

Power to Change

Name withheld

Although I was born into the Church and was active through the age of 15, I wandered from the gospel during young adulthood. During that time, in search of something that could make me happy, I turned to drugs.

I struggled with an ever-increasing addiction, and my life felt like some sort of bad movie I could not turn off. Although I wanted to stop, I found I had hardly any control over my thoughts or actions. It wasn't until I was serving a prison sentence for a drug-related crime that I found what I had lost. I had a copy of the Book of Mormon and came across Alma 5:7: "Behold, he changed their hearts; yea, he awakened them out of a deep sleep, and they awoke unto God. Behold, they were in the midst of darkness; nevertheless, their souls were illuminated by the light of the everlasting word."

I knew I was in the midst of darkness, and I wanted to have my heart changed.

It wasn't that I hadn't tried changing before. I had participated in various recovery programs. I had tried quitting for myself and for my family. Those things all worked for a little while, but I always slipped. This verse in Alma offered me hope in Jesus Christ—hope that even if I didn't have the power to change myself (and I knew I didn't), *He* could change me.

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Turning the burden of my addiction over to the Savior, I prayed and admitted to Heavenly Father, "I cannot do this on my own."

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I entered the LDS addiction recovery program, a 12-step class taught by two missionaries, a husband and wife. What they taught in that class saved me. They nurtured the seed of faith that had been planted many years earlier, when as a child I attended church with my mother. The missionaries taught me about repentance and forgiveness. More

important, they showed me love and told me I could find even greater love from my Heavenly Father and Savior. I felt "a mighty change wrought in [my] heart" (Alma 5:12), and I found that the happiness I had so long been searching for had been in the gospel all along.

It has been six years since I decided to turn to my Savior. It has been a lot of hard work, but through the strength of the Lord, I have overcome many obstacles.

I never would have imagined the happiness and joy I now have in my life with my wife and children. I hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and have received temple ordinances. I attribute these positive life transformations to Jesus Christ. He is the power to change.

I testify to others who are struggling as I did—and to those who love them—that change is possible and that it's very real. You need not give up hope. There is a way to return to happiness, and it is through Jesus Christ. ■

For information about the addiction recovery program, please see your priesthood leader or visit www.ldsfamilyservices.org. The program's manual, *Addiction Recovery Program: A Guide to Addiction Recovery and Healing* (item no. 36764), is available in many languages.