

## Measures to Apply the Atonement

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Tasting the bitter is a deliberate part of life.....	2
Sources of bitterness in our lives.....	2
The Power to heal – "Beauty for ashes" .....	3
How the Atonement "sweetens the bitter" .....	4
Comparing and differentiating the steps of "turning away" .....	4
Faith in Christ's Power to heal.....	4
Recognition/acknowledgement .....	5
Remorse .....	5
Abandonment/Forsake.....	6
Confession .....	6
Cast your burden.....	6
Restitution .....	7
Forgive to be forgiven .....	7
Stumbling Blocks .....	8
What are the Stumbling blocks?.....	8
Giving up bitterness – Casting our burden at the Savior's feet .....	8
Reconsider where our bitterness comes from.....	10
We must not "refuse to be comforted" but allow the Lord to comfort us .....	10
Accept that we are agents unto ourselves .....	10
Snip the feed back loop!.....	11
Forgo vindication.....	12
Turn our focus away from our bitterness to others .....	12
Study to discover how such peace is possible .....	12
Cast my burden on the Savior, so I can get on with life and be in peace .....	12
Soft hearts not hard hearts.....	12
Restore and rebuild confidence through the Savior .....	12
Seek meekness and lowliness of heart.....	13
References as needed .....	13
Learning from Alma: "I could remember my pains no more".....	13
"Racked" and "harrowed up" .....	13
"Cried within my heart" .....	13
"I could remember my pains no more" .....	13
Filled with joy and light .....	14
Learning from Alma again: "Swallowed up in Joy".....	14
References.....	14

## **Tasting the bitter is a deliberate part of life**

### Draw the "bitterness" box – at the bottom ###

- Pain, guilt, embarrassment, lack of self esteem, sorrow, despair, anger, depression, misery, unhappiness, suffering
- Moses 6:55 (Lord to Adam)  
"and they taste the bitter, that they may *know* to prize the good"
- D&C 29:39 (Lord to Adam)  
" for if they never should have bitter they could not *know* the sweet"
- Neal Maxwell:  
" It follows, then, that you and I cannot really expect to glide through life, coolly air-conditioned, while naively petitioning: "Lord, give me experience but not grief, a deeper appreciation of happiness but not deeper sorrow, joy in comfort but not in pain, more capacity to overcome but not more opposition; and please do not let me ever feel perplexed while on thine errand. Then let me come quickly and dwell with thee and fully share thy joy." ("If thou endure it well", pg 4)
- In the pre-existence we knew bitter would come to our lives because it was necessary
- I am convinced it will come one way or another to each of us as necessary. It will be tailored for our personal refinement.

## **Sources of bitterness in our lives**

(From: "Beauty for Ashes: The Atonement of Jesus Christ," Ensign, Apr. 1990, pg 7.):

### Draw the % responsibility line ###

- Sin
  - One end of the spectrum
  - Our fault
- Adversity
  - Other end of the spectrum
  - no fault of our own
    - Natural causes (earthquake, weather)
    - Actions of someone else
    - The man whose brakes on his truck failed
- Unwise choices, hasty judgments, mistakes, disappointments
  - In between ends of the spectrum
  - some degree of fault, sometimes no fault

### ### Draw the “sweet” box - On Top ###

- sweet, joy, happiness, peace, hope, security, comfort, confidence
- A way provided so we would not be lost in misery

### ***The Power to heal – “Beauty for ashes”***

### ### Draw the path from “bitter” to “sweet” – “The measures we must take to apply the Atonement in our lives” ###

- Isaiah 53:4-5  
"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.  
But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."
- Isaiah 61:1-3  
"he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;... to comfort all that mourn... to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness "
- “Infinite Atonement”
  - One way the Atonement is “infinite” is it covers the whole spectrum of bitter, not just at the “our sin” end
    - Bruce Hafen (1<sup>st</sup> Quorum of 70):  
"The Savior’s atonement is thus portrayed as the healing power not only for sin, but also for carelessness, inadequacy, and all mortal bitterness. The Atonement is not just for sinners." (Beauty for Ashes: The Atonement of Jesus Christ,” Ensign, Apr. 1990, pg 7.)
- Robert Millet:  
"To put it simply, the Atonement does more than fix the mistakes. It does more than balance the scales. It even does more than forgive our sins. It rehabilitates regenerates, renews, and transforms human nature." ("Grace Works", pg 95)
- Boyd K Packer:  
"So many are like the immigrant woman who skimmed and saved and deprived herself until, by selling all of her possessions, she bought a steerage-class ticket to America.  
She rationed out the meager provisions she was able to bring with her. Even so, they were gone early in the voyage. When others went for their meals, she stayed below deck—determined to suffer through it. Finally, on

the last day, she must, she thought, afford one meal to give her strength for the journey yet ahead. When she asked what the meal would cost, she was told that all of the meals had been included in the price of her ticket." (Grace Works. pg 95)

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- Don't be like the immigrant woman with the Atonement!

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## **How the Atonement “sweetens the bitter”**

**There is only one Atonement!**

- We taste the bitter in life on one end of the spectrum through our own actions where we bear responsibility to the other end of the spectrum through no fault of our own
- The *measures* taken to apply the Atonement to remove the bitter from our lives are the *same* in all cases
- In other words, the process of “casting our burden” at the Savior’s feet is the same regardless of how we obtained the burden
- We call this process when we sin repentance meaning to “**turn away**”
  - While we “shy away” from the word repentance when the burden we receive is not of our own making, we still need to “turn away”
- We can learn by looking at the measures we must take for applying the atonement for sin (Repentance) and applying it to the other end of the spectrum

**### Write the steps to repentance – use these below ###**

- Pre-requisite - Faith in Christ that the Atonement can heal
- Recognition/Acknowledgement
- Remorse
- Abandonment
- Confession
- Cast your burden (ask for forgiveness)
- Restitution
- Forgive to be forgiven

## **Comparing and differentiating the steps of “turning away”**

### **Faith in Christ's Power to heal**

- Alma 7:11-12 (Alma the Younger)  
"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."

- succor: go to the aid of; relieve
- Atonement allows us to give away the pain – receive succor
- He understands
  - We can not say – "you don't understand"
  - When we have someone who understands us it lightens our minds
- He has been there
  - We can not say – "you don't know what it is like"
  - We have a companion in our trials and burdens
- Tad Callister:  
"There is a miraculous rebirth, a spiritual phoenix that emerges with our acceptance of the Savior and His Atonement. His spirit heals; it refines; it comforts; it breathes new life into hopeless hearts. It has the power to transform all that is ugly and vicious and worthless in life into something of supreme and glorious splendor. He has the power to convert the ashes of mortality to the beauties of eternity." ("The Infinite Atonement", 206-7)

## **Recognition/acknowledgement**

### **Both**

- Acknowledgement of source of bitterness
- Clarify our responsibility

### **Sin**

- Conviction of guilt

### **Tragedy**

- Conviction of innocence
  - Sometimes victims think they bear responsibility

## **Remorse**

### **Sin**

- Godly sorrow required

### **Tragedy**

- Its OK to feel bitterness, sorrow, wishing it had never happened and other feelings
- Part of tasting the bitter

## **Abandonment/Forsake**

### **Both**

- Can not wallow in it

### **Sin**

- Give up the sin!

### **Tragedy**

- Give up bitterness! Or dissolving bitterness
- Ephesians 4:31-32  
"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:  
And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"
- Alma 41:10-15  
" For that which ye do send out shall return unto you again"
  - If we are in the gall of bitterness we must give it up to receive the comforts of the Atonement for that which we *"send out will return again unto you"*
- Matt 7:1-2  
"For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again"
- Return to bitterness topic - Talk about *how* to give up bitterness later

## **Confession**

### **Both**

- Reveal
  - Lessoning of the burden

### **Sin**

- Must confess

### **Tragedy**

- Abuse - stopping the lie

## **Cast your burden**

### **Both**

- "Cry out" to Christ
  - Alma 38:8  
"and never, *until I did cry out* unto the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy, did I receive a remission of my sins"

## Restitution

### Both

- Matt 5:23-24  
" Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift"
  - Reconcile to others before receiving blessings of the Atonement

### Sin

- Repair the wrong

### Tragedy

- Matt 5:23-24
  - Just because we bear no responsibility for bitterness received that was caused by someone else's sin does not excuse us from reconciling for other sins
  - Reconciliation is with someone who "hath ought against thee"
    - The instigator or perpetrator in cases where we have 0% responsibility is not likely to whom we must reconcile – it is others
- Abuse - stopping the lie so that restitution may begin

## Forgive to be forgiven

### Both

- Alma 41:15
- Matt 7:1-2
- D&C 64:8-10  
"ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.  
I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men"
- Boyd K Packer:  
" Some frustrations we must endure without really solving the problem. Some things that ought to be put in order are not put in order because we cannot control them. Things we cannot solve, we must survive. If you resent someone for something he has done—or failed to do—forget it. Too often the things we carry are petty, even stupid. If you are still upset after all these years because Aunt Clara didn't come to

your wedding reception, why don't you grow up and forget it? If you brood constantly over a loss or a past mistake, look ahead—settle it. We call that forgiveness. Forgiveness is powerful spiritual medicine. To extend forgiveness, that soothing balm, to those who have offended you is to heal. And, more difficult yet, when the need is there, forgive yourself! I repeat, "John, leave it alone. Mary, leave it alone." Purge and cleanse and soothe your soul and your heart and your mind and that of others. A cloud will then be lifted, a beam cast from your eye. There will come that peace which surpasseth understanding." ("Balm of Gilead," Ensign, Nov. 1987, 16)

### ***Stumbling Blocks***

### Draw out the stumbling blocks - note they are common to both ends of the spectrum ###

#### **What are the Stumbling blocks?**

- Pride
- Lack of Faith
- Brass Serpent (too simple)
- Caught up in the injury
- Wallowing
- We want others to repent before we forgive them
- Hard heart – refuse to be comforted

### ***Giving up bitterness – Casting our burden at the Savior's feet***

Thoughts on *how* we can give up bitterness

## Draw out thoughts from others too ##

- Clearly understand where bitterness comes from
- We must not "refuse to be comforted"
- Accept that we are agents unto ourselves
- Snip the feed back loop!
- Forgo Vindication
- Turn our focus away from our bitterness (don't wallow)
- Cast my burden on the Savior
- Soft hearts not hard hearts
- Study to discover how such peace is possible
- Rebuild & restore confidence through the Savior
- Seek meekness and lowliness of heart





## **Reconsider where our bitterness comes from**

- Terrance D Olsen:  
"Bitterness, and feelings like it, cannot develop into a lasting attitude unless we cultivate these feelings. In clinging to bitterness, we blind ourselves to the fact that we are doing just that." ("Freedom from Bitterness," Ensign, Aug. 1991, pg 54)

## **We must not "refuse to be comforted" but allow the Lord to comfort us**

- We must repent of spurning the Lord
- Moses 7:44  
"And as Enoch saw this, he had bitterness of soul, and wept over his brethren, and said unto the heavens: I will refuse to be comforted; but the Lord said unto Enoch: Lift up your heart, and be glad; and look."
  - When Enoch was shown the fate of those in the Flood he had bitterness of soul and refused to be comforted
  - When he refused to be comforted he was refusing God  
*His refusal to be comforted and his bitterness went hand in hand*
- God extended comfort – "Lift up your heart, and be glad; and look." – he showed Enoch that all would have a chance for redemption. Enoch "repented" and later and "received a fullness of joy"
  - Moses 7:67 (Enoch)  
"And the Lord showed Enoch all things, even unto the end of the world; and he saw the day of the righteous, the hour of their redemption, and received a fulness of joy"
- Don't be like the chickens!
  - Moses 7:44  
"how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

## **Accept that we are agents unto ourselves**

- We can act, not just be acted upon
  - 2 Nephi 2:  
"because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon"

**Snip the feed back loop!**

- Jump off of the downward spiral train

### **Forgo vindication**

- Be comforted to know that the Savior had already suffered scoffs and scorns for us
- What is important is to know that you know and Heavenly Father knows what the truth is

### **Turn our focus away from our bitterness to others**

- Extend mercy and love
- Extend forgiveness

### **Study to discover how such peace is possible**

- Savior was not paralyzed by injustices done to him
- Look at how others were able to let go

### **Cast my burden on the Savior, so I can get on with life and be in peace**

- Let it go, throw it away
- Action: I don't want it anymore

### **Soft hearts not hard hearts**

- Often we must repent so as to soften our hearts
- Potters Clay

### **Restore and rebuild confidence through the Savior**

- Name Withheld:  
"The tides of self-pity, self-reproach, and self-destruction rage against my shore. And at my shore the Savior is ever there, building—shoring up—protecting against the onslaught—telling me I have value—telling me to believe in myself. His is the voice I prefer to hear, the voice I must heed." ("How the Atonement Helped Me Survive Divorce," Ensign, Apr. 1997, 28)

## Seek meekness and lowliness of heart

- D&C 19:23  
"Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me."
- Matt 11:28  
"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest....learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls"
- Meekness allows me to endure trials
- Study Christ
- Do as he did
  - Service, Service Service
- We *must* be humble (meekness)
- Turning to Christ better than any self help book!

## References as needed

### ***Learning from Alma: "I could remember my pains no more"***

#### **"Racked" and "harrowed up"**

- Alma 36:12-13  
"I was *racked* with eternal torment, for my soul was *harrowed up* to the greatest degree and *racked* with all my sins"
- Racked – like stretched on a rack (torture device)
- Harrowed – what a harrow does to a field

#### **"Cried within my heart"**

- Alma 36:18  
"I *cried within my heart*: O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me"
- We need *explicitly* to "cry out"
- Within our hearts
- Verbalize out loud

#### **"I could remember my pains no more"**

- Alma 36:19 "I could *remember my pains* no more; yea, I was *harrowed up* by the memory of my sins *no more*"
- Did *not* say he couldn't remember his sins
  - No longer harrowed up when he thought of his pains
  - Memory of the pain, not the sins taken away

- D&C 58:42  
"I, the Lord, remember them no more"
  - The Lord remembers no more, doesn't say we won't remember
  - Sometimes we think we should not be able to remember our sins

### **Filled with joy and light**

- Alma 36:20-21  
"what *joy, and what marvelous light* I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!  
Yea, I say unto you, my son, that there could be nothing so *exquisite and so bitter* as were my pains. Yea, and again I say unto you, my son, that on the other hand, there can be nothing so *exquisite and sweet* as was my joy"  
  - Atonement replaces
    - Pain with joy
    - bitter with sweet

### **Learning from Alma again: "Swallowed up in Joy"**

- Alma 31:38 (Alma, Sons of Mosiah, Zeezrom, Amulek, Alma's sons)  
"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.*"
  - Childbirth (example)
    - pain swallowed up in the joy of birth of a child
  - The refining heat may come but our pain may be "swallowed up in the joy of Christ" making the burden light that we may endure it well

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- Neal A. Maxwell, If Thou Endure It Well [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996]

