



The Contrite Spirit: How the Temple Helps Us Apply Christ's Atonement

Bruce C. Hafen , Marie K. Hafen

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From Reader Review The Contrite Spirit: How the Temple Helps Us Apply Christ's Atonement for online ebook

Bruce Olschewski says

Loved this book! It is a powerful companion to The Broken Heart.

Cindy says

I listened to this as an audio book and then went back and read the ebook. It was very well written and very deep. I feel like I need to go back and read it another ten times! I'm sure I would learn more every time.

Heather says

What a WONDERFUL book! One of my favorites! There is so much here to study and ponder and love! Understanding these truths can change us. This is a beautiful book about the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the blessings it offers us. It's about the temple, about sacrifice, about having a contrite heart, about becoming pure and sanctified and holy. It's about consecration and love and trust. It's inspiring and motivating. It is full of scriptures and testimony and examples of faithful disciples who turned to Christ - trusting Him and His promises. I highly recommend this book and will come back to it again.

Here are a few of my favorite quotes:

*"O hope of every contrite heart,
O joy of all the meek,
To those who fall, how kind thou art!
How good to those who seek (p. xiii) (Hymns #141)!"*

"When the Lord asks us for our broken hearts, He is asking, in part, for us to take His work into us, to put His bit in our mouths, to wear His bridle so our ears can become attuned to His voice. But notice, when the Lord asks for our broken heart, often He also asks for a contrite spirit (p. xiv)."

"A contrite spirit is eager to repent. It accepts responsibility for its own weakness and choices with a willingness to be corrected and desires to 'learn of [Him] and listen to [His] words' (D&C 19:23)... A contrite spirit does not hide. It seeks Jesus, compelled by faith in Christ's ability to save and to heal. 'Will ye not now return unto me,' He pleads, 'and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?' (3 Nephi 9:13)."

"A contrite spirit together with a broken heart unlock the blessings of the Atonement that are held in the temple. As I've come to see it, the temple is the place where we covenant to unite our sacrifice with His sacrifice, and in that union--in that becoming one with our Master--our eternal lives are born (p. xvi)."

"More people are bearing testimony that because they have increased their knowledge of and reliance upon His Atonement, they have discovered the Savior's greater influence in their lives. They speak not only of their having found forgiveness and greater assurance of the Resurrection and life beyond the grave, but, like the faithful woman in the crowd reaching for the Savior's hem, they have also reached Him from the depths of

their most personal needs and have been filled with the strength and comfort that only He can give (p. 5)."

"Paul's statements about our entering into the fellowship of Christ's suffering make it clear that, even though Christ suffered for our sins, as His disciples we may well be required to endure other suffering of our own. Repentance, for example, requires the kind of suffering that Paul called 'godly sorrow' (2 Corinthians 7:10).... Somehow the Atonement will bring about some kind of universal fairness that will correct whatever has seemed unjust--as broadly and unconditionally as the Resurrection. In reality, some of the problems we face, which may indeed seem unfair to us, might actually be the means by which we can learn what God has sent us here to learn. As the parable of the talents shows, He has blessed each of us with a unique mixture of gifts and limitations, even burdens, in a customized curriculum suited for each individual.... We need to consider how much of our own uniquely personal initiative is required for the Atonement's blessings to be fully effective in our individual circumstances (p. 12)."

"Because the Lord's mercy is far more than fair, His blessings to us will be infinitely more than we deserve (p. 13)."

"If we become too casual in the way we talk or think about [the Atonement], we may not be able to find that help. As President Dieter F. Uchtdorf recently counseled, 'The Savior's Atonement cannot become commonplace in our teaching, in our conversation, or in our hearts. It is sacred and holy.' If we let our thoughts and conversations about His Atonement become too much like clichés, that could have the unintended effect of hiding its meaning behind terms that seem so shallow (or so opaque) that few people give them a second thought--let alone a hundred thoughts (p. 13)."

"Some people reduce the Atonement to a sort of spiritual rabbit's foot which assumes that the mere reference to it justifies most of their wishes. In the past I have held that any association with the Atonement was helpful. So I have been hesitant to counsel others to be parsimonious about their references to the Atonement. Recently, however, I have thought to be slightly more bold. I have discovered that the misunderstanding of a doctrine is not much better than the rejection of that doctrine (p. 14)."

"The Atonement is not just a prime teaching of the gospel; it is the heart of the gospel. It infuses life into every doctrine, every principle, and every ordinance (Tad R. Callister, p. 14)."

"After what seemed the longest run I ever made before or since, the driver, Brother Kimball, called to me, 'Say, sissy, would you like a ride?'...He reached over, took my hand, then clucked to his horses which made me run, with legs that seemed to me could run no farther.'... This run...increased her circulation, which saved her life. This story has much to teach us about the redeeming and strengthening powers of the Atonement of Jesus Christ (p. 23)."

"While the story of Christ's life is the story of giving His Atonement, the story of Adam and Eve is the story of receiving His Atonement. And their story is our story (p. 25)."

"In addition to these unconditional blessings [mercy, grace, Resurrection, original sin], the Savior's Atonement also offers us at least three kinds of conditional blessings...we can be forgiven, strengthened, and perfected, on the condition that we participate fully in each of those processes (p. 31)."

"Struggling with a sense of weakness as we face life's problems is at the very core of mortality's purpose....So when we notice our weakness or we feel inadequate, that doesn't mean there is something wrong with us. As we come unto Christ, He will actually help us see our weaknesses more clearly and then help us become stronger and wiser--if we humble ourselves enough to listen to Him.... When we find ourselves wrestling with our weaknesses, that could actually mean that we are moving nearer to God, not farther away (p. 36)."

"Learning is, by its nature, often messy.... It is easy to get discouraged at such times. We may feel that we're

continually falling short, missing the mark, and living lives marked more by failure than by success. Nevertheless, because of the Lord's Atonement, we can learn from our failed attempts without being a failure. That insight is central to the reason why we are on the earth rather than having stayed in a premortal world where we learned only by theory, not by practice (p. 37)."

"We could miss what this understanding of succoring and grace offers us if we don't also grasp what it asks of us, and why. It's not that God will simply remove the hard things or take our pain completely away if we just decode the hidden messages or push the right button... He asks us to give all we have to the refining process of grace--not to please or appease Him, but rather to engage us (p. 44)."

"'We became acquainted with God in our extremities. And the price we paid to know Him was a privilege to pay.' Not only can the Savior help us to survive suffering, but when we seek Him while in it, He will make weak things become strong unto us (see Ether 12:27). As our earnest seeking draws us closer to Him, fears become faith and trust, anger melts into meekness, anguish becomes empathy. Line upon line, grace for grace, He causes--if we will--the affliction to be consecrated for our gain (see 2 Nephi 2:2) (p. 45)."

"The Lord's perfecting blessings can endow us with divine qualities, even His divine nature, through a process of becoming holy, like Christ.... This process is also referred to as sanctification--becoming a Saint (p. 46)."

"'The very act of choosing to be a disciple...can bring to us a certain special suffering.... If we are serious about discipleship, Jesus will eventually request each of us to do those very things which are the most difficult for us to do (Neal A. Maxwell, p. 49).'"

"Those who begin to receive charity will not only sense Christ's love for others, they will also sense His love for themselves in a way that assures them beyond any question that--despite their persistent weakness--their sacrifices and their lives are acceptable to Him (p. 50)."

"'Enduring to the end...means the endowment and sealing ordinances of the temple (Russell M. Nelson, p. 57).'"

"The sacrifice of a broken heart and contrite spirit symbolizes and emulates the Son's sacrifice of Himself.... 'Real, personal sacrifice never was placing an animal on the altar. Instead, it is a willingness to put the animal in us upon the altar and letting it be consumed (Neal A. Maxwell, p. 64).'"

"Are these dear people more saintly because they love the temple, or do they love the temple because they are so saintly? That is, are they sanctified by the temple or for the temple (p. 70)?"

"'The temple's sacred story stabilized and perpetuated Joseph's governing passion' which 'was to have his people experience God (Richard Bushman, p. 71).'"

"'When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not' (John 21:18, p. 82)."

"Much of life really can be what happens to us while we're waiting for something else. So we do need to decide whether our unavoidable waiting will be aimless or purposeful...our waiting can still have value, even great meaning (p. 100)."

"Normally we just think of Luke 2:52, that 'Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.' But Joseph's translation added: 'And it came to pass that Jesus grew up with his brethren, and waxed strong, and waited upon the Lord for the time of His ministry to come...And after many years, the hour of his ministry drew nigh' (JST, Matthew 3:24-26). So even Jesus 'waited upon the Lord' for years,

directed by the unique tutoring He must have received by 'serving under his father (p. 102).'"

"When our lives don't look very successful from the outside, or when our own plans or dreams seem stagnant, that might be exactly the time to 'wait' in motion, like a busy caterpillar, moving, struggling, gaining strength, and growing wings (p. 103)."

"Waiting in patient stillness can also create an ideal environment for us to offer the Lord a substantial sacrifice--perhaps of the kind most difficult for us to make. Without our unstinting sacrifice, He may not be able to bless us as generously as He might desire (p. 107)."

"'What is the secret of your happy marriage?'" Sister Hinckley replied matter-of-factly, with a twinkle, 'Oh, I just lowered my expectations (p. 113).'"

"'I am certain He will keep His promises somehow, but what do I do with today (p. 121)?'"

"'Her faith was based in trust and not in blessings, and would therefore withstand any trial (p. 124).'"

"Like the ancient mariner, most of us look to the heavens to get our bearings--and we do that through the temple. Every time we go to the temple, the ordinances reorient us to the godly natural order of the universe. And the North Star in that heavenly order is eternal marriage. It is at the very core of God's plan for us (p. 142)."

"'It is wholesome and proper to look for similitudes of Christ everywhere and to use them repeatedly in keeping him and his laws uppermost in our minds (Bruce R. McConkie, p. 146).'"

"As we deny ourselves of ungodliness and honestly love God as fully as we know how, Christ's perfecting grace will bless us enough to complete the process of making us holy (p. 149)."

"The natural order of marriage that God gave to Adam and Eve is worth whatever it takes--to find it, to build it, and to keep it in our lives. And husbands and wives who try to live like the Good Shepherd will discover, and they will give to each other, a more abundant life (p. 151)."

"'Our ultimate goal is to get to the temple (p. 156)!'"

"The missionary and ward mission leader would each keep a hand on the baton until the ward mission leader held it securely--so they could keep up their momentum without dropping the baton... The ward mission leader would then carry the precious baton safely to the temple president, representing the convert's receiving his or her temple endowment (p. 159)."

"When our faith is based on trust and not on blessings, He can lead us where we need to go--to places we are not wise enough to ask about.... When we keep our covenants with Christ, He will keep us (p. 167)."

"The widow woman was a true follower. Faced with starvation, she still trusted Elijah's promise of divine care--and the barrel and the cruse failed not. Then, after the shock of her child's death, she witnessed the restoration of his life.... How could she possibly render her boundless thanks to God? By living her gratitude. By loving the Lord with her whole soul. This wasn't bargaining or a fifty-fifty contract, but an open-ended covenant in both directions. For her part with her widow's mite--total consecration with no expectation, only trust. For His part--all that the Father hath. And for both, their bedrock motivation was simply to love, with all their souls (p. 168)."

"'Here is all I have. I only wish it was more (Lydia Knight, p. 169).'"

"I have not forgotten how generously you helped me when I was in trouble.' The Prophet [Joseph] then handed the couple almost twice as much money as Lydia had given him. Both Lydia's gift and Joseph's gift came not from a contract but from two-way feelings of generous consecration (p. 173)."

"Because she regarded Newel's covenant as her own, she responded to Brigham as she had when Joseph needed help: My oxen and wagons are 'at your disposal.' Lydia was never compensated for her animals and wagons--but she hasn't offered them because she expected compensation. She trusted that the Lord would provide (p. 177)."

"God's desires for them became their desires--and their courage. As the darkness of dross was removed from their desires, they had within them ever more gleaming light. As the Lord has said, 'If your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light' (D&C 88:67-68, p. 179)."

"Lydia didn't bargain with the Lord--she just continually gave Him all she had, holding nothing back, and He kept His promises in His own way and in His own time (p. 186)."

"There really is a bond and a sense of belonging across the generations on both sides of the veil. This bond has helped shape my own identity and values. It makes our ties with the eternal world more real, sharpening our spiritual focus and lifting our confidence in the future--here and hereafter (p. 197)."

"Consecration is the result of our contrite, self-willed choice. We decide how dedicated we will be to God, how much of our hearts we will give to Him. Sanctification, on the other hand--becoming saintly, like Christ--is ultimately a gift of grace from God. As our consecration deepens--as our hearts become more open, more yielding to Him--He sanctifies our souls in fulfillment of His covenant with us (see Moroni 10:32-33)... but if we hold back, He cannot sanctify us (p. 204)."

"As someone once said, this story is not about what we give; rather, it's about what part we decide to keep for ourselves (p. 205)."

"We talk often about the difference between being 'active' and 'less active' in the Church. Perhaps we should talk more about the additional distinction between being active in the Church and being a truly consecrated disciple.... A life of consecration will naturally take us out of our comfort zone.... 'Ultimate consecration is the yielding up of oneself to God. Heart, soul, and mind...If we desire [to receive the Father's] fullness, we cannot hold back part!.... How could we be entrusted with His 'all' until our wills are much more like His? Nor could His 'all' be fully appreciated by the partially committed (Neal A. Maxwell, p. 216)."

"[Brigham Young's] concern about being 'glued to the world' was also a major theme of his talk at the dedication of the St. George Temple in 1877. He knew how the covenants of the temple could help us remove that worldly glue and shift our sense of attachment to a higher purpose--to 'let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever' (Alma 37:36).... The purpose of the temple covenants is not just to remind us of pioneer sacrifices, but to evoke our sacrifices, because the Lord still designs to build Zion by establishing 'a consecrated people.' Zion is not only a geographic place, it is the gathering of people who have come together because their hearts are being purified: 'for this is Zion--the pure in heart' (D&C 97:21, p. 221)."

"Receiving the attributes of Divinity is not something we can confine to a routine list of 'things to do today.' But we can choose the daily attitudes of being more humble, meek, selfless, and peaceable in our walk with our fellow men. And if we give these steps our honest effort over time, we can keep up with Him enough to hold on to His hand and run with Him until, Agnes-like, we are prepared for His strong arms to lift us to safety (p. 227)."

"Since the temple with its higher ordinances is explicitly concerned with making 'the power of godliness' manifest to us in the flesh, perhaps it could play a key role in helping us to develop the attitudes that will

qualify us to be endowed with the qualities of His very nature (p. 228)."

"The temple can bring to us a sanctifying growth--but only as we move from being acquainted with the temple, to having experience with the temple, to knowing true worship in the temple, not as spectators, but as participants in the process of giving our hearts to God, which is how sanctification comes (Marion D. Hanks, p. 229)."

"They found Him in the temple' (Luke 2:46)."

"It's not that the Lord won't give us salvation and exaltation without our wholehearted engagement; it's that He can't. All of our experience teaches us that if our heart isn't fully engaged in the process, we won't grow. If we don't freely give our will--and everything else we have--to the Lord, we cannot become capable of benefiting from all of His grace. After all, our will is the only unique possession we have to give Him. He already gave us everything else (p. 240)."

"The yearning to be 'at one' with those we love does help us have the power to overcome the most potent opposing forces (p. 246)."

Adam says

This was a joy to listen to since it's narrated by the authors. Such knowledge and humility brings such meekness as the Haden's teach wonderful messages about the atonement and many aspects of the blessings of the temple. So glad I read this.

Jenny says

If I could rate this higher than 5 stars, I would. I listened to this on CD...if I owned a copy, I think I would have highlighted nearly every other line...particularly in the first 4 chapters and in the very last chapter. So much that this book made me consider...and it brought comfort to me about a lot of things I have been pondering. I don't even know where to begin to review it...because I took tons and tons of notes but can't possibly share everything I learned...nor would I want to, because reading it first hand would be better than my poor summaries.

They spent some time clarifying the doctrine of grace and how our definition of grace differs from that of most of the Christian world...it was talking about what parts of grace are freely given and what parts have conditions. (For example, the gift of resurrection is freely given to all who come to Earth, but forgiveness of sins requires repentance.) They talked about how we do have to do our part, although our Savior is there to help us as we do our part.

They talked a little about strengthening our muscles, physical and spiritual...my comparison of what they said is this: I'm not a good runner and my sister is. Of course, if I was going to run a race, I could have her run it in my place...she could easily do that for me, but then I wouldn't get stronger or become better. They said, "But grace can't be completely free if it's going to benefit us. If we don't reach for his reaching, we will never have enough muscle to move." They also shared this amazing quote by Elder Neal A. Maxwell: "How can you and I really expect to glide naively through life, as if to say, 'Lord, give me experience, but not grief, not sorrow, not pain, not opposition, not betrayal, and certainly not to be forsaken. Keep from me, Lord, all those experiences which made Thee what Thou art! Then, let me come and dwell with Thee and fully share

Thy joy!" ”

Then they shared a story that I love, love, love. It's a true story about this little girl named Agnes Caldwell. She crossed the plains in the Willie Handcart Company. Many in the company had died and her feet were nearly frozen. The rescue company sent by Brigham Young arrived and those who were sick were allowed to ride in the wagons, but the others still had to walk. She was walking next to a wagon, keeping up with it, hoping that she would be asked to ride. She got to a point when she could barely keep going. She was so tired and her feet were so frozen and she was nearly starving to death (literally, not figuratively). The driver of the wagon asked if she wanted to ride and she gratefully said yes...he reached down and grabbed her hand and then made a clucking noise to make his horses go faster, requiring her to run to keep up as he held onto her. Her thought was that he was the meanest man alive. But then, just as she was about to collapse from exhaustion, he pulled her up into the wagon and wrapped her in a blanket. She came to realize that causing her to run had warmed her body and kept her alive...if she had been pulled into the wagon when she was so cold, she would almost certainly have frozen to death. They then compared this true story to grace. The man was there to rescue her and he reached out to her in her anguish and pain and did what was needed to save her...but she also had to reach up to him and she had to run. In order to reach our ultimate destination...which is eternal life and to become like our Savior and our God, we have to experience personalized trials and even be pushed to our limits at times...and then we have to reach up and grasp their (always) outstretched hand. They could do it for us...but then we couldn't become what we need to be. I just love that story!! And what it represents.

*Luke 2:46 "They found him in the temple." The temple is the place for us to find Him also.

*If we haven't known generosity and grace through our extension of them to others and if we haven't come to recognize forgiveness through forgiving others, then we won't recognize it when it is offered to us from the Lord. He may be reaching toward us with His arms outstretched, but if we don't have those qualities, we won't recognize them being offered to us...they may be right in front of us but we won't see them. "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy" not because Christ won't offer mercy to all but because He can't...those who haven't been merciful won't recognize/accept His mercy. That's a thought provoking concept!

Becky says

I loved this book. Its very thought-provoking and insightful. It makes me want to go to the temple more often and understand it at a deeper level.

Kyle Woods says

I took my time on this book and really savored it. It is one of the best religious books I have read in a long time (other than scriptures, of course). Elder Hafen has an amazing way to take temple principles and apply them to aspects of life. The book opened new spiritual doors to me, helped me to understand temple ceremonies, passages of the scriptures, and the Atonement itself better. The book was a conduit to personal revelation for me, as I felt the Lord prompting me to change and improve some aspects of my life, and the promises and blessings discussed in the book helped me find the courage and strength to do so. The Contrite Spirit is, unsurprisingly, firmly rooted in Mormonism, so it may have limited appeal outside the Mormon community, but I nonetheless give it my very highest recommendation.

Susan says

Loved all the examples.

Brandon says

This review reflects my state of mind much more than the quality of the book. I found it hard to concentrate and really appreciate the material. This led me to long breaks between reading sessions that lessened the cohesiveness of the book. However, on the rare occasion when I was able to engage fully, I found the Hafens' insights fantastic and motivating. I may have to give this book another go at a future date so that I can appreciate it fully. For now, my review reflects my experience with the book.

Brooke Morrill says

I really liked how the stories and information were presented in this book, they helped me understand LDS temples in a deeper way. I listened to this book and loved Elder and Sister Hafen narrating it. Highly recommend this book for those looking to expand their knowledge on temples and the Atonement.

Denise says

This is written for LDS audiences. I loved it, especially gentle encouragement to do better and be better. Also, it added to my understanding of meekness and the atonement.

Greg says

I read this over a few months and stopped to visit with my family about it. I feel like this book helps me understand the temple in new ways and I am able to see the role of the temple with a deeper understanding. I love the Hafens and their work, and I recommend this book for anyone looking to deepen their understanding of the temple and level of discipleship.

Suzette Kunz says

Great insights. Very thought-provoking. I also enjoyed the way the referenced their experiences serving in the St. George temple and some details from church history. Great book.

Jan says

This book gave me specific things to ponder.

I am inspired to listen more carefully in the temple.

I am inspired to look for more connections between the temple and the scriptures.

I am inspired to study with more "real intent".

When I see so many people in the world causing chaos and looking for things to argue over, this book has reminded me that that is never okay. It is much better to humbly seek after a contrite spirit. Understanding is meant to be a spiritual experience.

Seth says

Between three and four stars. A good devotional book with some pretty insights as well.
