



Is Mental Health Healing Possible? | An Interview with Steven Shields

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Speaker 1 00:00:02 Have you ever heard of Scrupulosity? This is a mental health concern that is impacting more latter day Saints than you think. Scrupulosity is religious obsessive compulsive disorder where individuals are hyper obsessed about their worthiness and repentance. Sam Baxter, a former bishop, sat down with me to talk about his lifelong struggle with Scrupulosity and how he got treatment. You can watch this interview for free in the Mentally Healthy Saints Library by going to leading-saints.org/fourteen. This gets you 14 days free access to Sam Baxter's interview about Scrupulosity and 25 plus other interviews about ministering to those who struggle with mental health. The content is priceless for leaders. So visit leading-saints.org/fourteen for free access.

Speaker 1 00:00:51 I would be rude if I didn't take the time to explain to the newer listeners what Leading Saints is. Here it goes. Leading Saints is an organization that started as a hobby blog in 2010, and then really caught some traction in 2014 when the podcast started. We talk about all things leadership in the context of the Church of Jesus Christ, and Latter-Day Saints. We aren't owned by the church, but we have a great relationship with them and always aim to be faith promoting even though we talk about the tough topics. My name is Kurt Francom. I'm generally the voice you hear as the host of the podcast. I've tried to get other hosts, but people demand my smooth tone and I really enjoy it. Check out leading-saints.org to really get into the weeds of what Leading Saints is and learn all about our mission to help Latter Day Saints be better prepared to lead.

Speaker 0 00:01:42 Alright,

Speaker 1 00:01:42 This is another fire episode where I invite back in my friend, my brother Steven Shields, who is a phenomenal therapist and has talked on therapy concepts before on the Leading Saints podcast. We'll link to some of those, especially the episode called, uh, I think it was called Therapy Buffet. And he just goes through the various types and styles of therapy and what leaders should understand about the array of therapy out there. But in this episode, we do a deep dive in this concept of can mental illness be healed? Obviously, this is an issue that comes up for a lot of church leaders. They want to be such a strong resource for individuals struggling with their mental health, and they may refer them out to, you know, therapists and resources and things. And I remember this as a bishop, a lot of the times it just seems like progress is slow or not even happening.

Speaker 1 00:02:32 And then it's easy to sort of come to the conclusion that this is their lot in life. There's struggle, and that may be, but do we really know that? Do we really believe in a savior who can heal like today? I mean, we believe in one in the New Testament, right? But do we believe in a savior that can heal even mental health today? Do people get better? Do people progress and overcome these things? And too often that the idea that it's perpetuated, that this is just something everybody with mental illness struggles just needs to struggle with throughout life. And that's not a very hopeful message. And in the gospel of Jesus Christ, we preach a hopeful message. So in this episode, really listen in for how Steve sees progress happening, how he's witnessed healing in mental health, some reasons why this narrative persists that mental health can't be healed.

Speaker 1 00:03:22 And the role of a bishop, or a role of a church leader in this process of being willing to sit in the journey with these individuals, give them hope and fill permission, fill enabled to give them hope that Jesus Christ is there, that he actually is the answer. We don't just say these things in Sunday School to say them, but we witnessed them and experienced them in real life, that Jesus does heal today. And so this is a phenomenal episode for church leaders trying to navigate resources of therapy and whatnot to help individuals progress. So I think you'll appreciate it. This is one to pass on to other leaders and uh, hopefully it'll get you thinking. I'd love to respond. What did we miss? What resistance do you feel when you hear this message? And, uh, I think it'll lead to phenomenal exploration of thought and theory and theology. So here, here's my interview with Steven Shields.

Speaker 1 00:04:25 Steve Shields, I'm sneaking up with you. I'm just hitting record. I, I find if we, if we start talking before you hit record, we, we <laugh> we share all the good stuff. So that's where all the gold is. That's right. So we're not gonna hold anything back from the leading Saints audience, but your recurring guests, you're on leading saints. One of the greatest things I've done in my life. <laugh>. That's right. <laugh>. So, um, a therapist. I mean, how do you, uh, how do you introduce yourself for those who are experiencing Steve Shields for the first time? Yeah, I do some different things, but I would just say yeah, primarily background of therapist as we'll. Discuss today. Normally when I introduce that, um, I say I'm a therapist, but what you think that means is not what it means. Okay. Yes. We're gonna that and, and, um, what I would really say is what I really do is I'm a guide.

Speaker 1 00:05:11 Guide and so that I help guide people in their healing journey. 'cause what I have learned is no one actually needs me to heal. They need God mm-Hmm. Whatever way they wanna call God that in therapy settings. But they need the atonement of Jesus Christ. And so we do it through Warrior Heart, which you're an executive team member of you and I do that, you know, spiritual men's retreat. We talk a lot, do it through the nonprofit and podcasts, unashamed and afraid that, as you know, do record a lot of people's stories and do scholarships for stuff. And then also do it through accepted, which is a, our clinical therapy practice. And we got therapists and coaches and, and do all of the hands-on guiding. Yeah. So whenever I get one of my close, uh, therapist friends on, on the podcast, I'd love to just like, just get a pulse on like what you're seeing, what's walking into your office, who the issues, I mean, I know they don't change drastically for the most part, but how would you respond to that?

Speaker 1 00:06:08 Today in, we're in November, right? <laugh> of 2023. Yeah. I, I would say in 2023, I think people, so I think we went through this whole movement where like therapy became cool. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> where like, you know, I remember it happened with road bikes. Like a road bike was like in the early two thousands, like a real nice one barn burner was like five grand. And then it became the rich white man sport <laugh>. And that exact same bike is now like 20 grand uhhuh because like everyone got on it. Right? And so I think there's this trend where as a culture we're like, oh yeah, mental health, slap on the back light, you know, everyone should go to therapy. Yeah. Right. And so I think we got into this movement where everyone's like, oh yeah, yeah. Therapy, right? And we even, we hear it in general conference, right?

Speaker 1 00:06:54 Yeah. God atonement. And you may, depending on the severity of this, you need to seek out professional help to make that happen. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, right? And so we even have that commentary as a church. So I think that was a whole revolution. And I think in general that was a good thing to desham people go into therapy, you know, or, um, needing to ask for help. And I mean, that's the crux of the atonement asking for help. I think we're now moving into this phase where people are like, yeah, I went to therapy, is I like, it was like, it was, I don't know, it was nice. It was nice to talk to somebody. Like there's a lot of really expensive road bikes just hanging up in garages, <laugh>, you know, and yeah, I got mine. It's right there. Yeah. I've got it. I'm in.

Speaker 1 00:07:37 It was right there. And so I think there's this movement happening right now where people are expecting more out of their experience. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> as opposed to like, Hey, I went to say, I go, I think there's some unrest Yeah. With that. And, and would you say like, in the moment, like when I'm in the therapist's audience and I'm talking with, you know, Sally or Jim or whoever my therapist is like, yeah, I'd like feel it then, but I go home, it's like, dang, life still hurts. And it's hard. Right? Like, it maybe there's not a lot of traction there. Yeah. I think people are like, want it to work, which I think is a, a consumer of any service or product you should Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> like, I, I I would say that like get a testimony of whether or not Joseph Smith saw what he said he saw.

Speaker 1 00:08:21 You need one of those Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> mere Christianity. Either Jesus was the son of God and is, or he's kooky Dukes <laugh>, there isn't a middle ground.

Right? Right. The CS was mere Christianity. Like, he's crazy. You know, that quote that's really famous everyone goes to, and so that's where I kind of say people are getting, as a consumer of therapy or coaching or retreats, all of the self-help stuff is, at first it was like, that's for people who are crazy. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And I think we're now on the back end of that movement that we're like, no, no, we all should do it. But now that we're all here, like it should work. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And so I think there's some unrest and change, and I even see it on the side of the professionals saying, you know, kids coming outta graduate school, people can do it for us.

Speaker 1 00:09:05 Saying like, I wanna do this more effective. I wanna do this better. I wanna do it different. I just don't wanna like see people. I want something to happen. Yeah. And so before we slide too deep into that, like what does, is there, you know, a specific issue or concern you're seeing is just the, the general anxiety, the general depression? Or is there something more to that that you're seeing? Yeah. Uh, so I, I always talk about it. If there's smoke, there's fire. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And so in that way, I don't think the story's changed. So anxiety and depression is typically the one that people say when they want it to be like therapy light. Because like telling your friend that you're struggling with some depression is pretty, like, that's a culturally safe move. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Right. Like, get up in your ward on a fast Sunday and be like, you know, I'll be real vulnerable with you guys.

Speaker 1 00:09:53 I've been struggling with some depression or anxiety. Yeah. You know, I'm really leaning into with Jesus, like, you will get off the pulpit and after the meeting everyone will be like, wow, thank you for support, like vulnerability being open. Nobody's gonna be super shocked though 'cause No, no. It's, it's, it's, it's welcome to my world. Yeah. We can culturally kind of hang out in there when you get into the fire that's like compulsive behaviors, addictions, relationship issues, that gets a little dicier in the vulnerability category. Right? Right. So if you get up and you're like, Hey, you know, fast and testimony, I 20 ever know my church discipline, uh, is next Sunday. Right. Dunno if my membership's gonna be withdrawn or not, but just appreciate the prayers and I, and I think I'm planning on being a lot more active in this ward now and really trying the Jesus thing on.

Speaker 1 00:10:34 So just, just wanna know where I'm at coming in. Right. Yeah. That one you don't hear too often. Right. Or like, hey, real quick, just before it gets awkward for everyone, like, pretty sure me and Nancy are getting divorced, so just kind of heads up on that. So ER's quorum. Yeah. If, you know, the move's probably gonna happen sometime in the next three to six months, kind of, we gotta figure out the money stuff, but let us know. Right? Yeah. And so I think there still is, there's the things that are culturally safe to talk about and the, and the things that require more safety, more connection that happen. It's like the, the stigma, right? Like the, the depression anxiety that, that stigma's sort of been removed. But then, but it's the, I mean, 'cause that's where mental health leads is into the stigmas of like, you know, I, I numb out with porn not because I'm a horrible person that just has a bad habit.

Speaker 1 00:11:16 It's like, I don't know how to cope in life because of the depression anxiety. Right. Well, and and that's the porn one's one that we do a lot of work around that and in our office, but that's one that's starting to get de-stigmatized. But it's, it's having a hard time

talking about it 'cause people feel like they don't actually have answers. Mm-Hmm. And so, you know, depression, anxiety, we're pretty settled on that. You just deal with that forever. Because when you say there's, 'cause there's medications that can address a lot of that. When you say like, well just, you know, here's some medication, right. We're like, you can manage life. Right? Yeah. Just, and so we're pretty okay with just managing that indefinitely. Yeah. We have a hard time saying out loud that we're okay managing an eating disorder or porn or something else indefinitely.

Speaker 1 00:11:57 Like, you won't hear a bishop say like, I think you should just manage your porn addiction indefinitely. Right. <laugh>. And so it's hard for us to culturally kind of hold that one because that's supposed to be one that you get rid of and never ever, ever do again. And so, which is I the ideal scenario Yes. We would be proponents of that. Right. <laugh>. Right. And so I think that's where we get into kinda some, I think the misleading right. Or I called you is, I think that's the part where I think where we are today is people are starting to get dissatisfied with the managing answer. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And I think they should be. Yeah. So there's like, in mental health, there's like that managing answer and that's where a lot of people get that through therapy. And then there's the like, no, we're gonna get to a point where you're healed.

Speaker 1 00:12:41 Like this is over. Well that's why I called you Yeah. Right. To quote our phone call. I had several experiences in a short amount of time 'cause I'm all the time. But the back to back, I and I called and said, I don't know at what point in time we quit believing that people get healed. Mm-Hmm. Like, I don't know where in the restored gospel we lost that one. And as someone who literally makes their living being in mental health, like, I don't know where we lost the translation. Like did we just, did we just leave the quad like in the car and just walk into the therapist office and forget that we knew anything that was in those pages? Yeah. Or we categorized it in the, in the fantasy book column. You know, it's like, no, these things really happened and miracles have not ceased.

Speaker 1 00:13:22 Correct. And so that's the part that blows in my mind is that we've created this segment in our culture that mental health issues don't get healed. Like totally. Your mom's stage four breast cancer in the hospital. Yeah. We'll buy that all day long. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> get the entire ward to fast. And the doctor walks in there and he is like, it's gone. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And they're like, what? And they're like, we can't explain this. And you know what our answer is? Jesus. We're like, yeah. 'cause they got a priesthood blessing and we have the power to heal the gifts right there in the doctrine covenants, their people have the gift in them to heal. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And they go use it and Yeah. Her breast cancer's gone. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, praise God. Yeah. But mental health will hold, I don't know why we don't believe that about depression.

Speaker 1 00:14:07 <laugh>. I do not know why we believe that. So I understand why the clinical world believes that. So the dark side of that is they've made a lot of money managing that. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Because think about it. If I'm a therapist, if I can get 40 people who wanna be depressed the rest of their life and they like me enough done, I've made my career. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. That's it. It's like selling insurance policies. <laugh>, you gotta

have insurance on your car. Yeah. If you're depressed, you're gonna need a therapist. 'cause how are you gonna manage? Yeah. Or a coach or that same retreat you always go to or that same group or whatever it is, is that pick pick it in any category. We keep saying therapist, but anywhere in the self-help category. Yeah. So take me back to that message, like the, uh, incorrect message We hear that, you know, healing doesn't necessarily happen in mental health.

Speaker 1 00:14:56 Like what are the different forms that you hear that, or the context that you hear that? Well, I think that's where we talk about being a peculiar people and being different is the messaging from the world and the, and the, um, medical community is that it doesn't heal. So just like I would say we take some pretty strong stands, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And there's a difference between knowing God's truth versus being able to embrace some of the gray around that. Right. Pray always cur, that's just God's truth. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, if you were to say it with me and be like, I'm not gonna have a prayer life, Steven, I'd be like, get into the scriptures and be like, boop, boop, boop boop, boop boop, Kurt, you gotta have one. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> right now what your prayer life looks like. Exactly. And what mine looks like.

Speaker 1 00:15:38 You like, I wouldn't be like, and you must pray for 15 minutes every morning Right. When you wake up. Maybe that's not what works for you and that works for me. But the idea of having a prayer life, that one's not up for debate. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Right. Right. And so when you look into the DSM five, which is the clinical guideline in, in medical land of, so if you come into my office and I diagnose you with depression, it is out of that manual. You go in the DSM and I say, tell me your symptoms and you say this, this, and this. And you take a, a little survey and you can take one of like six different ones that are all apparently different but the same. And I can say, you are moderately depressed, so since you're moderately depressed, you should or should not get on medication.

Speaker 1 00:16:19 So go see a psychiatrist and get on medication or not or whatever. And we do that. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So that system does not believe that people are healed. They believe miracles have ceased or don't exist. So there is not, and by the way, the ds, you can just Google it, it's online. It's not like hidden behind some doctor patient wall for Right. Uhhuh is, it's just, it's there. Right. And it's not all bad. It was to help people make meaning of what's going on with 'em and what type of treatment is more effective for this or that. But that is not, there are personality disorders. Different thing. Right. And so we think about this person, we'd say in the Bible, this person had, you know, we're possessed by demons. What do you think that looks like? If they walked into a therapist office today? I think it might look like a personality disorder.

Speaker 1 00:17:06 Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. I'm just, you know, making it up here. But it's exactly what it would look like. Right? Right. Jesus healed him. And so we say, gosh, we don't, because I don't know, you know, we just leave it there. And so that system, the world's system believes in managing mental health. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. There is also a significant amount of money to be made if people have to be on drugs forever or pay if for insurance forever. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And it's not necessarily there's one evil person behind the scenes

that's facilitating all this. It's the nature of the beast of when you start, you know, when there's a system in place, an economy in place, that it's, you can follow the money well, but it's the world. Right? Yeah. I can pick anything in the world sports, professional sports is entertainment business about making money. Mm-Hmm.

Speaker 1 00:17:51 <affirmative>, there's totally a dark side. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Right. Pick anything else, right. Airlines. Yeah. I mean, it doesn't matter. Pick whatever you want. Government contracts, right? How many people get government contracts? Like that was good old boy and, you know Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. It's 'cause that guy would, I mean, the corruption of the world is turns out everywhere in the world. Right? And so, yeah. It's not like this is the only place where, you know, yeah. Darkness is, or there was that one president or there was that one, whoever. Like yeah. There's people that participate in the system, right. And, and don't have, you know, have ignored the light of Christ for quite some time maybe. But yeah. It, it's, everything in the world is that way. So I don't know why we'd be shocked that this is different. Yeah. And, and I wanna make sure like your message is coming clear that obviously most therapists that you know, that bishops recommend to, they're wonderful people who have the best intentions.

Speaker 1 00:18:37 It's not necessarily for sure their fault, but it's like they're trapped in the system that, that perpetuates these things of like the DSM five and, you know, these are all there for a valid purpose. But, you know, if we step back and look at the greater intent of all this, uh, we can start asking some of these questions, right? So I, I consulted with a therapist once I'm super burned out in our practice. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> and, um, you know, down and now, which is a, a sadly a common experience. And I said, look, this is you and I in a closed room. I want you to write down all of your, the current clients you're working with names on a card. So we put 'em all on a three by five card, separate three by our, put 'em all up on the wall. And I said, gut decision, just boom, I want you to put everyone on the left who, when you see that they're the next person on your calendar, you go, Ugh.

Speaker 1 00:19:29 Yeah. And I want the people who you are like, awesome. Sally's coming in, right? Who you feel e like a positive energy towards on the right side. She's like, oh, I don't know my, just do just trust your gut and just do it. She does it. Out of the 40 clients, guess how many were on the right side? Zero five <laugh>. And so I said, do you wanna know my advice about your practice and your burnout? I said, yeah. I said, drop those 35, refer 'em to somewhere else and start with those five and change how you're viewing clients and how you're approaching your practice to being in a relationship with people where we're healing can happen. And if for some reason it can't, don't stay in that relationship. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And it's not that we're discarding those people. They don't, you know, they're on their own now.

Speaker 1 00:20:11 They just need, there's needs to be a change happening. Right? What do you think one of those 35 people would've said if they knew that that's how their therapist Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, who according to ethics, should see them with unconditional positive regard and hold a complete container and space for their healing. Felt that about them. Yeah. Do you think if they had that knowledge they'd wanna keep working with that person? No way. No way. No way. Yeah. So just because they don't actively know that doesn't mean it's not

showing up in the room. Yeah. It's the same thing. If you're seeing Ward council and you're like, Ugh, that family in our ward, your ability to serve and truly heal them, invite to Christ ended right there. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Right. Love it. It's, it has to be done in love. Yeah. Because as you say that, and I kind of wanna loop this back and come back to the, uh, touching point of, of leadership as far as like, 'cause I remember as a bishop, that person will walk in and be like, I've shared all my scriptures related to his issue.

Speaker 1 00:21:04 I don't know what else to give him and say to him. And, but I'm his bishop, so here we go. Right. And obviously, you know, I can't say go to a different bishop, but we can try some different things. Right? So I mean, this, that's a real, a real dynamic that we all feel in this, in this mental health fight, you know? Right. And so, to me, I would say the first is you can't give something you don't have. Like I would just be a bad missionary for the Islamic faith <laugh>. I would Right. Totally. If they were like, Hey, come use all your skills. Come help us evangelize some people over here in Turkey, whatever, let's go. And I was like, okay. Like I'd go over there and I'd be like, read the Quran <laugh>. It's interesting. It has some good principles, powerful teaching.

Speaker 1 00:21:48 Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, I don't think, I don't believe it. I think at best it's some good writings of some inspired men. I don't think it's God's word. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So I ain't gonna convince anyone else it's God's word either. Yeah. So if I don't really believe that the atonement heals, like the blind Lazarus from the dead, I don't know how I'm gonna bear witness or testimony of that to anyone. Yeah. These words of, I mean, this is, this is a phrase that you've taught me that I've really taken to heart. Like you can only give what you have. Right. If you don't have it to give, you can't give. And it's a quote, it's a quote from Brene Brown, by the way. So Okay, well credit where credit's due, but Sure. And especially in those, these leadership callings where people are suffering with intense mental health.

Speaker 1 00:22:28 It's like, I, all right, one more trip in the bishop's office. Let's see if that does, and of course we refer out, right. We hope this does it. But at the same time, if you're referring out and it seems like you're not giving them anything, then you don't have anything to give to them by referring out. And so you gotta change the plan. Right. Right. Well, and current client lists for me currently, Kurt on that role, two stake presidents and mission president. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> current as your clients. Correct. Because it's like, I want to help people. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> great. What's your deal? Oh yeah, I'm totally depressed. Okay. But you're the stake president, right? It's like, wait a minute. Yeah. So let's do that. And then the, the funniest thing happens in their capacity and ability to help those that they lead when they do their own work.

Speaker 1 00:23:13 It is the wildest thing because all of a sudden, as their heart comes back alive and God heals them, all of a sudden they know how to do that Interview Kurt. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> is the, is this the weirdest thing? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> as the hope of the gospels in them as they feel the real cha. And this is the part that's crazy to me. Like I can get lost in articles until I'm dead about what really heals depression. And is depression real? And is anxiety really get healed and dah, dah, dah. And it's different in men and women. And what's it, you know, we're recovered from addiction really mean, and you know, we do this study with

alcoholics and dah, whatever, you know, and people go to, you know, a 30 day rehab, only 8% stay sober. Is that 'cause of their support system? Like, we can do this till now even come.

Speaker 1 00:23:52 It's just really simple. Alma five, you've sang the song of Redeeming Love. Can you do so now? So the first thing I ask every leader tell me when you were alive in the spirit of God on my mission, we were in this new ward when we got married, we moved, you know, out of my home state for medical school or dental, you know, or something. And man, we were alive in that experience as a humanitarian trip. Great. Do you feel that way when you sit in your office and interview people? Do you feel that way at Ward Council? No. Then you're doing it wrong. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So whatever boxes you need to check, check 'em. And it needs to be done in that spirit of real healing, right? Yeah. And like this, this dynamic brings to mind the, you know, as we talk about healing, does healing really exist?

Speaker 1 00:24:35 And I think, you know, most leaders on paper like, oh yeah, sure, I believe in the tone of Jesus Christ. Um, and then you come to this concept of like, you have to do your own work. So you have it to give. And most leaders are thinking, 'cause I've been there, like you've taken me on this journey of being like, well, Steve, like, I mean, I don't struggle with mental health. Like there's no place that it hurts for me. There's no place to heal because it doesn't hurt Steve. And so I'm supposed to just serve these people and hopefully we can find it. But it's in that shift of being like, like this journey that I've been on with you is that you've helped me find the hurt to get the healing. And now like, if there's any one reason why I would ever want to be bishop again, it's like I am been a transformed as an individual that when I walk in that office now, I could offer them so much more.

Speaker 1 00:25:22 You know, where back then, I just, I didn't have to give Well, and to offer yourself. Yeah. I mean that's the, the way I, every time I have the opportunity to talk to a bishop, the first thing I say is say, I say, Hey, look, I actually know what the job is. And I know that there's a bunch of hours you spend meeting with people and holding hearts and having really difficult, tough conversations in which you are then told, don't tell anyone about this conversation and hold it confidentiality and go home. So I'm well aware that you sat in your office for two hours and had one kid tell you that he's not gonna go on a mission and hates the church and is gay and hasn't told his family yet. And that whole thing's about to blow up. And they're good friends and neighbors of your, and then the following hour you met with a guy who's now had his third affair, got caught and is having that whole thing.

Speaker 1 00:26:07 And then you met with the family after that, that can't get a job and get financially on their feet. And you are not sure whether you should support him more or do the tough love thing and you're in between and you do all of that, hold it. And then you need to walk out of there to go to Jimmy's birthday party. That is so real. So if you don't need any healing from God around just having to sit in that chair and have that experience, I mean, come on. Just the hold in and of itself. Now we could use clinical words and say, Hey, that's secondary trauma. To sit there and have someone tell you about their trauma and hold. There's a secondary trauma that happens there. There's a whole bunch of care for therapists and different people, people in the field and, and all of that that has to come and be in place and parallel process and all that, all the different aspects of that.

Speaker 1 00:26:50 But to say, right, and it's, it's the question you always put out there, Kurt, right? Like, if Jesus was in this room right now, what would you want from him? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And that's when people are like, oh, well I'm good. And that's where I go. Like, I don't know what scriptures you believe in. Right? Because last time I checked the word was all any degree of sin. And no nowhere is there a story where the guy said, I'm good. And he is like, oh, okay, well I was just checking. And he moves on, like, he's like, I don't know where that is in the scriptures. I haven't found it. Right. Right. And then we look at these journeys that people go on, right? Like, I was like alma five, right? And, and uh, or, uh, Alma, the younger. And then we talk about, you know, Joseph being so, you know, Genesis 39 mm-Hmm.

Speaker 1 00:27:26 <affirmative>, you know, he saw pot of her's wife and said, no, I can't do this. I mean, do the math backwards. He was the second guy in the house. You know how many conversations he's had with that woman? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Do you remember how many times that she's passed through his sexual filter, by the way she looks, do you know how many times she's probably hit on him, touched his arm, hugged him, had something you think they'd never seen each other? And she just popped out of nowhere and was like, have sex with me? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And he's like, I can't, I'm a godly man. Like, this was a whole experience that he had to have to figure out how to get out of there to do. Like Alma has this experience with God. Do you know what he went? I mean, we know based on how he said he was living his life.

Speaker 1 00:27:58 Do you know what he found when he went home? All of his drunk buddies and the loose women they were with and all the contraband that they had at his house. And he's like, Ooh, crap. I just had this experience with God. I gotta change that. So what you think, he just went home in a half hour, like his house was now a temple. Like that was a whole process that guy had to go through. And so that's the part that like blows my mind. Like we have example after example in the scriptures of real mental health problems from holy crap, I'm screwed to healed, done praising the Lord, but we just don't believe in 'em anymore. Right. Or that's not our story. Right? Yeah. 'cause I'm good, right? Well, or it can't be my story 'cause they tell it's for everyone else but me.

Speaker 1 00:28:40 And then here's the myth that I want to bust right now. Let's, let's do it is well, but about Paul and the thorn in this side. Hmm. And here's 20 different conference talks about, you know, be patient. And here's the story of this woman who was blind and blessing after blessing. God never healed her, but she knew that her suffering was sacred and that this was her cross in this life. And God said, you know, that's good. And you know what? For everyone out there who just has to suffer God's with you and your suffering, and that might be your course, but know this life is a moment and the life that comes gonna be glorious. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So for everyone who chalks up all mental health issues to, well, that's just my cross and that's how it's supposed to go. Hey, your marriage is terrible.

Speaker 1 00:29:25 Oh yeah. We're not connected at all. So what do you wanna do with that? Well, you know, it's an eternal marriage. And so we'll just kind of ride it out for this life. And because we have this, we love the cultural narrative. Tell someone that they can get healed now that Jesus will do that. See how they react. Hmm. Tell someone, oh, you're suffering God's in it.

So just keep suffering indefinitely for the rest of your life. And someday God will clean it up for you. People will buy that like a kid getting candy on Halloween. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Because that requires often little to no faith. Now, there are people, a couple that I grew up with in my ward, the Foss, the most beautiful people you ever see. She got in a car accident, put in a wheelchair for the rest of her life.

Speaker 1 00:30:05 God hasn't healed her. I don't think he's going to, that's a cross. Yeah. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. There is sacredness in that suffering. But you know what? I know Don and Brenda, I've talked to them. God never invited her to be healed. God held the pain. God gave her reasons for why it happened. An explanation of their eternal identity. How it shaped and changed their marriage, what it meant for him as a spouse to now have a wife in a wheelchair. What it meant for their children and the experience they've had. I mean, that's a whole podcast episode you could do. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. My invitation would be if God gave you that answer, I'm good. If God said to you, if you in the temple on your knees fasting in a moment, not where you kind of wanted to guess what God's revelation was for you when you got it, when you got God's revelation.

Speaker 1 00:30:54 If you can tell me you kneeled down and said, God, I'm addicted to porn. I've been struggling forever. But you know what? Paul's thorn in his side and suffering is a part of this life. So I want to know, is your plan for me in this life to struggle with porn forever, depression forever, anxiety forever. This eating disorder forever, this marriage that's a three outta 10. But I tell myself it's a seven when it's really not forever. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And if in the inspiration of God, he comes to you and says, yeah. In this life I wanted you to have a, a three out of 10 marriage for 55 years. Yes. That was my plan for you child. Yeah. I'm good. You're on your journey with God. I don't know where else he needs to heal you. It's not that one. So if Jesus were to be in this room today, you wouldn't ask him for that one.

Speaker 1 00:31:34 And I'm good if you've gotten that revelation, I have no problem. Right. Most don't. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Most don't ask the question because what if God says, I would absolutely heal your depression, but you're gonna have to leave Egypt and go out there in the desert. But yeah. Do it. Yeah. 'cause it comes with that journey. Right. Always. And it's the most like beautiful journey. Even though it can be really difficult at times to say the least Father, father, please heal my son. I believe well actually help down my unbelief. Such a fascinating verse where it's just in that instant where all faith has lost him. I mean that then he reaches for help, right? Yeah. Pool of Bethesda. Right. That chosen clip. It's one of our favorites. <laugh>. Yeah. I know that's not technically scripture. I literally don't, don't anyone freak, freak out at me.

Speaker 1 00:32:23 But I've literally stood at the actual pool of Bethesda in the Holy land and listen to that clip. And it is, I mean though it's not scripture, it's beautiful because you know, it connects with the Right, because Christ asks him the question, do you want to be healed? Yeah. And the guy's like, what? Whatever. And he is like, ah, the pool. And I'm trying to work it out and their interpretation of it. Right. Christ says, you know, there's nothing here for you. So that's the part that, 'cause I get clients in my office all the time. I do this for a living. Yeah. This is what I'm doing. How's that working for you? It's not So why are you still at the pool? Right? So why are you still at the pool? Yeah. I talk to people all day long. Yeah. I went to therapy before.

Speaker 1 00:32:58 It was stupid in my office, in my personal life. Yeah. We went to marriage therapy. It was a waste of time. How long did you do that? Yeah, two years. I'm like two years. A bunch of hours and thousands of dollars later. I was like, why did you stay? I was When did you know it wasn't working? Hmm. Like the second session the entire time. Then it's a pool of Bethesda. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> get out. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Follow him. Follow him. Yeah. And that's the one of my favorite stories that we ever had. A super, super old one. So the audio's terrible. 'cause this Christian couple, this is on your podcast, all my podcast so unashamed and afraid. So we record stories of people's sexual addiction recovery. So this couple comes ONM and Melissa. So not LDS. Right. So not a restored gospel deal. Hear the whole story.

Speaker 1 00:33:44 Beautiful. One of the most beautiful recovers I've ever heard. You know, how many therapy sessions they've done individually in their marriage? Zero. Oh wow. Not a one. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. We could get Chris Bennett in here. Chris and Autumn, 16 years sober does firesides all the time. Beautiful. Recovery story therapy was critical and key for him and his recovery and the experience that he had. Therapy doesn't heal people. That retreat you go to, and I love the retreats we do. Yeah. Don't heal people. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> that medication, it numbs you out. It's not going to heal you. It may help regulate you for a short period of time. I'm not saying all medication is bad, short term that bishop ain't gonna heal you. That family member, that friend group, that book that you read, that yoga class, I am that 12 step meeting. I am pro all of these things.

Speaker 1 00:34:31 They don't heal you. God does through his son. Period. No one else ever said they would show me whose gospel is like, I will heal your heart. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. I don't say that as a therapist. I don't have a billboard that's like, oh, by the way, if you come to accept it, I, Steven Shields will heal you. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. I mean, I might be dumb, but I'm not stupid. Yeah. So let's uh, touch the, the leadership poll here for a minute. So to me, like what I'm gathering from this is like, you've got the person who's been in therapy forever and they just keep coming back in, hoping the bishop's gonna say that one thing that's gonna change things. It's, it's about time to step back and reflect and say, whatever you're doing right now, we need to do something different. Is that fair to say?

Speaker 1 00:35:12 Yeah. Well, and and something you touched on earlier that I would say we actually do have an option for is it's like they can't get a different bishop. They can actually meet with someone else. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So you can say, I might be the wrong personality for you. And you don't have to say out loud, you freaking annoy me just the way you are, the way I'm a BYU fan, you're a Utah fan, you know, I'm an attorney. You walk around all the time talking about attorneys are stupid. You know what I mean? Like, I just, I have a hard time loving you because if you say you love everyone, that's like, when people are like, I don't see color. Yes you do. Like, no, you as a bishop will not love every member of your congregation the way God should love them. You're too human.

Speaker 1 00:35:49 Sorry guy. My wife's relief society president right now. Facts like you cannot love everyone. Like is it is not in your human capacity. God's the owner can. So you can say, meet with the elders quorum president, meet with one of my counselors, meet with the

stake presidency. You're a stake presidency member. That is a hundred percent something you can do. So one, if you just don't have the capacity to hold because you feel like you have personality limitations or something like that, I'm not saying leave all inspiration and go out, but you absolutely can say, Hey, we'll meet once a month to talk about your worthiness, but meet with the EL president every week with your pornography addiction and do that. And yes, I will sit in an office with you and we'll do an interview about whether or not you're gonna get your template recommended back.

Speaker 1 00:36:29 But the ongoing, that ongoing support role, there's a bunch of options, right? Yeah. And so, so like utilize them. Like if I were made a bishop tomorrow, I would be like, Hey, elders quorum presidency, counselors, relief, society presidency, young men's, young women leaders, y'all need to have a night every week and we'll do a potluck or have our spouses bring nachos or whatever. Because when that young woman comes in my office and says, Bishop, I'm depressed, I'm gonna go, Hey, why do you meet with your young women's leader every week and talk about it with your mom or whoever, whatever the safety needs to be there, right? Because I'm a man, whatever age I am, and you as a 16-year-old girl probably don't wanna sit here and meet with me about it, right? So go do that. Or the relief society president or there's, there's not like, we're so stuck in that the bishop has to have all the answers.

Speaker 1 00:37:20 You do not have to have all the answers. Right. You as the stake president don't have to have all the answers. Use relief, say President Scrum. Like you don't have to have all the answers. It's like, it is so easy to get back to refreshing, but we lose our way. I walk in, you walk into my office, are there resources I need to refer you to? Because I don't have to do anything. I just have to refer you to the things. So is this a food order, is this a referral to LDS family services or a specialty therapist or something like this? Is there a book club I should send you to a 12 step meeting? What a retreat, whatever, right? A medical professional, you know, whatever that is. And then I just have to give you the hope of the gospel. I just have to remind you that Jesus does actually heal and that it's possible.

Speaker 1 00:38:05 My job is to challenge that in you. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. That's it. Yeah. And my mind just goes to, you know, I've mentioned this before in the, in our newsletter that consider the, the small army of former bishops you have in your ward. Like if, if my bishop came to me and been like, Hey, there's a couple guys in the ward, I could really use some just brotherly love and brotherhood and could you just reach out to them and meet with them regularly? I'd be like, wow. Like I would cry at that request. It would, I would love to do that. And, and with that experience I have of sitting with people in their pain, you know, like there's so much I get offered there, but there's this, you know, this this cultural structure where we feel like, which is nowhere to be found in handbooks or whatnot of like only words about your struggle.

Speaker 1 00:38:45 And your sin can be discussed through between you and the bishop. And that's just a hundred percent not, that's a, that's plan that will fail every time. And it will overwhelm the, the bishop and the leaders in that word. If you try and and put that all on your shoulders a hundred percent. Well, and shame operates in secrecy. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, you know, who likes to do things in secret combinations, the other guy. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Yeah. So keep a ton of secrets in your word and see how that goes. Yeah. And there's a difference between me telling someone else's story and airing out someone's laundry. Yeah. That's drama. That's inappropriate. It's unkind shaming and mean, but it is not. You know, I remember my, my, uh, I had a bishop use me and my wife once, couple pornography addictions said, Hey, can you guys come to the ward and can you park on this side of the church and sit in your car?

Speaker 1 00:39:29 And I may or may not have you come into an interview. So what was he doing? He's protecting their privacy. So we don't pull up right next to him and be like, oh, it's the Jones' Camry. So I guess he's meeting with the Joneses now. We know who it is. So he said he need to park on the other side of the church, you know, we're like, great, happy to do that. He said, I may or may not call you a couple walks in. Yep. Struggling with porn. And he said, wow, that's really tough. I have no idea about that. There's a couple in our ward who's like totally gone through that. You wanna talk to him, by the way, it's the shields. That's it. You know? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And he has permissioned to meet. Yeah. Dude's been through church discipline twice and all this stuff, you know, so there's the story.

Speaker 1 00:40:03 Here's the, you know, he got all the dirt on him now, so do you wanna meet with him or not? And they're like, yeah, nothing to turn down. Totally. So we get a, so he texts us. Yeah, come on in. So we walk in, I'm like, oh, it's so and so. We sit down and the bishop's like, yeah, the, they've got stuff going on, but just talk about your story. Let 'em know. Hope, hope, hope, hope, hope, hope. Is healing actually possible? Are you guys gonna stay married? Are you gonna get divorced? Was the church that's been process hard, whatever. Tell him boom, right there it was. We had that whole conversation. Not 'cause that was Bishop not 'cause it's in the bishoprick. You know, I learned this lesson super easy when, when I was excommunicated kid, stray kid in my ward, stray cap. See him going past my house all the time.

Speaker 1 00:40:41 I'm like, what's his deal? Talked to him once, talked to him. Church, you know, high school kid. Dropped outta high school, talked to dad once. And I said, Hey, could I battle for that kid? Do I have your permission as his parents to, 'cause that's kind of creepy and weird if some adult guy talks to your son and they're like, totally. A hundred percent. 'cause they knew me. We had, you know, neighbor relations and knew us and help that kid get his GED ended up getting married. You know, some cool stuff. I I wasn't in young men's. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. That's a beautiful story. And, and so what I'd say to anyone listening, you don't need to call his bishop to give people the hope of the gospel As a bishop, that's all you need to do. Stop trying to fix everyone. Christ can fix 'em.

Speaker 1 00:41:19 You don't have to have the answers. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> just refer to places to go get the answers. Yeah. So a as a, as a therapist. Yeah. I know a ton about addiction and depression all and I can do all the how-tos, books, tip tricks. Do the things get in the heart or whatever. You as a bishop don't have to do that. If I were a bishop tomorrow, courage. Do you know how much therapy I would do on anyone? Zero. None. I'd be like, my job is to be the hope train. This is even easier. That's a fun part, right? Yeah. So here's the people at LDS family services that I think are good. Here's some other specialty people. So I'm happy

to send you therapy, but I want you to know you don't have to be depressed 'cause Jesus heals. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, just like you raise Lazarus from the dead.

Speaker 1 00:41:54 You don't have to keep that depression in your body. And if we need to ask that question of whether or not this is your thorn in your side, let's kneeling. Ask him right now. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> That's what I'd be doing as a bishop. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. I'd have a little pad down there. I'd just leave my knees down there. Do you think Jesus can really heal you? Oh, I don't know. I'm pretty bad. Great. Let's ask him. Done you these interviews 15 minutes at a time. That's the, is like I, I I get, and you know me, I'm not having a hard time with words. It just blows my mind that we look for answers everywhere except Christ. We look for problem solving everywhere except Christ. And I don't know why mental health is this magical box. I don't get it. You're telling me he can heal your grandma's breast cancer but cannot heal your depression, cannot heal your marriage, cannot hear your anxiety, your A DHD and you can't focus at work.

Speaker 1 00:42:43 Like, show me the scripture. 'cause I can go verse after verse of all sorts of crazy stuff. They didn't call people depressed in the New Testament. They didn't say that people were bipolar in the New Testament. That's the words we now in the world have made up to try to make sense of what's going on. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> They said they had demons in 'em. There it is. <laugh>. I just don't get it. Right. Yeah. Yeah. That's, that's powerful. So take me back to a little more practical world as far as like, I'm just thinking how bishops I, I'm going back to my own experience Sure. Since that's all I got. But like, how I viewed therapy was like someone would walk in the office, they drop a 5,000 pound elephant on my desk and I'd be like, for sure, okay, uh, let's talk about a little bit.

Speaker 1 00:43:26 Let's speak regularly and, and let's get you some therapy. Right? But it's this feeling of like, I'm more saying like just can we just get this off my plate? 'cause I don't know what to do with it. So let's give it to the professionals, right? Because they need to deal with it and then sort of outta sight outta mind. And so in this, if we take this, this cadence of like healing is possible and real, how do we approach therapy and making sure they have good therapy that's leading them towards healing. Yeah. So again, this is easy. So what I'd say, so our current world right now, so how it used to be is the church would charge you as award a hundred dollars per session for LDS family services. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So my clinic would've a conversation with the bishop and they'd go, Hey, I don't wanna pay \$120 an hour for therapy.

Speaker 1 00:44:14 I can send 'em to LDS family services. And we'd say, which is a hundred dollars a session, just so you know, whether it's LDS family services or individual clinics or whatever. So what the church has done now is LDS family services is now free. So from a budget perspective, it's a much more attractive option. Whether using LDS family services, using a private therapist, there's gonna be some differences to that, which we don't have to get into because as a bishop you actually don't have to care. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So as anyone serving in church leadership, you don't have to care because the truth is, whether it's therapy or any resource, this is all you have to do. So you and Elana walk in, you're like, we got marriage problems and you dump the 5,000 pound weight on me as bishop, I only have to do two things.

Speaker 1 00:45:01 I want you to know that Christ can heal your marriage and based on how much I've had Christ heal my marriage is how much power my testimony is gonna have in that room. Again, that's why you gotta do your own work. Do your own work. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So I'm gonna do that. Have empathy, right. Do that. Say, gosh, I love you. Sorry you're going through that. I don't know what, don't ever tell anyone. You get it. You never get it <laugh>. Well, you just can't. Yeah. You're not in the body. Get outta your vernacular. I I don't say that to people who have sexual addiction. I'm not like, I get it. Most people I mood have sexual addiction. I can tell them three quarters of their story without them saying a word to me doesn't mean I get it, does not mean I get it.

Speaker 1 00:45:36 Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So I can imagine that's hard empathy. I believe you got it. And by the way, Jesus heals. Heals. He will heal you. Does not have to take a lifetime. Let's get crazy. Let's leave Egypt and see if he parts the sea. Let's try him. Mm-Hmm. And I will go on that journey with you. I'm willing to be here while you go through that process. Resource. Go to resource A. Hey, who are the therapists at LDS Family Services in Sandy, Utah. These 10. So when I send this person, who are they going to? They're going to Sarah for marriage counseling. Great. Send them meet with them next week. All I have to do is this. What happened? How is Sarah? She's terrible. Okay, let's try on option number two. They go to option number two. Hey, how is therapist Jeff? So good. Why? Tell me about it.

Speaker 1 00:46:29 I don't have to know anything. Mm-Hmm. About marriage counseling. How to fix stuff. Communicate. They don't need any advice from me. I can just say, tell me how that was. It was good. Why? What'd you talk about? What he recommended this book. Tell me about the book. Why was it helpful? Blah, blah, blah, blah. Great. And what I want you to know is Jesus heals. So let's go out to that. Do you feel like we're getting out there? Do you feel like we're going out to the sea? No, Bishop, I'm too scared. Don't be scared. He's real. It's real. I'm with you. Let's go do it. Or Yeah, I feel like we're going out there. Great. I'm so happy We are. I'm with you. See you next week. Then they come back and we know therapist Jeff is good. If I've sent three people to Sarah and they all said that wasn't that good.

Speaker 1 00:47:06 It was a waste of time or whatever. Stop sending people to Sarah. If every couple you send to Jeff really finds healing and finds it helpful, send them all to Jeff if you recommend a book to people. So I had one bishop. Yeah. I used, what's the old one? The Kimball one. A miracle of forgiveness. The miracle Forgiveness. Uhhuh. <affirmative>. I said, yeah. What's your experience been with that book? Yeah. Most people really don't like it. It just doesn't come off. I said Great. 'cause there's some new ones written by Apostles. Yep. Elder Anderson, elder Anderson's book, you know, uh, power of Forgiveness Or Right. There's several. There's not, I mean, there's several. The miracle of forgiveness. That's why I'm not having the one come to mind. There's several. So give him Elder Anderson's book now. 'cause if you, if you're Oh for four or one for five on the Miracle Fris, give them a different book.

Speaker 1 00:47:54 So that's the beautiful thing, is all the members of your word will tell you if the resources are good or not. You don't have to do, you don't even have to read the book. Hey, I think you should really read this book. Okay. They read it. How'd that work out? Man, it was so good. Tell me what was that? Here's this paragraph. Oh my gosh. The spirit of Lord's

here. Let's pray. I think God's really gonna heal you. Do you believe that? I think I do. Bishop. Great. Let's pray. Hallelujah. Amen. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Go do it. Same thing. Your relief say President, gosh, I don't know what to do with all my kids. This is so hard. What resources do you need? Let's give you some resources. 'cause I know that motherhood is hard, but I'm with you and you can totally have healing and have joy in your motherhood.

Speaker 1 00:48:29 And I'm gonna stay with you till you find that joy in your motherhood. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> word. Cancel Bishop. I need resources for this member. Hey, you should come to this gym class with me and a bunch of other women in the ward or come walking with us in the morning or whatever. So Sister Johnson comes walking with you. Man, this has been really meaningful to me. Great. Keep inviting people. Walking. She comes once. How was walking? Uh, I don't like those ladies in the morning. I feel like they're kind of judgmental. Okay. Go with these ones that play pickleball. Go with these ones that do bunk all night. You just keep giving 'em resources till one works. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, I've never met had someone, because I, I get people who come into my office where I wanna go find that church leader and gimme a kiss on the forehead and be like, you did it <laugh>.

Speaker 1 00:49:10 You did it. And then I've got other ones that I want to call 'em and just go, I'm not sure which Jesus you believe in, but it's not the one of the restoration or the New Testament or the Jehovah of the Old Testament, frankly. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And that's saying something Jehovah of the old T. Yeah. I imagine. That's right. I'm like, it's just, that's something sad. You know what I mean? But it's like I see it when people come. I've never had anyone say to me, man, I just, I don't know if you're LDS or not. 'cause what they're asking is, are you okay talking about, I wanna know if you're a safe therapist to talk about with my church hurt. 'cause I might be out or I am out. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. Totally. So tell me about it. Yeah. You know what, Steven, I'm just so hurt.

Speaker 1 00:49:50 So I've got this pornography addiction and I've got this bishop and it was just so hurtful. He said he doesn't get it, but that he loves me and that Jesus heals. And then, you know what he did that was just so hurtful. He told me to read this book and it was like not helpful at all. So then he gave me a different one. That one wasn't helpful. And then, you know what? He did that really? Then he gave me another one. You never heard that? I just can't believe that Bishop and I don't believe in Jesus anymore. Or the church. I just have never heard that story. Mm-Hmm. I've never had some say. Yeah. That Bishop, he sent me to LDS family services. The person was terrible. Well, so then what do you do? So then I went to someone else's, someone else at LDS Family Services.

Speaker 1 00:50:30 It was terrible. And so then what happened? Well, so then he sent me to this private counselor and that was terrible too. Yeah. That bishop's a joke. I've never heard that. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. What I have heard a ton of church heard around is, uh, when the bishop tries to have all the answers and he's wrong. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. This bishop just told me to do this and I did. And turns out God was not in that. And so now I'm confused because he keeps telling me that. Right. I thought the bishop was supposed to have the answers, but what the spirit of God is telling me is not what he said. So now I'm in conflict. So

now I feel like I have to choose either what God's telling me or to, to stay active in the church, essentially is where a lot of people go.

Speaker 1 00:51:08 Because that's in harm's way for me. So I, what I would say is, if you want to hold the mantle as a bishop or as a relief study president, we keep saying bishop, but it's, it's any right. Leadership calling in the church, which there's a lot if you want to hold the mantle, if you want to start your Thursday night interviews with a prayer that says, Hey, dear God, I know you called me here for a reason. The mantle for a reason. So I'm assuming I have all of the answers and I'm just gonna sling them. Thanks for making me so wise and so smart. Name of Jesus Christ. Amen. And you want to have everyone walk in and you want to give them all the advice. And you are sure that every piece of advice you give is absolutely in revelation. Absolutely. What God has for them right there in that real moment of time.

Speaker 1 00:51:51 If that's a cross you wanna bear, whew. Gonna be a tough five and a half years. Yeah. Talk to me in terms of like the elders quorum president offering this or a relief sighted president or like building that culture of healing in on Sunday or you know, in their lessons or activities. Yeah. I mean, what I'd say is just go there. I don't know what else there is. I mean, you, you had just Griffith on here, right? His whole thing that he did, a stake president where it's like we're talking about the atonement. And if you don't know how the lesson ties into the atonement, don't teach the lesson. Just teach the atonement. Like changed his whole stake. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And that's the part that I don't get. So I teach you Sunday school right now. So I go to the bishop and I said, Hey Bishop, I'm aware that in the handbook with permission from you, I cannot teach the current curriculum.

Speaker 1 00:52:38 So do I have your permission to not teach the current curriculum? And he's like, yeah, totally man. 'cause he knows I'm do fireside and do all this stuff. So he's like, yeah, you know what I do every time, Kurt, I've found about 50 different ways so far to give them a moment to get honest in their heart and ask them if God is disappointed in them, if he actually loves them. And if there's hope for more healing, connection, and love from God. That's it. We do it every time. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> last class we did, uh, love Your Neighbor Is Yourself. Write on 10 sticky notes. What you said to yourself internally in your mind this week. Couple I'm willing to share. Brutal. Brutal. Hmm. You're dumb. You're not wanted, you're not smart enough. Everyone's disappointed in you. This kid in my science class writing notes and I said, great.

Speaker 1 00:53:27 Everyone else in this room, in the spirit of the Lord, write a sticky note for everyone else. Just look at 'em and write a note of what's true from them. Get up and read those. I'm wanted. I'm smart, I'm worthy. I'm a good person. Just change them. Just uplifted everyone. Do you know how many problems I've solved for my Sunday school kids? Zero. Kurt. Zero <laugh>. Yeah. Do you know how much context I actually know about what's going on in their lives? Zero. I don't have a clue. I don't have to. Yeah. And that's coming from someone who frankly I do have the skills. So I could say, yeah, totally kid that's getting bullied. High school kid struggling with porn. I actually do can as a guide, walk with you through that addiction path and get it done out of your life. So even as someone who you could argue, quote air quotes here maybe has some of the answers, air quotes, you know, to give the advice or whatever, which generally is a waste time anyways.

Speaker 1 00:54:25 But I just remind 'em that God loves them and give them the hope that healing's real and they all keep coming back. Yeah. I think I might have one of the only youth Sunday schools in the church that I don't have to go out in the hall and find them. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. I just go sit down and they all come in as soon as they can. I go 10 minutes over all the time. They don't even care. And they all joke about it. They're like, yeah, our moms are mad out there. But this is awesome <laugh>. Love it. That's awesome. That's awesome. So you, you just don't have to. Last time I checked, if you do the yoke with him, the burden's light. If you're drowning in your yoke as Bishop or elders quorum president, I think you should give it to him. You don't have to carry anyone's problems.

Speaker 1 00:55:05 God, none of these elders want to minister. Yeah. No doubt. They don't want to <laugh>. We don't have a culture of healing and brotherhood. So you know what you have to do. Nothing. Let him do it. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And I know that sounds that people are saying like, well that's dumb. What are the actual steps of doing that? <laugh> actually repent. Actually surrender it to him. Yeah. Have you as elders quorum president gone on? I don't care where you do it. Do it out on a hike. Do it in the woods. Do it in your living room. Do it in your car. Do it in the temple. Heavenly Father, I am Elko president. And you know what, no one in this world wants to do ministering. And you know, God, how I really feel about that is I feel like being called as Elder quorum president is a burden.

Speaker 1 00:55:46 And that there's now this weight on me that I need to convince everyone that ministering matters. Don't say so, God, since you called me, I'm assuming that the weight is supposed to be mine. So, um, give me the answers of how to do your job for you. And I, I as elders quorum president, will go convince everyone that ministering is real. Hmm. I mean, you're welcome to keep saying the try harder gospel prayer if you want. But I would just argue, how's that working out for you? Or that prayer could say, God, I want you to do it. So whatever you wanna do in this word, I'm willing to walk out of Egypt into the desert. So whatever you heal the hearts of these men, that we might have real brotherhood and caring in our ward and I'm willing to do something small, or I'm willing to do something big, let me know.

Speaker 1 00:56:32 Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And then I wouldn't worry about it for another minute. 'cause it's his church. It's his kingdom. Your only job is to be yoked with him and give it to him. Yeah. And believe, believe that God can really do it. Do you actually believe, I would say to an elders quorum to say, do you actually believe in the three years you're called or in the year you have left, God has the capacity to change the culture and experience around ministering in your ward. Just like healing the blind guy. Either you believe it or you don't. It just comes down to that. Either God heals or he doesn't. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So you just gotta decide which one you believe in. Yeah. And then be willing to go on that journey. That, that it will be a journey Yeah. That causes you to, uh, put yourself out there to try some different things to risk, to push back, to be in the battle of it all.

Speaker 1 00:57:19 And uh, yeah. You'll be shocked what can happen. Yeah. It's amazing. But what you will be is clear. Yes. And your heart will be alive in your calling and you'll be excited about doing it. And you won't, will not be the bishop going into your Thursday night interviews with everyone being like, I gotta get a burger and fries after this. 'cause this sucks.

<laugh>. Yeah. I've eaten a lot of burger and fries in my, in my service my friend. I, I mean, haven't, haven't we all, I did that in recovery for years and years and years. Try harder Gospel. Yes. God has inspired me for me to go do my recovery. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> gosh, it got easy when I just let him do it. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> super. Yeah. And that's, that's the experience everyone can have, right? I mean, that's our experience. I do this in the first interview with clients here and it's like revolutionary and it blows my mind.

Speaker 1 00:58:06 So I'm gonna, I'm gonna give every therapist in the world, just try this <laugh>. So I'm, I'm giving one of my top secret tricks. Try it. Nice. When that person sits down to meet with you for the first time, say to them, I actually think healing's possible. And my goal is to fire you as fast as possible. And the greatest moment I'm gonna have in this journey with you as a client is the day we sit down here and I say, yeah, we're done. See you send me a Christmas card. 'cause if you just wanna sit around and talk about this for the next 10 years, I'm a really expensive friend. So you to just go get a friend somewhere. 'cause I want you to know I actually want to be a part of a process with you as a client where you are healed.

Speaker 1 00:58:47 And I'm actually only here for that moment when you and I can sit here and I can go, you don't need to be here. I had this cool experience running a group once this workshop group is like week long thing. And the first day this cool experience. And I mean, these people were like ready to do their work outta all the groups I've ever run. I remember like the first hour I was like, oh, God's showing up in here. Like this can go down. And this lady, it's like the end of the first day, looks over at me and she's like, you are magical. Like we are lucky we got you as our guy. 'cause we're in this facility where they, you know, three or four groups at the same time. And I'm like, no, no, really this group is special. She's like, no, you are.

Speaker 1 00:59:23 She's like singing my praises. We get to like the second last day, this group member pours their heart out. Really vulnerable thing. Spirit's there. Super. You can't always call it the spirit and the therapy saying spirit's there super strong. And uh, that, that's a funny thing about therapy. It's like God will get to 'em anyway that he can <laugh>. Right. And so it's like, I'm so ashamed of my addiction. Like, well what's your higher power of the wind? Great. And if the wind was here, what would it say? Shocker. Exactly what Jesus would say. <laugh>. Um, but so does the universe. So does Mother Earth. They all, it's really funny how they all seem to think what Jesus thinks. But that's the whole, that's another podcast. That's right. But second to last day. So group members spirits, there whole thing happens. I mean, it's Kurt, it's just beautiful.

Speaker 1 01:00:01 You know, I'm sitting there as a therapist like, don't cry, don't cry. You're the container. Hold it. You know, it's just so beautiful, this healing. And as the group members are out, they're getting there, kind of everyone's hugging. And she looks back at me and she goes, you don't actually do anything, do you? <laugh>? So I turn around and goes back to connecting with the group. And Kurt, my heart was so full because I'm like, she got it. Like she gets it. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> like the healing is with her. And even called in the church when you sit in, in that calling as the common judge in Israel or with those priesthood keys, what is the priesthood? The power and authority to act in the name of God. It's still God's Moses didn't part the Red Sea. Moses with God's power parted the Red Sea.

Speaker 1 01:00:43 Moses couldn't tip over a water cup. You don't have to do it. I think that's where everyone gets lost. We get in the world and try and figure out how to do it. He just heals Kurt. Turns out brother. Amen. All right, here's the high points I'm picking up here. 'cause we've gone all over the place here. But I mean, good stuff. So the number one, and this we could maybe do a whole podcast on this of, and you've said it before on the podcast of do your own work. And for a leader to hear that, like don't be surprised. You feel immediate resistance. Like, oh no, no, move on to number two. Like, that's not it. But I just like, that's the huge invitation I have for people. And that doesn't even necessarily mean run out and get a therapist and talk to them about all your deep dark secrets.

Speaker 1 01:01:22 But like No, you do. You work a million different ways. Yeah, exactly. And you know, and I just see that like that's my favorite part of these, these men's retreats that we do that. Like it's when God sneaks up on those ones, you know? Sure. And I've been that guy and it's just like, oh yeah. Like remember how you were the guy who thought that God wasn't like, like he was good and he's coming to this Yeah. 'cause my son's here, my brother's here or whatever. But then the God sneaks up on him being like, no, like you are the one that needs to be healed. Like it's, it's such a beautiful personal experience in my own life where I thought, no, I'm, I'm good. I'm good Steve. But uh, he snuck up on me. So do your own work. And, and the invitation to leaders is just like anyone else, ask God if he has a better life for you.

Speaker 1 01:02:01 And I get it as a leader, you're high functioning at some level and you're like, no, I don't know. Like I've got a really nice Toyota Camry, live clean car runs. Well I'm great. I dare you to ask him if he's got a Ferrari for you. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. 'cause he does. I know he does. Yeah, he does. And so just ask, is there more just 'cause it's not bad. It doesn't mean there's not more Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. Second point, very leadership term delegate. Like don't do this on your own. Like there's so many resources in your ward, in your area and you know, like invite them into this Yes. And delegate the spiritual burden to Jesus. Yeah. There, it's, he's the savior of the world. You get to delegate the burden to him. You get to delegate all of the work. Right. Because last time I checked in the doctrine in covenants, nothing I've given you is temporal.

Speaker 1 01:02:47 It's all spiritual. So all of that spiritual work therapy can't what whatever it is, you also can have someone else do all of it. Yeah. So you literally just give me the hope guy. Yeah. Sweet. Yeah. And this next one, you have full permission as a leader offer hope and healing. And this is when, you know, you hear these debates sometimes with these stories of like, when you're giving a priesthood blessing, you should not pronounce healing on them unless you feel overwhelmingly, you know, inspired to do so. And the cadence I've taken with every priest of blessing, especially when it deals with health, I just heal. I say you are healed. And maybe it doesn't, maybe the arm doesn't grow back. Maybe this doesn't immediately, but like if the authority's real, like use it and you gotta go to the mat on whether or not it's real.

Speaker 1 01:03:33 Yeah. I mean I've sat with therapists that don't think people recover from porn addiction. I sat with one. It's his whole back, his entire practice. And he's like, yeah, but you know, most of 'em never heal. Right. And I was like, what? Like don't sit in the, in the calling and kind believe in Jesus. I'm fine being on a journey. I'm fine with you having your own stuff. But if

you want it to be different, yeah. You gotta go to the mat on that one. Either I can put my hands as a priest of blessing and heal someone's heart. Someone's arm, someone's cult or I can't. Yeah. And then last one is, uh, as the leader be willing to go on that journey with them and sit with them in their pain. And the, the frustration and the four therapists didn't work. And that book was, I got nothing from it.

Speaker 1 01:04:16 And just be there. Yeah. Yeah. You don't have to have the answers. Yeah. You're just there. You wanna know some of the, those powerful moments I have in therapy. How do on today with a client? Beautiful. She said three or four times. I just dunno why I'm crying so much. I just tons of releasing, like crying in a good way. Releasing Right. Like out of her body, not coming back. Right. You know what, most of the time I have to do in those moments, nothing shut up. That's what I have to do in those moments. Just sit there in silence. Yeah. Just listen. Mm-Hmm. You don't have to have all the answers. It goes back to your own work. The reason why people are unwilling to sit there in silent and feel like they have to have the answers is 'cause they haven't done their own work.

Speaker 1 01:04:50 The reason why you cannot sit with that couple in your ward who's having huge marriage problems is because you cannot sit with that level of discomfort, which means there's a discomfort in your life that's unresolved. Yeah. So if you do your own work, that last one's easy. It's one and the same. Yeah. And if just be with them and if leaders rather wondering, well, I don't, I don't know where to start with doing my own work. Like reach out to us. We can maybe give you some ideas or Sure can. Oh yeah, for sure. And uh, yeah. So all right, we did, at least for this, this segment, we may, this one, this one will probably come up again and again. So I hope always to drop. I took my goal. This is my, this is top of the mountain for me. Yeah. You know?

Speaker 1 01:05:27 Yeah. I just gotta get on here every once in a while. That's right. I, someone has to let the world know that your real name is KF and start calling you kf <laugh>. That's the mission all. So people who don't dunno. Steve calls me kf. What's the origin of the, of the, the name KF for you? Because you're Kurt Francom. I know, but you also love nf, isn't it? Yes. That's playoff of nf. Yes. It's a playoff of NF who's a Christian hip-hop artist. A Christian. Yeah. Hip-hop artist. He's really great stuff. You should go listen to it. Talk about therapy. There's some youth that walk into your office as a bishop. All you really do is just play some nf say, Hey, have you listened to NF before <laugh>? Yeah. Yeah. NF play the song Happy, you'll be converted. So good off the latest album.

Speaker 1 01:06:09 But yes. So Kurt, when I first met Kurt on his journey, a little, little, you know, a little, maybe a little Pharisee, a little square, you know what I mean? So like I just feel you just need his street name, you know, just something a little, yeah. Something a little hip hop, something a little not, you know, little less of a starched press suit. Right. And I grew up in West Valley, which many people in Salt Lake Valley would call the hood. So you know, gto Yeah. Going Yep. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. And so it just fit. And then he didn't like it, which then of course then it had to become a thing. So if anyone will please social media, email, send him an email and refer to him as kf. I promise you it will at least warm my heart. Yeah. I think it will warm.

Speaker 1 01:06:48 Well now it's, it's a term of endearment now because Yes. I love you, brother. Yes. Give him the love now. That's right. Love you too. Alright, so let's finish up with this, uh, with, with this question. Like, what has this concept of healing done for you? It not only gave me my life back, it gave me life that I didn't know was possible. Period. It literally gave me life. Like breath in the lungs is the physical life spiritually and emotionally gave me life, which is how I got sucked in. Therapy's a second therapy. And this being gets all a second career for me because I'm just like, what else is there to talk about? I worked in real estate before and I'm like, what a waste of time. <laugh> like not. And I have tons of friends who still do real estate and this meaningful career, but I'm like, literally life can be breathed into dry bones to quote the scripture. And you wanna talk about buying a shopping center? That is not how I wanna spend my day. I wanna spend my day walking into an office with someone and looking across 'em and going, so you don't need to be here anymore, do you? And have 'em know it.

Speaker 1 01:08:00 The end. That's it for this Leading Saints episode. I encourage you to check out some of the most popular episodes of the podcast that we list at the bottom of the show notes. If you haven't listened to all of those, do so now. Remember to watch the interview about scrupulosity, go to leading-saints.org/fourteen for free access to the Mentally Healthy Saints virtual library.

Speaker 2 01:08:31 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.