



Removing Shame from a Gospel of Grace | An Interview with Kurt Francom

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Speaker 1 00:00:02 Hey, welcome to the Leading Saints podcast. Now, for many of you that are brand new, uh, to Leading Saints, it's important that you know that Leading Saints is a nonprofit organization, 5 0 1 C3, dedicated to helping Latter Day Saints be better prepared to lead. And we do that through content creation. We get so much positive feedback on the podcast, our virtual conferences, the articles on our website, you definitely gotta check it out@leadingsaints.org and on their homepage@leadingsaints.org. You can actually find the top six most downloaded episodes to the podcast. So if you're new, like the content, want to jump in to some of our most popular episodes? Head there after you listen to this episode,

Speaker 1 00:00:45 Ladies and gentlemen, boys and Girls, brethren and sister, and welcome to another episode of the Leading Saints Podcast. Now, I've mentioned on other episodes that I have a new book out. That's right. This is a manuscript I've been working on for the last four years. I'm really pleased with how it turned out. It is now a book called, is God Disappointed In Me, removing Shame from The Gospel of Grace. And it is performing very well, even though it doesn't necessarily release until February 26th, which is Monday. However, you can get the Kindle version and start reading right away. The audio book will be out. Then obviously that the soft cover is showing up in Costco's around the Wasatch Front in Arizona, some places in California. And I really want to encourage you to grab a copy of it. Not only is it, uh, worth the read, at least I hope it is, I put a lot of time into it, a lot of thought.

Speaker 1 00:01:37 But also I don't think many understand what it can do for a brand like Leading Saints to purchase something like a book and, and get our name out there on, on platforms that where it usually isn't at like Amazon and Costco and Desire Book. And then in the

future, they know that wow, this is a brand that creates very valuable content that we need to definitely put in our distribution. So we're getting very good feedback from it. I'm doing the podcast circuit. I'm been invited onto many podcasts to talk about this book, and obviously I wanna make sure the Leading Saints podcast audience is well aware of the concepts discussed in this book and why you should maybe consider buying a copy of yourself, all your young men, all your young women, uh, your word counsel, whatever it be, pass it around and get this message out there because I think it is, uh, will be a very helpful message, especially for those who feel overwhelmed by the church, who are really dealing with a lot of shame in their religious experience.

Speaker 1 00:02:35 And so it, uh, hopefully is a message that will resonate with any everybody and give a lot of people hope that in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, you can find redemption and encouragement here. So this episode I'm about to share is actually a simulcast. This episode is also being published on the Cultural Hall podcast, which Richie calls it a show, but it's generally a podcast. And he sat down with me and interviewed me for the cultural hall to talk about, uh, the book if it's God disappointed in me. Now, if you're not familiar with the Cultural Hall, this would be maybe one to also subscribe to as well. Richie puts out some great content. He's a good friend, has a incredible heart, and really wants to put faith promoting awesome thought provoking content out into the latter-Day Saint World. So make sure you're subscribed to the culture hall as well. So here is Richie's episode on the culture hall interviewing me, Kurt Francom, the author of Is God Disappointed In Me, removing Shame from a Gospel of Grace

Speaker 2 00:03:45 Time for another episode of the Cultural Hall. And, uh, sort of an out of studio appearance both for me and for Curtis Francom. His name's not Curtis, and he's been on several times episode 2 26, if you want to get to know all about Kurt Francom, but that's not what we're doing today. You have written a book.

Speaker 1 00:04:04 That's right. Richie <laugh>. Thanks for having me.

Speaker 2 00:04:06 Uh, yeah, I'm glad to have you here. It's interesting, Kurt and I, when was it? Uh, I wanna give people a little bit of context because you came on very strong when I first met you. You're like, did I really? Hey, well, because you did this, uh, I think it was in the, the early days of leading LDS Uhhuh when you were like, Hey, come, we're having this thing at Salt Lake Community College. And what, what I thought it was was like me and you and maybe a couple of other people and you just like wanted to find out like how I do podcasts or something like that, right? You wanted to, you sort of couch it like, there's a thing I wanna tell you about and some other people are coming and I show, and I feel like most people, certainly Intermountain West people will know what I'm talking about, but where you realized very quickly you were invited to something that wasn't what you were actually invited to. Oh, come on. And it was like 60 people and you had, uh, you had a PowerPoint and there could have been more. You had a PowerPoint and you're like, and the vision I'm casting. And I was like, well, boy. And then we had like cookies and punch at the end of the That's right.

Speaker 1 00:05:08 Yeah, that's right. Back then that was my 60 richest friends. And you're on that list, <laugh>. Well that's, that's how, that's how bad it was Richie, but

Speaker 2 00:05:15 Just because of the name. Yeah,

Speaker 1 00:05:17 That's right. <laugh> Richie. He must be Richie. You're

Speaker 2 00:05:19 Like, I have 45 friends and I got a couple guys named Richard. Right. We'll get that. Get

Speaker 1 00:05:24 There. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:05:24 But that's where you sort of started. And then obviously because of the space that we're in, that the, um, you know, the community, the network is small. Everyone sort of knows everyone. You don't like everyone necessarily. I don't.

Speaker 1 00:05:36 Or you don't,

Speaker 2 00:05:37 I don't speak for

Speaker 1 00:05:38 Yourself there, Richie.

Speaker 2 00:05:38 I mean, you don't like everyone in the space. I mean, you're a nice enough guy to their face would tell you that you like everyone. I mean, you have your favorites and you're certainly one of mine. Oh, go on. The name of your book is an instant thing to me because I've seen you post about it multiple times. And I think everybody has the same, same inclination when they see the title of your book. It's called Is God Disappointed in Me? And it's one of two things that everyone responds. One is yes, Kurt, very much, he is very much, you know, some sort of joke response, so you're

Speaker 1 00:06:10 Response, right? Yes, yes. Lots of joke responses. Uh,

Speaker 2 00:06:12 And then the very, like either Jesus defiant or grace defiant that are like, no, absolutely not. How could you even believe? And so props for a great title,

Speaker 1 00:06:24 Right? It's memorable that way. Yeah, yeah, yeah. If you need a joke about it, sure. But you won't forget it.

Speaker 2 00:06:28 Yeah. I would be curious to, you we're obviously get into what the context of the book is, but you and I can sort of joke around about this. Did you have to write a book and is a class that you're teaching next? And are you, you know what I'm saying?

Speaker 1 00:06:41 It seems very, my consulting practice on the side and Exactly.

Speaker 2 00:06:45 It seems very like 2024, which is when we're recording this to be like, well, Kurt, he started with a, a, you know, just a, a great idea. And then it evolved into, um, a greater idea. And then, right. He wrote a book about it and now you can follow his class and he

is got a mastermind that he'll be meeting in Mexico. And if you don't mind, you know, like it just starts, some of that is marketing, which is your background. Right? But was the book just another device or was it something more that you're like, I'm really wondering, is God disappointed in me?

Speaker 1 00:07:17 That's a fantastic question. And the short answer is no, I do not have a in. Is God disappointed in me ink that's coming on the scene, <laugh>, you can hire me and no. So I guess where this came from, I did an episode 'cause I do these virtual conferences, as you know. Sure. You've helped promote many of them. And uh, one was about, it was called Liberating Saints, about how, how to mentor and help people overcome pornography. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And a big part of really any sin or helping anybody through anything is shame. 'cause in my opinion, it's the adversary's strongest tool. And so I did this 60 minute podcast episode that I included in the library of, in this virtual conference about this question, is God disappointed in you? Because I feel like as I interact with Latterday Saints from the nursery age, we're taught, well, God loves you and you're a child of God. Sure, let's sing to hymn. Right. But then at some point we're, we sort of give this unintentional message, which comes from the adversary, like, yes, God loves you, but ah, Richie, he sure disappointed in you and your choices and your decisions. And you know, and people see me as I'm the, I'm the leadership guy right. In, in the church leading saints. Why not write a leadership book The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Bishops? Right? Sure. But this is, that

Speaker 2 00:08:27 By the way, has been trademarked into his, uh, coming day. Okay.

Speaker 1 00:08:29 I'll probably work with that title. Yeah, yeah, yeah. But this one, uh, in my opinion, shame is at the, an understanding of shame is at the core of leadership. Like if you don't understand the dynamics of shame, if you're a bishop and someone walks in your office just beat up and lost and beating themselves up because of shame, you don't have a starting point. You'll never be able to get to the pure doctrines that are so healing if, uh, shame is in the way. So that episode was so popular and I saw it, you know, in the analytics that it was getting more and more attention. People kept talking about it. People would ask me to come do fireside on this topic. So I thought, Hmm, maybe I should put all this thought into a book and, uh, explore this concept of godly disappointment and shame, and does it have a role in our mortal experience as a good bad? Is it encouraging? Is it motivating? Why or why not? Sure. And that turned into the

Speaker 2 00:09:17 Book. So in the concept of shame, like people will talk about like, you know, there's guilt and there's shame and guilt is that you have done something wrong. Shame is that you are something wrong. Is that sort of how within a gospel context, you, you take on the shame as

Speaker 1 00:09:32 Well. Yeah. And I think that's been since the sister Brene Brown Yeah. Entered the scene, <laugh>

Speaker 2 00:09:36 Not actually a member of the Church of Jesus gre, the Latterday

Speaker 1 00:09:38 Saints <laugh>. That's right. But you know, that, that's sort of the dichotomy that's articulated. And I think it's been used so much that it's become cliché that we sort of lost some meaning in that. So the way I frame it is that shame is an attack on the identity, the divine identity. So anytime we feel shame or even are motivated by shame, we're actually being motivated by the wrong reasons. We're being motivated to prove who we, who our identity is. But as we know at the core of our doctrine, that identity was established long ago and we're on this mortal journey. I mean, the pinnacle of our, our faith experience is the temple where you are go to be endowed from un high with an identity. And so identity plays an important role that, uh, when we feel shame, it's not that, oh, I just, you know, I you're just feel bad or you feel beat up. It's no, like your identity is being attacked and we have to get that outta the, out of the way before we can actually move forward because you'll find strength from your divine identity.

Speaker 2 00:10:34 So the idea of really, you know, when we talk and sing about, you know, I'm a child of God, sort of, if I'm understanding what you're saying correctly Yes. That you're like, well, the, the greatest gift that the adversary that the adversary has, the greatest tactic, I guess I should say, is to make you forget that you're a child of God. Yeah. Who

Speaker 1 00:10:53 You are. Yeah. Yeah. It's that identity for sure.

Speaker 2 00:10:55 So lemme ask you this, uh, I always will razz you about church leadership because you're one who's like, yes, give me all the church leadership. That's right. And to me, I'm like, pass <laugh>. I can't. Anyway, but also No, thank you. If I could, when you had the opportunity to serve as, um, I think probably most commonly, I think it's a bishop, right? Where you're sort of boots on the ground and people come in and they're like, it's infidelity, it's, you know, pornography, it's, life is rough at home. It's my kids and all those things. Talk to me about how shame and like that identity, first of all, gets lost with those individuals as they would come. I don't need specific stories or names, but then is this something that you look back into those scenarios and go, had I known any better, I would've done all of this? Or was it something you started to figure out in that time? And then how was it able to Yes. To make itself?

Speaker 1 00:11:48 Yeah. So I have a lot of regrets when it comes to my time as bishop. Bishop. I was, tell me,

Speaker 2 00:11:51 I'm curious.

Speaker 1 00:11:52 I mean, well, I mean, I was, I was in an inner city ward. Sure. I was called at 28 years old to be a bishop. And that wasn't because I was some, you know, shining light in the ward. It was, oh, we know <laugh>. I mean, there were, there weren't a lot of options to say the least. Right. So there I was like trying to do my best. I remember on day one, you know, my, I'm set apart ordained as a bishop. My executive secretary hands me my schedule, the individual walks in and he is like, Bishop, I'm struggling with pornography. Right? And I'm just like 28-year-old marketing grad. Hey, I mean, have you tried not to look at pornography <laugh>, like <laugh>, right? Like, that was, Hey,

Speaker 2 00:12:26 Hey, hold on. Lemme write that down. Don't do that. Okay,

Speaker 1 00:12:29 Thanks Bishop. Right. And because I just didn't have that perspective, I didn't know the dynamics of shame that we're working there. I think of another instance, a brother in my ward who was about my age, had a handful of kids, but was moved into my ward because he was separating from his wife and going through a divorce. And I looked at his life and, you know, he'd done the same things with me. He'd done the seminary thing, went on the mission, got, you know, went to college, like, got married in the temple. And it, I remember thinking, why am I on this side of the desk? And you're on that side of the desk. Right? And well, I think what we don't realize is that, uh, shame, there's a lot more going on than we realize when someone is struggling with sin. And we often default to behaviors. Like, like I was like, well just stop looking at the pornography, or Right. Read this chapter. Read this chapter, or here's an enzyme article that you should really check out. Right. And we, we default to behaviors because we don't know what else to do. And we do this with, with ourselves. The new year starts 2024. This, this is the year, Richie, I'm gonna, we default to year for what? Kurt <laugh>. Well, we say goals,

Speaker 2 00:13:27 Right? No, no, no. I know, I'm just teasing. But here we are, we're recording this in February, and it's like the year for what, what is this the year

Speaker 1 00:13:34 For? But, uh, you know, when we want to change or have a a, a transformation in our life, we first start with behaviors when in reality there's a step before that. And that is full acceptance of who you are right now. Because it is through that acceptance. And this is the, the paradoxical God that we worship is that when we feel accepted completely today for who we are, the identity we've been given, and that he accepts us fully, even if we never change, then we begin to change. And we can't begin to change if we just hyperfocus on behaviors. Like, well, okay, maybe I'll do, you know, temple attendance four times a month this year. Sure. And see maybe that will lead to my life will get better. Right. And, and I even still hear in, in Sunday school classes sometimes of like, isn't it great?

Speaker 1 00:14:16 Like, when you keep the commandments, like life is just good. And I'm like, uh, no, I can give you several examples. Right? Like, I don't think that's what commandments were for. They, they weren't given to us as some equation that life is just gonna be awesome now. No. That they were given to us to have a relationship with God, to, to find strength and when we life is not going well. Right. And so I remember just in going back to that leadership context of when I, that is at the young Bishop, I couldn't figure it out like I do, you know, I'm doing all these behaviors and things seems to work for me, and he is too, but he keeps relapsing or keeps returning to pornography. Why is that? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, I didn't realize that the dynamic was shame. His identity was being attacked, not his behaviors or anything like that. And so if we can figure out those dynamics of shame and start there and realize that we are fully accepted through the grace of Jesus Christ today, even if we never change, then we begin to change. It's, it's a paradox.

Speaker 2 00:15:08 So I love the idea and in the, you know, the primary sense of singing, I am a child of God. It's actually one of my favorites. Jokes aside. Yeah. I think that knowing that is life changing. But I wanna recreate a scenario that I feel like would not be the way that this works. But, you know, for the sake of this, you know, the bishop, I'll be, I get to play the part of

the bishop, the only time I'll play the bishop and Bishop Steadman. And you get to play the part of, you know, someone we Koon doesn't matter, Bishop Bar

Speaker 1 00:15:38 Thomas

Speaker 2 00:15:39 Steadman, right? Yes. That's my apostolic name. So just be Richard. T Steadman is a bishop. Okay. And I welcome you. And I'm like, Hey, you can, great to see you Curtis. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:15:47 It's good to be here.

Speaker 2 00:15:48 I want you to know that you are a child of God. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> you. Do you know that? Do you feel like that to me? I think that if we can convey that, but there seems to be like some sort of like, I don't know, maybe it's a little ness or like a, you know, and you start to get into your sin, you're like, oh, you know, but I've been looking at the stop. You're a child of God. I think if we can affect that mind shift, I think that that's the way that that goes. But I don't know how we facilitate that really. Like no, but also a child of God, but also he loves you, but also, you know, all of those things. How do we then do that if people are listening to this and going, yeah, I don't want people to feel the shame. I want them to know their divine identity. Oh, but I do this. Yeah. But also, how do we do that?

Speaker 1 00:16:32 Yeah. Yeah. Great question. So I, I think our natural response, whether as a parent or a church leader or as a friend, we default to behaviors. Like, right, well, you know, so what's going on? Like, oh, you're struggling with pornography, or whatever it is. Like, oh, let's tell me about your internet filters. Right? Yeah. We, we automatically kind of go to that. Let's figure out this behavior. Once we get the behavior figured out, we'll get to the grace. And it's beautiful. Let me tell you what, <laugh>, when we get there, it's gonna be worth it. I

Speaker 2 00:16:56 In the Greek translation of grace, and we start to, sorry. That's right. Help.

Speaker 1 00:17:00 But, but what if, instead of like going after the behaviors in appointment one, what if we, um, 'cause it's important, we need to talk about that. Sure. The sin sin will destroy you. And if you

Speaker 2 00:17:10 Do, you hear that <laugh>

Speaker 1 00:17:12 <laugh>, and if you allow a sin in your life, it will destroy you quickly or slowly at whatever speed you want. Yeah. But what if we just got to that maybe the 10th appointment? Yeah. And that first appointment is just them having a friend, a person where they can come to you and say, I am so buried in shame. Right. I keep doing these things and that friend's just listening. Right? Hmm. You don't have to read a scripture. You don't have to say, well, have you tried A, B, and C? You just Wow. Like, I'm just gonna sit with you in that. And I'm so sorry that you're there. Hmm. I I put this on in, in the book, I talk about the gospel continuum where, uh, on one side you have love, grace, acceptance. On the other side you've got, uh, commandments, covenants, you know, the behavior side.

Speaker 1 00:17:51 Sure. And a lot of us don't see us that we're actually swinging on this behavior. And a lot of people will say, well, the gospel is just about love, Richie, let's just love 'em. Yeah. Right? Yeah. Like, well, I don't really know what you mean that by that, but, but I would say the gospel begins with love because commandments, behaviors and covenants are so important. Right. Well, we must first swing over to the love side of the continuum. And as, as you know, with a pendulum, when you pull it up on one side, what it does it do, it

Speaker 2 00:18:14 Clacks back and hits the other four balls. That's right. And then it goes the other

Speaker 1 00:18:16 Way. Yep. That's right. It'll swing the other way. And the higher up we go on the love side, the deeper is the potential of going into the commandments and covenants and the behavior side. So I guess starting on that love side, because some days I don't need the general conference talk that tells me the 10 things I should be doing. Right. Right, right. Sometimes I just need Elder Holland to like, just envelop me in a hug and be like, Kurt, you're just loved and you know, Jesus loves you. And I just love how he, you know, is so poetic how Elder Holland puts it. Other days though, I need President Oaks kind of being like, all right, here's the doctrine. A, B, C. Like, wow. Okay. 'cause 'cause that's important too. But a lot of the time we, we need that feeling of acceptance of, you know, Richie or Kurt, like as your bishop, like this office is always open to you.

Speaker 1 00:19:00 Like, let's just talk, like, I don't have any demands for you. I don't have a, you know, uh, one steps, one through five plan. But can we just sit together and read like, how is Jesus showing up for you as you struggle? 'cause this would be so hard. Right. I remember another instance as a bishop, this individual, he's in his thirties, single guy, and he was struggling with, uh, pornography and masturbation. And it was obvious he, this was happening when he was experiencing a lot of stress at work. Sure. He did not know how to cope with life. Right. And so that's an easy answer is, uh, sin or pornography and masturbation. And so as we talked, I realized it wasn't about the behavior at all because he opened up to me and shared with me this tragic instance as a child being, being sexually abused and just like, oh, my heart broke for him.

Speaker 1 00:19:47 Right. And now if I came out like, great, great, uh, sad story. Yeah. Now if we can just get the behaviors right. No, the, the behaviors are happening because of that instance, and that's where the healing needs to happen, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And that's where the shame that, I mean, just pouring shame into his life that he experienced that. And, you know, as many, uh, sexual abuse victims do, they blame themselves, you know, and it's just awful. Right. And so I begged and pleaded him, let's get you some counseling. Let's, I'll cover whatever cost it takes. And he, the shame of all, he just refused to go there. And it just broke my heart to see that individual just keeping coming in thinking maybe I meet with the bishop one more time. You know, maybe that will fix it. But no, the shame was the problem that, that wounding that happened so long ago. And so in that moment, he didn't need the, the President Oaks talk. He didn't need the, the, Hey, let's go over the law of chassis. Maybe you just don't understand that behavior enough. He needed that love. And so we can't swing to

covenants and commandments and behaviors until they feel that full, feel that full acceptance and are ready to swing that way.

Speaker 2 00:20:42 Do you think that it's a, a human behavior response in that like, uh, you know, the checklist or the commandments or, or like, I came through my first like, you know, religious meeting and was sort of palmed the miracle of forgiveness to read. Right. Right. Do you feel like it's just sort of an easier human behavior to give a task? And that's why we do it? Because I, I think, and I'm trying to think of any of the opportunities I've had to meet with any sort of like ecclesiastical leader. Like it's always the teach the doctrine and then exhort to do something different. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And so if I came away from, you know, a meeting really with anyone, but especially with someone that is, I feel like is trying to help me with something, and all I sort of did was say, this is kind of what I'm feeling. I wonder if like, the leader then feels sort of ineffective because they didn't say, Hey, do this thing different. Right. And that's, and so not that they don't want to help, not that they aren't whatever, but they just feel like the model is show a lot of love. Here is a task or a couple of tasks or a checklist of things to do.

Speaker 1 00:21:50 Yeah. So the reality is, is going with a checklist that's a very pragmatic thing. Like, I know what to do. Right. And hey, here's, you know, have you thought about singing to Hym? Or you know, here's a book that'll go give you some skill sets to, to do that. But being empathetic and being able to sit in love and defaulting love, that's very difficult. And I empathize or leaders who are just like, Kurt, I just don't know how to do that. Or even parents like, but no, the behaviors need to change. Kurt, you don't understand like, this is a problem. I just

Speaker 2 00:22:15 Love 'em and they just keep doing it.

Speaker 1 00:22:16 Yeah. And so all we know is okay, I think what I do is I sit here and I say, Richie, I love you. Now let's talk about that internet filter. Like, no, no, no. Like you, you've got, this is something you have to, to practice, learn about and obsess over. How do you sit with somebody? And one of the strongest, strongest phrases that I've, I use and that I felt God show up to me in my life many times is the phrase, Richie, you could look at pornography the rest of your life and I'd still love you. Like nothing could change. You could come back here again and again to this office. Or you could call me as your father again and again and again. And with this problem messing up and I would just still love you. Like, I'm not concerned about that. Right.

Speaker 1 00:22:53 I just wanna make sure that you feel that. And like, how can we get there? And maybe let's, like, let's just read some stories of, of Jesus for, for the next five appointments, let's just dive into his ministry and see what he has for us. Right. And then by the time you get to that 10th appointment, the 15th appointment, whatever that interaction they feel, and they're like, okay. Like, and this is the beauty of grace as the, as the church website defines it, it is the enabling power of the atonement of Jesus Christ. Like it enables you to do something. Because when I feel completely accepted by God, even though I keep messing up, even though I'm broken, even though I'm mortal, I can't help but turn to him and say, how do I become like you? I wanna be like you. I wanna, I wanna love and accept like you.

Speaker 1 00:23:34 And then he'll say, oh, let's swing over to the other side of the continuum. 'cause I've got commandments and covenants for you to do not so that you will earn something so you can become something. Yeah. So that you, we can have a relationship together and I will mentor you on this path. And that's a beautiful relationship. And so it's easy to default to the behavior side. 'cause I don't know how to do the love side. I mean, I did that. Right. It took about five minutes. Right. And now we're done. So Yeah. He loves

Speaker 2 00:23:59 You. Yeah. So anyway, Alma 37. Yeah. Right,

Speaker 1 00:24:02 Right.

Speaker 2 00:24:02 So the book then, Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> Is God Disappointed In Me? Tell people a little bit how it reads. What I don't think it does, but I would love it if it did, is it's like <laugh>, so chapter one, so you think God hates you. Well, you know, is it instructional for leaders being able to, to meet with people? Is it the people that feel like, man, I did that extra thing that God, he forgives lots of other people. Right. But not this guy. Like who and what and how.

Speaker 1 00:24:29 Yeah. The easiest way to say it is that this book is for anybody who while engaging in the gospel, Jesus Christ has ended up in this place of overwhelm, like frustration and, and shame. Right. That, you know, I'm just thinking like that mother who's like doing it all and she just, at the end of her day, she can't seem to figure it out. Her kids are a mess. They haven't bathed, they've barely eaten. They show up to church, you know, 10 minutes late every week. And they look across the pew and they think, how do the steadmans figure it out? Right.

Speaker 2 00:24:58 And no one thinks that,

Speaker 1 00:24:59 I appreciate that, but, but, but the point being is it's so easy to compare, like, man, the bishop just has it all together. Sure. And that's why he's the bishop. Sure. And if I could figure it out, like, God just must be disappointed in me. Like if you're feeling that you've swallowed false doctrine along the way. Mm-Hmm. And so I spent the first couple of chapters sort of breaking this down of why do you see God as this disappointed parent in the heavens that's pacing in his family room thinking, oh, there Richie goes again. Ah, yeah. He just can't figure it out. You know, obviously, you know, how long has he been in the church and does, doesn't he get it yet? Right. Like, that's not God, because that's not grace and disappointment and grace cannot coexist. Hmm. Ne never does the deacon walk up to you on Sunday with the sacrament and then as a representative of Jesus Christ, roll his eyes when Richie has to take the sacrament one more time.

Speaker 1 00:25:44 Right. Or never does the bishop show up on Sunday and be like, wow, I think everybody have a good week. Great. We'll just forego the sacrament. Yeah. Because I mean, we're generally pretty good. Right? Right. No, like it is assumed that is the pinnacle of that meeting and that that the grace of that deacon walking up to you, you don't have to get outta your chair. He comes to you and says, here it is again, Richie, my salvation. Take it, eat it,

and I'll come back next week. I think I love the scripture in Romans six, six of dragging your old man into to church and crucifying him with Jesus. Like, that's what we're doing. Of course, you've, you've messed up this week. That's why you're here. And here's my grace and take it again. And that is so encouraging to me when I frame it that way and walk outta Sacra, meaning I'm ready to take on another day because I feel his hope, his redemption has encouragement through his grace.

Speaker 2 00:26:30 Have you felt in your life like God has been disappointed in you?

Speaker 1 00:26:34 Absolutely.

Speaker 2 00:26:34 Like what and how did, and how did you work your way through it?

Speaker 1 00:26:37 So this is a stigma. We've, if I was a, a better podcaster, I'd know the, uh, the episode number of when you were on, but we've shared your story Sure. Which includes excommunication and Yeah. You can say it <laugh>

Speaker 2 00:26:49 Excuse lots of members. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:26:51 Lots of men. And there's a lot of stigma in your story compared to mine. Right? Sure. Like, oh, Richie, you know, and even you mentioned you

Speaker 2 00:26:59 Do

Speaker 1 00:27:00 <laugh> and, and even you assuming you'll never be a bishop because of that. No, I

Speaker 2 00:27:03 Won't be.

Speaker 1 00:27:04 But I get it. Uh, well, I I hope some policy will change. 'cause you'd be a great bishop, but Oh, thanks. That's very kind

Speaker 2 00:27:08 Of you never, uh, I, yeah.

Speaker 1 00:27:12 So, but in my story, people look at my story and be like, wow, Kurt was a bishop at 28. Look nice dude. Like Ellen has stake presidency at 33 and Yeah. And he is got this podcast and he's like, well respected. And he's, he sort of figured life out. Right.

Speaker 2 00:27:25 Moderately respected <laugh>.

Speaker 1 00:27:27 This is why. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:27:29 But it's easy to look at, to be, and from my side of my eyeballs Mm-Hmm. I'm thinking, oh yeah, I've got a, I've got an image to keep up here. You know? And I remember being that little boy in church who I heard people say to my parents, wow, your kids are so great. Like, isn't it awesome? Like, they're just, they're just always so well behaved and they know all the answers in seminary, right? Sure, sure. And I remember hearing that thinking,

oh, I have to be a certain way. I can't let them know who I am until it came time for me as a youth to go talk to the bishop. 'cause I had messed up. Right. And I remember the shame of not letting my parents know about it secretly going into the room before cell phones. Right. I'd have to go in my parents room.

Speaker 1 00:28:07 I called the, you know, 60-year-old executive secretary and just like, so filled with shame that I would have to tell him what I did. And then showing up outside the bishop's office. And I remember just sitting there just wanting the building to just fall down on me. 'cause I must have been the only youth in the history of my ward that ever had to set up an appointment with the bishop. Right? Yeah. Obviously, you know, I had a loving bishop and I referenced him a little bit in the few first few chapters of just, just that love and, and grace I felt and I, you know, got through it to say, but then it was like, okay, I gotta go on the mission. I'm the youngest of four. My two brothers have been zone leaders. Like sure, I gotta be the missionary that earns that, that zone only.

Speaker 1 00:28:43 Well, it didn't happen. Right. And I just felt defeated. Right. I come home and my brother gets a full ride to BYU get three rejection letters from BYU and, and, you know, have to settle for a different college. And then, you know, just this, this overwhelm. I gotta keep up. I gotta do the things. I gotta be something that where people will accept me. And even, you know, and then the thing came time for me to be called as bishop. And I remember going to my parents' house after receiving the call and finally like being able to tell 'em like, mom, dad, like I'm a, I'm gonna be a bishop. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> like, and it, and I didn't say the words, but in, in one form I'm saying, do you accept me now? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And I'm sure if I would've said that, my parents would've looked at me like, what is wrong with you <laugh>?

Speaker 1 00:29:22 Like, we love you. Yeah, yeah. Of course we love you. Right? Sure. But this is the, the slightness of the adversary inserting shame into our, our life where you've gotta, you've gotta earn it, Kurt. Like come on, like you are better than this. Right. And, and that shame is even without the, the stigmatized sinning that may be some experience. And I remember that this grace moment being at a conference and they were playing, it was a Christian, uh, conference and they were playing some, uh, Christian worship music before. And I just felt like this incredible grace moment where God whispers in my mind, Kurt, you could never read your scriptures again. And I still love you. You could never be another leader again. And I'd still love you. Like I want you to just, I love you. And I just remember it was just so transformational that grace that I felt where I thought, wait, you're not disappointed in me.

Speaker 1 00:30:09 Yeah. Like, but I've done, like, I I I haven't done some things I should have done. Right. That should have word and that it was transformational. And, and he's like, no, I'm inviting you into a relationship with me. That's why we do the covenant thing. That's why we do the commitments. 'cause I wanna be with you. I wanna walk with you. I wanna develop you in something, not because you earned it. 'cause my son did that thousands of years ago today. I just love you. Right. Because he swung me in that, in that love. And that gave him a momentum to find healing and restart into approaching checklists and commandments because of their, the reason God put 'em there. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:30:43 One of the things that I hear especially about like, with really like driven people, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> that when they start to have this discussion about grace, that it's like, oh, that's going easy on yourself. Not necessarily that they feel like shame, like God is disappointed in me, but like they use some element of shame or some sort of negative element to propel them forward. Meaning, you know, I have to be able to rise to these things. Or there's nothing wrong with wanting to be a zone leader, for instance. 'cause your brothers were Right. Right. You wanted the experience. They told you about these amazing experiences about being able to help missionaries or be able to, you know, travel and be able to see those things. And so where it gets muddy for some people is this idea of like, you know, if I just let Grace, oh well it's fine that I didn't reach any of my goals and it's fine that I don't do the diet and it's fine that I don't treat my kids well because Grace is so great. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> like, I think that there is a really hard stigma that people have. Like they'll allow it to a point and then they're like, yeah, now you're just going easy on yourself. Right?

Speaker 1 00:31:46 Yeah. Because here's the thing, I and people, they'll respond to, uh, a lot of these perspectives I've shared of like, well, Kurt, listen, I was raised in a home and there was a lot of shame in that home. But you know, there's some expectations in place that, uh, we, we, we go to church and we do this and that, and that's just who we are. We serve missions, we get Eagle Scout awards and, and they say, look, Kurt, I turned out great. I'm not a criminal. I am active in the church. Like, what's the problem? Right. And let me be very clear, like shame works. Yeah. <laugh> like, and even every day I'm tempted with my own kids. Like, you might just spring a little shame here. Yeah. We can get going and get out the door. 'cause it'll, he just, doesn't it go a little quicker if

Speaker 2 00:32:21 We can just,

Speaker 1 00:32:21 You know? Right. So admit like yeah, it works. Right. And some people feel like I kind of like perceiving God as a little bit disappointed 'cause it gets me, me moving, I correct my ways and I get back on track and that's fine I guess. But that's not the nature of God. And so you can use that as sort of a, you know, whip yourself to get, get moving. But, uh, that's not the God of grace. 'cause disappointment and grace cannot coexist. Or we want to create this God who's, who's angry at us and like coming for us. And hell, he's got the, the key to hell and he'll open that door and lock us in there forever if we don't get moving. But that's not the gospel. I mean, it, I would love for anybody to sit down and and articulate that that's the, the Jesus that came and saved us, that he wanted to scare us really bad. Sure. So that we'd go to heaven. No, he wanted him to love us unconditionally and overwhelmingly, uh, so that we would want to go to heaven. We'd wanna be there not 'cause we were forced to or scared to be there. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:33:13 There's some Old Testament stuff that I might be able to contend with you Sure. Where it's like, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Speaker 1 00:33:17 Right, right. And and here's the thing with that, like people say, Kurt, there's, there sure seems to be a lot of scriptures where God seems not just disappointed but pretty bad. Right? Yeah. And I, I try and be clear that like, as we enter that relationship, there

will be those tough coaching moments Sure. Where God has to get in our face and say like, listen Richie, I love you. You know, I love you. Things gotta change, right? Like these things you're doing, I'm trying to mentor you into this relationship and these are impeding you. And so I'm not disappointed that you're doing this 'cause I'm doing the long game here and my son took care of this, but let me help you through this. And so lemme coach you very strongly here. Right? Yeah. So, and sure, maybe I'll get to the other side, Richie and God will be like, Hey, cute book you, you wrote there, Kurt. But, and the

Speaker 2 00:33:59 Answer is yes, I <laugh>

Speaker 1 00:34:01 I was, I was actually quite disappointed in you and your book and your publishing and the, the, the typos you made or whatever. And I'd be like, dang, missed it. But guess what, like, day to day living my life, I've never been more anxious to keep covenants. I've never been just giving more commandments. You know, even I, you know, you'll mention on like a cup of coffee. Really? We're gonna get to heaven. Right. Right. And be like, and

Speaker 2 00:34:22 God's like, you know, listen,

Speaker 1 00:34:23 No, not

Speaker 2 00:34:24 I'm looking this over. Uh, right. Folgers, huh. Right. All right.

Speaker 1 00:34:29 But the way I see, it's like, gimme more commandments. You want me to not drink coffee, I want drink coffee. Like whatever it is, no matter how arbitrary it seems. Yeah. I just want to like, put me in the game coach. Like I want to become like you and if that's what you acquire and I don't know why, well, whatever. Like I'll do it because that grace and encourage my Phil rather than this. Well the Old Testament God of like fire and brimstone getting moving, Kurt. Like no, that's not God.

Speaker 2 00:34:53 Yeah. I have to ask you about the book writing process itself. You've got like a hundred kids and I know you moved at one point and I've three kids. You live within laws at one point. Listen, any kids is a hundred kids. It's true.

Speaker 1 00:35:05 Especially on plane. Yes.

Speaker 2 00:35:07 <laugh> the process of being able to like, have the focus to do that. 'cause you're also cranking out a couple episodes of, you know, leading Saints every week. Plus you're trying to show up as a partner and a dad and a, you know, all the things. Mm-Hmm. mm-Hmm. Like how did, were you able to do this?

Speaker 1 00:35:22 That's a great question. Now I'll answer it this way. In the book I talk a lot about my five-year-old son. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, he's nine. Richie,

Speaker 2 00:35:29 <laugh>. <laugh>.

Speaker 1 00:35:30 Okay. So yeah, it was just one of those things of like, I'm gonna write this book even if it takes 30 years to write. And, uh, little by little, and then, you know, I'd get the manuscript done and then I have people read it and be like, this is, I mean, it's fine, but, uh, chapter one you lost me there. I'm like, oh man, I'm not done yet. Dang. Yeah. So I, you know, rewrite a few things and then you give it to professional editors and they're like, all right, like, this is cute that you're trying to write a book, but let me educate you. And if then you're like, so I went and went through like five ed editors, you know, professional editors. Wow. And then, and then, you know, you're like, how do I, how do I do a book cover and what do, oh, I need an ISBN number. Like how do I do? Right. So you just learn these things along the way. But just like anything, you just say, I'm just gonna do a little bit every day or every week or maybe once a month. And here I'm, I did it, I got to the end of the marathon.

Speaker 2 00:36:17 So, uh, jokes aside, 'cause I did, you know, sort of take stabby at you at the, at the beginning of this, but do you feel like it was something that God was like, I need you to write this book?

Speaker 1 00:36:26 Yeah. I mean, I mean the experiences, I guess it was more of like, whether anybody reads it or not. Like I now have this record for my children to be like, let's just learn about like dad's journey through repentance and becoming more saintly and you know, how he handled Covenants commandments. And so I never, even with Leading Saints, I mean, I felt, uh, an like sort of an echoing call in the distance part of heaven. Like, keep going Kurt, keep going. Right. Rarely is it like, all right, Kurt, this is the title of the book. This is Sure. Here's the nine chapters and Need write. But I just, yeah. I felt like this is going to be a book someday and even, you know, I'll just keep at it. So

Speaker 2 00:37:01 Yeah. That's pretty cool. Yeah. I think that's fun to see the way that, you know, not only to take something where it was just like, yeah, hey, this is a good, this is good information, but then they'd be able to commit to it and do it. It's not easy. Right.

Speaker 1 00:37:12 And I think your, your experience with the culture hall is similar, right?

Speaker 2 00:37:15 I mean Yeah. It's not easy

Speaker 1 00:37:17 <laugh>, but

Speaker 2 00:37:18 You've been doing it for so long. But I haven't written a book. Well, that's the thing.

Speaker 1 00:37:21 You've done a lot of episodes this iss a lot of time. Well

Speaker 2 00:37:23 Sure, sure, sure,

Speaker 1 00:37:24 Sure. I think God is in this. I want you to know that. Oh, sure. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:37:27 A hundred percent. Quite honestly, like, sometimes people will be like, you know, why do you do the cultural hall? And I'm like, I'll say it's a lot of things, but I think for me it's like my faith in podcast form. Yeah. You know, every

Speaker 1 00:37:40 Week I think it's up you on some of those hard weeks or whatever. Right? Sure. Like yeah, sure.

Speaker 2 00:37:43 Just to be able to do that or to just be like, uh, other people got questions. Right. Do you have questions? Yeah, I do. Oh,

Speaker 1 00:37:49 Good. Yeah. Yeah. All right.

Speaker 2 00:37:50 I'm not alone. As far as

Speaker 1 00:37:51 Another thing I'll say, like with writing a book, I often say like, it's not just about knowing the gospel or believing the gospel, but can you articulate the gospel? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And so the exercise of like sitting down and being like, these concepts make sense in my head, but could I articulate it in word that other people would understand what I'm thinking? And that process of doing that, you get halfway and you're like, oh wait, there's this whole other caveat that I need to explore and wow, I'm learning more. Right. And I wish, you know, some people use like ghost writers, right? They'll be like, I'm just gonna drive, you know, in my car and tell you what the book is about. You make it sound good and make it come all together. But I'm like, I don't know if I could do that just because, you know, half the book I discovered on the journey, these principles of like, or people would push back on certain things. Like, oh yeah, that's right. I should probably, you know, answer that question through the book. So it's, it's a journey worth having.

Speaker 2 00:38:37 The, uh, baby is out into the world in that some people have read the book at this point of us recording what have people said so far? Well, and and how nerve wracking is that when you go, alright, <laugh>, here you go. I started when he was five and now he's nine, so, you know. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:38:55 Oh, this is

Speaker 2 00:38:56 Like professionally, I, I think you get it where you go, okay, someone professionally, I should put a period as comma that you go, you're a, a business savvy person that you go, I welcome those things. Yeah. But when you start to be like, alright, peers, all people that I'm trying to help, what do you think of this? Right. What does that experience

Speaker 1 00:39:14 Like? No, that, this is interesting you bring up, 'cause like I did like a book launch event last week. And, and so I'm thinking, who am I gonna invite? And you know, I've got a lot of friends like at BYU who are religion professors and I'm like, oh, well he probably doesn't need to know about the book. 'cause if he read it actually John Hilton, you

Speaker 2 00:39:30 John Hilton, the third,

Speaker 1 00:39:31 There's the third, right? Uh, BYU religion professor. Phenomenal guy. I gave him the manuscript to go over it and I was like, oh man. Like, and I sort of, you know, buffered it with like, Hey listen, like there's probably some pi in here, but it's,

Speaker 2 00:39:43 It's probably not any good and you're not gonna like it. Uh, I mean, but if you wouldn't mind it's, I mean I've here

Speaker 1 00:39:48 And, and he came back with a lot of feedback. So like, Hey Kurt, like I get what you're saying here, but I don't know how doctrinal this is. You know, I'm like, I get, I, that's not why I'm not a doctrinal guy, but I just wanna take people on a journey where they think different. He's like, oh, okay, well maybe you just this and that. Right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And so, but he was kind enough to write a, at first I was like, Hey, listen, you don't need to write a, you know, a a what do you call it? A forward a for no a a reviewer

Speaker 2 00:40:11 That blog, uh,

Speaker 1 00:40:12 You know, the front of the quote, you don't have to gimme a quote about it. Right? Yeah. Yeah. But he, he was like, no, this is a good book and I'm glad glad you wrote it. And, uh, so yeah, there are those people. I'm like, you know, I'd love to send to my bishop that when I was growing up, but, uh, BYU professor, Hey, listen, you just do you like this? But so yeah, my ego comes out a lot in it. And there's some people that, and another part is even myself, like the last two chapters, I'm like, as I was reading for the audio book, I was like, Kurt, like, you're being so redundant. And like there's, how did I miss this? I should have rewritten it. But it was like, you know, it's done. Yeah. It's out there. Yeah. Take it for what it is. Maybe you'll hate it, maybe you won't. But my goal is not necessarily convince anybody that they should see God my way that he's not disappointed, but maybe sit with it and wrestle with these concepts and maybe walk away disagreeing with me. But maybe you've at least thought about it.

Speaker 2 00:40:58 Have you had anyone disagree with you yet? Oh

Speaker 1 00:41:00 Yeah. I mean, there's, tell

Speaker 2 00:41:01 Tell me about the haters who are going to hate, hate, hate, hate, hate.

Speaker 1 00:41:04 Well, it's just more of like the, just like any, you know, parent, just that that person like, hey, no, no, no. Like sure, I use a little shame, but come on. Like, we gotta, we gotta get things done in my home and we gotta, or you know, am I gonna get my, the

Speaker 2 00:41:15 Fun comes, we are front row family. Yeah. Or we

Speaker 1 00:41:18 Gotta, we're gonna get our kid on a mission. Sure. And whatever it takes, we're gonna get 'em there. And you may not have a strong testimony, but he'll get out there and he'll do it. Like, okay, like, you can do that. And I, and I pray for you. Maybe that'll work. Maybe I'm completely wrong and all my kids will end up in federal prison, <laugh>. And, um, at least the one. Yeah. <laugh>, we pray for him. Uh, <laugh>,

Speaker 2 00:41:36 I was gonna leave a generic. Now they know it's at least a him.

Speaker 1 00:41:39 Gee. Yeah. So I don't mind if people disagree with me just as long as you know why you're disagreeing with me. And, uh, yeah. Maybe it is the Old Testament God, and we'll just get up and be like, oh my goodness, that guy's bad. Like, yeah. You know, but, uh, I just don't, that's not bit of my experience. And then that's not a redemptive message because we're not a, I don't wanna be a high demand religion. I wanna be a high redemptive church. I want people to leave church feeling like I'm so glad I went, rather than I'm just never good enough for those people. And I hate that. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:42:06 How do we do, I mean, kind of in a bigger thing, sort of taking not just the subject of shame, but expanding it out. Something that I've thought about quite recently is like how we could just be more kind of welcoming and or loving as far as award goes. You're recently in a new ward, in a new area. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, you're in Utah County, so I suspect I know how this went, but like, you get into the new place. Are people kind welcoming? Were you overjoyed with how people treated you? Or were you like, this is underwhelming?

Speaker 1 00:42:36 No, it's been, I mean, it's a new development area, so everybody's new. So it's sort of like you can show up and be like, why is nobody talking to me? And I'm like, they're just thinking why is nobody talking to me? You know? 'cause we're all new. But no, I mean, my word has been phenomenal and great. It's interesting, you know, even in, uh, I've been to several like, stake conferences Right. And serving in a stake presidency, I remember that feeling of like, all right guys, we get this opportunity once every six months. Right? Let's make sure we're clear, we're strong and we're deliberate. Right. Right. And it's so tempting for a leader to, or anybody like speaking in church or speaking in stake conference to be like, Hey, I just want you to know, like things gotta change around here. Like, uh, that temple tense, I've seen the reports folks.

Speaker 1 00:43:13 Yeah. And, uh, can I just tell you how much, how awesome the temple is, right? It's sort of this oversell of, but what if we just like offered a church where people could come? And it's a good example of this is actually Andy Stanley, who's a, I think he's Baptist. He, I watch a sermon every week on YouTube. Interesting. And his way, he, it is genius how he, he always, I forget how he frames it, that assume that they're in the room where he'll talk in a message and be like, now for those of you who aren't Christian, you may see this this way. But for those of you that are, this is why I'm talking about the scripture. And I'm like, wow, that's interesting. He's assuming those people are in the room. Like, what if we assumed that that message on the front, front plaque in the, in front of the church visitors, welcome.

Speaker 1 00:43:52 What if we assume like every week 30 people are actually just showing up? Like, what is this place? And are we formulating our, our message in a way of not just, Hey, we could do a little bit better, but isn't it remarkable what Jesus did for us? And that like, you're back here again and we just love you and let's just be, be here together. And, and so that's the challenge. Is anybody speaking in church teaching elders quorum, teaching relief society speaking in the stake conference, can you do it without a mention of a change of behaviors? And we do this in, in such slight ways, we'll be like brothers and sisters, when was the last time

you really prayed and I mean, really prayed, right? Like on your knees for a half hour. Like, I get what you're doing. Sure. But you're focused on behaviors.

Speaker 1 00:44:35 But when was, when was the last time you just felt like, like you're loved, like you're here with us no matter what you've done, what whatever your background, you're here in the pews and we're about to experience such a redemptive ordinance, here we go. Hmm. And there's no expectation, no reason to consider what you have done, but just be here with us and just be fully accepted. And what you'll find is everybody will leave that place feeling like, you know, I'm gonna find ways I can be better. I'm gonna find ways that I can be in more in, in the right relationship with God. And it could be transformational.

Speaker 2 00:45:05 You know, we, we also talked sort of how almost cliché the idea of, you know, you're shoulds, you're shooting yourself and shame and all that. But it also seems like grace has been one of these things that in the last 10, 20 years, give yourself some grace. It started to become, you know, far more popular as far as that goes. Interesting to note that you mentioned listening and observing other faith traditions and the way that they engage with grace. Do you see grace being spoken of in a different way? Not necessarily from you, but from the greater church? Do you see the way that we are embracing Grace different?

Speaker 1 00:45:40 Yeah, for sure. I mean, even from, I think in an interview with Anthony Sweat where he, he wrote his book Seekers Wanted where he actually goes into the database of general conference and Grace has like gone off the charts, like the mention of Grace has gone off the chart. And, and that's encouraging to me, right? And this is the, you know, in being in a restored church with prophets and apostles, we think, well, if it's good enough today, Kurt, why wasn't that happening in 1985? I think this is just the natural journey and wrestle that any organization, even prophets, apostles go through is the messaging of it. Sure. Like, and we were learning that way or that worked for them in that time and, and now we're, we're shifting as far as that messaging of it. And so I do see a shift there. There's, I mean, and I'll be honest, there's some general conference talks I hear and I'm like,

Speaker 2 00:46:23 That is not dude.

Speaker 1 00:46:24 Like, I <laugh> <laugh>. I feel extremely shamed right now. Right. And, but I hold grace for them, you know, right back. And that's the last couple chapters of my book where I talk about grace, for grace. The beautiful reaction to receiving grace is that you wanna be more graceful and you have more patience for leaders. And you're like, yeah, I don't necessarily entirely agree with how you frame that message, but love you brother. I know you're trying. And, uh, upward and onward.

Speaker 2 00:46:49 One of the things that I find most fascinating about stuff like this is the way that spouses engage in it as your wife read your book. And what has that experience been like? That's

Speaker 1 00:46:58 All right. She's not a big reader, but Sure. Like even yesterday she's like, I'm onto chapter five, like, she's getting through it and she's great for it, but she's heard, you

know, several of my fireside Sure. Several of my episodes. So she kind of gets the key concepts I'm, I'm getting at, but obviously I'm going in more detail. But yeah, I think, and it's interesting creating a home of grace because I believe me, if you follow me around with the camera, even this morning, you know, I'm, we're late for school walking into my nine year old's room and he is doing Legos. It's like, dude, like we have got to go like, I'm being

Speaker 2 00:47:27 Ful, but get your butt in the car.

Speaker 1 00:47:29 That's right. Right. Yeah. So yeah, those are those moments. And, and I think a powerful thing that I've learned as a parent is the power of apologizing to your children. Mm. And don't do it in a way of like, I'm just awful. You know, I'm so sorry. I just, you like, you see

Speaker 2 00:47:42 These ashes. Yeah. Do you see this sackcloth that that's right. How sorry I am.

Speaker 1 00:47:47 But there's no sweeter moment that I've had than laying down with my son at night and just saying like, Hey buddy, like, I just messed up today and I don't want you to have that kind of father. And I just get, I get worked up sometimes and you know, I'm, I'm very, you know, I, I express myself vocally as a profession, you know, so I yell sometimes and I hate that. I just want you to know like, I just love you completely. Right. And for him to see that witness that I think is, is encouraging. And, and so more parents could probably do that. Yeah. As they establish a grace field home. And, and my wife and I are, are wrestling with that. 'cause that's not always the case.

Speaker 2 00:48:18 I like the idea too, because I've only briefly met your wife a couple times, but the idea that she is like, oh, he thinks that, huh? <laugh> flips the thing. Hey Grace Boy,

Speaker 1 00:48:27 Remember that, that book he wrote <laugh>. Oh, absolutely. There's many of those opportunities.

Speaker 2 00:48:32 Yeah, yeah, yeah. But, uh, to be able to do it, I mean, it's a tremendous, um, undertaking a thing that, like the idea of writing a book excites me. I have no idea what it, I would write about. I don't, I feel particularly called in any direction or so like that coming

Speaker 1 00:48:47 2025. Oh

Speaker 2 00:48:49 My gosh. If I, I honestly really would.

Speaker 1 00:48:51 Oh, you that would be awesome. I think

Speaker 2 00:48:52 It'd be super fun. Yeah. I don't know that I, 'cause it's a lot of research. It's a lot of like works and reworks and those kind of things and, and I don't know that I have a specific thing that I'm like, yeah, but I'm glad that you know, that maybe

Speaker 1 00:49:04 We could co-author something. That'd be fun.

Speaker 2 00:49:05 Listen, if you write it, I'll put my name on whatever you write done. But people can find a link for it in the show notes as we mentioned. Uh, look for it as we do the cultural hall book club that Kurt will join us and be a part of that. Details to follow as far as all that stuff goes. But I think it's pretty exciting and in a moment of seriousness, which I don't do very often. Yes. I think it's, uh, I think it's incredible what you do with Leading Saints. Mike, glad to know you and the fact that you've got this book that I think is changing people's lives. Thanks brother. It's pretty significant. There are three questions that we ask everyone who steps into the cultural hall. I've asked them of you before. I will ask them of you again. The first one is, do you have a calling? And if so, what

Speaker 1 00:49:47 Is it? I am, I, I am a, uh, ward podcaster.

Speaker 2 00:49:51 That's your calling. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:49:53 So, so like I said, we're in a huge ward that's probably gonna be split here in a couple months and

Speaker 2 00:49:57 Oh, Bishop, Bishop Francom. Oh

Speaker 1 00:49:59 Yeah. I wanna get my application in. Right. I would love to do that calling again. Right. Never say no to that calling. Yeah. It is a phenomenal experience. I will. But, um, <laugh> and so I approached my bishop and said, Hey listen, I know there's not a lot of callings to go around. Uh, this is something I've done in a password. What if I, uh, created a word podcast and I'll just go around and interview living histories of people in the ward? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And he loved the idea. Yeah. So I jumped in and I actually have a whole podcast episode, uh, dedicated to if other wards wanna do this. And I've gotten a lot of emails saying, Hey, we're doing it. So that's, this is becoming a thing, which is cool until I'm sure somebody in the handbook department shuts it down.

Speaker 2 00:50:33 <laugh>.

Speaker 1 00:50:33 But for now, but for now. And so yeah, just, uh, connect with different people in the ward and it's phenomenal to sit down with someone for an hour Mm-Hmm, roughly and just talk about their life. Are

Speaker 2 00:50:43 You talk to 'em for an hour? Well,

Speaker 1 00:50:44 30 minutes to an hour. Okay. Okay. Whatev. I don't, I don't like, well, we have 45 minutes left. What else do you wanna, but you know, as long as it takes and then the ward gets to hear it. And I think, I hate the tradition where, okay, you're speaking of sacra meaning, and you gotta sort of, well I've got, I do this for work and I've got three kids. Sure. And you like, let's get on with Jesus. You know, that's why there's, we're there. So this, I'd rather would have a different form that we can learn about members of the ward and it creates a

unifying force that, man, I know Richie's story, like when I sit down with him in El Corps, I kind of feel like I know him and I have a starting place. Do you

Speaker 2 00:51:15 Have a, like, set questions like every time it's the same five questions?

Speaker 1 00:51:20 No, I mean, I just sort of go through their life. Like, tell me about growing up. Like, interesting, how'd you get your testimony? Okay. Did you on a mission, why or why not? Yeah. And where'd you go? What was that like? Right. So interesting. You know, the

Speaker 2 00:51:29 Beat, so, and it's just one-on-one, one on. Yeah. So do you do like the patriarch of the household first and then the matriarch? Or are you doing like, um, I go through the Bishop and the Relief Society presidency. What's that word? How do you So

Speaker 1 00:51:39 I've, I've done, I've tried to as many of the ward council as possible sort of set that example like, Hey, they're doing it. You should do it. Right. Yeah. And I get people to be like, I'm just not interested. I'm like, okay. Like you don't have to share your deepest, darkest, all

Speaker 2 00:51:48 Right. Geez. I dunno why you hate me. <laugh> al fine. If you wanna keep your story secret, but

Speaker 1 00:51:53 Then I'll just, it's just you. I'll meet someone on the ward and be like, Hey, we should do a podcast episode. And you do it over Zoom. Make it really easy and Sure. And publish it. Cool.

Speaker 2 00:52:01 Okay. All right. If you could pick a calling for yourself, either one that exists or make one up, what would you

Speaker 1 00:52:05 Pick? I would love to be the guy that handles all leadership in the church. Maybe have like a podcast Uhhuh <affirmative> that I produce every week. Uhhuh. And, uh, yeah. So the reality is is I've picked my calling and well, I feel like it is a calling from God. And, uh, but I love it. I want to be the leadership guy in the church. So like

Speaker 2 00:52:21 Appointed by the church, they're like, no longer you get paid by for this, you do it for free.

Speaker 1 00:52:26 I mean, that's the calling. It depends on what number they write down on, you know, slide across the

Speaker 2 00:52:30 Table. <laugh>. Yeah. That's not how callings work

Speaker 1 00:52:31 Curtis. Right, right. But no, I, no, if I got to the end of my life, they're like, I wanna serve a mission for 30 years and I'll just do, just do leadership stuff for the church, travel around and help board councils think about problems. And, and I would love to do that. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:52:46 The final question that we ask everyone as you know, and you also have answered this before, but I find it shifts when people, uh, get asked it is, what is your favorite part of your faith?

Speaker 1 00:52:58 So when I, and I think this is similar to my first response to this, but you know, when I show up to church and that deacon brings me to the sacrament, it's like I said, like there's no expectation in that sacrament. It's just, here it is, Kurt. Like, take it again. Let's do this one more time. Like that Grace is so propelling in my faith of why I show up to the temple, why I answer the Temple recommend questions, not because I'm trying to earn something or pretend I'm something else because God wants a relationship with me. And, uh, there's a, a Hebrew translation of the word righteousness and 'cause we read that all over in the scriptures, like the righteous people, right? But the Hebrew translation that frames it as right relationship. And, uh, so anytime I read righteousness in the scriptures, I read right relationship and being in a covenant with God, I am generally in a right relationship. And even when I mess up that relationship's there to turn to receive strength from and try once again. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:53:49 I love it. Again, find a link for the book. In the show notes, you'll find a link also for, uh, leading Saints and for all this stuff. Um, do you guys have another, uh, one of your online things that we'll be promoting alongside you guys kind with

Speaker 1 00:54:01 Attention? Uh, so, uh, we, we sort of hit all the big topics, so I'm still, but there's, there's least some in the future, but nothing coming, but not

Speaker 2 00:54:07 Nothing coming. Anything you wanna announced here with

Speaker 1 00:54:08 Me? I had to finish a book. Rich. Come on. Alright.

Speaker 2 00:54:11 <laugh>, finish one book and then you don't have to do anything anymore. That's fine. We hope that this episode has nourish and strengthening your body, that if you're not healthy enough to listen this week, that you'll be healthy enough. Listen next week and that when the time comes, you'll be able to travel home in safety, Kurt. In the meantime, we'll be saving a seat for you on the back row of the cultural hall.

Speaker 1 00:54:35 That concludes this episode of the Leading Saints podcast. Hey, listen, would you do me a favor? You know, everybody's got that friend who listens to a ton of podcasts and maybe they aren't aware of Leading Saints. So would you mind taking the link of this episode or another episode of Leading Saints and just texting it to that friend? You know who I'm talking about, the friend who always listens to podcasts and is always telling you about different podcasts? Well, it's your turn to tell that friend about Leading Saints. So share it. We'd also love to hear from you. If you have any perspective or thought on this episode, you can go to leading saints.org and actually leave a comment on the, uh, episode page or reach out to us at leading saints.org/contact.

Speaker 3 00:55:24 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.