love encourages our efforts and strengthens our faith that with His help we can succeed. A witness of divine nature thus inspires our reach for redemption in Christ.

The feeling of our infirmities will be ministered in proportions meet for repentance when that feeling is anchored in a witness of divine nature. Satan attacks divine nature, leading those who succumb to his attacks to destructive extremes of guilt and shame. The helpful feeling of our infirmities can be restored to us, though, as we embrace the striving and reassurance of the Holy Spirit.

Additionally, loving others sensitive to addiction's devastation can act as one's proxy, conveying awareness and moral sensitivity which the addicted person may have pushed past feeling themselves. Finally, the addicted

person can take their own steps to restore feeling.

“How do my feelings help recovery?” “Is guilt good, or bad?” “How guilty should I feel?” “How do I regain helpful feeling?” Read *The Feeling of Our Infirmities* to learn about the helpful feeling of your infirmities, including guilt and shame. Learn how to regain that feeling and measure it for repentance by anchoring it in a witness of divine nature.

*“O my brethren, . . . arouse the faculties of your souls; . . .”*  
(Jacob 3:11).

*“And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness . . .”* (Ether 12:27).

*“And now, for three days and for three nights was I racked, even with the pains of a damned soul”* (Alma 36:16).

*“And now, my son, I desire that ye should let these things trouble you no more, and only let your sins trouble you, with that trouble which shall bring you down unto repentance”* (Alma 42:29).

The truth—the whole truth (see D&C 93:24)—concerning addictive choices is a powerful ally in recovery.<sup>1</sup> The truth of addiction invites and even spurs

<sup>1</sup> The bright light of truth is our powerful ally in recovery, darkness and deceit its deadliest enemies. Several chapters address the friendship of the light of truth in recovery. *Personal Political Spin*, *Pushing Past Feeling*, and *Dangerous Deception* address the dangers of rationalization, self-deception, becoming past feeling, and living a lie. *Personal Political Spin*, *An Open-Book Recovery*, *Custom-Fitting Your Open-Book Recovery*, and *The Feeling of Our Infirmities* invite you to enlist the power of truthful testimony, truthful feeling, and truthful relationships for recovery.



## Chapter 17

# Our Efficient Learning Brain

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

Our learning brain is a gift from God, in service to our moral agency. Our lives are made easier by the brain's ability to learn our choices and make them ever easier to carry out. Over-learning—repeating a behavior over and over again until it is “memorized” in the tissues of the body and brain—leads to habituation. Addiction and powerlessness develop in part from misdirecting this learning.

*Our Efficient Learning Brain* explores how the brain learns associations, sequences, and consequences connected to addictive behaviors to the point where we feel preyed upon by temptation and powerless to stop.

“How do habits fuel temptations?” “Why do I experience such powerlessness to stop?” “Why do temptations become stronger and more frequent?” “Why do temptations persist long after I’ve stopped my behavior?” Read *Our Efficient Learning Brain* to see how addiction preys upon our learning brain. See how learning and habituation lead to daunting powerlessness, and employ to rehabilitate learning for recovery. Learn and then diligently and patiently employ the numerous techniques that will help you gradually rehabilitate learning for recovery.

*“The chains of habit are generally too small to be felt till they are too strong to be broken” (Samuel Johnson).*

*“And there are also secret combinations, even as in times of old, . . . yea, and he leadeth them by the neck with a flaxen cord, until he bindeth them with his strong cords forever” (2 Nephi 26:22).*

*“And now, . . . I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance . . . ; for . . . behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness . . .*

*“ . . . that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world.*

*“ . . . if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even until death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his; therefore, . . . the devil hath all power over you . . .” (Alma 34:33–35).*

*“Refrain tonight,  
And that shall lend a kind of easiness  
To the next abstinence, the next more easy;  
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,  
And either master the devil or throw him out  
With wondrous potency”  
(William Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act 3, Scene 4).*

In *Staying Away from the Slippery Slope* we focused our attention on the left side of the pendulum-swing of addiction, where, for the chronically addicted, recovery momentum wanes and a downward swing of the pendulum toward addiction is set in motion. When recovery resolve flags and recovery labor stutters and stalls, all the challenges and strains of your ascent in recovery become the gravitational pull tugging back toward addiction. A simple U-turn turns the ascending slope of recovery into the descending slope to



## Chapter 18

# Hold Fast That Which Is Good

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

Relapse is a painfully discouraging experience for all who share in the journey of recovery. Hopelessness and despair following relapse can cripple recovery. *Hold Fast That Which Is Good* offers counsel for responding to relapse in a way that acknowledges and accepts the painful truth and consequences of relapse, while focusing on rallying hope, resolve, and resources to reinstate and fortify recovery.

Temptations to give up, give in, withdraw, and isolate must be resisted. Separating yourself from good influences only weakens resistance to addiction. *Hold Fast That Which Is Good* provides counsel for maintaining ties to loved ones, persisting in or renewing worthy pursuits, and claiming every virtuous opportunity and strengthening blessing possible.

“Don’t I ‘deserve’ to be unhappy and suffer?” “Shouldn’t I be punished?” “Doesn’t this prove I can’t succeed?” “I feel so bad I don’t even want to try. Why should I? What difference does it make now?” “Is it even right for me to be happy as long as I have this problem?” “What blessings am I entitled to?” Read *Hold Fast That Which Is Good* to learn how to recover strength for recovery following relapse, rather than allowing reactions that weaken you even more.

“... thou art not excusable in thy transgressions; nevertheless, go thy way and sin no more” (D&C 24:2).

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

“... if there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report, or praiseworthy, we seek after these things” (Articles of Faith 1:13).

With repentance and recovery firmly fixed as our goal, surely the best relapse responses are those that encourage the quickest possible return to a recovery frame of mind, desire, and action. The appropriate response to relapse is not punishment or penance, but getting repentance back on track. Every response to relapse should have the renewal of recovery as its fixed purpose.

Responding to relapse in a way that fosters repentance requires love and compassion, truth and wisdom, spiritual sensitivity and discernment. Both the addicted person and loving others sponsoring recovery must cultivate and strengthen these virtues, for nothing puts them to the test like relapse does.

Relapse browbeats hope and faith that one’s recovery is real or that recovery is even possible. Thus, following relapse, despondency, discouragement, and despair nip at the heels of both the person in recovery and their caring others. These feelings sap desire and motivation, energy and discipline, and thereby threaten to deepen and extend relapse and lead to complete collapse and total surrender of all the strategic “high ground” in one’s life. Following relapse, more than ever it is essential to “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21) in one’s life—both one’s redeem-



## Chapter 19

# Neither Do I Condemn Thee

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

Setbacks are a painful part of the larger experience of recovery for most people. *Neither Do I Condemn Thee* focuses on a spiritual and practical response to relapse calculated to renew and refresh resolve and faith for recovery.

Relapse doesn't wipe out growth and gains, doesn't erase an overall recovery trajectory. Acknowledgement of recovery gains puts relapse in the broader perspective of meaningful progress. Five questions highlight recovery progress: "Am I fighting for recovery?" "Am I lengthening my time in recovery?" "Are my relapses on a smaller and smaller scale, and do I catch myself sooner?" "Am I immediately reinstating recovery?" "Am I lifting recovery higher and higher?" Refresh your faith by focusing on how far you've come.

"How can I possibly have faith for recovery right now?" "What does relapse mean about the reality of my recovery?" "Shouldn't I be down on myself?" "How bad should I feel?" "What consequences should I give myself?" Read *Neither Do I Condemn Thee* to consider these and other important issues relating to your spiritual and practical response to the disappointment and pain of relapse. Learn to counterbalance sorrow and suffering following relapse with perspective on how far you've come and with hope and faith for renewed progress in recovery.

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

*"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16–17).*

*"They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.*

*"Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?"*

*"So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*

*"... and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.*

*"When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?" (John 8:4–5, 7, 9–10).*

*"She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more. And the woman glorified God from that hour, and believed on his name" (JST John 8:11).*

God's work and glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of His children (Moses 1:39). His divine design is to help us become like Him, if we will so choose and so labor with all our might (see 2 Nephi 25:23). God is omniscient and knows best how to bring about the repentance, sanctification, and exaltation of His children. The scriptures are a rich treasury of God's dealings with his children, inviting and lifting us to *overcome* our weaknesses and *become* more like Him. Among the many examples of God's labors to invite and assist repentance, our Savior's interaction with the woman taken in adultery is a singular Liahona



## Chapter 20

# Correcting Course through Forensic Analysis

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

A constructive forensic analysis is a post-relapse intervention focused on course correction for recovery. By identifying choice points on the path to relapse, a constructive, course-correcting forensic analysis provides education and preparation for renewed recovery. The purpose of a forensic analysis following relapse is learning and growth, not self-condemnation. Retrospection on relapse is aimed at discovering the seemingly minor lapses that led to full-blown relapse. Identifying small, “hidden” lapses brings critical choice points for recovery into conscious awareness for remedial action.

Though relapse can seem like it strikes without warning, looking back one can see all the small steps and choices that led to relapse—gateway lusts leading to preoccupation, even compulsive obsession with temptations, followed by first-step behaviors that weakened defenses, then the launching of habituated relapse rituals, and finally the building up of “irresistible” relapse momentum.

Careful forensic analysis identifies choices that will now be your early warning signs of relapse momentum. With a focus on learning and growth rather than guilt, first steps on the road to relapse are “red-flagged” to become early warning signs that one is traveling the

road to relapse. Preventing these gateway and first-step lapses is the single most critical choice point for recovery. Thus, the result of forensic analysis is an early warning system for relapse prevention.

“What is a ‘recovery-oriented response’ to relapse?” “What can I learn from relapse that will help prevent future relapse?” Read *Correcting Course through Forensic Analysis* to learn how to learn and grow for recovery following a disappointing and painful relapse.

*“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:21–22).*

Recovery is made secure as we abstain from the very first appearance of sin, while it is still marshalling momentum. But for many, this early-intervention lesson is a long time in the learning, and longer still in the heeding. Furtive flirtations with sin and small indulgences can seem so innocuous and the addicted person can feel entitled to them—as though a little sin is due compensation for the large sins he’s had to give up.

Yet, to stand at the abyss of addiction looking in is to be captivated by temptation, which leads to relentless torment and, all too often, to slipping, stumbling, then tumbling over the edge into transgression. But after the heady euphoria, one always wakes up to a mental, emotional, and spiritual hangover as painful as any aftereffects of alcohol. Your head throbs with guilt, your heart



## Chapter 21

# Spiritual Exodus Waypoints

## A Recovery Outline for Couples and Therapists

### WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER?

Recovery is a *lawful* experience—correct principles faithfully practiced assure recovery success. Persons seeking recovery are naturally anxious to piece together the complete puzzle of recovery with no missing pieces.

*Spiritual Exodus Waypoints* was written to provide couples and therapists a broad overview of the journey of recovery that can be used to establish an overall treatment/recovery plan. *Spiritual Exodus Waypoints* broadly maps the journey from one waypoint to the next all the way to an enduring recovery. A complete recovery attends to relationships in recovery, desire for recovery, individual will and work for recovery, and grace for recovery. Each of these dimensions, their sequencing, and their component elements are outlined for couples and therapists in *Spiritual Exodus Waypoints*.

Perhaps the single most significant contribution of the entire *Spiritual Exodus* curriculum is our faith-filled reliance upon divinely designed and divinely endowed covenant relationships for recovery success. Solo recovery attempts are fraught with risk and prone to failure. Like summiting Everest, the ascent to recovery is safest and surest only when we tie and tether ourselves to covenant relationships. *Spiritual Exodus Waypoints* emphasizes

reliance on covenant relationships throughout recovery.

Throughout this chapter, a basic map of recovery work is provided in the form of a treatment outline placed in inset boxes, while the body text provides further directions and explanations.

Each element of the recovery ascent outlined in *Spiritual Exodus Waypoints* is also indexed to other chapters of *Spiritual Exodus*, where detailed “enlargements” of specific elements of the recovery ascent can be found. These chapters provide comprehensive, step-by-step directions for navigating each recovery waypoint.

“Do I have a complete recovery map?” “I’ve been piecing together the map of recovery for years, a little here, a little there—I wonder if I have a complete picture of the ascent and if I understand how it all fits together.” “What should I focus on first, then next?” Study the map of recovery ascent in *Spiritual Exodus Waypoints* to get a feel for the entire ascent of successful recovery. Learn about the tasks and challenges that lie ahead and the help you will need. Then, start climbing, with faith that you can reach your goal!

*“Giving line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little; giving us consolation by holding forth that which is to come, confirming our hope!”*

*“Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward*

Dr. Mark Butler's *Spiritual Exodus* is a comprehensive description of how to recover from pornography and other addictions. His unique approach integrates spiritual, psychological, and family relationships to offer hope not only to addicted individuals but to their family members who need healing too. This is a must read not only for those who suffer from addictions but for those who try to help.

— James M. Harper, Ph.D., School of Family Life, Brigham Young University, and Fellow, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

*Spiritual Exodus* provides a comprehensive road map of how to recover from addictions. Most important, it includes all levels of recovery: Individual, relationship, and spiritual. I highly recommend it for both individuals and couples struggling with addictions as well as the therapists who treat them.

— Jeffrey H. Larson, Ph.D., Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy, School of Family Life, Brigham Young University, and Editor, *Journal of Couple and Relationship Therapy*

The topics in *Spiritual Exodus* helped us to better understand the problems we were dealing with. They gave us a reference point from which we could begin to solve them. We learned how to react to situations such as relapse in a way that helped recovery. Most importantly, we learned that we weren't alone. There are others that have had the very same problems and frustrations, yet they have overcome them. It gave us hope!

— Married couple in recovery from behavioral addiction



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