



Helping Saints Find Purpose in Church Service | An Interview with Simon Fagg

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Speaker 1 00:00:02 It seems like struggles with pornography get most of the airtime these days since it is so available in modern times. However, drug abuse and substance addiction is growing at shocking rates. As a church leader, you need to be prepared. We have a library full of resources focused on this topic. The presentation I would recommend you start with is Joseph Granny's presentation about what we can learn from Captain Moroni to help our loved ones overcome struggles with drugs and alcohol. His story of how he loved his son through his addiction is powerful and redemptive. You can listen to this presentation in the Recovering Saints Library by going to leading-saints.org/fourteen. Put your information in there and that will give you 14 days at no cost. I made it easier for you. And put the link in the show notes, or you can go to leading-saints.org/one-four.

Speaker 1 00:00:57 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@leading-saints.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 COE can apply them to a latter-day Saint World. So here we go.

Speaker 1 00:01:50 I love a good European interview. That's right. We're headed to the UK to talk with Simon Fagg. He's a leadership guy. I love talking with leadership guys. Like his day job is, he consults with corporations and businesses and organizations to, uh, enhance their leadership and help teach them principles of leadership. I, I mean, these are my people. If I wasn't doing Leading Saints, probably be, you know, running one of these companies. So I love talking with, uh, these leadership consultant type, especially those who've been a, a stake president like Simon has been before. And he is also a fellow podcaster. He has a podcast called After Dinner Leadership. We talk a little about that, but we explore some principles that he typically talks about in the context of, uh, you know, in the secular world. But we talk about it in the context of the church.

Speaker 1 00:02:34 And, uh, we talk about purpose. And again, that's a like a general sort of a fleeting principle that, you know, it's hard to really wrap our hands around what is purpose and how do you apply that and how do you motivate people through purpose and, you know, how are they getting fulfillment through the church and their service, and what if they're not? And so fantastic conversation about motivation. And then, uh, we spend a good amount of time talking about mentoring our replacement. Right? We will all be released in whatever leadership role we have and someone's gonna replace us. And what are we doing to not just raise up, you know, that one person that can replace us, but what about a team of individuals to choose from that can be prayed over and considered so that, uh, the person we're replacing us can further move the organization and the direction that, that God intends it to be. So phenomenal conversation. I hope to have Simon back on the podcast in the future. It's so fun to talk to. So here's my interview with President Simon Fagg. Today we're headed across the Atlantic Ocean to the UK to, you'll have to help me here. Is it Colchester or How what?

Speaker 2 00:03:44 Colchester. Colchester.

Speaker 1 00:03:46 I need to bring out my, in my English accent accent. Colchester.

Speaker 2 00:03:49 Your Harry Potter.

Speaker 1 00:03:50 Yeah, that's right. And you're, is that, you said just south of London?

Speaker 2 00:03:54 No, it's northeast. Northeast of London.

Speaker 1 00:03:56 And you are Simon Fagg? Correct. Nice.

Speaker 2 00:03:59 It's great to be here.

Speaker 1 00:04:01 I was asking you about your name. You know, you said it is what it is because obviously there's some negative connotations in, in other context, but in the UK that the name or the the word fag isn't as, doesn't have as strong and negative connotation, or is it something you just live with? Well,

Speaker 2 00:04:15 Yeah, it traditionally has meant cigarette. Yeah, that's right. And so that was the jokes I grew up with as a child, was about being <laugh>, you know, packs of cigarettes

and these type of things. And, and then I guess, um, north American influences come across the pond, so it has the same connotations as it does in the, in the states now. Gotcha. And, and actually from a church perspective, I'm one of 11 children and our family has served in various capacities. So it actually is a name I'm very proud of.

Speaker 1 00:04:44 Oh, good. Nice

Speaker 2 00:04:45 Of you. Having a strong reputation across the church locally. Nice. And the good news is, from a business perspective, it's very memorable. People will remember my name. That's right. Because they remember nothing else.

Speaker 1 00:04:56 And it's interesting you mentioned, you know, it's another word for cigarette. 'cause I've interviewed, I believe it was, uh, president Coffee, uh, and I think he was from the UK as well. But, uh, so now I've interviewed, now I'm interviewing President Cigarettes, so this <laugh> Awesome. Now you are, you're a leadership guy, right? I mean, how do you articulate what you do for work?

Speaker 2 00:05:13 So I'm an executive coach and a leadership development consultant. So I run my own boutique consultancy and it's helping business leaders to be more effective both individually and with their teams. So I use the, the phrase kind of purposeful leadership, so full of purpose, finding their own individual purpose, helping their teams to have purpose. And I love what I do. It's great. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:05:35 Sounds fun. Sounds fun. And you're a fellow podcaster as well? Yes.

Speaker 2 00:05:40 Nice.

Speaker 1 00:05:40 Yeah,

Speaker 2 00:05:40 I like the podcast that I came out with, started in Covid times, as many did. And it's targeted what really young adults who I'm hoping will want to be leaders, use their skills as leaders early on and not wait till they're in a senior management position to think about leading. So that's, that's who I've targeted that.

Speaker 1 00:06:02 Nice. And you have had opportunity to serve as a stake president. You were released about five years ago, correct? Maybe what's, uh, were you doing leadership consulting at the time of your call?

Speaker 2 00:06:11 I was, yeah. I've been working in the industry for 25 years and yeah, I was operating you of it. So yeah. So things that I learning business hopefully have helped me to serve better. I think in the main, it's the other way round. My service in the church has magnified my ability to do what I do in, in the world. Yeah,

Speaker 1 00:06:31 I bet. And I, I always enjoy talking with guys that have this professional career path in researching, learning about leadership, and then having an opportunity to apply it in that context again, not that it, there's an obvious application in all aspects, and obviously it's a

different, a different approach with, you know, preached keys and revelation and all these things, but it's still fun to explore and, and talk about any, like, since your release, like what have you been up to in the church since then and what's that journey been like?

Speaker 2 00:06:59 Yeah, I currently serving on the national communications team. So what was public affairs? So helping the team there. So I'm the assistant national director along with my wife. And before that I was on the Elders Quorum presidency in the ward in our local ward and was teaching, helping to teach some Sunday school classes and, and, and that type of thing. Awesome. So awesome. Yeah. I've kept active in our service and, and just privileged to serve wherever I can.

Speaker 1 00:07:30 Yeah. So with this, you're talking about purpose and this is sort of the main, like the core concept that, that as far as in your, your consulting and, and talking with corporations and things, this concept of, of purpose, is that the crux of it? Or is there other other main focuses you have? Yeah,

Speaker 2 00:07:45 Well it's, that's part of it. I think that's probably more driven by my main purpose. The client demand or the client need might be slightly off that, but I'll try to, to ensure whatever we design for our clients is anchored in being purposeful. But we do a lot of high potential talent development programs, this type of thing. And it's helping junior leaders to get ready for more senior positions. And I work on a day-to-day basis with leadership teams actively to help them to define their vision or strategy, to help them to work more effectively together as leadership team, because of all the teams in an organization, a senior leadership team is one of the hardest to get to function effectively. Yeah. So I do a lot of work there.

Speaker 1 00:08:32 So maybe just talk to me in the context of like, church leadership, and again, we don't have all the answers and not that you've, you know, cracked the code on any of this, but I'm just curious like bringing that, that backdrop of leadership consulting into your experience of, of serving in the church, especially as a stake president. Like how would you describe the dynamic of church leadership? Just from your own personal experience? What was the things that are maybe easier to execute, the more difficult things, or what comes to mind

Speaker 2 00:08:58 From the purpose perspective? It's typically a little easier in that finding the common shared reason why we're doing this is a little easier than can be achieved in business sometimes. And for it to be meaningful and talk to the heart, not just to the head. We are talking about the gospel of Jesus Christ. We're talking about the covenant path and we're collectively trying to achieve things. I am always inspired, often kind of just amazed at what we achieve when the group of saints come together to do a task. Now it's just the Lord magnifies the efforts. I know what's happened to me over the years has just been miraculous <laugh> Yeah. Situations I've been in. So I, I think it's lovely to see the saints get magnified and to rally people around a cause it's relatively sorry, relatively easy in contrast to sometimes a business that may not have a, a clear sense of let's say moral purpose.

Speaker 2 00:09:56 You know, they, they, they might be perceived as just there to make money. Yeah. And one of the hard things, so the, the, this is a, a double-edged sword in that

you're dealing with volunteers in essence, you know, consecrated volunteers, but volunteers nonetheless, who are spread quite thin. And so one of the challenges is this is not their day job. And we are asking somebody often to do a full, like being a state president felt like a full-time job. <laugh>. Yeah. And then I am, you know, and I have a full-time job and I'm a father and a, you know, and a husband and all these other things as well. And so it is like, being sensitive to the requests that we are making of the saints, I think is also a really important part of leadership, which is different from if when you're employing somebody and you can expect a certain amount of hours and quality of work, sometimes you've just gotta accept what someone can offer.

Speaker 2 00:10:46 We, I think one of the beauties of the diverse population that we have in the church is you've got people from all walks of life, all demographics, all different shape and size and experience and cultures coming together. What a beautiful thing. But also it creates, you know, you haven't employed any, sorry, you haven't recruited any of them, <laugh>. Right? They're just people that are there. And you've gotta think, right, how do we get this high council working effectively? Or how do we get this presidency working effectively? Yeah. 'cause I didn't, you know, a revelation has meant they're here, but they're coming with all sorts of different, uh, skills, talents, uh, none of which we've necessarily hired into the organization.

Speaker 1 00:11:28 Yeah. And I would imagine, I mean, with your day job clients, you probably, you know, engage with certain corporations that they're, they're trying to motivate their people or get them to meet their, their goals or whatnot. And I mean, how, how do you generally approach that? 'cause that's a big question we get at leading saints of like, how do we, how do we motivate people? You know, how do we get the ministering done? How do we get the service assignments fulfilled and whatnot? Uh, what thoughts come to mind? Well,

Speaker 2 00:11:52 Uh, I think it, again, coming back to the purpose thing is really important. Why are we doing this? You know, if you can try and connect to somebody's why, their personal why, I think that makes a massive difference. But if we can also connect with the shared reason why we're doing this now, what is ministering truly for? Why are we, why are we engaging in this? I think that can make a massive difference when people have a sense of that and helping them see it, you know, sort of visualizing it for them and helping them to, uh, you know, make it practical and tangible in their life, I think is a, is a big, yeah. A big part of that is tuning into their particular motivations. Yeah. And I think another part, oh, sorry, another part to it is also trying to help people from where they are at currently, whilst also having a vision for where they could be in the future.

Speaker 2 00:12:40 But I loved Covey's work in spiritual roots of human relations where he talks about the days of creation and kinda, you need day one to happen before day two, and you need day one and day two to happen before day three. And it's similar in our own growth and development. Sometimes we might be a, a certain level, we're expecting everybody else to operate there. And actually, well, if they're a day one person in this particular part of their lifeless work with them at day one to help them become day two, let's not try and make them day five overnight. You know, it's, it's part of that spiritual, creative process we all have to go through. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:13:15 And I think that sometimes the, the, the cultural expectations creep in there as well, that, you know, we're, we've been asked to do this, it says in the handbook that this is the way it should go is, you know, whether it's ministering, whatnot. Like everybody should be engaged in this work. And, and sometimes when they're not meeting that, those expectations, we, you know, we sort of wanna prod them along until they get there. Even if maybe they're just not there yet or, or they don't, I don't know. They just, where they're at. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:13:39 I had a conversation with somebody on another podcast a few weeks ago, and I was reminded just of a story, Ida, I'm confident you are a great ministering brother and serve very well <laugh>. But there's times where I haven't been. Yeah. And there's times where I have been over the years, and I've always appreciated, you know, the one-to-one opportunity to account to my leaders. And that's often been a great stimulus for me to think how I could do better. But I've always appreciated when someone has asked me questions about where I'm at, rather than saying, Hey, you should be doing this better and make me feel guilty and use shame or anything like that on it. It's, I don't think that's the Lord's way, but if we lovingly invite people to ask how they're doing and what could be the next thing, and showing some empathy and understanding for maybe some of the challenges we've got in our work or our family situation that might be hampering our vision of, for example, our ministering assignment. I, um, I've always appreciated that approach Yeah. And encouraged me to do better than if someone just badges me to, to do better. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:14:46 This, oh, I wanna dig into this concept of the of purpose because on, on paper, it makes a lot of sense. You know, of course we should always act from a place of purpose. Uh, if we, if we don't have purpose, we probably won't act in, in a lot of noteworthy things that are worth living our life by. And I think a leader may see that and be like, well, I mean, the purposes are obvious, aren't they? Like, why, why wouldn't somebody want to minister to another individual? Or why wouldn't somebody wanna come to church and be a part of this community? And, you know, I keep reminding them that we've been asked to do this by God or by our prophets, and isn't that purpose enough? Right? And so they, we kinda get lost in this principle. So how would you maybe guide someone to really use the, the concept of purpose and infusing individuals with purpose or helping them find their purpose so that they engage in a work that they will actually wanna do.

Speaker 2 00:15:32 Wow. What a question. There's so many layers to that. So help me stay on track here as well. Okay, I will. 'cause I think I could, I think I could easily deviate into other things. I would say one of the key things that's really important is, I, I mentioned this phase kind of collective purpose is like anchoring around the core parts of the work of salvation and exaltation as a priority. So, and really trying to help people to understand, I mean, the way that you led into this, where my mind raced off to is we can easily say, I've told somebody, guess what? We did a sacrament talk on this, or well, we had a priesthood meeting about it last week. And we think because we transmitted some information out to somebody that they have understood and they've accepted and they've embedded into their heart.

Speaker 2 00:16:21 But there's a gap between somebody knowing something or hearing it and actually doing it. And I think that's where a lot of patience is required to help with that. So

what, what are we doing to follow up? How are we, uh, finding out how people have applied the principles associated with their scripture study that come follow me studies, they're listening to general conference, and we can, sometimes we jump from one thing to the next, and one of the things that purpose does is provide a certain amount of focus. So if we can get people focused on the core of loving God and loving their neighbor as an example, and then out of that they can decide, you know, how they can apply it with their talents and their skills and the things that they can offer to the Lord and to other people. I think that that's tremendously exciting. I don't know if I've answered your question enough. No,

Speaker 1 00:17:14 No. You've given me a few things there that, uh, are really interesting. 'cause the, the, you talk about the, the hearing versus doing. Yes. And it is such a powerful concept to sit and think with, because we have this habit. It's not just like a latter day saint thing. It's, it's human nature that you see a problem. You know, you do this a lot as a parent, at least I do, where you see a problem. And so you go talk at the people you know, you let me just talk at you long enough. And then once you hear it, then you'll do it. Right? Like, but, uh, there's so much more in between the hearing and the doing or, you know, we, we, we say something, you know, see this in announcements, right? In Sacra meeting, we, we've said, we've told you about the Christmas party 10 times in Sacra meeting, and you, you didn't come.

Speaker 1 00:17:58 Like, what's the problem? Like, oh, I didn't realize we were ha but we said it over and over. And so we, there's this natural thing as from the, on the leadership perspective, like, no, I, I stepped to that lectern and I said it so therefore the message was, was sent and it must've been delivered. 'cause I don't know how else I'm gonna do it. Right? Yeah. So to just not assume that the message is being embraced completely, just because it was said is something for leaders to maybe just sit with and analyze and invite revelation to, like, how else could we deliver information or invite them in into that world? Right.

Speaker 2 00:18:29 Nicely put, because I think as a leader, and I've been there myself, I'm sure you know, where we kind of almost wash our hands of, well, I asked them to do it and I've done my bit, you know, and, and of course we respect people's agency and their time and these type of things. But you know, we may, the harder thing was perhaps asking someone on a one-to-one in the corridor. Are you able to come to the party on, you know, the Christmas social or, you know, yeah. Are you able to join me in helping this sister to move some furniture? Next week we make the announcement, okay, we need some volunteers to help this family move, or this sister, and we think we've done our part then 'cause we announced it to 20 people and our work's done. Yeah. And, and so it does often require some sort of one-to-one interaction. And we see that in the life of the savior. That's, you know, he spoke to thousands, but he also often had a massive impact as he ministered to the one. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:19:19 And my, my mind also goes to even like, uh, more broadly communicated things like for instance, the Come Follow Me program. Right. Obviously a remarkable revealed established program in the church. And because it came from a very official lecterns in the church, you know, in general conference and whatnot from the brethren and whatnot, we, we sort of assume that that message is delivered in the hearts of everybody in the ward. That everybody's on, on board with the Come follow me, you know, thing. Yes. And

then that Sunday school pres, or the Sunday school teacher shows up on Sunday and nobody's really read, or they're not getting engagement and they think, what's the problem here? Right? Like, didn't you hear like this is, this is the program? Like this is what we're doing. So everybody get on board. But there's still so many steps there than just revealing the program, even if it is by, uh, revelation.

Speaker 2 00:20:08 Yeah. I mean, what comes to mind is when I was serving as state president, we had a fantastic mission president. We had many fantastic mission presidents, but there was a time where I, when I was serving that the keys, my keys as state president, his keys as mission president really aligned. And it was just a beautiful experience and we were really making strides. And it resulted in far more of our youth serving missionaries. And we are having a great number of people joining the church comparative to other years, which was exciting. The missionaries were really well integrated into the, the units as well. It was a really exciting time meeting with the state council. As we met with, we met with the state council and we were talking about the vision for, for how we were gonna grow the stake. And one of the things that come to mind was a model by a guy called Kurt Lewin, uh, which is force field analysis.

Speaker 2 00:20:59 And it's really like, what are the enablers for change? And what are the barriers to change? And kind of, you need to, if you're putting your foot on the accelerator, you also need to take your foot off the brake, you know, in terms of a, a car analogy. And so we did this exercise where it's like, well, what are the, what are your personal barriers to sharing the gospel? So rather than just say, go and share the gospel, you know, spread the gospel and inspiring them to do it, we're also faced up to the reality that there were some fears that everybody, including myself were facing. And we identified what they were and we wrote those, everyone wrote their thing down. And then we identified, well, what would be some of the things that would outweigh that fear for you personally? You know? So going back to the analogy, like, what do you need to take your foot off the brake on <laugh>, but what could help accelerate to outweigh that?

Speaker 2 00:21:47 So if you've got your force field, it's moving against the status quo, what's gonna move against the status quo? And that was a really powerful example. We went through the effort of, you know, documenting that, giving everyone a, in the state council a little Asics card with this record of their own personal commitment, you know, in writing that they're keeping their scriptures or their notebook as a reminder for that. And we'd follow up on that when we met as a state council later on. And that was just one way of just trying to take a concept and make it real in the hearts of the individuals within the state council. If we are gonna see change, we'd have to lead out on it in our own, in our own ways of dealing with our own fears and our aspirations.

Speaker 1 00:22:26 Yeah, that's helpful. I mean, 'cause I think naturally we default to what are the things we're supposed to be doing or what's the program? What are the steps? But we maybe don't take the, a breath to analyze, well, what's the resistance? What's stopping us from doing that? Or what's in place currently that won't work with the, the proposed changes or the proposed direction that we're headed in. So even guiding a quorum or a, a class through that of saying, you know, what, what is it that's, that makes it hard to, to read the Almi lesson or

whatever it is. Right? Yes. And analyzing that, then that opens up all sorts of new doorways of revelation to figure out how to take the foot off the, the break.

Speaker 2 00:23:04 Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. I think that's a

Speaker 1 00:23:06 Really good point. You know, digging more into this concept of purpose. Here's one thing that I've talked with several other guests about, I'm interested to get your perspective as well, is that sometimes in the context of the church, you know, we have these, we have great purpose in the church. I mean, it's an eternal purpose. I mean, it's beautiful, right? And so we, we teach about it, the doctrines are related to that. We want people engaging, serving all these things, but we sort of forget that there's maybe purpose outside of that room that individuals are feeling fulfilled. So let's say somebody's in a career path that they're really enjoying, they're part of a great team at work. They're working on some interesting projects. They're connecting and bonding as friends and, and coworkers and, and they're just finding like this individual's finding great purpose at work and maybe at home as well.

Speaker 1 00:23:50 And then they come to church and because they're so fulfilled in these other areas, they kind of don't see a need to really dive into, you know, ministering in the ward or magnifying their calling because they're sort of, they're overflowing with purpose and fulfillment in other areas. But nonetheless, we sort of look at them like, why aren't you <laugh>? You know, like, why are you missing this? Like, why aren't you jumping on board and, and helping us out when we don't realize that they're reaching that fulfillment elsewhere? Yeah. And sometimes it's hard to just let that be, or I don't know what, what comes to mind when I say all that? And I articulate that. Okay.

Speaker 2 00:24:22 Yeah, you did. And I, I've witnessed that and I, I know that feeling very well. I've probably been one of those people I've looked at in the past as well. I expect and, uh, thought those things <laugh>. Yeah, it's a really good observation. And there's a, I have tried to sign up to the thought process of, you know, making sure you make a, a space for the Lord in your life, you know, and being able to have capacity to serve in some way. Because I've, I've seen that magnify, you know, if you look at it purely from a transactional point of view, I've seen it magnify my, my work when I do that as well. You know, I'm a better employee. I'm a better leader manager when I give myself and a portion of myself to the Lord. I'm a better father. I'm a better husband when I do that.

Speaker 2 00:25:11 So it saddens me when people, you know, if you want to completely honest answer, I think when they're completely devoted to their work and leave no space for the Lord, I think there's, it saddens me that they've not remembered where their strength and power has come from. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> particularly if people fall away and people I've known for many years, you know, I've seen the Lord craft them into this wonderful person who is then a very attractive employee, <laugh>. And then at that point when they're saying, you know, the people that they're getting the, the acclimation of the world, they're saying, oh, look how good I am. And they, they might move away from the church. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And I'm thinking, well, hold on a minute. The Lord has been involved in crafting and chiseling you for

years. Now you're thinking it's all you that did that and you're leaving to, you know, to use those talents elsewhere. So, I haven't answered your question, <laugh>.

Speaker 1 00:26:07 No, I like where you're going though. That's

Speaker 2 00:26:09 Great. But I'm, I'm mindful that there's something we can do to tap in more deeply to those people on the edges. And I guess the other thought is, have we actually spoken to that brother or that sister about those things?

Speaker 1 00:26:20 Right? Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:26:22 And we can think that, but we, we may not have actually just leaned in, you know, how are you doing? How's your faith? How's, how's going? You know? Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:26:30 And I admit that this situation, I've described this hypothetical situation. It, it was, I think it's, uh, it would be an outlier situation. I don't think most people that are showing up on Sunday are just like overflowing with purpose and fulfillment in life. That's, it's usually the other side of the, the issue where they're not finding fulfillment. They're just sort of caught up in the rat race of life. And they're not finding purpose and fulfillment. And like you said, just in these interactions we have, whether it's a a, a ministering interview or elsewhere of really connecting with like, are you feeling fulfilled in life? And I would say nine times out of 10, you're gonna get a response of being like, I don't, I don't know, I'm just overwhelmed. Or, you know, I'm just trying to keep up. And so for you to then help them understand like, well, let's find some purpose in there, or let's see how your religious experience could foster some purpose that will then counteract and help you cope with the overwhelm of life.

Speaker 2 00:27:25 Yeah. I think what sparks from that, Kurt, and I appreciate that, is this idea of what are you going to bring, not just what you're going to get. And I think there's something very important about helping people to realize, like if they bring, it could be as simple as an open heart and mind to a sacrament meeting. They're more likely going to get that filled with something. And, or rather than, what am I gonna get from sacrament meeting today? And the, the speaker's boring, or, you know, these type of things. Actually, what you bringing, actually, I could bring a friendly handshake to this person over here who I've never met before. I had a lovely experience on Sunday. There was a brother there sitting on the back pew, clearly a, a stranger to the ward. I'd, I'd not seen him before. And I went over to, to meet him and he was visiting from West Africa and his brother was in the local area.

Speaker 2 00:28:15 And he'd, he'd been able to get to church and he was just over for a couple of weeks, had this wonderful opportunity to get to know him. And just that opportunity to see somebody that was a stranger and hopefully help them feel welcome was a great blessing to my life to get to know him, feel of his love of the Lord and the faith that he had. But I guess if I turned up, like, what am I gonna get from church today? And I think we miss an opportunity to be really filled because we're, we wanna bring something to church, not just what we're gonna get from church.

Speaker 1 00:28:47 Yeah. That's so helpful. 'cause it's so easy to sort of see church as you know, all that, that Sunday school class didn't go well. And I can think of 10 ways the teacher could do better, but, and so then you, you can get to a place of, you know, why am I even showing up here? Right? So instead of criticizing maybe those things that are less ideal, but just finding new purpose and whatever situation you're into, whether it's reaching out to the person in between class or at the end of church and you know, or whatever. But that there's, there's purpose in going even when it's not ideal. So I wanna, I'm curious about this concept of, you sent me some, some notes before as far as building others to be able to serve in your capacity when you are released. I think this is a big thing, especially in a lay leadership tradition. Yes. By the time, hopefully by the time we're at sort of the end of our run with whatever calling we, we figured some things out. We got some momentum, some rhythm to it all. And you know, we hope the next person can pick up the, the football and move it further down the field. Right. And so help us, what are some core principles, this concept, how do we, you know, prepare our replacement?

Speaker 2 00:29:52 Yeah. I think this is really, IM important part of, you know, when we are first called, we don't wanna think, we don't necessarily wanna think, oh, I'm gonna be released someday. But the reality is we are <laugh>

Speaker 1 00:30:02 And, and I bet when you're called as a state president, it feels like that day will never come. Right.

Speaker 2 00:30:06 <laugh>. Yeah. I served for nine years and it was, it was a real blessing, but it was, you know, there was some challenging times in there. I'd previously served as a bishop. And when I was released as a bishop, I remember I, in my journal, I wrote down a whole ton of things that if I was called again, that I would do. Yeah. 'cause uh, when I was released, I, I got a sense that, I dunno, I hadn't really fulfilled what I was called to do as, as well as I had hoped, you know, for various reasons. I thought I served well and I strip away all of that. I think I did serve well, but there was definitely something that felt like it was somehow premature my release or something like that. I served for about four and a half years and it was a great, again, a great blessing to our family.

Speaker 2 00:30:46 But I don't know if I was as conscious then as thinking about, well, who's gonna be the next bishop? I tried very hard when I had counselors to help them. I was quite young. I, I was called to serve when I was 26 I think it was. So my counselors were always older than me. Yeah. <laugh>. And, and I was not experienced in leading award really. And they were great. But I was also thinking towards the end, you know, towards the last couple of years of like, who's gonna be the next bishop? And I was encouraged by the state president to have that kind of eye of faith about preparing, uh, the next person. But when I was state president, it was a much more conscious thing that I've got nine years to ensure that when I'm released. 'cause I was told I'd surf for nine years when I get released, I won the area of, you know, the, the member of the 70 that's coming in to be spoiled for choice, <laugh> for who could serve after I was released.

Speaker 2 00:31:41 So this wasn't about me choosing who the next state president was gonna be or who the next bishop was gonna be. This is about providing, or really thinking about am I raising the capability of leadership within the ward of the stake so that whoever has the revelation assigned to have the revelation for this has people to choose from. And more than one <laugh>, you know, that they can choose from to be able to, to serve in that way. And of course, in doing so, you've got more relief society presidents, you've got more, you know, elders, quorum presidents, et cetera. You know, it's not just state presidents. Yeah. You, you've got more strength in leadership. So I think a very big part of that was thinking about how in my direct area of influence I was leading my counselors, how I was leading the high council and the state council, and how I interacted with the bishops specifically.

Speaker 2 00:32:35 Now, of course, I'm ministering on a one-to-one basis at other times as well. But those were key people that I needed to think about how am I gonna raise their capability and capability. I hope you get under what I mean by that in a broad sense of terms. Yeah. These were very capable people, but like, how can I help to ensure that they remain faithful and that they're growing in their faith and their leadership capacity? Yeah. And particularly those who haven't served in those leadership positions before, that they're, you know, you don't wanna keep calling the same person as a bishop or, or whatever. You want different people to have the opportunity to serve. And so you're very conscious, you're trying to help address that. So yeah, it's not just one person I'm preparing 'cause I think, oh, this is my succession plan as I would doing a business. This is about having a breadth of people that you're trying to invite to change, encourage to be more faithful disciples. Yeah. And I love the, the quote, if you don't mind, from the church handbook, I've got it here. Being a faithful disciple in order to help others become faithful disciples is the purpose behind every calling in the church. And I love that as a sentiment in whatever calling we've got. How am I increasing discipleship, faithful discipleship in the responsibilities I've got?

Speaker 1 00:33:49 Yeah, that's powerful. There's so, there's so many of those gems in the handbook that, you know, of course we, I think generally leaders keep tabs on the handbook, whatnot. But we can get caught up in, in everything where it feels like, no, we, we actually just need to get some things done in the world. Like we're not discipleship or not, like at the end of the day, we got people coming, showing up on Sunday. We need a teacher. We need, you know, and so to just step back and remind ourselves, no, we're developing disciples here. And, uh, sometimes it's not gonna go as fast or sometimes it's not gonna look ideal. Like, like we'd hoped. You know, so.

Speaker 2 00:34:19 Absolutely.

Speaker 1 00:34:20 And another thing that, that came to mind, just the, the nature of our church and, you know, the geographic boundaries and whatnot, that, you know, in a in a corporate setting, you may, you know, take the same approach where you're developing a handful of people to maybe in that succession plan, but if, if that one, obviously the majority of them don't become the leader, they often will leave and go somewhere else and, you know, more power to 'em that there's more opportunity out there. But in a ward, everybody generally

will stay and they can. Yes. It only blesses the area that much more because they were still developed as a leader, even if they didn't end up with the title of leader, right?

Speaker 2 00:34:56 Yes, absolutely. Right. Yeah. And I think one of the harder parts of that is you're going to have to have and confront with some challenging conversations along the way, is you're inviting people to engage in different ways. I remember very early on when I was state president, we, we had a member of the high council who, he is a good friend of mine, and I love him dearly at the time. He had a bit of a reputation of being quite abrasive. And when we, we had a, a high council meeting and he was kind of unnecessarily destructive in that particular conversation. What, I can't even remember what we were discussing, but I remember him feeling like kind of that that was unnecessary. You know, whether it was a bit of an attack across the, the room to somebody else or whatever it was, it was just like, yeah, it's like, and it would it be easy to have said, oh, well that's just him, that's just the way he is.

Speaker 2 00:35:48 But I was fairly newly called, so I was like, no, that I'm not gonna accept that as a, as a, an answer. You know, that we can't just justify that behavior. We're trying to seek revelation in this room. And if someone acts like that, it just, the spirit leaves immediately. And this is not a business meeting. This is a, a space where we want revelation to happen. Anyway, I called him afterwards and I thankfully God saw him differently and help me to see him through an eye of faith rather than just as a man who was abrasive, you know? Mm-Hmm. It was, it was. And I called him and we had a lovely conversation. Initially difficult 'cause he was kind of quite defensive, but thankfully he could see where I was coming from and just tried to raise his sites a little as to what these meetings were for and why he was so important to be there and why we needed his input.

Speaker 2 00:36:37 But the type the way in which he communicated would help his message to get further than just what he was saying. 'cause what he was saying was probably right, but the way he was saying it was meaning people were getting hostile back to towards him, why he discovered was a man full of faith, but also full of a lot of hurt from years of different things going on from his childhood. And that conversation, not in that moment, but led to a series of other conversations which brought him closer to Christ through one of my, uh, counselors on the presidency and went through some hardship and all sorts of things. But I'm fairly confident if I hadn't engaged with him on that, he wouldn't have gone on that journey, um, through his own Geth seminary. And it's quite, you know, painful thing. But, you know, he's such a lovely man and I've seen him far more meek, you know, his public exterior is now far meek than it was <laugh>. Yeah. Um, you know, uh, 15 years ago. Yeah. So it's just important to engage in those types of conversations as difficult as that was.

Speaker 1 00:37:40 Yeah. And in leadership, you know, we wanna be the leader and, and this is a, a, a <laugh> great part of leadership when you can be the encouraging leader on the other side of the desk that's smiling and say, you're doing great. You know, keep going. But it, it's tougher when you have to really mentor and coach them down a path or, or not even coaching them, but just making them aware of, because he may not have even have been aware of how he's being perceived or coming across in that setting in, in that, in that room. And so for a leader to make him aware of that, what a remarkable way to love that person. Right.

And again, maybe, maybe he disagreed with you. Maybe he thought he didn't have to change, but at least somebody was willing to have that tough conversation with him.

Speaker 1 00:38:20 May brought to mind a conversation I had as a bishop with one of my counselors where he was looking for feedback and I knew exactly like he was, he often interrupted people, like in a council setting. And so it was kind of of hard for me to articulate that to him, and I did the best way to do it in a loving, loving way. But he was like overwhelmingly grateful that I would say that. Yeah. And he had no idea. He said, I I had no idea I do that. You know, like, thank you for bringing that to my awareness. And then he was able, now that he's aware of it, he can work on it. Right. And yeah. And again, with that, those little steps that then four years down the road, suddenly that development, that experience has, has created a new man.

Speaker 2 00:39:02 Yeah, absolutely. Right. Yeah. And it is tricky. And by the way, I, I will say I'm not the best at this. Like I do. This is one of those areas where I've seen the Lord magnify me in those moments. I didn't wanna make that phone call to that guy. I'd much rather just, well leave him to it. But I felt that I needed to, the spirit was with me to help me in that process. And, and it resulted in a very good conversation. There's been others that perhaps haven't gone as well as that, but that's one I like to remember. No,

Speaker 1 00:39:29 Same. Yeah. Yeah. My own stories as well. So, but my guess my mind also goes to just the, the dynamics of, you know, and when we prayerfully approach certain callings, you know, that need to be filled, especially leadership callings, it's easy to default to a certain type of person. Right. And yes, now these people have, you know, maybe they're established economically or they've years of education and, and they're already leading a, a company or a have a strong management, uh, role at work. And so we just look at them and like, you know, they would make a great bishop or they would make a great relief society president, or whatever it is. And one exercise I used to do with my, my bishop Rick, you know, going through callings is that depending with certain callings, I needed a, what I called a dark horse candidate.

Speaker 1 00:40:15 Like who's the person who you never think <laugh> would be a perfect fit for this role? And let's just put it in the super revelation and see if we can begin to see if God's guiding us down direction like that. Because oftentimes it's not that these people, you know, a lot of people, they just haven't had the opportunity to refine their leadership skills, their personality or, you know, in these contexts or their speaking skills, whatever it is. And so what a remarkable chance to at least engage with that person and give them feedback and say, if you're leading in this context, here's some few suggestions. Now what do you think? Right. And you're giving 'em a chance rather than being like, well, at least this guy has a foundation of, of leading that, that we can work with. And that is the easier path. And so it's the more tempting path at times. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:40:59 I love that. I was reading a quote or reading a talk from Michelle Craig from October, 2020 earlier in preparation for tonight. And, and just, it's one I like. And this little paragraph here I think ties nicely to that. Jesus Christ sees people deeply. He sees individuals

their needs and who they can become. Where others saw fishermen, sinners, or Republicans, Jesus saw disciples where others saw a man possessed by devils. Jesus looked past the outward distress, acknowledged the man and healed him. And I just love that idea of kind of seeing Yeah. You know, having this eye of faith, seeing the person that, that God is seeing as best as we can.

Speaker 1 00:41:43 Yeah. And yeah. And yeah,

Speaker 2 00:41:45 It's, that's hard.

Speaker 1 00:41:46 And one, one thing I'm learning, you know, just as I'm engaging with other faith traditions, you know, evangelicals and whatnot, just how unique our theology is about personal development and becoming something, you know, obviously, you know, sometimes it's put in a negative connotation that like, oh, Mormons think they can become gods or whatnot. But it really is remarkable that we don't, you know, so many other faith traditions will frame mankind is we are the image bearers of God where we are much more readily responding. Like, no, we are the literal children of God. And that statement is so full of so much potential as we see each other, that this is person isn't just going to, you know, believe in Christ and dedicate their life to them as a disciple, which is a phenomenal path, but that we believe they can become like their father in heaven. They can become like Jesus Christ. And uh, that just breaks the door open for how we can see the church tradition, uh, you know, these callings and, and what we're doing in the church with, uh, there's so much more there. It's so potent.

Speaker 2 00:42:47 Yeah. And I was really grateful, I'm really grateful for people when I was a young man who took time to see that in me. Yeah. And you know, one of my great mentors, a guy called Bob when I was 14, we were at a big youth conference and he sat, you know, we had these little booklets that, almost like a testimony book that you might have as missionary, I dunno if you had the same sort of thing. Mm-Hmm. You'd kind of, they were the pamphlets of the weekend. And the tradition was you'd take it round and you'd have people sign little messages on it and these type of things. And I remember Bob, you know, just writing some words on, on that little pamphlet for me, or I was 14 young man, chubby. And uh, but he basically said, look, I see potential in you.

Speaker 2 00:43:32 And I had a lot of re uh, I have great parents, by the way. I mean, they're very affirming and lots of role models, but I really appreciated that as a non-family member kind of writing down that he saw something in me that I hadn't seen in myself. And, and he continued to be a mentor. Sadly, he passed away about three weeks ago. Oh, wow. But I'm really grateful for his ongoing mentorship. When I was state president, he was still in the stake, and I'd give a talk. I really valued him after the meeting saying, Simon, that was really helpful, or that was really inspiring. You know, it was only 30 seconds, but when he shook my hand, he said, oh, that was, that was a really helpful talk. His mentorship lasted my whole life, you know, for, well pretty much, you know, as a teenager right. Through to when he, you know, in recent years. And I, and I'm grateful for people like that, that saw something in me and then continued to see something in me, even when I was a, an older man, that they'd give me that confidence and encouragement to follow through on what I knew was, you know, the revelation. Something

like that. 'cause you can sometimes doubt yourself, you know, very <laugh>, very easy. It's nice to have support and mentors helping you in your leadership too.

Speaker 1 00:44:44 Yeah. No, mentorship is, is crucial. And it's much more, it's different than just, uh, fellowship. You know, sometimes we, we conflate the two or just having friends, but to have peers that we are striving to become more like, 'cause sometimes Christ seems unattainable. Right. We need the, the nephi's in our life at times where we're like, okay, I can't be like Christ today. At least it feels that way, but maybe I can be a little bit more like nephi or more like my, my mentors at church. You know? So that's powerful. Yeah. You put this principle down of seeing with an eye of faith, challenging others to change in a loving way. This I, it seems like we're sort of talking about that. Is there anything else in that principle that we haven't touched on?

Speaker 2 00:45:19 I think, well, I, I mentioned, yeah, I've mentioned this a few times today. I, I think the thing that we haven't talked about, so the eye of faith, there's elements to that as I explore it. One is about seeing somebody in the future, seeing through that kind of lens of where they could be that they're not now Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So not having their past determining who they are and, and seeing that, which I think is helpful. And I think as a state president, as a bishop, you are at the forefront of, or sorry, right at the edge where individuals often have their deeper engagements with the atonement of Christ. So for example, when someone has, uh, been involved in a more serious transgression, for example, you are often there to help them in the repentance process and standing with them and buy them. And you kind of getting to experience the beauty of that and helping them to not be locked into that transgression is that defines them for the future.

Speaker 2 00:46:16 <laugh>. They can be different and the Lord can change them. But there's also the eye of faith, which is about, if you've got faith in something, you've got trust in something, you've got confidence in something. So there's this vision of the future, but there's also this God has confidence in you, God has, is putting your trust in you to serve in that capacity. And maybe as a leader, there's an opportunity for you to exercise that same eye of faith that I have trust, that I have confidence. A bit like you were saying in this person who has never served in that, in that, uh, leadership responsibility before, but the revelations come and you're gonna extend the call to serve. They've accepted it. Right. How can we help support this person and train them and you know, give them what else is needed to help 'em to feel that they can rise up to that capacity that they've been called to serve in. Yeah. Love that. So there's that element of the eye of faith as well. It was just about trust and confidence, not just a vision of the future, which Yeah. Which I think is important.

Speaker 1 00:47:12 Yeah. I appreciate that. I get, because we, you know, as leaders we wanna cast a vision, but that's always sort of forward thinking. But again, to see us as who we are, you know, like in children of God that we're God's creation. Yeah. I mean, just being in that place enables us to have that future looking vision. But without one, you know, you can't do one without the other. Right.

Speaker 2 00:47:33 I got the scripture in one Corinthians chapter two, if you kind of listen to this from a leader perspective. Okay. But as it is written, I have not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the thing which God have prepared for them that love him. But God have revealed them unto us by His spirit, for the spirit search of all things. Yay. The deep things of God. And I love this as this idea of, we haven't seen yet what this person can do. There's more to be seen and this person, you know, but they love God. And I can't always express fully what I'm feeling when I talk about this, but the, you know, the, the Spirit will reveal to you that this person can serve in that capacity. And we know that they love God. They've got faith. Right. Let's allow that to happen. There's gonna be worldly reasons why we said, well, we shouldn't call them because, or I don't think they've done this before. You know, they're not as good as the last person that, you know, those kind of things <laugh>. But how do we know that? But yeah, that scripture said, I have not seen ear hasn't heard those things yet. Yeah. Let's exercise faith and allow that person to thrive with the Lord's help and, and you know, magnification.

Speaker 1 00:48:47 Hmm. Love it. Anything else that with the, the scene with the Eye of Faith concept or did we cover it all?

Speaker 2 00:48:53 I guess another story

Speaker 1 00:48:54 That's here, I love a good story.

Speaker 2 00:48:56 <laugh>, there was a talk, I think it was 2016. No, it could have been earlier than that. Elder President Udo as he was there, talked about learning from Alma and Aek. I dunno if you remember that talk. Oh yeah, yeah. That's a great one. Really powerful talk. And it was one of those, when I heard it, I immediately knew who he was talking about in my influence. Like this brother's name came to mind as he was speaking. And it was someone that I'd had on my mind for, yeah, it was around 2016, 'cause I've been serving for about six or seven years. And it was like, now's the time to engage in a dialogue there. And I could see that this person had far more, uh, capacity to use their skills and talents in furthering the work of the Lord. And they had done in the past and they'd gone a bit dormant, still attending church, but just kind of very passive in their faith.

Speaker 2 00:49:48 And what a beautiful meeting. You know, I met with them. I went with some fear and trepidation as I often did. You know, that maybe that there'd be pushback as I'd had in some other meetings where I'd attempted to invite people to come back and engage fully. And, but the spirit was strong that night and I could just express my love for who he was. And I could reference President Udo's talk and just invite him to Yeah. To step into faith. And he expressed his concern that he'd, he was kind of on the dark side of the planet where he couldn't, you know, others around him could see the light, but he was on the dark side of the, the, the planet. And he could never, you know, he doesn't seem to be seeing the light that others were experiencing. I don't remember much of that conversation, more a feeling.

Speaker 2 00:50:38 But one of the things I invited him to do was start Walking East, was the statement I used <laugh>, like you could be on the dark side of the planet, but at least to head

towards the sunrise, you know? Yeah. Just exercise a few steps to head towards the sunrise. And, and he knew, you know, what we meant by that. And we felt love for each other and, and the Lord. And it was so lovely to see him exercising faith and relying on the faith of others to help him reignite his faith and, and start that journey again. And I had this vision of him years before that conversation, which I hadn't felt the time was right. And I knew then when I heard President Uls talk, that this was the time to have that conversation for me to express my deep love and appreciation for him, and, uh, invite him to more fully engage with, with the Lord. And, and it was a beautiful experience. Hmm. One I'll always cherish.

Speaker 1 00:51:33 Yeah. Yeah. That'd be a, a talk worth visiting again. It's been a few years, uh, but it's so powerful to consider the AIX in our, in our life. Right. I mean, yeah. What, what's the book of Mormon like without Emmy? Like, I mean, such a phenomenal mission companion, you know, and yeah. And, uh, you know, really preach the word in a unique way and, and the way he was invited. I mean, just so a great life principle for sure. All right. What about preparing the rising generation? This is one that so many church leaders are wrestling with and wanna understand or do better?

Speaker 2 00:52:06 Well, first thing first, I have a huge optimism and hope about the rising generation. And I think sometimes we see, you know, I've, I've got one of my, we, my wife and I have seven children, and, you know, we've got some struggles in our own home, you know, in terms of children. I, I don't want to, you know, get into any specifics on that, that would be unfair. But, but the, you know, it's not all rosy, but I have a huge optimism for the youth and the young adults and their capacity to do good. And they inspire me when I talk to missionaries that come back from, we've just had a daughter return from the Manchester Mission and like her service, I thought I served a decent mission, but when I see what she wrote, and then I talk to her about <laugh> service, like she outstripped me by a by miles, you know, uh, in terms of the, what she's done and, and their immense faith and all that they've done, those missionaries that serve during the Covid period, again, just my admiration for them is huge.

Speaker 2 00:53:07 And that was a real challenging assignment, I think, for many. So the first thing is I think they can get a bit of a bad press. And I don't like it when people call them the snowflake generation, all this kind of thing. Mm-Hmm. They're different. I think that's my personal feeling is I think this generational criticism has happened for the whole of life. You know, the generations two up will always say, well, the youth of today dunno how good it is. And there are some factors that make it challenging. And I think technology of all its blessings has encouraged a more instant gratification in all of us, not just the youth. And I think parents like me are just as bad or can be just as bad at turning to their devices immediately when they've got a minute rather than thinking they're, they're on the phones and, uh, yeah.

Speaker 2 00:53:54 Scrolling and, you know, death, scrolling, all those kind of things. So, so I think, again, the youth can be a, get a bit of a bad rap on that, but I do think this kind of instant gratification piece is a potential challenge for this generation for them to overcome. It's like, how do we help them to invest in something where it actually takes a bit of time and the answers don't necessarily come immediately. And I prayed once and I didn't find out that my testimony, so it can't be true. It's like, no, it's like this is something that requires some faith and patience

and work and, and listening carefully. So I think the distracting and noisy element of devices is a challenge. As much as they bring lots of wonderful benefits to the world and to us individually, I think they can also create a lot of noise that, uh, gets in the way.

Speaker 2 00:54:42 So I think if we can kind of help them to put phones down and engage with what it is that we are doing, I think that can be a massive difference. And so, you know, it's a very practical thought, you know, as we're getting together youth, you know, that we can help 'em to engage with the spirit. Let's, let's talk really with conviction about, you know, what's the matters of the heart, matters of the soul <laugh> as adults and why things really, you know, deeply, uh, move us and inspire them that way and help 'em realize it's not gonna necessarily be found on their, their phone and it will be in serving others. So the opportunity to help people to get out and service, I think the inclination for the rising generation is to want to serve, to make an impact on the world, to do good.

Speaker 2 00:55:29 And helping them take that lead from a aspiration and a wish to actually doing it, even if it's a relatively small thing in the community, can be a very empowering thing. So yeah, I think we've got a responsibility to help lead out on that and to model those behaviors for our younger youth and, and young adults. And then give them opportunities to lead. Don't just talk about it. Let's make it happen. Uh, give them assignments and responsibilities that you're gonna require them to use. The talents, many of them have developed massive skills in their, in their missionary service of leadership. And then we don't ask 'em to do anything with that when they come home. Yeah. I'm lucky. One of my nephews served in Russia during Covid and Wow, what a, what incredible experience he's had. I mean, just like some of them shocking in terms of I bet the, you know, challenges that he was faced with, but I'm really pleased what, he's early twenties, he's serving on the high council in his stake.

Speaker 2 00:56:29 He's doing a fantastic job. He is got responsibilities for units as well as sharing the gospel, you know, throughout the stake. And I'm really pleased to see him, you know, his skills and talents that's been developed on the mission field, then put into use in the local unit that he's serving in. And that's a really good example. He's not the only one, but he's one that's, yeah. He also works for me. He is one of my team, so I know that very well. But he's a great guy and it's lovely to see, you know, those Yeah. Those talents, the skills that have been magnified put into use.

Speaker 1 00:57:01 Yeah. And just, I, I, I appreciate just the, the confidence you see again, you know, that that potential, the purpose that so many, you know, recognizing the purpose that they, that it just seems to be in their DNA right. That they wanna make a difference. Yeah. They want to see the world head in a, in a positive direction, even though communicating that, or manifesting that looks a little bit different maybe how we did it when we were that age. Right. And that's okay. And just create, hold space for that.

Speaker 2 00:57:24 Yeah. And I think, you know, let's not be afraid to talk about our faith. You know, that's, uh, that's the thing. I, I dunno if it's the same entirely in the US but you know, in, in Western Europe and certainly the uk you know, it's not an easy thing to bring up in, in a work setting or social settings. You know, it's a, it's one of those areas where people can quickly

jump to think that you are homophobic or all these kind of assumptions about what that means. And so us as older members, I, I, I'm really trying to make a conscious effort to be more vocal in my faith, you know, making sure I'm sharing testimony, whether that's informally in a corridor or whether it's up on the stand in a testimony meeting. You know, help 'em see that their faith meets something. And, you know, you know, recognize, I love it when the youth get up and bear the testimony. I really try and seek them out after the meeting to go and say, thank you that inspired me. Even if it was 30 seconds, I grateful that you shared what you did and Yeah. Yeah. I think if we can yeah. Be cheerleaders for these people, it's, it's tough out there. And they, they need more cheerleaders than critics, you know, so let's, um, when they do something good, less, less reward it <laugh> Yeah. Yeah. With, uh, validation and affirmation and give them opportunities to use their talents productively.

Speaker 1 00:58:39 Amen. Love that. Well, Simon, this has been, uh, awesome to explore and, and I hope, uh, we find another opportunity to, to get you on here. 'cause I know you're, you know, you leadership guys, you're full of this stuff, you know, so <laugh> <laugh> love to have you continue to explore different concepts and things that'll help leaders across the world, maybe more effectively engaged in, in leadership in, in the context of the church. So this is really good. Any other principle concept story you were hoping to tell that you didn't tell that? Did we miss anything?

Speaker 2 00:59:07 I think I've probably chewed your ear off a little bit. I'm grateful for the questions that you've asked that have invoked some. Well, thank you. Important feelings for me that have brought back some good, good experiences and memories. Cool. And I, I hope that anything I've said is in the spirit of trying to help, not to judge or to criticize anybody, you know, that that's, that I hope it's brought some light and thoughts that will help us to be better faithful disciples.

Speaker 1 00:59:34 Perfect. Well, and you told me before we record that you're not here to sell anything. And I get that that's not what, you know, nobody's expecting that. But if people do wanna learn more about your, your company, what you do, you know, where, is there a place you would send them if they wanna learn more?

Speaker 2 00:59:47 Sure. Well, my name is Simon Fag. FAGG. So two Gs. And, uh, you can find me on LinkedIn is probably the easiest way to do that. And the company's name with Leadership co uk. Cool. And my podcast is After Dinner Leadership

Speaker 1 01:00:05 And <laugh>. I love it.

Speaker 2 01:00:06 And then the, you know, the sentiment is kind of a, a more relaxed conversation about leadership and, and say it's particularly, we hope it's particularly helpful for those that are aspiring to lead and yeah. Helping them to learn from those that have gone before.

Speaker 1 01:00:21 And is it primarily like a interview style like this, or do you do some monologues or, yeah,

Speaker 2 01:00:26 It's, it's mainly interview style. Yeah. I, I, cool. It's a mixture of people I've met over the years and those that are trying to sell their book <laugh>. Yeah.

Speaker 1 01:00:36 I get it. You know, but sometimes those are the best interviews 'cause they've really thought about something deeply, you know, so Oh, yeah, yeah,

Speaker 2 01:00:41 Yeah. And, and I will take that as a, a mass criticism that I haven't thought too deeply about what I've shared tonight. Kurt

Speaker 1 01:00:48 <laugh>, you did great. You did great. And have you written any books or is there one, uh, bounce around in your

Speaker 2 01:00:55 Brain? I have. I'm sure there's one in there. I mean, one of the things that I ask of, my guess is what three leadership lessons do they wish they'd learned earlier? And so I'm collating a a library of lessons that leaders wish they'd learned earlier. And Nice. I expect that could turn into something.

Speaker 1 01:01:12 All right. Well, okay, you pitched me a softball here. I gotta ask. So what are your three leadership principles you wish you learned earlier?

Speaker 2 01:01:18 I'll share with you the, the top one, and that is, okay, there's a, a real space for what I call quiet leadership. Hmm. And I thought, and I witnessed that kind of what we might class a more charismatic style is what often people see as leadership and what gets applauded and often, you know, supported. But more and more I have appreciated and valued and come to recognize those leaders in my life who are quiet rather than loud Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> and who were just as effective, maybe even more so, but just didn't make a big noise about it. Yeah. And, uh, that starts again, you're gonna get me upset again. It starts with my mum, <laugh> <laugh> as, uh, a great example of that. One of my mission presidents, my first mission president, actually a guy called Bob Garth, who comes from, who held from, uh, bountiful, who passed away during Covid. Just another great example. And, and many, many others throughout my life who, and I've seen it in business too, who quietly do their work and effectively lead large organizations, large teams brilliantly, but don't make a lot of noise about it. And those that make a lot of noise about it are also, can also be good by the way. I'm just, I, but it is just, yeah, those are the ones different. We sometimes put up on a pedestal, say, Hey, that's a great leader, but actually I love quiet leadership.

Speaker 1 01:02:43 Nice. And I think you just, uh, teased your next episode on the Leading Saints podcast. So if you put an, an outline together, Simon, I would love to explore that concept. 'cause uh, man, I think a lot of, uh, a lot of leaders sort of silently wallow and shame because they're not that dynamic loud, gregarious leader. So, uh, okay.

Speaker 2 01:03:02 I'll take you up on that if you're interested. I'll be very happy to carry on that conversation. It

Speaker 1 01:03:07 Was rich. And if you wanna hear the other two leadership lessons that Simon wish i learned earlier, you have to turn into his podcast. 'cause maybe he'll share 'em there, but we'll see. I love it. See, we did, we're we're great marketers, aren't we? <laugh>?

Speaker 2 01:03:17 So.

Speaker 1 01:03:17 Awesome. Well, the last question I ask on my podcast, Simon, as you you probably know, is as you reflect on your time as a leader in the church, how has being a leader helped you become a better follower of Jesus Christ?

Speaker 2 01:03:29 Oh, I hope some of what I've shared tonight is, has transmitted my love of the Savior. One of the biggest learnings for me as the state president is the atonement of Jesus Christ, being a redeeming and an enabling force. I hear, I mean, elder Bednar particularly loves talking about that, and he inspired my thinking around it. But I saw it in practiced time and time again, and in my own life, being able to apply it as state president, as was massive. So with my own challenges, my own inadequacies, my own needing to forgive people who had offended, you know, who I'd felt offended by, I had, yeah. In that space, I learned more about the atonement, Jesus Christ as an enabling power as state President than anything. And, and hopefully that helps me to be a better follower of him is his capacity to help me to do good when I don't really feel like it.

Speaker 1 01:04:42 That concludes this episode of the Leading Saints podcast. Hey, listen, would you do me a favor? You know, everybody's got that friend who listens to a ton of podcasts and maybe they aren't aware of leading Saints. So would you mind taking the link of this episode or another episode of Leading Saints and just texting it to that friend? You know who I'm talking about, the friend who always listens to podcasts and is always telling you about different podcasts? Well, it's your turn to tell that friend about Leading Saints. So Sherry, we'd also love to hear from you. If you have any perspective or thought on this episode, you can go to leading-saints.org and actually leave a comment on the, uh, episode page or reach out to us at leading-saints.org/contact. Quick reminder, go watch Joseph Granny's presentation on helping loved ones overcome addiction by going to leading-saints.org/fourteen.

Speaker 3 01:05:40 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 only, 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.