

TRUSTING IN THE **Living** Waters

During a family vacation one summer, we visited Cascade Springs, a natural spring near Mount Timpanogos in Utah, USA. The hike around the springs was breathtaking and, for me, life changing.

For the previous year my husband and I had been facing the reality of his pornography addiction. We received help from priesthood leaders and a professional counselor and saw the Lord's tender mercies in our lives. The transformation in our lives and marriage as we worked through his addiction was amazing. The power of the Atonement brought the peace of forgiveness, and trust was growing. Then summer came.

Though my husband was progressing in fortifying his life with virtue, I felt stagnant. I cried often and felt anger, pain, and fear bubble up unexpectedly. Despite continual prayer, gospel study, and temple attendance, I struggled with not only the negative feelings, but also the guilt of experiencing them when my husband was doing so well.

The week of the vacation was one of the most challenging. I had every reason to feel connected with and close to my husband, but instead I felt alone and afraid.

As we toured the springs, we read signs along the trail that explained the remains of a fire there. Years earlier, rangers had initiated a controlled fire that burned more than intended. Though the scarring of the mountain



was significant, the sign explained that it was a cycle of life and actually improved the habitat for plants and animals.

When we reached the top of the springs I felt enveloped by a sense of sacredness. There loomed the charred skeletons of hundreds of trees. At their base, growing thick and strong, were hundreds of new aspens.

I thought of the “fire” of my life that year. The destructive influence of pornography had burned our lives and wounded my heart.

But I had also had opportunities to grow stronger and healthier. As I gazed at the scene, I realized that for the past month I had been focusing on the destruction in my life—not the new growth. Now that I saw them together on the mountain, rooted deeply in the springs of fresh water, I realized that my own soul must look much the same.

Although the repentance process was complete, the healing and regrowth were not. The love I have for my husband and my forgiveness of him for his choices didn't make the effects of those choices go away immediately. But as I stood there I felt Heavenly Father reassure me that His love and healing power were working in our lives. His Son's Atonement was what was allowing us to be cleansed and healed—giving us the strength to come out of this experience stronger than before.

I know it will take time and continual nourishment from the Lord's living water (see John 4:10–14) to fully overcome this issue. But I trust that just as those new trees are growing, so is the new relationship between my husband, me, and our Savior. ■