



## Following the Spirit in Leadership | A How I Lead Interview with Nate Kimbler

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Okay, so you're here for some great church leadership content. The podcast is great, but there's also another piece of content you need to be enjoying each week. It is the Leading Saints email newsletter. Now, I get it. Email newsletters feel so 2006, you know? But it isn't as old-fashioned as you might think. It's actually one of the most popular pieces of content that Leading Saints produces. Each week, I share a unique leadership thought that can only be found in the newsletter. I keep it short and sweet. Most can read in less than five minutes. And then we share with you recent content you might have missed, throwback episodes, and Leading Saints events that happen more often than you might anticipate. If you want to make sure you are on the email list, simply visit [LeadingSaints.org/14](https://LeadingSaints.org/14). That's [LeadingSaints.org/14](https://LeadingSaints.org/14). That will also get you 14 days access to our full library of content not available to the general public. So look for Leading Saints in your inbox by going to [LeadingSaints.org/14](https://LeadingSaints.org/14) or click the link in the show notes. So, my name is Kurt Francom, and I am the founder and executive director of Leading Saints and obviously the host of the Leading Saints podcast. Now, I started Leading Saints back in 2010. It was just a hobby blog, and it grew from there. By the time 2014 came around, we started the podcast, and that's really when it got some traction and took off. In 2016, we became a 501c3 nonprofit organization, and we've been growing ever since. And now I get the opportunity of interviewing and talking with remarkable people all over the world. Now, this is a segment we do on the Leading Saints podcast called How I Lead, and we reach out to everyday leaders. They're not experts, gurus, authors, PhDs. They're just everyday leaders who've been asked to serve in a specific leadership calling, and we simply ask them, how is it

that you lead? And they go through some remarkable principles that should be in a book that should be behind a PhD. They're usually that good. And we just talk about sharing what the other guy is doing. And I remember being a leader, just simply wanting to know, okay, I know what I'm trying to do, but what's the other guy doing? What's working for him? And so that's why every Wednesday or so we publish these How I Lead segments to share. Today I'm with Nate Kimbler from Ridgecrest, California, and he's on his, I don't know, last month or two of being a stake president. At least that's what we're speculating. That's what we're thinking, but you know, I haven't gotten the letter yet. Yeah, but it's been nine years. It's been nine years. It has been nine years. So take us back nine years to the beginning, because you're not, on average, I would say in the United States, you're a younger looking stake president. Yes, I get that a lot. How old were you when you were called? I was 36 years old. Okay. That's not like crazy, but yeah. No, no, but I think I probably look a little younger than I am. A lot of people come up to me and be like, President Kimbler, you look like you're 19. And at least immaturity wise, that's how I often feel like, you know, stake presidents are supposed to be these older mature people, but I always felt like I was young and super immature, right? Not full of wisdom. So what's the story of you being called? Oh my goodness. I was actually a bishop at the time. Okay. How many years were you into your calling? I was only like a year into being a bishop. Yeah, being a bishop was a lot of fun. I really enjoyed that, especially working with the youth as a bishop. And I think it just kind of caused my surprise to be called a stake president. Yeah. So the stake conference comes up and you're, you know, as typical, they interview all the bishops, you know, along with eye counsel and whatnot. So you knew the interview was coming, but you didn't really anticipate, I mean. I figured no way. They would call someone a lot more mature and more full of wisdom than someone like me. But I think I kind of knew it was coming. I just was ignoring the spirit telling me that that was the case. But the call came and my wife and I met with the visiting authority and we accepted that call. And it's been quite the journey since. Really a great growing experience. Yeah. Anything else about that experience worth mentioning that sort of that was a teaching moment or a unique experience? Well, just our youngest daughter, she was like three months old, just had gotten out of the NICU.

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So we have a young family, we have five children. And so we just had like a big family, a bunch of young kids. And I remember just the day we were called, my wife came up to bear her testimony during stake conference and, you know, brought our little three month old up who was screaming her head off. Right. And so here we are. And I'm trying to like comfort my little daughter and she's screaming. And that's probably all you could hear if you're in the congregation is the screaming three month old. Yeah, that's funny. And so what do you think? What do you remember as far as like just starting in that calling? Did you feel any like did you feel intimidated by it that you were so young and trying to do this? I mean, what comes to mind as far as taking those first few steps in that role? Yes, I was terrified. Absolutely terrified. Just feeling completely inadequate. You know, as many people do when they receive a calling in the

church, you often feel very inadequate. And I was no exception. I just felt completely inadequate. All the people I was working with were a lot smarter, a lot more experienced than I was. And so I had to lean heavily on my counselors and others to really help me kind of get on my feet, you know how to lead, right? It was something that was pretty new to me. Yeah. And did you pick more seasoned counselors? Well, I felt I did, right? One of the counselors, my first counselor had already been in the stake presidency prior. He had a lot of great experience and he was just a great rock. He was just someone I could always lean on, had great wisdom. And my second counselor at the time was, he was about my age, maybe a year or two older than me. And he had already been a bishop for five years. So yeah, they both had a lot of good experience. And that was really essential, especially as I began. Yeah. So maybe describe the demographics, the geographics of your stake. What is it? Ridgecrest. California State, right? Yeah, it's kind of an interesting stake. We have five wards, three branches. Most of the membership lives in the city of Ridgecrest. We're located kind of in the middle of nowhere in California, kind of near Death Valley. Mount Whitney is probably the closest people we recognize. And we have, it's really spread out. So we have a concentration in the city of Ridgecrest. And then like an hour and a half north of us is a town called Lone Pine. And we have a branch there. And you keep going north even further. There's a town called Bishop. We have a ward there. And then, and then it's about 200 miles from my house is Mammoth Lakes. And we have a branch there. So it's really a huge stake geographically. But not a lot of people live in that area. It's pretty desert. We're along the mountain range, the Sierra Nevada mountain range. Yeah. So how long were you typically driving as you're visiting wards? Wow. You know, if it's in Ridgecrest, it's just a five minute drive. But you know, if I'm going up to Mammoth Lakes branch, it's a three hour drive one way. Wow. Yeah. So how do you work that? Like, obviously, you don't just think maybe I'll buzz up to there and see how things are going. That's kind of sometimes how it works or, or the branch president up there is kind enough to let me stay at his house from time to time. So it works out. We make it work. Yeah. Because you don't want to, you know, you know, not leave them hanging out there just by their lonesome. No, no. And they're great up there too. They they're fantastic. So is the state center in your in your town? It is in Ridgecrest. Yeah. So at least that was a short drive. Yes. It's like five minutes from my house. Nice. Nice. Anything else about the the area, the calling that that this specific calling is maybe more unique. Anything else that would be worth mentioning? I don't know. Not that I could think of. Maybe I think our stake is has had a lot of challenges in the past. We had in twenty nineteen, we had these earthquakes that were pretty significant. Seven point one magnitude in the epicenter was like 10 miles from my house. You know, it was pretty, pretty big deal for for the Saints and Ridgecrest and all and everyone in our community. Yeah. Everyone really got shook up. Literally. So was there I mean, did it interrupt like church services or daily life or what did that look like? It did for a while. Right. There's there's the whole aspect of like, you know, everything got rattled. We had a little bit of damage to some of our church buildings and and, you know, some of the buildings in town. I think like the biggest the biggest thing is just how it affects you psychologically, like being in an earthquake like that. But there's something like. You know, when you when you go through something like that, it's kind of traumatic, like you're it's like I remember having this adrenaline rush and it wouldn't stop like, you know, it's like after a day or two, I just would wish the adrenaline would stop. You know, adrenaline is great, right? If you're

going to go to race or if you're going to go run a race or you're going to go to do something adrenaline is great. Right. But when it's nonstop for days on end, it's it's it's no good. Yeah.

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Yeah. I don't think we realize how much we really assume that, like, obviously the earth is just so solid and we have a firm foundation and and when that starts to move, it's like, well, like it really is a a mind trip. Right. It sure is. Right. Like it's like the ground betrays you. It's like the earth betrays you by moving. Did that impact like as far as in your calling, like the emergency preparedness, you know, system that sort of there that we're ready to turn on at any moment? Well, hopefully. But we hope it's prepared when something that that was that needed in any degree or. Yeah. Yeah. Like so I think we discovered that, you know, a few things are a little different than we expected. Like, for example, landlines didn't work, but cell phones all worked. So, yeah, it turns out they have backup systems to the cell towers and and the whole, you know, the whole organization of like ministering and the elders quorum Relief Society having everyone assigned, you know, that worked pretty smoothly. Being able to reach out and make sure everyone's OK. And so that all worked really well. You know, one of the challenges really was just figuring out how to get resources that were needed for the recovery to the right places. And that was a big challenge that we might talk about a little bit later on on how the women were really instrumental there. Yeah. And this is what I appreciate. And we'll go through your principles is that you sort of you don't have like this radical approach to leadership, but one that is really intentional. And I think as leaders listen to this and and consider it, maybe there's some implementation they can do as well. So where should we start with maybe with following the spirit? Is that numero uno? Yeah, I think it's a great place. In fact, if you don't mind, you know, maybe I'll just start with saying, you know, I feel like I'm in a calling that's like impossible. Like, you know, we talked about inadequacy earlier, and I feel like being a stake president is impossible, at least for a man to do right. But as we know with God, all things are possible. And I think we see that in the scriptures a few times where, you know, with the power of God, with God's help, all things become possible. And I really feel that's the case as the stake president. There's no way I could do this, right? As a young, immature guy that I am, right? You know, I completely rely on and I need God in the work. I need him to guide the way, to prepare the way. And sometimes he does his work in spite of my stupidity that I bring into it, right? So I think that's just kind of one thing that's important to recognize is that a lot of times we find ourselves in impossible situations, impossible callings, but with the Lord, all things are possible and he provides the way. And kind of going off of that, you know, is the importance, I think, of listening to the Holy Ghost and having the Holy Ghost be the guide, really in anything that we do. You know, I'll just bring up like an example. Recently I was in a leadership conference with Elder Bednar and I don't remember all the words he said, I don't remember all the teachings he gave, but one of the things that I took away from that meeting with Elder Bednar was it wasn't so important. I like write down everything he said, but what was important was that I write down and I was the stake president of my stake, like, where did I need to focus my efforts? And so I

think that's a really important principle, right? We can get caught up in general conference of like recording all the great things that were said, but really it's like, what does it mean for what I'm doing in my life? We want to capture like the, make the meme or a quote, you know, slide to put on Instagram about, oh, he said this, like mic drop moment. But what's more important is how is it being interpreted through the Spirit for our personal life, right? Exactly. And so, you know, like one of those examples is like from that recent leadership conference I was in with Elder Bednar, like one of the things I took away from my stake was we needed to really focus on temple prep for our young people. And so we went ahead and we decided, hey, what are the needs? Where do we need to focus on temple prep? We decided we needed to focus a little bit more on the covenants that these young people will be receiving in the temple when they receive their endowment as an example. And so we went to the church website, we gathered the resources, we assigned a high counselor to really lead that effort and he taught the class and that's what we needed, right? So that's what I took away. So we, you know, we needed to adapt a little bit from what the temple prep manual looks like and we focused where we felt we needed to focus. And I think that's a blessing for the young people as well. Yeah. Was there anything you did as far as, because I love this model and I've heard Elder Bednar do it before where he almost structures the meeting or puts everybody's mind in the right gear as far as saying like, it doesn't, you're going to be focusing on what I'm saying, especially as an apostle, right? But I want you to focus on what the Spirit is saying.

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So is there anything you did to make sure that, you know, others you're engaging with? I mean, just this whole concept of following the Spirit, like it was just something that you just tried to apply in your own leadership or was it something you focused on in general? And then maybe you didn't, that's okay. I'm just curious if there's anything else there. I think it's something that I focused on, I think almost subconsciously for a while. And then at some point it became a little bit more obvious that like, Hey, this is the Holy Spirit guiding me. Yeah. As I look back as my, in my nine years as stake president, that's what I find is a common theme, right? That following the Spirit has just been essential. I was going to ask if there's a story that comes to mind that illustrates this, that maybe leads us, whether it leads us to another principle we'll talk about or not, but what any story come to mind as far as over the last nine years out, this was manifest. Yeah. Yeah. So, so there was one and I'll start with one, and this is, I don't remember the exact year. I want to say it was 2016. I was in this meeting, it was in the Los Angeles temple. It was, it was Elder Dykes of the 70. I think he recently was, received a merit of status, but I don't remember much about what he said in that meeting. It was really cool. It was like in the temple, right? Who gets to have a meeting in the temple, right? With the general authority. This is all exciting, right? And I really don't remember much about what he said, but I remember some lessons or some things I took away. And I remember like after the meeting, he's like, Hey, President Kimbler, you look like you're 19. You know, let me, let me tell you a few things, right? So he pulled me aside and we had a good conversation. And one of the things I learned or I

took away that I was going to apply in my stake. And this is really like the spirit teaching me through his words. So these aren't necessarily the words he used, but this is what the spirit taught me from, from that discussion. And one of those was that the high council is not a retirement calling, right? It's not a, it's not a comfy calling, right? That you, you go into when you're, when you're old and experienced and you've done your, you paid your dues. And you, you know, tour the stake and pontificate from the various lecterns, right? Each high council Sunday or whatever. Right, right. And so what I took away from my stake was, you know, that the high council was actually like a, uh, like a training ground of sorts, right? An opportunity for, for brethren to, to grow, to learn, to have responsibility. Um, and I really started focusing on who might the Lord need to be in leadership positions in the future. So we're talking about like maybe future bishops, bishopric counselors, who knows what, right? Just maybe elders quorums presidents. I, this is something we, when I was in the stake presidency route, we really thought a lot about because it's easy. Sometimes I think the natural thing is, is to, I mean, I think a lot of people see this sort of the training ground, but almost like a holding place that, okay, we sort of know who the next Bishop is going to be. So let's put them on the high council and let them marinate there. And then he'll be, we can just bump them into that position. But I always thought about like, okay, brother so -and -so he's, he could probably be Bishop tomorrow and he'd be fine. Who's someone we could put on the high council that over the next three years, he's probably not ready today, but we could really develop them and give them some perspective that when that time comes, we have one more name on the list to take to the Lord, right? Yeah, yeah, exactly right. And so many of these brethren, when they're called to the high council, especially when they're, they haven't had a lot of leadership experience and they really come very in a very humble state, right there, they're ready to learn. They're, they're jumping in, you know, they feel like this great sense of responsibility to represent the stake presidency as they go throughout the stake and maybe they have speaking assignments, maybe they have worked with an elders quorum, they have other, lots of responsibilities. And, and so they, they really step up to that calling and they get to be close to the stake presidency. So they get to hear a lot of maybe the things that I'm learning from, from our area 70 or other general authorities that, you know, sometimes I get an opportunity to listen to. So they, you know, you get, they get, they get a little bit of experience there by being closer and they get to go out and do, do some good. Yeah. And I don't want to take you off track with, as far as the following the spirit concept, but you, so take us back to, you're in the temple and this is sort of the guidance that you got, but don't let, don't let the high council just be a retirement calling. Yeah. And so, and so that, so that's what I, that's what I started to do, right? So as we considered new people for the high council, this is the, what we were considering, right, is, is who needed this opportunity to grow and to learn, get out of their comfort zone rather than default to, oh, he was just released his Bishop or, you know, he's been in, in the Bishop break or whatever, like to really, and we would sometimes call experienced leaders into the high council and, and they were high counselors and help them in their duties. And, you know, some of them had never extended a calling in their life, for example, and, you know, they could help, you know, help with some of those, those things that were really new.

Yeah. So I want to sort of go look under the hood here as far as how you handled high council, because in the stake, it can be it's, I always joke. It's like those on the high council, it's easiest calling to hide because you don't really have to be anywhere on Sunday. I mean, yes, there's certain responsibilities that you have to maybe be somewhere, but you can sort of kind of, if you're not there on one Sunday, like, oh, he must be out doing high council stuff or, you know, whatnot. So, or even you go through the motions of the monthly high council meeting or whatever, and you just gather everybody and let's go around the table. All right, you who's over keys, tell us, does everybody, does all the Bishop works have keys, right? Like physical keys. So how did you handle, like, what was your philosophy in approaching the high council and using them or, or mentoring them? Yeah, I, I, I think it really gets back to that, that the high counselors represent the stake presidency. So, so anytime that there's like training, we're trying to help with the elders quorums. I mean, that's where we go to the, to the high council to, to help bring that message, to help bring that training to these, to these people. I'm thinking of one thing in specific that we did. At one point we decided we were going to do it. We were going to survey the high counselors and we're going to ask them, like, what assignments would you prefer to have? Oh, interesting. So, yeah, it was kind of an interesting thing that we did. And, um, our stake executive secretary set up basically a survey online and had all the high counselors go in and, and it wasn't anonymous. Right. So we would know who said what, right. Cause we, we sort of wanted to know, like, like, uh, are, do we have high counselors in places where they feel like they're thriving or do they, you know, are they not maybe, maybe they're not in the right place. Right. Loving this. Yeah. So, uh, let me tell you something unique that happened in that experience. So, so we did this and, you know, of course you can't promise him, right. You can't promise everyone wants to do whatever, but you know, not everyone can do the fun thing. Right. Right. We'll say it's YSA, right? That's, that's why I thought everyone would want YSA, right? In fact, we had a YSA on the high council and he had been assigned to the YSA. While the survey, just something interesting happened. Um, there was only one brother who, who said that their top thing was missionary work. They wanted to be involved in the missionary work and have that responsibility. And this was the guy that was the YSA. And we had him assigned to YSA. Seems logical, right? Yeah. Right. Right. And so, and so we saw this and, and it's like the light bulb came on for me. I was like, you know, Hey, there was, well, first of all, there was only one that said that that was their top, that that would be the top choice. And I'm like, well, this is a no brainer. I, you know, I want someone in my stake who's, who's excited about missionary work, who's enthusiastic, who wants that responsibility to be there. And it was this, it was this, this young man who was a YSA. And I tell you what, that was like one of the smartest things ever did as the stake president is assign him mission, missionary work. Wow. Cause he was just absolutely fabulous. He connected with the missionaries. He connected with the word mission leaders. He, he was always coming up with, with new ways to, to, to be engaged, to help them be engaged. It was just a marvelous thing to see this young man grow in these experiences as a, as having that responsibility for missionary work. And it makes my life a lot easier too. So, and you gave, I assume you gave YSA to another high counselor? Yeah. Another high counselor got YSA and that's okay. And that's great, right? Yeah. Wow. I love that because even we sort of want to put everything in the inspiration box. Like if it, if it, if it wasn't told to us by

God, then there's something wrong. When in reality, like he enabled us with capacity to think through these things, to take a survey, to consider, you know, where, where people are most fulfilled and then, you know, then move forward with it. And it creates for positive experience for all involved. Right. There's like this principle that like preparation precedes revelation. Yeah. Yeah. That doing your homework ahead of time can really help, you know, in that process of receiving revelation. Right. And, you know, I'll be frank as, as the stake president, you know, I approve callings and assignments all the time and, and I don't get an angel that comes down every time and says, you know, yes, this is the right person to be the next, whatever, elders quorum president or Bishop or whatever it might be. And so often, you know, we rely on, on the high council. We rely on others to give us information that helps us in that, in that decision making. And, and sometimes that might mean a survey, right? Like that's what we did, you know, we use the survey and that helped guide us in those assignments. Yeah. Anything else with your high council that was unique or a different approach or that you found effective? Um, I feel like it's really essential. Well, I'm going to jump ahead a little bit, but one of the things I did change, um, in fact, maybe I'll just jump right into this because it doesn't pertain to the high council, is, is, is a different leadership meeting and it was with Elder Holland.

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Um, and again, I don't remember the words he actually used, right? This is like the, this is like, again, what the Spirit taught me, right? Um, I came away from that meeting feeling like the Lord was trying to tell me, stop holding high council meetings. And so, and instead just only hold state council. Oh, interesting. So, so that was the message I took away. That's probably, those probably aren't the words he used, right? He didn't mandate everybody in the area stop. Yeah, right. He probably didn't do that. Right. But that was the message I took away. You know, again, there's the, it's the Holy Ghost trying to teach me what I needed to know. Um, and so I came away from that and I, I stopped holding high council meetings and I started holding only state council meetings. Uh, and this is, I think this is important because, you know, the high councilors, uh, they're, they're really important in the work of salvation, but, but so are the sisters that are, that are involved. Um, and so we have a number of sisters on the state council and, and they provide just a really valuable input, uh, and their ability to lead is just exceptional. Um, and so I think it's, it's that unity of the high councilors and these other individuals on the state council that, that really strengthen a stake and help the leadership in the stake. Um, and so when we hold state council meetings, like I said, from that moment on, I never hold, I've never held a high council meeting since. Oh, really? It's always been state council. How long ago was that? Uh, I don't know what your, what your, I don't know. It's been a while. It's, it's been a few years. I'm going to guess 2017, maybe around that timeframe. It's been a few years. And then how often do you hold state council then? So we do it, we do it twice a month. Every other week type thing. Uh, yeah. So the first one in the month, uh, is usually just, we counsel about something important in our stake. Okay. And it's, uh, and that's how I like to do it. So we have, give us a few examples of what some of those things would be. Um, so for example, one of



them, uh, recently has been, um, how do we become masters of technology and not, not slaves of technology. So, so that, that's just kind of, again, the Holy Spirit was like, keep beating me over the head. It's like, Hey, President Kimbler, you really need to work on this. And I've had a number of experiences that just kind of led, led me to that, the emphasis. And so in the state council, we'll, we'll talk about that, especially in context of like, of like who we are, like, like we're sons and daughters of God and we're part of the Lord's church. We have an important work to do. Um, and sometimes we get, we develop apathy. Maybe we, maybe we're not as engaged as we could be. And part of the challenge is sometimes, uh, these technology, these technology devices kind of rule our lives. And so how do we, how do we make them tools in our lives rather than, than governing us? Right. So, so in state council meeting, we can counsel together about like, you know, what could we do about this? Like, how do we, how do we help our stake, uh, kind of learn some of these important principles? Um, and this doesn't just apply to technology. It could apply to anything. It's like, how do we, how do we, how do we become masters of the tools that we have in our lives to, to be better disciples of Christ? Yeah, cool. So, and so that's the first, uh, the first, uh, state council of the month is you sort of just counsel about a topic. And then, then, then, then the second one of the month, uh, we usually hold a brief state council. Uh, it's like 30 minutes long or less. Um, and it usually will be something, uh, it might be a counseled subject, but it has to be brief. And then, then we split into our two committees, the, uh, stake youth leadership committee and the stake adult leadership committee for the other 30 minutes. For the other 30 minutes, usually an hour. Okay. So, and that kind of keeps you on us to stick to the 30 minutes, right? That you're like, all right, we've got to move on to our counsel. Yeah, exactly. Okay. Nice. Nice. And that's, so it's strictly been state council meetings twice a month. Yeah. Focus on a topic one and then short council meeting with, uh, committee discussions. Yep. With committee discussions. Exactly. And they had, I assume they all find a room in the, in the church or something. And yeah, we go, yeah, we got it. We got all figured out. Nice. Nice. That's great. Anything else with the state councils meetings that be worth mentioning? Oh, I don't know. There's, there's probably a lot, lot there, but I'll just cover the basics. That's fine. Yeah. Yeah, I think so. Um, I just really enjoy the, the, the inspiration that comes from a, a good council meeting, right? So when people, uh, they come with different perspectives and it's really important to, to hear the different perspectives that will come and it often leads to, I mean, you've heard these kinds of things all the time, but it's just, it's just so exciting to see the Lord work through someone unexpected and, and bring up a good point that really changes the whole direction and then, and then the Holy Spirit is like confirming, yeah, that's, that's something important for our stake. Yeah, that's, that's awesome.

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Um, what's next? Should we move on or anything else around the high council or things? Yeah, if, you know, kind of involved with that, that meeting with Elder Holland was, was another change I made. And again, this is back to the Spirit, right? I was like, the Spirit's teaching me something. I, I, again, I don't remember what words Elder Holland used, but I also left that same

meeting, um, deciding that I was going to invite my stake Relief Society president to all of our stake presidency meetings. I love it. Right. So, so this is like, I don't know, it seemed kind of crazy at the moment, right? Like, and I talked to my counselors about this and they're, they were on board, right? They're like, yeah. In fact, I'd look, I remember looking back as when I was a bishop and I remember after some bishopric meetings, I was, I'd sit there and be like, I don't know. I was like, I need to counsel with my stake Relief Society president on this very topic we were in bishopric meeting about, and I kind of, kind of regret of sorts that I hadn't invited her to the, the bishopric meetings, right? Cause she always had such a, such a great perspective, great inputs. And I, and I, I felt like I needed her right. Uh, more involved than, you know, it kind of felt like if she, if she's not in that meeting, she's a little bit less involved, a little bit more removed. Um, so, so I, anyways, I left that meeting from Elder Holland deciding that, Hey, what I needed to do for my presidency was invite the stake Relief Society president. Yeah. And I want to insert here that from my experience being in the stake presidency, the stake Relief Society president role, uh, sometimes they can feel like, you know, you usually get a very experienced sister in there, maybe they've been award Relief Society president, but sometimes they feel like, wow, what, what do I do? You know, like, okay, I have the yearly training or whatever. I mean, the hammock's very limited. And so you have a very capable individual in that role who doesn't really know what they're supposed to do. So involving her in that, in that, uh, weekly, you know, uh, meeting where various things are being discussed in the context of the stake really empowers her to step into that role, right? It sure does. Like, it's just been, it's just been a fabulous thing to see that work, right? Because she now knows everything that we talk about in a, in a stake presidency meeting, like whether, I mean, it doesn't matter what it is. In fact, like after many years of doing this, I can't even think of any subject we would talk about in a stake presidency meeting that you couldn't, couldn't have your stake relief site president in, at least, at least for me. That's kind of how I know a lot of stake presidencies. They'll have their executive secretary in the room and a clerk and it's like, well, if they can be there, you know, I'm sure at least I present can be there though. Yeah. So, so for me and my stake, that's just been a huge blessing. And, and they've always brought just a great perspective, a great spirit and really grounding sometimes too. Yeah. Just just some, a little dose of reality sometimes, right? Cause sometimes us men, we don't, we're not as in tune to some of the things going on in the stake as sometimes the sisters are that they're a little bit more aware of like, of like some of the challenges that are being faced. And so, and so I just find it just absolutely essential. Yeah. Love it. Uh, anything else with that as far as involving sisters in, in your efforts and whatnot? Yeah. Yeah. Let me just, let me just mention this too. So, um, I think earlier on we mentioned the, uh, we had some earthquakes and Ridgecrest and, um, you know, just kind of the toll that takes. So I, so I was there, I was in Ridgecrest during the earthquakes and, and I would describe it this way. I've never had PTSD, but it kind of felt like this might just must be what PTSD is a little bit like, right? Like your mind's just constantly racing. You can't, it's like, you can't even control your mind. Right. And I was just in, just in a terrible place to lead. Like, uh, you know, I'm here expected to be like the leader of my stake. Right. And I can barely function myself. Right. And so here come in like these sisters in our, in our stake and, and one of them, uh, one of them eventually became the stake relief study president, but she just came in and she's like, president Kimbler, what can I do? I was like, can you just handle all these relief efforts? Like, you know, and I think she might've been the just serve specialist at the time. And, and there was

really two sisters in particular I'm thinking of, and they just took over. Like, they're like, okay, this is what we need. This is where it needs to go. And, and, you know, I might be involved in the communication back like, Hey, could we get a truckload of whatever to, to this place? And, um, and it was just, it was just such a blessing to see how the, how the sisters played an active role and, and just a critical time in our stake and our community, um, where we're like someone like me, I just wasn't really able to function like I wanted to. Right. Um, and so I just found that it just a great blessing, uh, just at a very specific one. Right. And they're kind of opened my eyes to like, like these sisters are completely capable, like, like, you know, they can handle these relief efforts. They could really do anything. Right. Um, and so, you know, let's empower them, let them know they, they do have the authority. They do have priesthood authority to, to act in God's name and, and, and do a lot of good and, and do and lead. Yeah.

00:35:01 - 00:40:04

Yeah. And I love it. And it's not that you said, here's five things to do related to relief effort. You said, well, you just take it all and figure it out. And again, you're not trying to overwhelm them, but you're empowering them to say, oh, like I have a lot of authority in this realm right now and I can, I can run with it. Yes. Yes. It's, it's, it's, I love it too. Cool. Anything else with, with, uh, empowering the sisters in your stake? Uh, I'm sure there's more. But that, that sums it up for now. Yeah, I think so. All right. Um, counseling. Oh yes. So this is a kind of an interesting one. So, you know, thinking back as a young stake president, I'd been a bishop like a year, but, um, a lot of times, you know, as a stake president, you're going to counsel with members who are facing probably some pretty difficult things in their lives. Um, and so probably every stake president knows what I'm talking about. Um, and in a way, sometimes it's like when, when it's like above the bishop, meaning it's a little bit more difficult and the bishop is feeling comfortable with, sometimes I'll help out, right? I'm not trying to serve any power or anything. I'm just, I'm just trying to help out. Um, and, and early on, I, I, I kind of had this idea that members were coming to the stake president to get counsel. And in fact, they might've even said that, right? Like, what would you counsel me to do? Um, but my experience is that like probably 90 % of the time that they don't need counsel, that they probably already know what they need to know. Uh, you know, you know, these are usually active members, their whole lives, you know, you know, they know how to find the answers that they know. They know what's true, but what they really need, what I found that they really need is someone to, someone to listen to them, someone to be, just be with them in some, sometimes excruciating circumstances, just seemingly impossible circumstances and, and just be with them in that pain, you know, like as the scripture says in Mosiah, to mourn with those who mourn, right, sometimes they just need you to be there without trying to change it, without trying to make it better. Yeah. Um, and, and that maybe is a validating experience for them, but it, but it really helps them, at least I find that that's what really helps them the most. It's just someone to be there. And, and especially when you're, when you're in a leadership position, like a stake president or a Bishop, you know, sometimes these are things that people are really uncomfortable talking to other people about, they can be really

painful and they, they have, they might be involved in, in creating some of the to rely on others, but I found that just to be kind of like a beautiful thing. Once I figured that principle out, that in counseling, it was probably more about, it's been more about listening, just being with them in that moment than trying to change it. And I think in one way that makes it easier and then another way, maybe a little more difficult because, you know, when we take on this role of like, I'm the counselor, like I'm this wise sage that is going to tell them what to do or whatnot, or receive this inspiration, like that's a lot of pressure to put on yourself, when in reality, like God's working in their life and their heart and, and they, like you said, they, they know what they need to do. So to remove that and be like, oh, you mean I don't have to have the perfect scripture, the perfect quote, the perfect thing to say, I can walk into that meeting. Then on the other side, it is sometimes difficult by, well, I got to say something. Do I just like sit there and like smile? Like, but to just, and it's a skill set to take some practice. It's like, I'm just going to be here with you and then I'm so sorry this happened or, and really it's, it's empathy, right? I mean, and we've gone, there's a whole, in our virtual library, we have a whole series about, by Louie Hamner about empathy and how, what that looks like and how to really practice it. But it is so crucial in those moments when people don't even want to be told what to do. They just need someone that hears them, that'll sit with them and, and point to Jesus with them. Right? Exactly. Just help them, just help them know that Jesus is there, even if they don't feel that right then. And that's okay, because a lot of, a lot of people don't feel like Christ is with them in these really difficult situations. But often later on, they will see that Christ really was with them the whole time, but they can't see it at that moment. And that's okay. It's okay to not see that. And it's okay to just feel these deep, these deep feelings of despair. Like it's, I mean, no one likes that, but it's sometimes part of our human experience to just go through difficult times. And, anyways, I just find it a privilege to sometimes just sit with people who are experiencing something difficult. Yeah, it is a privilege for sure. Anything else related to the concept of counseling that we haven't mentioned? You sum it up? I think so. I'm just thinking how inadequate I've always felt at that. I think that's helpful for other leaders to hear like, okay, that nine -year stake president feels inadequate, like me, like good.

00:40:04 - 00:45:04

Right. Right. You know, like you say, like I could prepare what I think the best scriptures are ahead of time and I get into that meeting and into that session and realize that's not what they need at all. Like they just need someone to just be with them. And I think that's what the Savior does. Like that's what the Savior would do, is He would just be with people in those difficult times. I think that's what He'd be doing. Just sit with them and love them for who they are and whatever place that they're in. Yeah. All right. As we wrap up here, tell us about the concept of miracles and how those have shown up in your leadership. Oh my gosh. Like, I feel like I've just seen this all over the place. And there's an analogy I love to use and it's about Where's Waldo? So as a kid, I had these books called Where's Waldo? Any kid in the eighties and nineties, right? Yeah. And that's when I was a kid, right? So Where's Waldo? If you haven't seen them, there

was these illustrations. And there's this character, Waldo, he's usually wearing a shirt that's red and white stripes usually. And for example, he'd be hidden in a store full of American flags with all these red and white stripes. As a kid, at first you can't find him. You're searching all over the picture. And eventually you do find him, right? You find Waldo in that picture. And then once you find him and see him, it's hard to unsee him, right? You know he's there and it's almost like, how did I not see that before? I mean, it's that really exhilarating moment. And I feel like seeing the hand of the Lord, seeing miracles in our lives, it's kind of like that, right? Like sometimes at first, it's hard to see it. We don't see it very readily. But once you recognize how the Lord's been involved in your life and in your it's details, hard to unsee it. Like, and you realize he's been there the whole time. He's been there when I did stupid things. And it's just a great blessing. It's just, it just really enriches the experience for me as being a stake president is just to see all these miracles all the time. And I'm like, it's like, you can't even make this stuff up, right? Like these things that happen. Yeah. And I can only speak from my experience, obviously, but it seems like it's always in the hindsight, right? Where like, when you're in it, it's not like, Oh my goodness, like all this is falling together. But then when you get to the place where you're striving to go and you look back and you're like, Oh my, like he was always there. Like he was throughout all this and he was guiding me and I can, I understand why this didn't work or that did work and what a miracle. Yeah. So I'm thinking like this past summer in particular, we, well, we had our youth camps and building up to this, we had decided we were going to hold our stake, uh, our young men's camp and our young women's camp and youth conference all in the same week at the same place. Wow. Okay. Ambitions. Yeah. They, they were going to overlap. So they were all exactly all at the exact same time, but there was overlap. And that was the youth conference part. Um, we decided that that was what our stake needed. So, so we were moving forward with plans and, you know, we just had a tremendous year of snow in the mountain range by us and that's where our camps were. And, and our, as we're getting close, we realized our camp was like underwater, like literally was like a lake and, and there was no way we were going to be able to hold camp there and we really weren't sure what to do. So, so our stake, our stake leaders were kind of like hunting down different, different options of like, of like where to go. And, uh, you know, we, we had a couple of misfires, right? Like we even booked a place and, and probably realized that wasn't going to work. That's not unusual by the way, right? When Nephi and his brothers were going to get the plates, they had a few like misfires, right? Trying to get the plates, uh, on their assignment. So, uh, you know, same thing with us, you know, we had a few say misfires, uh, where, where it didn't pan out. Uh, but in that process of, of trying to find the camp, um, I remember meeting with our stake youth leadership committee. Usually I don't go to that one. I go to the adult one, uh, but I was with them and, and I just had this, they were talking about this, these camps and just how difficult it was trying to find a place to go, uh, that would work. And I, and I just had this impression at the time that, and I told them at the time, I was like, the Lord wants them to have this experience. The youth had this experience. He's going to provide the way, uh, he's going to show us the way. I don't know how we're going to get there right now. I know it seems impossible, uh, but I have this confidence is going to happen. And then, and then through this process of finding a camp that eventually something opened up and it was, and it was ended up being a camp that was really better than we could have, we could have imagined had better facilities. More than space really,

I mean, it was just perfect, absolutely perfect. And, and I, and that was just like maybe a simple example of, of how the Lord worked in a very practical way to provide, he provided the way.

00:45:05 - 00:50:04

Um, you know, it just happened. Someone canceled at the right time. We're the right place at the right time to pick up this spot and to pick up this camp and it was just, it was absolutely marvelous just to see that unfold. Um, and because the Lord wants these, these young people to have good experiences, he wants them to learn and grow. Uh, I'll speak, speaking of which, another miracle that happened there, uh, started off a little tangent. That was great. We had this, uh, um, I think I might've freaked out our, our stake leaders because, uh, uh, with the tech technology, with our mastering technology, I, I told them we were going to allow the, uh, the youth to, uh, you have and use their electronic devices at camp and there even was some cell service there at camp. I'm sure some people about lost it. Like how, what are you thinking? President Kim, ruining the event. Uh, now how is that supposed to work? And in fact, you know, we had struggled with this and things like seminary, you know, um, just inappropriate use of technology, um, and semi, you know, distracting or what I'm talking about. And, and, and at camp, you know, we, we allowed, we set the boundaries. We allowed them to use their electronic devices, but really we saw something marvelous unfold and that was the youth were extremely responsible with their devices, you know, they can do this, right? They, they know how to do it. Right. Um, I don't know. I don't know, like what we did differently other than say, Hey, you can use them, but let's create some boundaries here. Right. Like, yeah. Uh, you know, you can call home, call mom if you need to, but you know, if you're going to talk to your friend, just go over and talk to her, you know, they're here, right? Yeah, that's cool. Anything else, uh, with miracles? I mean, I'm sure you could write books about the miracles. Oh my gosh. Like we've just seen so many miracles, just how the Lord just unfolds in a way that's just unexpected. Um, and I'm just, I think when you see those, you just feel a great privilege to, to see those and often a leader gets to be in those kinds of positions where you see some very sacred miracles occur in the lives of others and it's just, it's just amazing. Like, and sometimes it's even the words that I say, and I'm not a wise person. I'm not like, you know, some master scribe or I don't come up with great phrases or anything, but I will often see that the Lord just puts through his spirit, just puts the right words in my head and I just spit them out. I don't even know what I'm saying, but it's often just what someone needs to hear. Um, and it's just been a marvelous thing just to see that and just, I don't, I can't explain what a privilege that is to be a part of and to be able, it's like a front row seat to just awesomeness. Yeah, I love it. That's, that's a good way to frame leadership, these leadership opportunities. You get a front row seat of some remarkable things and, uh, it's a privilege for sure. All right. As we wrap up here, any other principle or concept that we didn't hit on or you want to make sure we squeeze in or I think we did a good job. Yeah, I think so. Um, you know, being a stake president, it's a challenging calling. Like, like I said in the beginning, it is impossible. It's impossible to do it on your own. For me, it's been impossible, but, but with, with God, all things are possible. And that's maybe one of the most

important lessons I've learned as stake president with God is all things are possible. Listen to the Holy Spirit. It, it does, it does guide us. It inspires us with the right things. Maybe that inspiration sometimes comes through others, other means, like sometimes could come through a survey. Sometimes it came, sometimes it came through a member of our council. Um, uh, but it, but it does come and it's just, it's just, uh, what a blessing that is. Awesome. Well, you're probably entering a very reflective time as you think back of the nine years of, of being a stake president. So as you consider that time, how has being a leader helped you become a better follower of Jesus Christ? I, you know, I think that's a great question. Um, what I feel like I've seen a little bit better is, is how Christ sees each of us, like for our true identities, uh, as children of God, as sons and daughters of God, um, and I think that perspective as being a leader, like, like I've been in, I've, I've just really developed that sense of, of how Christ sees people. At least I feel like that I have a deepened, deepened sense of that. Um, and that has really changed how I see people. It's, it's really changed how I lead because I see people in a different light. So it's, it's like, uh, in the church, the church isn't about having like a well-oiled machine. It's not about running smoothly. It's about helping people on their journey, uh, to developing a relationship with Christ, receiving covenants, uh, uh, coming closer to Him as we come closer to each other.

00:50:04 - 00:52:26

Uh, and develop relationships with one another and with Christ. And, and so it's like with that perspective, I am now able to maybe lead a little bit better, to follow Christ a little bit better by seeing other people for who they really are as cherished, loved sons and daughters of God. And that concludes this, how I lead interview. I hope you enjoyed it. And, uh, I would ask you, could you take a minute and drop this link in an email on social media, in a text, wherever it makes the most sense and share it with somebody who could relate to this, this experience, and this is how we, how we develop as leaders, just hearing what the other guy's doing, trying some things out, testing, adjusting for your area. And, uh, that's, that's where great leadership's discovered, right? So we would love to have you share this with somebody in this calling or a related calling, and that would be great. And also if you know somebody, uh, any type of leader who would be a fantastic guest on the, how I lead segment, uh, reach out to us, go to leading saints .org slash contact, maybe send this individual an email, letting them know that you're going to be suggesting their name for this interview, we'll reach out to them. And, uh, see if we can line them up. So again, go to leading saints .org slash contact, and there you can submit all the information and let us know, and maybe they will be on a future, how I lead segment on the leading saints podcast. And remember to get on the email newsletter list, simply go to leading saints .org slash 14. It Yeah. came as a result of the position of leadership, which was imposed upon us by the God of heaven who brought forth a restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And when the declaration was made concerning the own and only true and living church upon the face of the earth, we were immediately put in a position of loneliness, the loneliness of leadership from which we cannot shrink nor run away and to which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.

