



## **Making the Bishop's Office the Ward Council Office | An Interview with Stephen Jones**

October 14, 2023

Speaker 1 00:00:02 Have you ever had a loved one leave the church and your relationship becomes awkward. This is so common and so sad. I got the chance to interview the Packard family who have been down this road. Cindy and Blair Packard are Orthodox believing parents and Josh, their son and his wife, have left the church. We came together to discuss their journey, and it was amazing what they taught. They talked about the communications that you regretted and how other siblings responded in positive and negative ways. They learned how to pick up the pieces. Again, express love, carry on, and build a beautiful relationship. This has become a favorite in the Questioning Saints Virtual Library. You can actually gain access to this [interview@leadingsaints.org](mailto:interview@leadingsaints.org) slash 14. This will give you 14 days to watch the Packards interview and many others related to helping individuals who begin to question their faith. Go to [leading-saints.org/fourteen](http://leading-saints.org/fourteen) and get access. Now.

Speaker 1 00:01:01 Before we jump into the content of this episode, I kind of feel it's important that I introduce myself. Now, many of you have been around a long time. You're well familiar with My Voice and the with Leading Saints as an organization, but if you're not, well, my name is Kurt Francom, and I am the executive director of Leading Saints and the podcast host. Now, leading Saints is a nonprofit organization dedicated, helping latter-Day Saints be better prepared to lead. And we do that through well content creation, like this podcast and many other [resources@leadingsaints.org](mailto:resources@leadingsaints.org). And, uh, we don't act like we have all the answers or know exactly what a leader should do or not do, but we like to explore the concepts of leadership, the science of leadership, what people are researching about leadership, and see how we can apply them to a latter day Saint World. So here we go. Steven Jones, here you are. We're in your studio. Thank you for opening the door, and let me turn the tables on you and ask you the

Speaker 2 00:02:04 Questions. Oh, this isn't my studio. You know what I mean? This, we, a lot of people use this here. It's just a blessing to be able to, to like connect with people wherever they are. Yeah. You know what I mean? And that's what I feel like the internet allows you to do. And this is

Speaker 1 00:02:16 So what are you trying to accomplish with your podcast, your show?

Speaker 2 00:02:19 You know what's interesting, what you, we were saying before that we started rolling the cameras, you said there's a huge issue in the church where, and not the church in the church itself, but people within the church, they go to church and they have, you know, Sunday school or they're in their families and they're learning about the gospel, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But one of the big gaps that people have is, well, how do you, like, how do you do that? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> like, I mean, I know what the

Speaker 1 00:02:39 Application of it.

Speaker 2 00:02:40 Yeah. Well, I know, I know what faith is. I've heard that before. And so the podcast that we do here, it's called Let's Get Real Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And it's really that idea of like bringing it to life. Like, so you have people that are practitioners that are experts, whether in their study, but then also in their practice. So it's like, here are examples of people who, maybe it's based on a hard question. They know the answers really, really well because they've, they've studied it their whole life, or they're an expert in that area, but then you also have people who are putting it into practice. Right. And that's the piece that I feel like has been really helpful to people.

Speaker 1 00:03:09 Yeah. Because there's, there seems to be all these like scholars, theologians who do great work in what they do, and we sort of go to them sort of wanting to know the answers and the details. But it's the, the real stories of like, this is what the gospel looks in my life. This is how I apply it. Then it's like, oh, like, then we can connect those two worlds.

Speaker 2 00:03:25 Yeah. Well, I mean, think about it like, learning has a lot of stages. It's not just, just to understand it. Right. And I love Elder Nars book, the, the series that he has. Right? It's like you have to know and understand and then you can be like, it become so like it's learn, uh, what's the, the first book is, um, increase in learning. Yes. Yes. The power to be, uh, and then act in doctrine and then then the power to become. And then I say a lot of times we only focus on the first, or we only focus on the second, or we only focus on the last. But I think that's an aggregate. And so we try to have a, a variety of guests that meet in probably one of those three boxes, right? Somebody who can help us really understand and get the context right, or somebody who's actually living it. Right. And then obviously once you really know it, then that's when you can become it. And that's really what people do in their real life and put into practice.

Speaker 1 00:04:07 Now, most people may not know that you're an active serving bishop right now. I am. Yeah. So tell me the story of you being called as Bishop.

Speaker 2 00:04:13 Oh my gosh. Okay. Listen. So three years ago in July, it was during Covid. Covid just hit, and I'm in my master's program at BYU studying public administration. And my wife is a young women's president at the time. I'm thinking, I'm just gonna finish this school and just keep on going. Right? Uhhuh <affirmative>. And then my state president calls me and they call me to be the bishop. So like, it happened in the midst of a lot of people in a situation in their life where, you know, there was a lot of struggles that were happening at the time, but also at a time in my life when my life was already pretty, pretty busy. Right? And so it almost thought, I almost thought like, okay, I don't think God's like trying to play a joke on me. Right? Right. But I also think there's plenty of people that could do this, but maybe there's something that I could offer.

Speaker 2 00:04:59 I have no idea what it is. But I remember at the very, very beginning just thinking, okay, he, I'm not gonna do this by myself. Right? Like, he's not, like, that's what I mean by not playing a joke on me. Like, he's not just like, Hey, let me let you suffer. Right? <laugh>, he's gonna help me. Right? And so I was like, all right, well, let's see what I have. I don't think that they joke around when they call somebody to be a bishop. Then my state president knew my circumstance. And I've been doing it for the past three years, and it's been, it has been one of the most purifying things that I've ever done in my entire life. Like, honestly, it has been one of the most, I can't, I don't even know how to explain it. I, I tell people this way. I feel like I've become, like, in some ways the closest to God that I've ever been. And in some ways, in my own perspective, the farthest from God. Does that make sense when I say that? Yes.

Speaker 1 00:05:43 What, what example comes to mind? Or what, how would you, uh, illustrate that?

Speaker 2 00:05:46 I would say that you feel like you need the Holy Ghost so much, and you have to rely on the Holy Ghost so much that you notice every little thing that you do. Hmm. Like when you become a bishop, you're not all of a sudden a different person, you know? Yeah. It's not like, I think that you look at a bishop and you think, oh, your bishop is a really good person that they, not that you don't think you know, that they're not perfect, but you know, the, they try to set a tone of spirituality to some degree. Right. But at the same time, it's not like whenever you're called, like from the day to the next, it's like you like go and get some superpower, and you're like, now I'm the bishop. You know, <laugh>, you know, you're still, I'm still Steven. Right. You know, I'm still, I still get frustrated at home sometimes.

Speaker 2 00:06:27 I mean, I don't have a, my home is not a perfect situation and scenario. I still need repentance. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, I still have to repent every day. And so, because I want the spirit so much. 'cause that's how you can connect to know how to help people. That's kind of more of what, I mean, I feel like that you might, I think it may have caused me or caused others, if they can relate to notice more of the inadequacies that you have. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, I guess that's more of what I mean. Yeah. And at the same time, you have these experiences where like, you see God so clearly in people's lives that there's no question. There's like, I can't even tell you how many times I've been in a room with someone and I'm like just knowing the con the the context and the circumstance.

Speaker 2 00:07:04 And then we'll be reading the scriptures together. And I'm like, or in the sacrament meeting, the very, like, you'll meet with somebody before church and in the Sacra meeting, like God is talking directly to that person in such an intimate way, and I'll just look out in the congregation. And they're like, yeah. I'm like, you can't make this stuff up. Yeah. And so it's like so clear that he's real, but, and at the same time, you realize how much you need him too. Right. You're, and by yourself. I don't know if that makes sense. Yeah. I

Speaker 1 00:07:27 Have to ref frame it as, uh, being a bishop, you get the opportunity to watch the atonement of Jesus Christ from the sidelines. Like, you're right there. Oh, yes. And it's, it's hard to deny what is going on in people's life with their savior. And it's unfortunate more get out the opportunity to sit in that chair. And, and because it is so remarkable to witness

Speaker 2 00:07:46 It is the most powerful thing that I've ever experienced. I mean, but this is the thing though, that I also believe is it's made me look at being a father differently, though. Mm-Hmm. Because I remember the first time that I sat down in a, in the chair to meet with someone. And I remember I had a, a previous bishop that was my bishop, and he is like, look, when you get a become a bishop, this is what's gonna happen. You're gonna sit down in a chair and like, inspiration's just gonna, it's gonna hit you. And I was like, yeah, okay. What does he mean? Whatever, you know? But then whenever you're there, it just, no, even though I'm imperfect, God will not hold that against that person who I'm trying to help. And I'm telling you like, just the thoughts that'll just appear in my mind that are so clear of like, ask 'em this, invite them to do this.

Speaker 2 00:08:27 But what I realized though is I don't think that that was ever not the case in other areas of my life as a father. Right. I think that as, as a bishop, you're like, I need to make a decision today and I need to help this person now. And so you kind of expect the revelation, but then now what I've realized is it's always been there, it's always been like that for other areas where I have stewardship, I just feel like being a bishop, you expect it because it's like, it has been more clear. So now as a father, I want to go back and I try to go back in every area of my life. Whenever I have a thought, I act on it right away the same way that I would if I'm sitting down with someone. Yeah. Does that make Yeah,

Speaker 1 00:09:01 Absolutely. It's remarkable experience. And, and just to recognize that you have stewardship elsewhere, regardless of this calling and those types of things, those dynamics still happen. Yeah. So tell me just about like walking into that calling the first few weeks, or picking counselors or just trying to fi, you know, figure out your footing. What, what was that like? What comes to mind?

Speaker 2 00:09:18 Yeah. So one of the things that I like to do that I've done for a while is, and this is how crazy this was, like how inter it was. So the past decade until a couple months ago, I've been a, I've, I've been in teaching seminary right? In that same week and

Speaker 1 00:09:31 Is full-time seminary full,

Speaker 2 00:09:32 Full-time seminary teacher Yeah. Here in, in Utah. And what happened was, I had gotten these, we had this conference and they're like, whoever wins can take me out to lunch. And so the leader that I had at the time in seminary, he was a stake president. And then in this same conference that I was in, like two, both of them, they were like, I had won this ability to like go out to lunch. Right? Both of them were stake presidents, both of 'em, very tenured. They don't understand the gospel very well. And so when I got called, I was like, Hey, gonna meet 'em for lunch. And then I just picked their brain about like, Hey, what do you do? How do you do it? And it was really, that's cool. It was really helpful. And so when I first got called, I, like, I tried to at talk to as many leaders as I could who had keys the way that I current, well, I now would be having keys, and then I just kind of pick their brain like, what do you do?

Speaker 2 00:10:17 Why do you do it? And try to just get as much of a perspective as I could. But when I pick my counselors, I practice that I already have, that I've been doing for the past, I don't forever. Right. Is I always go to the scriptures with a question. And so whenever I was trying to pick a counselor, I was just, I thought of that question, right? I was like, who should be the counselor? Right? One of the things that I thought was interesting, the council that I got from my state president was, Hey, talk to your wife. Like, make, like, put things that you can help ask, you know, that you can talk about that aren't confidential. Like, ask her what your wife thinks. One of the counselors, specifically my wife suggested, and I was like, you know what? That's crazy. And then one of the days that I was, when I was studying, kind of contemplating it, he randomly called me and there was just all these cool connections with like a dream that I had that made all these connections.

Speaker 2 00:11:02 I was like, yeah, I think that that should be, he would be the one that I would call. And, um, trying to think of, uh, what else That was helpful. I, um, sometimes I think I like to say it this way, you don't know until you go. Yeah. And I think that like, especially when it comes to a decision that you think is so vital, but there could be a thousand answers. Right? And so sometimes I just, when I chose or make decisions, even now, like making the decision is the thing that I need to do. And so like, I feel like ping counselors, or even in different callings in general, I'll have to just sometimes like, it'll come to me Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And I'll just be like, I know that's what it is. Right. And then now, you know, I counsel with my counselors. Right. Sometimes I just have to move forward and decide. And even if it's not the right decision, I won't know until I actually make it. And I feel like a lot of times we don't really Yeah. We don't really decide. We're like, could be that one, it could be that one. And I'm, I'm like waiting for a bird to fly on my shoulder and say, pick that one. You know? Yeah. Yeah. <laugh>, and that doesn't ever happen.

Speaker 1 00:11:55 But it's in the act of stepping into the water that then the Red Sea splits. That's right. Right. Likes Right. Just taking the action. Or you'll realize, oh, and now that I'm, you know, up to my knees in this decision, I realize I'm need to go a different direction. That's right. That's okay. That's the, the nuance of revelation on a lot of these things. Sometimes we want this be spelled out, but that's, I think those are more sanctifying nature in, in taking action, you

Speaker 2 00:12:16 Know? Well, and this is the way that I found this to be true when I got married as well, when it came to Revelation. I think that sometimes God is, he wants you to own

the decision. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And I feel like, 'cause whenever I got, when I got married and, and things, right now I'm, I'm making a decision that, that I'm counseling with my stick president about. And at the end of the day, God's like, what do you wanna do? His will is like, I want you to own the decision. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> like, like, you know, I'm trying to think of the example. It's this, the idea of like, when you go to decide, you want God to just kind of tell you. But when I, that's what I was trying to say with my wife. I knew that my wife was amazing and I felt led to my wife.

Speaker 2 00:12:54 And there's no question that I was led to my wife, the way I met my wife. Right. But when it came to getting married, God never came down. And, and I never had this huge overwhelming, like, you better marry her. But I definitely had a confirmation that I knew that I loved her. Right. I had a confirmation that I knew that, that she's amazing. But when it came to, should I marry her? He's like, what do you think? Yeah. Yeah. And so with making decisions with counselors and everything like that, I think sometimes that's what God does. He's like that way when, 'cause it's in, in a marriage and in, in a relationship that you have with your counselors, it's like, if God's just like, do that, I think in some scenarios when things get hard, it'll be easy, I think, for us to be like, well, you told me to do this and it's not working. But whenever he allowed me to come to know for myself, it allows me to say, okay. Like, I committed to, like, I decided I chose and now I'm more committed. Yeah. Right.

Speaker 1 00:13:52 Yeah. I love that. I, it's that partnership of, of decisions. And, and now you frame it, I love that

Speaker 2 00:13:57 Say that we did partnership of decisions. Well,

Speaker 1 00:13:59 I think there's a partnership going on, right? Yeah. Yeah. Because we're not just these empty vessels that robots, that God, you know, plugs his knowledge into. He's, he created us, we're his children, and he wants us to develop like him. So he's gonna like push and pull with us in those, in those things. And even when we make the wrong decision. Right. Or even when we make the right decision. And I love that how you framed of just to own, how did you put that he wants you to own own your decision, right? Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:14:25 Own it. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:14:26 Yeah. And I think that's in, in the, in the mistakes we make, but also in the positive things. Like, I often see this is a little thing of culture that rubs me the wrong way. <laugh>, sometimes

Speaker 1 00:14:35 When a decision's made, let's say a board boundary change or a new stake presidency's put in, sometimes the leaders, they want to get in front of the, the audience and sort of convince them that this is completely God's choice. We've received revelation, this is what it is. It's sort of a Trump card. Like, yeah. Yeah. So you can't, can't argue with it. But I just feel like leadership in the gospel works a little more dynamically than that. That I do believe that a leader will make a decision that really is off a lot. You know, half the congregation may be like, huh. But it's through that process that people are sanctified. You know, it, it may be corrected or

it may not be, and hearts may be hurt. But nonetheless, we turn to Christ for that healing and repair. Not because every decision being made is God's decision, but we gotta own the good, the good decisions and the bad decisions. And just say, you know, that's what leadership is. But, but

Speaker 2 00:15:23 That's, that is the essence of the gospel. I think the assumption, what is the assumption that we make in those scenarios? The assumption is what I feel like you're saying. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, we assume that everything is this. Like it's God's will fill in the blank. What his will is, is to develop us. Right. Which I feel like, and I'm not saying I don't know the scenario, you could pick a thousand, right? But it's like we make the assumption that, well, come on, he's trying to, what is he doing? He's, why does God delegate? God is delegating, is he trying to be efficient? Do you really think that what he's trying to do, he just, let's get this done as fast as we can. Second coming, let's delegate this thing. What is he doing? What is, you look at delegation from a business perspective of like, we're trying to get some money and get this as efficient as possible.

Speaker 2 00:16:02 He's trying to create other leaders. Right? And how in the world are you? Can you imagine, can you imagine, and I don't want to be, this, this is not meant to be blasphemous. Can you just imagine Jesus, like just he makes decisions. Anybody also does God's will. Right. But whenever he came down to the Nephites, he did what God wanted him to do. But in those moments, he chose, I'm gonna bless them now. He chose, I'm gonna stay. You know what I'm saying? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. That's powerful. But, but he gave him the, he gave them that he had that authority. But that's what develops, that's what allows us to become like him, is that's how I kind of see delegation more. 'cause in the past I thought delegation was more, we need to get more stuff done to get more effectively. Yeah. But he's like, no, we're trying to create more leaders. Right. Yeah. And there's no other way to learn unless you by experience. Right.

Speaker 1 00:16:47 That's so true. And I think we, you know, the concept of the restoration, we often mistakenly think the primary reason for the restoration is to restore a church. But that secondary, he is here to restore people through his church. Ooh,

Speaker 2 00:17:01 Preach it to me. Man. That's so

Speaker 1 00:17:02 Powerful. And so, like you said, he's not, there are a thousand other ways to be efficient in restoring a church. Come on. But that's not his business. He's here to restore people through his restore church.

Speaker 2 00:17:14 Tithing is the perfect example for this. Yeah. He does not need your money. He does not need a dollar from you. He doesn't, he lets us build the buildings. 'cause he's trying to build us. Yeah. And it is not as cliché as that sounds. Yeah. He does. Like, I, I like this. Uh, there's this preacher that I like, I'm from the south, so I like, you know, I mean, preaching is preaching, right. But, um, is, uh, TD Jakes and he says, God doesn't make chairs, he makes trees.

Speaker 1 00:17:38 Trees. Mm.

Speaker 2 00:17:39 And it's just that, that imagery is like, oh, that f so clear. Fantastic. You know what I'm saying? Yeah. He doesn't make chairs. He makes trees, he provides the tree, but he lets us build the chair. Nephi. Right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, he built the boat. God could have built the boat, but Nephi needed the experience of the asking, seeking and knocking Yeah. To be able to be developed. And then obviously the boat physically got him there. But it's really what the process was, is what developed the people in the, in the long run. Right. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:18:05 And I think this, this framing takes off so much pressure from the leaders who put a lot of pressure on themselves. Right? Like, if we feel like we have to go into an office, close the door and not leave till God has spoken, like that's a tall order, right? Yeah. Yeah. But to recognize that this is just kind of messy. And I think back to a time in, when I was bishop, I called a a a, a woman in the ward. We did as a bishop, Rick to be the primary president. We called her, set her apart. She was in there for like four weeks or something. I don't remember exactly what happened. It just sort of fell apart. And it was evident, wow, this was not a good move. And we, I'm sure the ward was like thinking when we called the next primary president, didn't we just call the primary president?

Speaker 1 00:18:45 Right. Yeah. And so just to be able to step into your ward and say like, this is a sanctifying process. It's a mortal process that it's not efficient. It's not meant to be efficient. But I know from my time as Bishop, I grew as a person, right? Yeah. I became more of that chair that God maybe wanted to intended for me. And, and I think it just removes that pressure of just saying, Hey, this is okay. It's messy and that's okay. Let's just keep going, figure it out and know that we're, we're growing from it.

Speaker 2 00:19:10 But that's the assumption that we're making. Right. We're making the assumption that it should be some other way. Right. You think that we look at too much at the, I think that God is an aggregate God he looks at and which is to basically the eternal perspective. He looks at the whole picture. He's not just looking at the one calling the one thing. We make all this stuff up and we make all of these, we have all of these assumptions because we're trying to justify whatever it is we're trying to justify. Right. But that's not how he operates.

Speaker 1 00:19:33 Yeah. Yeah. Anyway, I often refer to it as the, the chalkboard in heaven fallacy that we as a bishop Rick, we assume that God has this chalkboard in heaven. Yeah. And every calling in the ward is written on that chalk. And he has a one specific name by every calling. And it's our job Yeah. To figure out what's on the chalkboard in heaven. That's just a fallacy. Like, you know, there's probably the, whoever replaces you as a bishop, there's probably five guys in your ward who could do that. Oh, easy

Speaker 2 00:19:55 Question. There's not

Speaker 1 00:19:56 Question, no question. Who would be like, this is who God wants. Like, you know, the state presidency is gonna sit down, pray over it, talk it through and make a



decision. And that doesn't mean that was God's choice, but it means he was called of God not by God.

Speaker 2 00:20:09 Well then what he said, the Nephi like, and you see this happening, and I'm not, I'm not putting a bishop on that level of what Nephi came. I'm talking like right before Jesus came Uhhuh, and he's like, whatever you choose, I will stamp it. Right. Yeah. I will justify it. I'll make it work. And that's really important for us to realize too. I think, I mean, think about it as being a dad or a parent. I mean, how many things do you get wrong? But God's still allowing you to keep playing the game. Right. You know what I mean? Like, I think that our, our perspective of what God's doing is based, it's kind of a selfish perspective of what we think or what we hope 'cause 'cause we want it to seem good or look good. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And that's not, he's not in the, I don't believe that God is in, in that game of, Hey, let's make this perfect. Yeah. You know? Yeah. Like, oh, today is the only day and Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden, when they partook of the fruit, that's what the whole probationary stage is. Because we will continue to fail. Right. We need time to develop. Mm-Hmm. To me, that is what makes it so clear that we need that wiggle room because the wiggle room is what's gonna allow us to, you know, hundreds of years from now to be like, I'm glad I had that wiggle room 'cause I wouldn't be who I am now. Right. You know?

Speaker 1 00:21:16 So true. So true. Anyway, so what about like, just leading say the, like working with the Ward council. What comes to mind with things you do with your ward council? Yeah. Whether even the practical things of how often you meet or just how do you foster those relationships and, and lead?

Speaker 2 00:21:31 Well, I mean, a lot of what with Ward Council, I mean, I try to stay, this is a challenge because there's a lot of perspectives in our same room. And the one-to-one I feel like makes Ward Council more effective. When I meet one-on-one with the people of the Ward council, I feel like, uh, let me give you an example, and this is not a word this, I guess this is a word council thing. Before, when I would plan Ward Council, you know, I would kind of send out an agenda. But now what I've done recently is I've have the executive secretary, he and I meet separate just him and me. Hmm. And this is like a simple thing, but like, even in the times that we've done it, I feel like I know him way better. And our connection is way different in our meetings now because of the one-on-one experiences that I have with him.

Speaker 2 00:22:19 Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And I know that that's not maybe exactly what you're saying, but then so, so with the Relief Society president, with the elders co president, this is the thing that I think is one of the biggest differences and that I've learned from being a teacher is elder Nar. I remember he was in this interview and he said, teaching, which I feel like is leading, is listening first so that you can observe, so that you can then discern and then you know what to say. And so when I'm meeting one-on-one, that's my whole mindset and perspective is, okay, I'm listening. Like, I could just come in and say, okay, all right, sit down. I'm gonna stow this at you. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But first I need to get a pulse on what's really going on. You know, the other day I was, I was in the same meeting.

Speaker 2 00:23:02 I was talking one-on-one with someone, and I just listening to what's going on in their real life. And that dictated like, oh, you know what, if that's going on in your life, then we need to bring this up in word council. Like, if this is going on in your life, then I'm sure there are many other people. People assume that everybody inward councils like, got it all taken care of. No, they don't. We don't. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And so we need to address this concern for the whole ward. And so let's bring that up. Right. Another thing that I found recently with, with the tithing declaration is I love that term because before when it was a tithing settlement, and lemme I'm getting back to why this has to do with word council in a second. Sure. Tithing, the dialing settlement was just, oh, you settle the tithes and they come in every 10 minutes or 15 minutes, you set up the little sign on the door, or you do it with a Calendly or whatever you do, however you got it.

Speaker 2 00:23:51 Yeah. Yeah. But this year I sat down one-on-one with the clerk, and we prayed and we're looking for the will of God. We're like trying to use piece of keys to be directed. And I just, it just, we were looking at the finances. I meet with them every once a week and just quick, quick 15 minute meeting. And it hit me. He's like, yeah, we need to talk about how we're gonna set up the tithing declaration and all this. It just hit me, wait a second. Tithing declaration. People declare their tithing, wait. And recently BYU, they came out with a new honor code. And it's based on what the temple recommend. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> the foundation of it. Right. So what's one of the Temple recommend questions? Do you pay a full tithe? Right? Yeah. Are you a full tithe payer? I'm gonna declare that I am a full tithe pair.

Speaker 2 00:24:34 That is part of my covenant is that I am keeping is to pay tithing. God's not trying to direct me and say, I'm trying to keep some rule. I already promised that I would pay tithing. Are you keeping that covenant with the promise that I'm gonna give you? God's saying, right. Right. And so then as I'm looking at this, I'm like, I think there's something in there of how we should approach tithing declaration. We should look at it more based on the covenant. We should focus on the covenant. We should think about, okay, well let's, let's pull up the report. Who doesn't have a temple recommend whose temple recommends are expired? Instead of throwing out the sheet, right. Of who's gonna sign up, let's now invite these individuals to come in to the office. Let's prioritize them. And now instead of us saying, who are we gonna talk about?

Speaker 2 00:25:17 How can we invite people to come back on the covenant path through tithing declaration? And so now from there, it's like, okay, well these are the people we need to discuss in Ward Council. We're not making a project out of it. It's like, these are people who haven't been to church in a while, but that's a different conversation. Yeah. It's, and now we're not talking about who hasn't been to church. It's like, whoa, this is about a covenant. And now it's not just about tithing. This is a covenant and oh, what are the blessings of the covenant? We wanna invite them to be a part of that again. And so, and it's been really interesting to see. Yeah. And that came from meeting one-on-one with the clerk trying to be guided by keys, getting inspiration and acting on it. Right. Yeah. And I just hasn't, we haven't perfected it yet. But that's different than just, oh, that's the thing we do. Let's just do the thing we did last week. Right. You know,

Speaker 1 00:26:02 It, it takes it from an administrative thing. We're that's where we, where we settle with, you know, I remember being bishop, like, how, how can I get through this list as effectively as possible, efficiently and get this done so I can get on with Christmas? Right. But sitting there and creating space for that, it shifts it from an administrative thing to a spiritual administering thing. Right.

Speaker 2 00:26:19 But think about tithing settlement. Okay. And this is so powerful. You get to see so many individuals who are so consecrated that these people are gonna come, they're gonna come no matter what. I mean, there's the people that in the past three years, they're the same people who come Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Right. But now it's like, okay, they're gonna come anyway. Right. Can you imagine like you just one, just one person who wasn't, wasn't acting in, in the, the doctrine of the covenant, like the, of the promises of the covenant in one family that wasn't sealed. And now the invitation isn't about tithing. The invitation isn't in, is let's get back on this. Let's get back in working in this covenant. Yeah. This promise that God's given us. You know what I'm saying? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And so now the, the conversation's different. So I think, like Elder Ben and I talks about this all the time. It just feels different in war conference. Whenever you start with, you're like on the focus of the wild, what's the ordinance? What's the next ordinance? What's the next covenant? And instead of just saying, Hey, let's have this activity, it's like, how can we help the members of award keep their covenants? You know? I don't know.

Speaker 1 00:27:22 Yeah. Yeah. No, that's really helpful. And in another conversation we had, you talked about just the, how you see the Bishop's office, like the actual room Yeah. With the door and the lock and everything. Yeah. Break that down for me.

Speaker 2 00:27:33 No. So look, the Bishop's office, it's an interesting title because now you have an elder scoring president, you have a release society president, and what's the, what's the main focus that they have? It's ministering interviews. Like, we don't track interviews. We don't, we don't track Did you do your home teaching anymore? Right. We track Have you been doing ministering interviews? And so what I'm, I'm, I've been trying to do is I haven't been really that successful yet, but I I, and make the invitation look this office, I'm gonna use it on Wednesday. Okay. Feel free. Elders co president, these society president, take it another day. This isn't my office. This is our office. Right. You can meet with people here in a, in a way that, that's comforting. That's connecting instead of meeting in the, you know, in the primary room or wherever it is that you meet, meet in here. Right. Where people can feel the most comfortable. And then we can break down that day. That's one of the things that, that I've tried to do. It's been challenging though, to kind of shift that mindset though, because I think that, uh, the key that you have, it only works for, you know, it's like getting of the keys has been, has been challenging to figure that out. Yeah. Because, because to me, I'm like, what, what, what are we hiding in this room? Because I don't, I don't know about you.

Speaker 1 00:28:42 There's nothing valuable. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:28:43 There's nothing like, don't get into, 'cause we used to hold files in there now, right. We don't do that anymore. Yeah. It's all electronic. So, and you're

Speaker 1 00:28:49 Not like, you know, stockpiling, tithing dollars and cash.

Speaker 2 00:28:52 There's, there's nothing in there. It's like, nobody can enter into this room. Lock it. Yeah. You can't come in. No. Just get the key to everybody and they can come in and meet and have these interviews. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:29:04 Yeah. And especially with the shift of, you know, there's been a emphasis for bishops to focus on the youth. Right? That's right. And to enable elders, presidents and release society presidents to really minister in the lives of, of those adults that they preside over. Right. We say that on paper, but sometimes we haven't put the infrastructure in place of, of doing that. Like, it's easier for a bishop to do that because he has an office. He has a secretary, they call the secretary. That's right. They sit outside the office, they come in the office, they chat. That's right. The elders Corps president, or least site president. That infrastructure hasn't really been in place. So for a local ward to say, you know, no, this office is yours. Yeah. Let's, you know, obviously we gotta figure out scheduling and whatnot. Yeah. But now they have a place to, to minister or to, to hold the interviews that they're supposed to do. Or if there's an elder that really just wants to have a tough conversation with his elders Corps president, why not the bishop's office? Right. Yeah. Why, why not have a place to seclude and jump into it, you know? Ooh. And

Speaker 2 00:29:55 We need it so bad. Like, how are we gonna focus on the youth and how am I going to make an invitation to an elder school president or even a, or release society president? And, but, but we wanna make it as easy as possible for them to do it. Because a lot of the times we spend a majority of our time meeting with adults, but the other adult leaders don't have a way to meet with the adults. Yeah. You know, and I think that's a simple way that we could potentially do it. And in fact, I had this old, there's a ward that I was in, and it had a Elders Quorum office. Oh, wow. That, but it was, I like from back in the day, Uhhuh, this was, this was, it was probably built in like, like

Speaker 1 00:30:30 The fifties or something. Right. Something like that.

Speaker 2 00:30:31 Yeah. And the Elders Quorum president had an office. Right. But I think that we could, it doesn't need to be multiple, I think it could just be the same place. Right. You know? Yeah. And, um, yeah.

Speaker 1 00:30:42 Yeah. That's cool. Uh, talk to me about, you know, with the emphasis on youth as a bishop, like any unique dynamics come, there's a lot of Bishop Rick struggling with what this looks like and application and whatnot.

Speaker 2 00:30:53 A lot of this comes from our, our assumptions, I believe. Now look, to me, the gospel's very simple and we create, so this is gonna sound like a humble brag, and this is not I So go for it, man. So, Brad Wilcox, I've known Brad Wilcox for, and he's, he's in the young men's presidency, general presidency. And I've known him since from back in, in, in, uh, at BYU. And he's been a good friend of mine. And when I got called to be a bishop, I just called him up and I was like, Hey, what advice would you give? 'cause you, you have these

conversations with general leaders all the time. What would you say? Like, and he said, this is what he said to me, and I've tried to live by this, this advice. He's like, if I were you, I would treat your first and second assistant in the priest quorum.

Speaker 2 00:31:35 And even, even the young women too, right. In their class, like the assistants, they like if you're on a mission, like when you're on a mission, because he was a mission president. Mm-Hmm. And he gave that perspective. And he is like, when I was a mission president, I would call the assistants on my mission, and I wouldn't, I would say, Hey, such and such is going on. Go, will you, will you go do this? Uh, we need to move this, these elders or these sisters out, out, uh, and we need to change over, da da da da da. There's a finance secretary. They were, they were elders. They were sisters. Right. The, the leaders in the mission. Yeah. And so he is like, I would treat the leaders in the youth like that. And so that's what I've tried to do. So, um, I can't even tell you, this was the coolest experience I had.

Speaker 2 00:32:15 I was at BYU working on this project for something I was working on. And there was, there's a, there was a man in our ward who young, he got cancer for a second time. Wow. And so, as a quorum in the priest quorum we're like, how can we help him? And so I said, okay. Hey, so-and-So would you go to his house and ask him what he needs? And don't ask him what we recommend. Like what would be the best way to minister to you right now? What is the thing that you need? And so he went and he found out by himself with the other member of the quorum. And they said, yeah, they need help with their yard. 'cause they are, uh, in the process before they found out they got new sprinklers. Right. And then they needed to put down the sod and all that kinda stuff.

Speaker 2 00:32:59 There was some trench they needed to dig. And so I said, Hey, this particular young man, I said, now will you go back to him and ask him to set up the best time to go and da, da da. So, and that's the last I heard about it. So now I'm at working on this project and I'm thinking, oh, it's Saturday. I'm thinking, oh my gosh, I think I left them hang. Like I wasn't there for this service, this service that they set up. I called this youth. It was the coolest experience. I called him on the phone, he picks up and he is like, Hey Bishop. I'm like, Hey. 'cause they never told me about the, I knew it was gonna happen. They never told me about it. And I'm like feeling all guilty, like, I didn't show up. He's like, no, we're here right now.

Speaker 2 00:33:33 Like, he set it up. Oh wow. He got all the young men to be there. He did it. Wow. It was him. And so instead of throwing parties, he's like, we don't need to throw parties for the youth all the time. We just need to invite them to be a part the same way you would call the elders going president or at least Saudi president. Right. Yeah. Another thing that I've done is when I go and minister, I can't think of a better way. If we're trying to, I can just show 'em what I do. I just bring them with me. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> like, I'm gonna go and visit. Let's go and let's just switch it out round robin. And, um, I'll invite one of the priests to come with me or to come with me while I'm ministering to people. Like sometimes there's appointments, sometimes we're just knocking on doors. And I've had some of the most powerful experiences that I think, I really believe that God allowed that really powerful experience to happen with that particular youth. That was way more useful than just talking about it in, in the room. Yeah. Do you know what I'm saying? Absolutely.

Speaker 1 00:34:31 It's an experience, not just all lesson.

Speaker 2 00:34:33 Right? Yeah. Like, like, how else can I teach you better than just, this is what bishops do, will you come with me? Yeah. And we went to a lady's house and it was so powerful. I just remember sitting, he said the next day, I can't remember what he said exactly, but he was like, that was such a powerful experience. Which is different than just sitting in elders or in in, uh, priest quorum and just, Hey, what do you guys wanna do for you

Speaker 1 00:34:57 <laugh>? Yeah. You know? Yeah. What do you wanna do Wednesday night? Like, or Yeah. You know, pizza party or play basketball or rather than, you know, invite them into the mission of, of your work.

Speaker 2 00:35:05 That's right.

Speaker 1 00:35:07 Yeah. That's

Speaker 2 00:35:07 Powerful. It's the work being on a mission. It's all the workers of salvation. And what better way to do it than to, instead of talking about it Yeah. Let's bring them with us now. I know if you have a big ward, you can't take 'em all out, but I mean, I bet you could once a week. Yeah. You're gonna be doing it anyway. Right. Why don't you just take somebody with you? Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:35:26 You, you're going to that side of the ward that's an hour away. Yeah. Find the priest that's in that area. Right. That's right. And make it happen. Yeah. And I love that framing. I never thought about that. We call them first and second assistant the same as a mission president call has assistance. You know?

Speaker 2 00:35:38 That's cool. Yeah. But what do they do? Yeah, they assist.

Speaker 1 00:35:41 That's right. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:35:42 That's so

Speaker 1 00:35:43 That's awesome. Young

Speaker 2 00:35:44 Women can do the same. I have a little, like, I just asked the youth, I listened to, what do you, what would you make this experience better whenever I meet with you? And they were like, you know, it'd be good to have some like treats or something. I was like, okay. And I turned it around and said, Hey, would you be willing to go get 'em Uhhuh <affirmative>? And you know what she did? She went to Costco by herself and she stocked it up. <laugh>.

Speaker 1 00:36:05 That's awesome. You know, I mean, awesome. Yep. Turned in a receipt and everything. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:36:08 Did you see what I'm saying? Yeah. It's been powerful to see, you know, it's been really powerful.

Speaker 1 00:36:12 Yeah. That's cool. Anything else with youth or worth mentioning or?

Speaker 2 00:36:16 I think we need to be better at helping people understand where repentance really is.

Speaker 1 00:36:20 I was, that's where I was gonna go next. I wanna know like your mo with repentance or how you teach it, how you facilitate it, all those things.

Speaker 2 00:36:27 I think with the youth, especially teaching seminary for about a decade, like they just need somebody to listen to him. When I meet with them. I got this from somebody else. Uh, uh, my brother was a bishop at the time and uh, he shared something with me that his state president did with him. And there's four main questions that he asks when he does his interviews with people to minister. And, and most of it is just to model how to minister. Right. And the question number one has to do with how do you hear him? What are you doing currently to hear him? Because I feel like that's the question that comes up often is how do I know it's God or me? And so, well let's, so I, on a consistent basis, I'm like, okay, well what is like, what are you doing to hear him?

Speaker 2 00:37:04 What questions do you have about hearing him? The second is, it has to do more with who do you know that needs help? Like, how else can I know who, who the poor are in spirit or physically or whatever. And so I asked, do you know anybody who needs help? And I'm trying to open up that door of like, if there's anybody that's being hurt in any way that they know of or that needs help in any way. And then, uh, the third question has to do with, you know, how can we, what can we do better to help with the work of salvation and the ward on both sides of the veil? Excuse me. That's actually number two. And then number three is the one about who needs help. And then the third is what do you need help with? Hmm. And I do this with youth and with people that I meet with.

Speaker 2 00:37:40 And then I say, which one do you wanna talk about? 1, 2, 3, or four? And I let them choose and then guided through the spirit, right? And I'm listening first. Right. I then I then say, then I'll address based off of what I'm hearing from them of what I can invite them to do. And so the fourth one is, you know, what questions do you have? Let's bring out the, for the strength of youth, are there any questions in there? And I try to invite them to read it and come beforehand, before they come like, Hey, will you look it over? And then, you know, I'm gonna ask you that question. What questions do you have about it? And so now it's an open dialogue where I'm listening so that I can discern instead of just saying, Hey, this is what I need think you should know. It's like, no, what do they need? Right. And I've found that to be very helpful to know where to go with them. And it's so customized. It's not just when I meet with somebody, we talk about this and it's been so powerful. So then, so then now I'm talking about what they wanna talk about that they're choosing to talk about. But it's based on something that I've found is in line with the things that youth really need to know.

Speaker 1 00:38:38 Yeah. And this is specifically more often not in the context of these routine youth interviews that, that you're doing as the bishop. Yeah,

Speaker 2 00:38:45 That's right. Okay. But it's the same pattern that I use with adults as well. Oh, cool. But it's that same idea of listening, observing, discerning. So I know what to say and then I can make invitations. Right. Yeah. The other thing with it comes to repentance that I found with youth and even with adults. They say people come that they could be repenting on their own. Not, I'm like, let me, lemme back up when I say that. What I mean by that is I'll ask this question. I'll say somebody, say somebody will talk about a sin that they've been involved in. And I say, well, have you talked to God about it? Hmm. And I'm telling you, most times, majority of the times people say no.

Speaker 1 00:39:20 Wow. Because I think oftentimes the bishop's office feels like step one, that's not what I gotta to start repentance. I gotta go see the bishop. When in reality it could be step 4, 5, 10. Right. In all this,

Speaker 2 00:39:30 Well, the divine gift of forgiveness that book the myths, they're not the the what are the main, the assumptions that we make. Repentance is a punishment. Penalty or payment for sin. Repentance is what saves us. Repentance is an event. Basically. If it doesn't involve the redeemer, it's not repentance. Hmm. And there's that chapter, I think it's either nine or eight. Right? It's like repentance is only through the fa, it's through the father and the son. And it's cool 'cause it's like you have now three witnesses that you've repented if you do it this way. Right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But primarily the interesting thing though is that this is what I would say when it comes to repentances. I feel like we could do, I could do a better job. We could all do a better job at teaching our children and even all of us of like, these are the two questions that I think that I like to really focus on that I think if we understood these two questions, it is life changing.

Speaker 2 00:40:22 Who is God and who are you? So who is God and who are you? Hmm. And I feel like the reason why we don't really want to talk to God is because we don't really know who he is. 'cause if we didn't know who he was, we would want to run to him with our sins. Yeah. If we really knew who Jesus Christ was, we wouldn't hide from him. You know? Right. And you can tell a lot about how people feel about God by how they interact with who they feel represents him. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, right?

Speaker 1 00:40:49 Yeah. If they walk in there with a lot of shame or they even avoid, they've been putting it off for months, that's power.

Speaker 2 00:40:55 Do you know what I'm saying? Yeah. Like I was talking to my wife the other day, I was like, you know what? I think the way they interact or the perception of the bishop or leadership is probably is, it may be, I don't know. It's probably similar to how they might feel with God. Yeah. And there's this quote from Elder, from Joseph Smith that says, like, to know God is, and I'm, I'm butchering this to know God is really to know yourself. Hmm. And and the more we know about God, the more we can know. If we really know how merciful he is, it makes us wanna be more merciful to others. Yeah. It makes us wanna be more Mer like



reciprocity really is that idea of He's forgiven me, man. I have to forgive other people. Like if he's that merciful to me, I need to be more merciful to others or

Speaker 1 00:41:37 Forgive yourself as well. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:41:39 But when people can't forgive themselves Yeah. The next question I ask is, who do you need to forgive? Mm-Hmm. Or if they struggle forgiving someone else, that doesn't make sense. I don't even know if I said that. Right. A lot of times we will interact with others the way we think God interacts with us. Oh, okay. It's hard for me to forgive someone else if I don't believe that I can be forgiven. Yeah. Yeah. Yes. You see what I'm, I'm saying they're correlated. Like if I struggled to forgive myself, well I'm probably for struggling to forgive someone else and I'm holding that grudge because of how I think that God would forgive me. Mm-Hmm. Does that make sense? Yes.

Speaker 1 00:42:09 Yes. Yeah. Anyway, that's helpful. So those two questions. The who is that? Who, who's got and who are you? Yeah. Like take, take put it in context of the Bishop's office. Are you like using that as sort of a format of the conversation you're having as someone comes in to talk about repentance?

Speaker 2 00:42:23 So lemme tell you a story. This, so the foundation of this is when I first got called into a, a Bishop Rick, initially by state president randomly at the end of, after they set me apart, he just goes up to this whiteboard and he is like, Hey, how do you chop down a tree? And I'm like, I don't know, we get an axe. And he's like, but where do you start? And I'm like, start at the base. And he's like, okay. Yeah. That's the base. And he drew it, right? And he's like, the base of the tree is the understanding and the belief. And he said, lemme tell you this quick little story. A young woman came into my office and the parents kind of scooted her in the office and they're basically like, Hey, she's been breaking the law of chastity. Like, fix her.

Speaker 2 00:42:58 Right? Yeah. But that, with, with so few words. And he said, you know what I didn't do? He's like, do you think that that young woman knows that what the law of chastity is? Do you think that she knows that she shouldn't break the law of chastity? He's like, I'm like, yeah. He's like, so he said, the behavior is the branches. The base of the tree is the understanding and belief. Mm-Hmm. And he said, oftentimes what we do is we chop at the branches, we chop, we the behavior. You know, you're not supposed to be doing this. And so he said, I talked to her and as I counseled with her, I found that her dad was verbally abusive. And basically he came to the point where he was discovered that when she would sleep with her boyfriend, she was hoping to find love. Right?

Speaker 2 00:43:36 Yeah. That's what she really wanted. And so I tell this story because I feel like the understanding and belief as the core and having conversations more about that is usually the remedy that people need for many of the things that they struggle with. It usually the things that people are, and even including myself, it's like I'm forgetting who he is. I'm forgetting the covenant that he made with me. Like, who is he and who am I in relation to him? Yeah. And so, and I like to read Moses chapter one where I feel like a lot of those are highlighted. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:44:07 So those questions take you to the base.

Speaker 2 00:44:09 They take you to the

Speaker 1 00:44:10 Base so that you can talk about the, the real solutions. Right.

Speaker 2 00:44:13 This ain't about that. This thing you're doing ain't nothing about that. You just don't understand who he is. You don't know who you are. Yeah. You know what I'm saying? Right. And if we're really being honest with ourselves, like that's probably the majority of the challenges that you see in the world are because we either don't know who God is, or we forget who God is. Right. And that really gives us a foundation of who we really are. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:44:34 And there's this feeling of like, going to the branches, let's, we gotta focus on the branches. They gotta at least know where they're at. And you know, let's make sure we do that. And we sort of hurry past the doctrine of grace just 'cause we think, well, we don't want 'em to feel like this is completely okay, they can just repent and whatever. But it's experiencing grace that when I feel the love of God, there's nothing more I want to do. And turn to him and say, how do I become like you? And he'll say, keep my covenants. Oh, okay. I'll do that. Not because I feel like I should keep the covenants. 'cause I'm so overwhelmed with his nature, his character, what he thinks of me, that there's nothing else I wanna do. Right. That's at the base.

Speaker 2 00:45:12 We are always trying to put these in these compartmentalize God. Yeah. Like, I wanna get this attribute. Okay. Patience, love, charity. No, he's all of them. Yeah. And, and I had this bishop, he taught me this and it was, and it was so important to me and it changed my perspective from my own life. And for others it was like, you don't have to be perfect 'cause he already is. But what we, what I can do is if I focus on having the Holy Ghost, I can have him with me always, who is perfect. Yeah. Does that make sense? And so instead of just trying to be a perfect bishop or trying to help other people be perfect, I'm now focused on, well, when did you lose the Holy Ghost? And now, now that's where you can start. Right. So instead of trying to be perfect, just where did you lose it? Okay. Stop doing that. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, you know? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And the Holy Ghost is way more powerful than we realize. Yeah. You know? Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:46:02 That's awesome. Anything else around the topic of repentance or

Speaker 2 00:46:06 We haven't touched on? Um, a lot of things we avoid are the things that, like when we think about scripture study, what does the Book of Mormon do? What does it outline over and over again? Repentance. Yeah. Repentance. And so I find with repentance, I feel if I connect that more, like if I connect reading scriptures as a form of repentance. Now wait, hear me out now. What is repentance? It's turning to Christ. It's changing the way you see him. I can't think of a better way to see Christ differently than reading your scriptures every day. And so instead of inviting people to like the what the iron rod is him. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, you know, hold to the rod. The iron rod is, was just strong and bright and true. Well, one day I was reading and I was like, oh. I was like, what is, what is iron?

Speaker 2 00:46:50 Iron is basically the most magnetic material. Like he wants to stick to us, you know, like he wants us to be connected to him, you know, but not just the book, it's him, it's his promise. That's what gives us assurance. And so when it comes to repentance, I'm saying it's not like this straight line like, okay, now I do this and now I do that. It's like this, it's like constantly in motion all the time. Yeah. And a lot of the things that we struggle with is because there's something that we need to do that he's asked us to do, that we've promised that we would do. That we didn't. That really didn't go along with what you were saying. But I'm trying to think of, um,

Speaker 1 00:47:29 Well, what I take from that is just like the, the, the point of repentance isn't that it's a process. It's a a turning to Christ. And that's why it's not an event.

Speaker 2 00:47:37 That's right. That's right. That's

Speaker 1 00:47:38 Right. It's a lifestyle.

Speaker 2 00:47:39 Yeah. What does he say in the Vine gift of repentance? Uh, elder Anderson's like, I'm repent. I'm not repenting from the sin. I'm repenting from sinning. Right,

Speaker 1 00:47:48 Right. Yeah. From the natural man. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:47:50 Yeah. It doesn't work when I try to do it by myself. But this is a story that goes along with this that I think could help other leaders is when I first started, like, regarding repentance, elder Gong was conducting a meeting in, um, it was over Zoom. 'cause he had an area meeting here in our, in our local area. And, um, it was right when I got called and my life was insane and everything was going crazy. And I, they were like, Hey, submit your questions. And I was like, it was so insane. I didn't even submit a question <laugh>. And so

Speaker 1 00:48:18 There's so much to ask. I'm not gonna ask anything. Well, yeah.

Speaker 2 00:48:20 I was like, oh my gosh. And I'm like, showing up here and going there, you know, and I was like, heavenly father, like, I didn't ask this question, but I just need help. I don't like, how do I carry this burden? Like, how do, like, and you could say maybe it was a balance. And what was interesting is he addressed that question. He, that was the first question he addressed. And you know what his answer was? What he said, you need to repent. And I was like, what <laugh>, what is he talking about? I mean, I'm not saying I'm perfect, but I had that perspective of like, I need to go talk to him about it or talk like, and I was like, repent. And I'm talking, I couldn't sleep over this. Like, I mean, I mean, I, I slept, but you know what I mean?

Speaker 2 00:48:55 I was like contemplating this a lot. And then I got to the point where I was like, and the more I think about this, he's saying, no, you need to like, turn to him the way the burden is carried as a bishop or as a leader. I like, I had this epiphany a couple, couple weeks ago is like, because you always say like, how do I give it to him? And I think the way you give it to him is you actually believe that when he told you that he would take it, that you actually believe he'll take it. Yeah. What does that look like? You keep moving. Like you actually believe him. Right. You keep on going forward. Like you actually trust him. Right.

Speaker 1 00:49:29 I'm thinking of Steven Robinson that we, we don't believe in Christ. We believe him. That's right. From things he tells that if he takes our burdens, then actually give it the burden to him. Right.

Speaker 2 00:49:39 But this, but that's the question. How do you give it to him? Yeah. Yeah. You give it to him by living like you actually trust it. Yeah. Well, like what does that mean? Right. Well, I'm gonna stop being all paralyzed, acting like a bird's gonna come down and sit on my shoulder and tell me what to do. I'm gonna keep on going. I'm gonna keep going. 'cause I trust that it's gonna work. Like I, I really trust him. And I think like people say there's a faith crisis, I'm like, no, I, maybe there is. And not to degrade it, but it's a hope crisis too. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> because the promises here that he gives us. And then on the other end you have the realization of the promise. That's not today. That middle section is the hope. And that's why that's what gives us the strength to keep going, is you actually hope for it. Like, I really trust the promise that he says, even though it's not happening right now. Anyway.

Speaker 1 00:50:29 Yeah. Yeah. I, and I, going back to that story with, uh, elder Nar of, of sort of that epiphany you had, we often frame repentance as something you did something wrong. And you need to repent of that and you know, correct it. When in reality we need to repent every day. And that's what, you know, if Elder Nar says that to a room full of bishops, it's sort of like these are sort of the elite of they've, they've figured out, generally speaking not perfect, but, but to then say like, oh yeah, I can, I can stop turning towards Christ 'cause I get caught up in the meetings and the schedules and this and that. Like, we need to create space to again, turn to him even when we're doing all the things on paper that make sense. Oh, and

Speaker 2 00:51:06 Elder Bednar recently on social media, elder Gong was the one who told me Elder Bednar.

Speaker 1 00:51:10 Oh, it was Elder Gong. Okay.

Speaker 2 00:51:11 Yeah. Yeah. Well, I'm not, well I'm not trying to be like, well, let lemme correct you <laugh>. I'm not, that's not what I'm trying to say. Okay. Okay. I'm just saying to your point, elder Bednar recently has been talking a lot about repentance and president. Like, and was it 2019? He is like, you need to repent. I need to repent. And he said every single day, and I can't think of a better way to change the way I see God than to communicate with him, to read his words because of a promise that he made. Like, this is not just some random thing. This is a real covenant. This is a real elder nar. He calls it a covenant connection, which I feel like is stronger than a relationship. You can count on it, you know? Yeah. Anyway.

Speaker 1 00:51:50 Awesome. What else? Any, any other point, principle as far as in your leadership experience would be worth mentioning or we covered all?

Speaker 2 00:51:57 I think we covered most of it, man. I think that this is something I've thought of lately and I don't wanna speculate. 'cause you know, we're in the last days, whatever that means. Okay. And everybody's waiting for the bad to get bad. You know, everybody's waiting for, oh, well that's a sign of the time when things get really terrible. That's when Jesus

will come. I believe he's waiting for us. Hmm. I believe that Jesus Christ could come anytime, but he's waiting for a place. He's waiting for us. And that what I'm learning is the foundation of the home is where that happens. And I feel like before, like when Jesus came to the knee fights, he could have blessed them all at the same time. Everyone's blessed, you know? Like Yeah. But he did it one by one, one person at a time. Like what would the ward be like? What would the stake be like if we cared as much about our like meeting and having meetings with our families, counseling and counseling with our families showing up, you know, doing this and that. You know, developing the youth, developing your youth in your home, ministering in your home, that's when Jesus will come back. Hmm.

Speaker 1 00:53:03 That's powerful. You're good at this. Have you ever thought about starting a podcast? I dunno. <laugh> I dunno. <laugh>

Speaker 2 00:53:07 When I do, I'd listen. I know,

Speaker 1 00:53:09 Right. But well give 'em the in info. I, people want to find all this where they, they go to see more of the studio.

Speaker 2 00:53:15 Oh, let's get real with Steven Jones.

Speaker 1 00:53:17 Primarily on YouTube. Primarily

Speaker 2 00:53:18 On YouTube, but it's on everywhere you can listen. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:53:21 It's on podcast feeds.

Speaker 2 00:53:22 Podcast feeds and everything. Yep. Cool.

Speaker 1 00:53:25 Any other projects or things that you're working on that work do with mentioning? Uh, how come we don't have a Stephen Jones book of some type? Huh?

Speaker 2 00:53:32 Oh man, I don't know. There's <laugh> man.

Speaker 1 00:53:34 I don't, I know that's very 1980s, but, uh, you know, <laugh>,

Speaker 2 00:53:37 I don't know, man. I, I think let's get real. Stephen Jones. Okay. Awesome. But, uh, scripture central.org is also a good place too, currently working, uh, here at Scripture Central.

Speaker 1 00:53:47 Yeah. This studio is in the offices of

Speaker 2 00:53:49 Scripture Central. This, this, this studio is in the offices of Scripture Central. There's a lot of resources, especially for leaders. Yeah. Um, with anything scripture related. Scripture Plus is another app that they have that I think is very, would be very, very helpful. Again, the scriptures are Jesus Christ. Right. If you wanna come closer to him, come through his words and they, that's what they do. That's what we do. Awesome. So, yeah. All

Speaker 1 00:54:08 Right. Last question I have for you is, as you reflect on your time as a leader, how has being a leader helped you become a better follower of Jesus Christ?

Speaker 2 00:54:15 Ah, I think that it's that idea of delegation. Again, God has invited me to follow him. And it's almost like this paradox, or I don't even be like a, as I follow him, that's the best way that I could ever lead. And it's the flipped opposite of what the world would say. It's the way that I think outward. My worst days, whenever I flip it and start serving, you think I need to be like somebody needs to help me. But when I help others, that's whenever it's the best days. And I think that that's why God has so much joy, you know, is because that's what he does 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And so as I follow him, that's the, which is to serve is what I think is the essence and the epitome of what you're saying. That's whenever I feel like I can lead the best is whenever I'm, whenever I condescend, I'm not God. But I'm saying when I come to people's level like he did, that's whenever I feel like I can do both of those at the same time.

Speaker 1 00:55:15 That concludes this episode of the Leading Saints podcast. We'd love to hear from you about your questions or thoughts or comments. You can either leave a comment on the, uh, post related to this episode@leadingsaints.org or go to [leading-saints.org/contact](http://leading-saints.org/contact) and send us your perspective or questions. If there's other episodes or topics you'd like to hear on the Leading Saints podcast, go to [leading-saints.org/contact](http://leading-saints.org/contact) and share with us the information there. And we would love for you to share this with any individual you think this would apply to, especially maybe individuals in your ward council or other leaders that you may know who would really appreciate the perspectives that we discussed. Remember, go to [leading-saints.org/fourteen](http://leading-saints.org/fourteen) to hear the Packard family's experience of when loved ones leave the church.

Speaker 3 00:56:07 It 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.