



Men in Elders Quorum

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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, we 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 do org slash 14](https://LeadingSaints.org/14). 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](https://leading-saints.org/one-four).

Speaker 1 00:00:56 I got an email the other day from an individual, I forget where he is in the world, but he says, Kurt, I love Leading Saints, and I listen to it every time I'm on the treadmill. And then one time during an interview he heard that Leading Saints has a YouTube channel and like all the interviews, at least the vast majority of them are video recorded. And you can watch the video recording of the podcast episodes. And I'm like, yeah man, get on there. Go subscribe on YouTube to Leading Saints. And you can get a visual of the interview and not just an audio experience. And even if you're not a big YouTube user, I do us a favor 'cause this actually helps us gain more reach and, uh, expose our content to individuals who could really benefit from IT leaders around the world. So regardless if you are on YouTube a lot or not, go to YouTube and search for Leading Saints. Find the Familiar Red logo and just subscribe even if you don't plan to view every episode there. That's gonna help us, uh, gain a larger audience, a more reach dial in the algorithm. And, uh, we'll start showing up on Leaders' Feeds that they didn't know how much they're missing here at Leading Saints. So head on over

to YouTube, search for Leading Saints and subscribe to our channel and leave a comment every once in a while, but be nice.

Speaker 1 00:02:22 Hey everyone, welcome to the Leading Saints podcast. My name is Kurt Francom and you are about to experience a monologue episode. That's right. No guest folks, just me. I have some thoughts though, concepts I wanna share, and I think you may find them informative for sure. Now, you know this, I have to like sneak up on myself to do a podcast episode to record one when it's just me, because you know, when, when I am have a somebody coming in to be interviewed, you know, like it's on the calendar, I gotta show up, I gotta make sure I'm ready, or they'll wonder if I'm crazy or they'll actually find out I'm crazy. And, uh, so it's a little bit easier to get done. But for these monologue episodes, you know, there's always something else to do, right? I think I gotta go vacuum the basement, not don't even have a basement.

Speaker 1 00:03:10 So here I am, I've got plans, I've got an outline here, I got things to talk about. But, uh, yeah, I had a sneak up on myself here. Now, uh, you'll probably also notice, I, I recently moved to American Fork, Utah, so shout out to my, my American Forks. I don't know what, what do we call ourselves here? I'd love to know if you're in the air. I'd love to connect. And uh, that's why if you're watching on YouTube, yes, we have a YouTube channel and it's something you should all subscribe to, even if you don't do YouTube very much 'cause it helps our reach and whatnot. But, uh, if you watch on YouTube, the lighting's a little off 'cause I don't got like blinds from my home office yet. And the sun just happens to be blaring through on my shoulder here. But, uh, let's just say it's a little bit of heaven I'm bringing to the episode 'cause I'll need it.

Speaker 1 00:03:55 So, uh, I've had the opportunity to be on a variety of platforms, you know, podcasts and whatnot to talk about men at church. Now, I don't know how I became the men at Church Guy, but you know, I, I'm kind of proud of it. I'm kind of glad that individuals have reached out to me to talk about this concept, this topic, men at Church, because I'm really passionate about it. And it's almost a personal ministry. I mean, outside of, you know, leading Saints, you know, I feel personal ministry and leading saints, but it's also sort of my day job as well. But when I show up to church, like I'm usually there ready to connect with other men because they need it. Now I was on these other platforms like, uh, the Quick Show. I think it's not The Quick Show, but Quick Show with, uh, Greg Matson and Thoughtful Faith with, uh, Jacob Hanssen.

Speaker 1 00:04:46 And we had some great discussions there and I'll link to those, but I didn't feel like I got to share everything that was in my notes. So I thought, you know what? I might as well come onto the Leading Saints podcast and share my thoughts. Now, the more I look at my outline, it looks a little jumbled. But nonetheless, there's some powerful thoughts in here I want to share with you. And I want you to no, to think about and you may disagree with me, and that's fine. I have no problem with that. And this comes, you know, a lot of these thoughts I've shared in the, in the Leading Saints newsletter. And there's a lot of disagreement I get from my thoughts on the, the newsletter. And, you know, when I receive disagreement, I

think great, 'cause here's what my point, my intention with Leading Saints in general is I just want people to, to contemplate about leadership related concepts and topics and principles.

Speaker 1 00:05:38 I don't need them to agree without everything that we present here at Leading Saints. So in fact, I hope there's some points in this episode that you do disagree with that you can sit with and say, you know, I just think Kurt's wrong. And be like, great. But as long as you've thought about it and come to your own conclusion or your own perspective and framing about these important discussions, then that's just fine. So I did an episode a few years ago called, is Elders quorum Working again, we'll link to it in the show notes. Worth a listen. I may touch on a few of those principles here in this recording as well. And that's okay. And just 'cause it needs to be talked about more, more. And I think every few years or every year or so, I'll just have one of these episodes talking about men in church, whether it's me, whether it's somebody I'm interviewing.

Speaker 1 00:06:25 But again, this is so crucial. Like there are these components in our culture that if we can figure out these specific things, so many other problems fix themselves. And men at church is one of them. If we can crack the code on men at church, man, so many other problems would be solved. Homes would be stronger, youth would be more prepared to face the world, marriages would be better. Now, as I say that, I don't mean that like to frame this as if men are the problem. Like, oh my goodness, let's just roll the other our eyes at these men. I just can't believe they're just not getting it together. Like, can we please just stop it with the porn? Right? Like, that's often where we go with these discussions of men at church. The reality is, is not too many people, not not too many organizations, society as in at a large, really doesn't know what to do with men.

Speaker 1 00:07:19 And I'll be honest with you, as a man, most men don't know what to do with men. They don't know what to do with themselves. And that's why we see this plague of the world pornography taking over because and becoming so, so dominant in the lives of so many men. And yes, I know women struggle with it too, but for the sake of this episode, uh, yeah, it, it's becoming, it's a coping mechanism. 'cause men don't know what else to do. They don't know how to escape from the pressures of life. They don't know how to engage with their marriage. So porn is an easy solution. And porn isn't the only thing, the only coping mechanism. There's, there's work, right? There's even spirituality. I mean, if you want a, a blessing for a really tough marriage, have the husband get called as bishop, it gives him an escape.

Speaker 1 00:08:10 I know that sounds crazy, but it's true. There's so many people that use that welcome service opportunities. 'cause it gives them an escape out of their world that they don't know how to deal with, right? And again, serving as bishop, serving in church, callings, uh, having service opportunities are all good things. But if we're using them simply as an excuse to escape whatever prison we're living in, then I think there's bigger problems to talk about. So again, I don't think society really knows what to do with a man. There's sort of this, uh, I don't know if you've picked up on it, I'm, I'm spending less and less time on, on Twitter or X as as you should be as well, and social media in general. But there's this, uh, even in movies, media, you'll see this, uh, shaming of masculinity, right? People wanna water it down.

Speaker 1 00:08:59 They label it toxic masculinity, right? As if, ah, it's a, it's a virus. Like keep it away. Like don't, and okay, don't get me started on Barbie movie, but I won't go there. Not for this podcast. But nonetheless, it's just this, even society doesn't know how to frame healthy masculinity without like giving us this really passive, passive man that just behaves and is nice and, you know, does the dishes. And what I mean, again, again, those things are good, but I'm talking about sort of that persona, that caricature, that society offers us. 'cause I don't think society knows what to do with men. Like I said, men don't, don't know what to do with men. What about the church? Does the church know what to do with men? Like what, what does the church offer men? Now, I'll be the first to admit, and, uh, I'm speaking to this mic and so I'll, I'll admit it here.

Speaker 1 00:09:51 Like, the church has a lot to offer men. I mean, you think of spiritual instruction they get from attending church and being part of ward, right? In Sunday school and elders quorum, like on paper that makes sense. Like let's get the doctrines of Jesus Christ into the life of men or spiritual behaviors, right? A good dose of scripture, study prayer, family prayer, temple attendance. Like of course these things have been revealed, restored, given to us in order to bless the lives of even men. Oh, uh, I'll mention one other thing. Callings, right? Man, I'll tell you what the, the 10 years I spent in formal church leadership, huge blessing. Like it spoke to my masculinity to step into that role, feeling unprepared and being able to help others. Like it felt good. Like it really helped my heart come alive, which is connected to my masculinity.

Speaker 1 00:10:47 But there's these, like, these side effects that happen, whether in society and in church where we deliver the wrong message that we never intended to deliver, but it somehow got there, right? Just this concept of like this, the the pressed white shirt and tie maybe the suit coat, right? Like we sort of put that at the pinnacle in our faith tradition. Men who dress like that, men who are super nice, right? Uber nice. I don't know if you've ever had that, that bishop or steak president greet you coming into church. He's got this big grin on right? Big white teeth shaking hands, telling him. So glad to see you, right? But, which is, I mean, I appreciate what he's trying to do and whatnot, but you don't really feel like you're getting a person there, right? It's sort of, it's sort of plastic, right? And again, he's not trying to be plastic or fake, but he's wanting people to feel welcome at church.

Speaker 1 00:11:45 And so that's sort of the facade he puts forward, right? But we don't know the problems he's facing. We don't know the dark times, the struggles, the things that he cries about or things he really tries not to cry about. So in general, we've sort of created this caricature of a spiritual man. It is a very passive man. It's a man that is codependent, or in other words, somebody who acts a certain way so that everyone around them is comfortable and hopefully happy. So here's the most heartbreaking statistic, and I've shared it before, but I'll share it again. When you think of the various organizations in a Ward Relief Society, youth, primary Elders, quorum, and the sad statistic is Elders Quorum is the most likely, the most at risk to have a suicide man that just breaks my heart, right? Like, what are we offering these men to avoid that, to not seclude, to lean in and find fellowship and brotherhood connection to find life, to figure out how to get their heart beating again.

Speaker 1 00:12:55 So here's just some things to consider is you think of the offerings that our church, our faith tradition gives to, uh, certain demographics in the, in the church, right? Primary wonderful experience. You have activity days that leads into youth. And I mean youth, such a dynamic program. And, and I meant like it's not totally perfect and everywhere you go and ward leaders are, are still struggling with these things. And then we have, you know, youth conferences. We have eef, not eef, Ys, uh, Fs, Ys now, right? Such these dynamic opportunities and, and budgets are being poured into these activities and these, these organizations and man, thank goodness 'cause youth need help, right? And then we, we send 'em on missions and you know, I get, again, the mission program isn't perfect, but a remarkable opportunity. Like I think back to just my mission. I, I left as a boy.

Speaker 1 00:13:50 I returned as a man. Like, it was such a, an impactful experience that I think about every day, right? That's sort of the cliché thing to say. But the mission program is, is a godsend for individual development for these young people. And it's incredible and I applaud it and, and it should continue on. And, and maybe even into like the YSA wards and whatnot. Like there's a lot of resources there and opportunities and activities and whatnot. And then you get married or you sort of age out of those things and we sort of enter the endure to the end program, right? Like right there you go. You've made it like you made all the covenants, like now just make it to 90. Good luck. Right? And it breaks my heart that maybe we don't offer more to that demographic. And again, I'm speaking just about men, even with the men like you are, are privy or have access to the ward budget.

Speaker 1 00:14:44 Go look at the Relief Society budget and compare it to the elders quorum budget. You know, I think there's, could be some work done there. Typically the elders quorum budget, you know, they don't get much 'cause they don't really maybe know what to do with it, right? They need some ideas. And hopefully I can give you some ideas here. The reality is, is I think we, we don't have a well-rounded offering for those that age out of the mission program and the YSA program and beyond. And it's something to sit with, something to think about. Now, some may say, Hey Kurt, come on. I mean, the cur the church can't do everything for these people at the end of the day. Like, men just need to get a job, be good fathers and show up for their kids and, and do it, get it done, right?

Speaker 1 00:15:25 But I don't think it's that easy. I think we default to duty a little bit too much rather than heart. And let's get into that. But we have that hyperfocus on the youth, okay? And again, I love all these programs. They need to continue and they're fantastic. However, I believe so deeply in this concept. And it is this, if you wanna fix the youth, walk down the hall and fix Elders quorum again, if we can dial in Elders quorum if we can get it to a place where it is energizing and waking men up, it will have a significant impact on the youth. 'cause think about it. No matter how much money gets poured into the youth program, no matter how many activities happen, no matter how many dynamic testimony meetings they sit through treks, they experience youth conferences, they engage in, if they have a home that's falling apart and their parents' divorce, a lot of that effort's really flushed down the toilet from that trauma that that child goes through.

Speaker 1 00:16:24 Like seeing a home fall apart or a father addicted to substances or even pornography like a father that doesn't show up for the kid. Like it again, the, these youth programs are important, but they only go so far if the home isn't put together. If the home doesn't offer strength, if the home doesn't refuel itself. And a lot of that begins with the man in the home. And of course we'll have other episodes of things to talk about women and, and, uh, the importance and, and needs that are there as well. But if we want to fix the youth program, if we wanna fix the youth, if we want to give them what the gospel has to offer, we got to walk down the hall and start with elders quorum all. So here's another concept, uh, that plays into this that I wanna talk about.

Speaker 1 00:17:09 This concept of the nice guy versus masculine men. Okay? 'cause, uh, again, we, uh, society has presented us with this concept of toxic masculinity. And I'm sure when you think about that, that term toxic masculinity, a certain image, a certain caricature comes to mind as far as who that person is. It's probably someone who's repulsive. It's probably someone who's crass or offensive, rebellious. They really offer nothing to others. It's all about them, right? They're emotionless. You are never gonna see 'em, see 'em cry, but you'll never really see 'em happy either. They have this almost pose about them, right? They're not really, there's a facade. They're trying to be too more tough than they are, almost as if they're hiding something. And, uh, they ever have a problem, they seclude, right? They don't ask for help. They don't wonder what, you know, what what emotional therapist they can go to, to they, they, they seclude.

Speaker 1 00:18:06 And that's sort of our general caricature of what toxic masculinity is. But just like all things, these things fall on a spectrum. And that's one side of the spectrum, the extreme toxic masculinity side of the spectrum. However, there's another side of that spectrum that I call passive masculinity. And this is where, man, this is a lot connected to my story being raised as a good boy in the church. Just like every mother, they wanna raise a really good boy. And what happens is they grow up to be a really nice guy. Now what's what? Wrong with a nice guy? Well, you know, I'll refer to, to many episodes. We've done one with Dr. Robert Glover, who wrote the book No More, Mr. Nice Guy. Phenomenal episode. Must listen to if you're really concerned about men's issues and whatnot, or if you're struggling in a marriage, whoof, I mean, it helped my marriage a lot for sure.

Speaker 1 00:18:59 Just reading that book. And it had a phenomenal discussion with Dr. Glover. So this passive masculine person is closed as well, but they're the quiet one, right? They're not repulsive, they're quiet. And instead of being crass or offensive, like the other toxic masculinity person is, the passive masculinity is, is hyper obedient, right? You'll see this, uh, start to, to sprout in a mission experience, right? Because we stress obedience so much and obedience is important, but we become hyper obedient because we realize when we're super obedient, more people accept us. More people see us as the righteous person, right? Instead of giving nothing to others, they give too much of themselves to others. Yes, it is possible to give too much, right? Maybe you've experienced this in a calling. You give so much of yourself that at the end of the day you return home and you have nothing left to give, especially to your family.

Speaker 1 00:19:55 They're also a posr. They put up a facade. But it's, it's not a, a rough facade, an emotionless facade or a tough facade. It's a nice facade, right? Again, going back to that plastic leader who's shaking hands at the beginning of a meeting, they're not letting you in and uh, they can be clingy to their wife. They can be clingy to their family. And you're thinking, what, Kurt? I mean, aren't we supposed to be engaged with our family? Not that much man. Not that close to the point you're suffocating them or that they're so dependent on if she ain't happy, I ain't happy, right? That's not a healthy place to be. Talk to any therapist. That's what they'll tell you. There's a balance there. You've got to give, fill your own cup so you can then fill other cups. You gotta have it to give, you can't just keep giving until it's empty.

Speaker 1 00:20:43 And when they face tough things, life trials instead of, or they do the same thing as the the tough guys. They seclude. Okay? So here's the, the big point I wanna stress is that this is a spectrum and just as much as, as toxic, just as toxic as the, the toxic masculine guy is the, the low emotion toxic masculine guy is the passive masculinity is just as toxic. And it's, it's like the silent cancer. It really is. 'cause that person appears to be a model citizen, but he is not offering anything. He's not his real self. And so we show up to Elders quorum, those types of men can show up to elders quorum. And it feels like they're giving a lot, but there's nothing real there. We need real men offering real strength in those settings. And so it's in the, it's a balance in between those two extreme toxic ends.

Speaker 1 00:21:36 We have healthy masculinity in the middle now. And that healthy masculinity, that that big difference from the passive masculine and the toxic masculine is that the healthy masculine is high in emotion. You feel emotion from this guy. He connects with his emotions. He knows what it feels to feel feelings. Was that, that was a little weird. Okay? But you get what I'm saying. You'll often, you'll see this man cry, you'll see that he's not afraid of conflict. He doesn't mind pushing back when the going gets tough. He doesn't mind standing up for his wife or his family when things get awkward. He's not trying to diminish or pacify or diffuse, that's the word I'm looking for. Diffuse the situation. He wants to stand up and offer strength when he is faced with a battle. Uh, he finds strength with men, with other men, brotherhood. He finds it fueling.

Speaker 1 00:22:28 And that's a big thing that John Eldridge talks about. Who wrote the book? Wild at Heart? I'm a big fan of John Eldridge. You, you really want to get in this, the men's issue topic. You read John Eldridge, but he talks about only masculinity can bestow masculinity. We can't get it from our wives, we can't get it from our children. It's gotta come from other masculine figures in our life. And this is where the hurt happens, the wounding happens is growing up as little boys, many of our fathers didn't show up with that masculinity 'cause they were just in survival mode as well. They didn't have it to give. And that's not a, a hit on them, or we're not trying to blame them or anything. But that's just the reality of it. We were born into mortality. A world had war and these men were taken out.

Speaker 1 00:23:15 They had nothing to offer. But it is in the relationship with other men. Brotherhood where we find significant strength. A healthy masculinity offers strength to others. They are emotionally available and in life trials, they reach out. If there's anything I say the most when I'm connecting with some of my, my brothers, other masculine men in my life, I always

remind them, make sure you do not battle alone. Like, reach out to me, let's talk it through. I'm not gonna have all the answers, but let's talk about it and see what we can learn together in these life trials. And you think about maybe a, you know, a tough day at work, a demotion that happens, a death in the family. Uh, oftentimes men take that angst, that emotion, and they take it home and they sort of offer it to their wife. Like, Hey, help me figure this out.

Speaker 1 00:24:09 Right? And the, maybe the wife is dealing with her own stuff. It is by taking it to other men where they'll find that strength. Well, they'll find that energy to refuel and then they can return to their family and offer the same strength when they need it the most. Okay? So again, that's just a spectrum I wanna build in your minds. And I have a visual in the show notes if you wanna see it. But this is a spectrum. And we have to realize that toxic masculinity isn't just on one end of that spectrum. It's on the other end. And religion is pervasive. Religious communities are pervasive in creating the passive masculine man. And so we need to check ourselves and say, are we doing that? How can we avoid it? Well, I have some, some ideas here for you. Alright? So I wanna, uh, revisit some concepts I've, I've touched on earlier, but, uh, again, what does the church attempt to offer men?

Speaker 1 00:24:57 And again, these are remarkable things. The church offers men saving ordinances. Boom, love it. Ordinances. There's an endowing effect on ordinances, right? That pun is intended. It is revealing identity. And often for men, the men experience it is revealing divine masculinity that is essential for us to understand, for our hearts to be alive and for us to become, which is a huge doctrine, almost at the core of our doctrine, to become what God intended us to be, what God put in us. So saving ordinances, crucial spiritual development, right? Hopefully through church services, whatnot, you get spiritual development on paper. You, you know, we're offering people community and brotherhood. I love, I love the concept of elders quorum. I would just argue that we have a perfect Maserati engine. We just don't know how to turn it on. And, but we can get there, we can't.

Speaker 1 00:25:52 So, uh, the church offers community and brotherhood service opportunities, right? There's opportunities within the church to get out of yourself and give to others. I think that's a remarkable tradition and practice. And lastly, what I put on my list is leadership opportunities. Right? There, again, my time in, in formal church leadership was a very, very mascul experience in a very positive way. Like I could really show up. And anyways, I, so the fact that the church offers that is phenomenal. However, there's often not enough to go around. There's not an, I mean, I've been in some wards where 50 men in that ward would be remarkable bishops, but we only do one bishop at a time in award, right? So it doesn't get around everybody in there to, to give them that, that opportunity. Now, what does the church really offer men? I, I know we are on paper, we have these great intentions to give to men, but what's really being offered?

Speaker 1 00:26:49 I, you know, saving ordinances instead of service opportunities, it then comes across as just more assignments. Like, Hey, we just need you to do these things and you know, here's a passive aggressive guilt trip to get you to do these things. And come on, we really need you to do these things. And right. They're just, they feel more like assignments rather than opportunities. There's this constant drum of an over investment in family. And again,

<laugh>, here's a great opportunity to disagree with me, right? Again, like it is so important to show up for your family, but I often call it the little, the little league trap. Like next time you go to a little league game, whether it's for your, your kids or your grandkids, like look around at the different parents and see how they're engaging in that experience. You have the one parent who's the coach, like, hats off to that person.

Speaker 1 00:27:34 <laugh>, right? Bless their heart. There's blessings in heaven for them. Um, but what a great sacrifice to really engage with the children. So that's a great place to do it. And again, not everybody has that opportunity or will take that opportunity. Uh, but a lot of the parents are sort of on their phones or maybe just in conversation with another parent, they're scrolling. But we sort of built this norm into our society that, hey, if you show up to those little league games, you're doing it, man. Good job. Like, that's how you parent. When in reality, and this is part of my story, I just, there's some days I just don't know how to show up for my kids, right? And I feel so much shame in that, or I show up in the wrong ways, or I use my dad voice too often, or it's just, uh, it can be heavy.

Speaker 1 00:28:17 But there's this overinvestment of family of like the, and the message that men get is just like, no time for brotherhood. It's time to grow up, get the job, get home to the family. And that's what you gotta do. When in reality there's so much more that's needed. So I just want us to like, let's pump the brakes on the overinvestment in family and hear me out here. 'cause again, I'm not saying that men just need to abandon their family or, you know, leave them to suffer. Obviously your family needs you, but there's maybe a different approach that we consider at doing this. All right? So what do men need from, from the church? Like we've talked about some things that the church sort of offers them on paper, some maybe mixed messages that they get with the best intentions. But what do men need from church?

Speaker 1 00:29:02 What do men need from the quo? So there's this reflex we have, and it's not in our faith, it's all over of what men need is someone to get in their face and sort of remind 'em of their duty and say, Hey, you gotta get out there and come on, you can do better. Like, stop looking at the porn and kinda, you gotta go fight and you know, you need to get a better job or you need to do this. And so there's this, we lead out with duty or responsibility. Like what men need is they need to be reminded of their responsibility. Now, that's all important. And actually it is good for the, the male heart, the masculine heart to have a good dose of duty and responsibility. However, we have to lay the foundation. And the foundation is heart. You've gotta start with heart.

Speaker 1 00:29:47 And this is the big thing we're missing, not on only in our faith tradition, but others is most organizations, most leaders, church leaders, they don't know how to start with heart. So they start with duty, they start with a responsibility. But there's a better way. Start with heart. You may have this perception of men in the church or elders in the church as, and they seem lazy. You know, we ask them to do these things. Nobody's doing the ministering <laugh>. Most aren't, I mean, many wards, they don't even, or they're not even experiencing ministering interviews, right? So it, it's just like, we know it's out there, but there's this constant like, do more, give more. You're not doing enough, right? And so it's easy to sort of just label them gen

generally as like lazy. And if they just understood the gospel better, if they just knew that they should be doing these things and uh, maybe they just don't have a strong enough testimony.

Speaker 1 00:30:42 Maybe they're not in their scriptures enough or whatever it is. But there's no laziness in elders quorum I promise you. Like if you followed around each one of these men for the entire week, the vast majority of them, you're going to find a hardworking man, almost a too hardworking man to the point that he is empty and has nothing to give. And so then there will be no surprise when he shows up to Elder's quorum. And he has literally nothing to give. He can't even make a comment. He's so exhausted. So there's no laziness in elder's quorum. Only a lack of fulfillment. Okay? So if you start with heart, you have to understand what fulfills that heart. And few church leaders are taking the time to really ask the question, what makes your heart come alive? What fulfills you? What gets you excited? Few really ask the question 'cause we lead out with duty.

Speaker 1 00:31:34 But you consider the life of Jesus. Nobody else had a more mission-focused life than Jesus Christ. I mean, obviously 'cause he's Jesus Christ. He knew clearly what his mission was. Many the same thing. They need a mission, again, not based on duty that you're offering them, but duty that God is offering them from their heart, like this call from within their feeling to get out there and be mission focused. So men need that moment to return to their heart. Again, I hope this concepts aren't too arbitrary. They're, I hope they're, they're a little bit, uh, abstract. I know, but I just love the concept. I'm a huge Superman fan. You'll often see that Superman cape behind me in my videos. I love the concept in the story of Superman, that he has the fortress of solitude. This is the place where he can return home.

Speaker 1 00:32:24 And, and I love the visual 'cause it pretty much looks like a temple. And Superman has to return to the fortress of solitude in order to recharge, to reconnect to his story, to reconnect to where he comes from, to reconnect to his original identity that was given by a father, not of this world. And <laugh>, I mean, we have the theology so perfect for this concept, and I think we miss it. Sometimes We have a eternal father that it wants to endow us with an identity. I mean, we are, we are superheroes. I mean, marvel's got nothing on us because this is real life. This is real eternity that we go to a fortress of solitude and receive an endowment from God that reminds us that we're not of this world. Okay? Again, a little abstract, but what I'm saying is that men need to re have these opportunities to return to the heart.

Speaker 1 00:33:20 Oftentimes, they're asked to fly and save the world without even understanding how to fly or where their power comes from. So start with heart. I feel like I'm, I'm dancing around this, but hang with me. I hope, hope you'll, uh, key into some of these, these points. Again, this is a study. Like this is something if you're elcor president out there, this needs to be like a part-time research endeavor to understand the man's heart. Because when you flip that switch, it will transform your ward. It will transform the culture. Like, I don't wanna hear any other bickering about, well, it's, it's not doctrine, it's culture. Like we can diminish all negative culture by flipping the switch of the heart of man. So make it your focus. Like dig in, there's so much. And if you don't know where to start, like reach out to me.

Speaker 1 00:34:09 We're gonna put it in the show notes. You'll know where to do it. So starting with heart, focus on what fulfills them. Their purpose right now this may look like is we have to, for a, a week or two, put away the conference talk and say, we're gonna spend the next 40 minutes just trying to understand the story. And, okay, snapshot, here's, if I was to write a leadership book, maybe I will someday, if I was to write a leadership book, one chapter would be that all leadership starts with the story, the story of every individual that's in that room, or that every individual that you lead. Because every individual has a story and it wants to be heard. And once it's heard, it energizes the heart and it brings up purpose and fulfillment to the surface that, that they can actually do something with.

Speaker 1 00:35:00 So if you to take an elder's quorum, set aside the the general conference, talk for just a week or two or as long as it takes, and just say, I, we just want to hear each other's stories, whether they get in groups, whether, I don't know, start a podcast that we have a whole episode on that whether you just put a man in the center of the room and just start asking him questions and this isn't some cute get to know you activity. This is like, you know, tell me like, why are you a lawyer? Why are you a, in construction design? Why are you an architect? Why, you know, whatever it is. Like, where does it hurt? When did you lose heart? Tell me about your mission. Tell me about the time you wanted to come home from your mission. Right? You start telling these stories and out will come their purpose and fulfillment.

Speaker 1 00:35:42 And if you can anchor that purpose and fulfillment, you will have an energized elder's quorum. So there's no perfect way to do this, but figure out a way to start with their story. The next thing is just understanding the core desires of a man's heart. And this is a concept that John Elridge came up with in his book, A Wilder Heart. Again, must read for all elders quorum presidents and anybody who associates with a man in their life. But he talks about these three core desires. And maybe you would adjust these or add one or take one away, whatever. But I think they're pretty, pretty powerful. Every man has three core desires, A battle to fight, an adventure to live, and a beauty to love. And you explore these core desires in the context of Elders quorum. And you will see men come alive. And this is something I'll, I'll mention a little bit later, but this is exactly what we do.

Speaker 1 00:36:32 Uh, leading Saints has partnered with an organization called Warrior Heart. And we put on pretty regular, I think we're doing nine of these retreats in the coming year of men's retreats. And we bring in these men, I'm actually recording this two days before one of these retreats. We have 138 men coming up to the mountains, to the Wasatch Mountains, to a Christian camp, and to see them roll up and they're not sure what they're getting into. And it is, it is a top five experience in the life of these individuals. The vast majority of these men leave with their life change because they have tapped into the core desires of their hearts. So by taking these three core desires, just starting there and having discussion, and again, it doesn't need to be elders quorum. If you don't wanna set aside the general conference talk, that's fine.

Speaker 1 00:37:20 But create a place for men to come together, often it it works great around a fire and discuss these core desires of a man's heart. And you'll realize, you know what? I do need a battle to fight. You know, I do need adventure in my life. You know, I do need a beauty to fight for a beauty to love, a beauty to, to be there for, to offer her strength. So let me

give you quick, uh, some quick examples of, of these three core desires, a battle to fight. Men need a battle, whether it's a, a job that they feel passion in that they're going after the sales goal. It could be, you know, the softball tournament that they're in with their work buddies, right? We often roll our eyes like, I can't believe my husband signed up for the softball league, but no, this is the battle to fight coming out to the surface, right?

Speaker 1 00:38:07 They need to venture to live. This is the, the weekend warrior. Like this is where the hyper focus on family can be. So can actually counteract the family because men need time to get away with men to hunt. Men need time to get away to hike. Men need time to get away to get to the game. Men like they need that adventure of, of traveling, of going across country to, to visit that one stadium. They haven't been due to watch that baseball game like men need that type of thing. And again, it's gonna be different for everybody. And not everybody can travel. Not everybody can go on these, you know, weekend warrior trips. But men need something where they can escape their world and connect with their divine masculinity and feel that adventure, that fun of climbing the mountain and feel like I did it right.

Speaker 1 00:38:54 I did this, this was hard, but I did it. And then a beauty to love, like men need women, right? And I don't mean that in a sexual sense. Men need a feminine character to offer strength to. That doesn't mean that, you know, again, all the modern time controversies of like, ah, men, you know, a woman doesn't don't need men and they can stand up, they're strong, whatever. But men actually need that. They need a family. They need a, a, a woman in their life that they can offer strength to. It's part of their core desires, something that God put in them. Another thing elders quorums can offer men is brotherhood. And again, this is one of those things, yeah, it sort of makes sense on paper, Kurt, but what does that look like? And you know, I try, you know, we get the men together in a room, but they just don't seem to offer each other brotherhood.

Speaker 1 00:39:42 Here's a few things, a few ideas of how to stimulate brotherhood. I don't think we leverage enough the opportunity of mentorship in an elders quorums especially since we've combined high priests and elders. That 55 plus group has so much to offer to those 20 to 40 year olds. Okay? So even if you took a, a moment or a, a whole elders quorum lesson or an activity, just invite a men together and paired them up with other men that are, uh, more of an in a mentorship role, okay? Or find the, the, a successful businessman and connect them with a up and coming guy who's in business school, right? Like, figure out ways to connect the older generation to the younger generation. Offer mentorship. And again, it starts with stories. What's your story? Tell me about your mission back in 1965, right? Or tell me about what it was like when you were bishop or, you know, getting them connecting and offering mentorship.

Speaker 1 00:40:37 Like it will make those 55 plus to have younger men come to them and seeking advice and perspective on life. Like, whoa. Like that will ignite their heart. And so you've gotta orchestrate that in in elders Quorum. And again, there's a thousand ways to do it. There's not one clear way. You just gotta, just gotta try and figure out what works and, and I can't stress enough. If you ever have opportunity, and, and again, you go to a warrior heart.com and look at the retreats that we're doing around the country, you've gotta come experience. Like even if you're just there as a spectator, you see men praying for other men. I mean, it is like, it's just

bringing me to tears. Just thinking about like these men who like show up and offer strength to other men. We need men who are praying for each other.

Speaker 1 00:41:24 I think of Mike Vokovich, an elders quorum. I think he's an orum. I interviewed, we'll, we'll link to his, his episode. But, and the way he, he like goes after the hearts of men in his quorum and offers blessings. Like, like, go listen to that episode, his heart, how you like that, that ignites the man's heart, right? That starts with heart. Another thing like, and I've mentioned this a few times before, but if you're looking to stimulate vulnerability in an elder's quorum, invite a guest speaker in to tell their story. I, I often reference Chris Bennett or Evan Hathaway. If you're in Idaho, I mean, wherever you're at in the world, I can probably get somebody to your elders quorum or suggest somebody reach out to me and just have them come in and tell their story. A story of vulnerability, a story of struggle, of story of messing up, but a story of redemption.

Speaker 1 00:42:10 And it's so amazing to see this, I can't even articulate it with words, but it just breaks open those hearts and it gets the engine going. And then you'll, you'll find of weeks to come. Like men just start to, to share and connect on, on unique ways. It's, it's remarkable. So that brotherhood stimulated it through mentorship, pray together, invite people in to share their story, you're gonna find it and you're, you'll see that their heart is, comes alive. Okay? Authenticity. I talked a little bit about this already, but share them your story. Ask them what's your story? Start with story. Help them see like the main point of this is showing that all men struggle, right? Of course we struggle. We were born into a world at war, right? We were born, God gave us weakness as we learn in ether. He gave us mortality so that we can become strong.

Speaker 1 00:43:00 Like this world at war makes us strong by sharing these experiences. Is it des shames their experience lets 'em know that they're not alone, that they don't, that they don't need to seclude it reinforces divine identity. That they were divine, that they were endowed to overcome these things that they face in life. And then again, offering models of authenticity of sort of redundant there. But yeah, invite guest speakers in to share that adventure. Offer men adventure. I remember I had an elko once. He knew that I had a passion in ministering to, to men and whatnot and a lot of experience with leading saints and uh, interviewing men. And he called me once and he said, okay, Kurt, we're having a breakfast this Saturday and then going shooting after or taking, you know, all the men in the Elders quorum shooting after, what can I do to make this a really beneficial and uniting experience for Elko?

Speaker 1 00:43:53 And I said, dude, you are doing it. You're creating the activity. You don't have to have a certain thing at breakfast or organize the, the shooting experience a certain way. Like you're giving them an opportunity to go shooting and <laugh>. I'm not much of a gun guy. Like, I mean, I don't go out there and you know, I don't hunt or anything, but men's hearts come alive when they get to shoot stuff. All right? And so again, you're offering them adventure. You're getting them out of their world into a world that will make their heart come alive. So again, we do a pretty good job offering this until the end of our missions. Like the mission experience is an adventure and we sort of roll our eyes at all the mission stories, but these are stories of

adventure. And we're back to tell the stories of adventure and our heart yearns for these stories of adventure.

Speaker 1 00:44:39 And we need to show men that you can still have these and giving men opportunities. Like, okay, I just heard that, you know, brother Jones went to the Holy Land and hey Brother Jones, what was that like? Oh my goodness, it was so great. Like giving time in elders quorum for them to stand and talk about their adventures. It's remarkable. Okay, again, organizing, hunting, sports, just getting them out of the elders quorum. That's our step one. Like get them out of the elders quorum. Sure do you the every other week lesson and experience, but get them out of Eldridge Corps. Alright, well I think that's good for now. I'll wrap it up at this point, but hopefully you get the gist. I would love any follow-up questions you might have around this topic. I can shower you with resources. Again, I'll just start with, uh, wild At Heart by John Eldridge, dead Men Walking by John Eldridge No more, Mr.

Speaker 1 00:45:26 Knights guy Robert Glover. Again, we'll put these in the show notes. The, uh, alter Ego Effect. Oh, that's a great one. And go rent and watch Heart of Man. It's available on any streaming service, right? You rent it for a few bucks. Phenomenal Christian based sort of documentary style, but he talks about the heart of man. I mean, you want a great elders quorum. Simple, you know, informal activity is invite the men over and just watch it. It's about an hour long and it will get the discussion going after for sure. And that's another thing. I, and I've alluded to this in some other episodes. A big thing I do, I'm not in an Elders Quorum presidency, but I invite men over to my home every other week or so. Or we go to movies and we watch a guy flick or we'll just, uh, we'll watch Heart of Man, we'll do something like that.

Speaker 1 00:46:14 Uh, gather around the fire. We've got a simple fire pit in my backyard. And just these simple things of informal gatherings of men. And here's the secret, I'll, I'll kind of get in the nuts and bolts 'cause that's what I like to do here on Leading Saints is ask people, you know, wait, how do you do that activity? So the secret is, I would say you pick like a Tuesday, a Wednesday or a Thursday, sometimes Thursday's best because next day's Friday it's a little more, you know, people are rolling into the weekend, but you invite men over, say whether it's a movie night or we're just having a fire, say, Hey, we're getting together at my house. I text people this, just send 'em a quick text. We're getting together at my house starting at nine o'clock and you know, we're watching a movie or we're doing this.

Speaker 1 00:46:56 And you'll get a lot of resistance. Like, well, no, I work tomorrow, I can't come that late. And then I say, we all work tomorrow. We're gonna be a little tired, but it's gonna be fun. And what you'll find, the vast majority of men will show up for that because there's a lot less resistance around, you know, bedtime's over if they have young kids, their wife is, you know, winding down for the day so that she, she doesn't mind if he just takes off for that that time. Like the family responsibilities are done. And yeah, they may be a little bit tired the next day, but you'll see that they'll accept the invite and they'll keep coming because their heart yearns for that. And then finally, if you're really serious about this or if you're like, feel just stuck in general, let's get you to a Warrior Heart Bootcamp, as we call it.

Speaker 1 00:47:40 If you go to a warrior heart.com, we just opened, I'm recording this, the end of October, 2023. We just opened a ton, I think five or six bootcamps everywhere from we're getting one, we're about to launch one in Virginia, we got one in Idaho, we got one in Alaska, we got one in Arizona, we got one in Utah. And, uh, even if you have to travel to one of these locations, it will be worth every penny. Don't let cost hold you back. There is an opportunity to, to request scholarships. And uh, we had, you know, they're a nonprofit, they take on donations. Really, there's no reason you can't attend one of these. If it's financial, a lot of them get sold out and so you gotta jump on 'em soon. But I'm a, the majority of them. And, uh, and these are, they're, they are life-changing experience.

Speaker 1 00:48:25 And if you're an elders Quorum president, a bishop, a stake president, you'll come to these retreat experiences, these bootcamps, and it will totally shift your paradigm that you will leave thinking, ah, mm-Hmm, <affirmative>, I know exactly how to connect with the hearts of men in my, in my quorum, the men in my stake, the men in my ward. And it is, uh, life-changing. 80% of the men who attend come again. And, uh, it is phenomenal. I'm losing my voice for some reason, so I better stop talking and wrapping up. But how has ministering to men helped me become a better follower of Jesus Christ? There's few things more Christlike than the heart of man. And again, I'm not like separating this from women, but it's like a true man is so strong, so powerful, so meek, so Christ-like when he taps into their heart and we have the model to do it, we have the engine, it's there. Let's just turn it on and battle for the hearts of men.

Speaker 1 00:49:28 Now that we've reached the end of the episode, I quickly wanna thank you for supporting the Leading Saints podcast. There's so much content out there to consider, and you picked this one. If Leading Saints has made an impact in your life, we would sure like to hear about it at leading-saints.org/contact. And if you could quickly text or email this episode to a leader, you know, I bet it will bless their life. You can mark off your good term daily and let's even call it ministering. Okay? Maybe not that far, but seriously, thank you. And help us share this content. Quick reminder, go watch Joseph Granny's presentation on helping loved ones overcome addiction by going to leading-saints.org/fourteen.

Speaker 2 00:50:18 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.