



Sons of Thunder in Elders Quorum | An Interview with Aaron Jaussi

March 14, 2024

Speaker 1 00:00:04 It's finally available. I've been working on a manuscript for the past four years, and it is finally a book I can hold in my hands. It's titled, is God Disappointed In Me Removing Shame From a Gospel of Grace? This book has gotten so much attention that it is already a number one Amazon bestseller. I'm Beyond amazed in just a few words I wrote, is God Disappointed in Me for Latter Day Saints who often feel overwhelmed by the gospel and who are constantly worrying if they are doing enough. It's for the latter-Day Saint who have stepped away from the church. It's for the individuals who appear to be living right, but still can't find peace and happiness. And frankly, it's for everyone who enjoys listening to the Leading Saints podcast. You will love and cherish this book. Now, warning, you might want to consider purchasing multiple copies to share one Bishop who got an advanced copy, read it in one weekend, and then literally purchased 100 additional copies. You can order it on Amazon. The link is in the show notes, or starting in March, you can find it in your local Costco in Idaho, Utah, and Arizona. It's called, is God Disappointed In Me? And you can order it Now.

Speaker 1 00:01:25 So my name is Kurt Francom, and I am the founder and executive director of Leading Saints, and obviously the host of the Leading Saints podcast. Now, I started Leading Saints back in 2010. It was just a hobby blog, and it grew from there. By the time, uh, 2014 came around, we started the podcast, and that's really when it got some, uh, traction and took off. Uh, 2016, we became a 501 C3 nonprofit organization, and we've been growing ever since. And now I get the opportunity of interviewing and talking with remarkable people all over the world. Now, this is a segment we do on the Leading Saints podcast called How I Lead, and we reach out to everyday leaders. They're not experts, gurus, authors, PhDs. They're just everyday leaders who've been asked to serve in a specific leadership calling. And we simply

ask them, how is it that you lead? And they go through some remarkable principles that should be in a book that should be behind a PhD. They're usually that good. And, uh, we just talk about, uh, sharing what the other guy's doing. And I remember being a leader just simply wanting to know, okay, I know what I'm trying to do, but what's the other guy doing? What's working for him? And so that's why every Wednesday or so we publish these How I lead segments to share,

Speaker 1 00:03:07 Hey, how I lead interview, where we talk with everyday people who are serving in everyday callings, but performing as a leader. And today we're talking with Aaron Jaussi, who is an elders quorum president in Payson, Utah, and also has a side project he's working on, which pretty cool. It's called Sons of Thunder. That's right, James and John from the Bible. He got swag now. But no, he's got a great blog, uh, website. We'll talk about what led Aaron to, uh, leaning into this adventure of starting an online platform that's focused on men and helping them, uh, connect with, uh, positive masculinity and, and, uh, finding adventure in life and maybe how some of that has spilled over to his role as Elders Quorum. He discussed his, uh, men's retreats that he is done with his elders quorum and even connecting with members of his quorum through the simplest way of a birthday card. So here's my interview with Aaron Jaussi. Aaron Jaussi, welcome to the Leading Saints podcast.

Speaker 2 00:04:33 Thanks for having me, Kurt. Appreciate it.

Speaker 1 00:04:35 Now you are in Payson, Utah. Uh, now how long you've been in that area?

Speaker 2 00:04:39 So in, in this ward, we've been here for about four years. We've been in Payson for a total of seven, seven years, I believe. Great. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:04:46 Nice, nice. And where were you born and raised?

Speaker 2 00:04:48 Born and raised in Riverton, Utah. Actually, both my wife and I grew up up there.

Speaker 1 00:04:53 Great. So a big shout out to Sean Ray who suggested that we connect and talk. Um, and how do you know Sean?

Speaker 2 00:05:01 So I actually know Sean through my older brother. So he and my older brother are best friends. Um, Sean and I have actually probably only met once, I think, but uh, we've been in communication over a few different things over the years, and great guy. He lives down in southern California, currently in a mission presidency.

Speaker 1 00:05:21 Oh, great. Nice. Yeah. Now, tell me about the, the Sons of Thunder Project that, uh, like where did this all begin for you?

Speaker 2 00:05:29 Yeah, so it's kind of a, an a leading saint story actually. So it comes from, uh, my dad a long time ago. He's been a, a longer listener to your podcast than, than I have been. But shout

Speaker 1 00:05:41 Out to your dad. Yeah,

Speaker 2 00:05:42 He, uh, he recommended a book to me called Wild At Heart, that you've mentioned a few different times. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, and I didn't think anything of it. I think I got a copy of it and it kind of sat on the shelf for a while and then listening, uh, to a Leading Saints podcast Later on, uh, you had talked, I wish I could remember the exact episode, but you were talking to someone about it. I thought I'd better give it a read. And, um, it really resonated with me. It helped me kind of identify some of the things I was feeling, uh, personally, uh, in my life and kind of led me on a, on a journey to pursue, you know, what it means to be a man, what it means for me in my life to be a man and a father and a good husband. Um, and so I spent a few years just really kind of with that on my mind. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:06:31 And now unpack that a little bit more. Like what, where were you at at this point, as in your life is, I mean, how would you, what, what resonated about it or what points came to the surface? How, how were you experiencing manhood as you read that?

Speaker 2 00:06:43 Yeah, so I've always been, I'm, like I said, I'm born and raised in the church. Um, always been pretty active, kind of your typical born and raised in Utah, a member of the church. Um, I was, I, I think at, at the time of reading Wild at Heart, I was married and we had four kids. And so really kind of doing your typical stuff, uh, what you would kind of expect someone, uh, like me to do. And, um, but when I, I felt like something was missing, I wasn't reaching that potential. I don't think that's a unique, uh, thing to most men, but something wasn't there. I was, I was going to the meetings I was supposed to go to, doing the things I was supposed to do, um, but really, really with no direction. I was just kind of, I was in the current of the church and just kind of going with it. It was a good way to live and I wasn't unhappy by any means, uh, but, but really felt like, like there was more that Heavenly Father had in store for me. And if I just kind woke up a little bit and, and had a little more purpose and, uh, and maybe, uh, did a little more searching, put some effort into it that maybe there would be a, a greater adventure for me out there. Something, something more I could, I could be for my wife and family and, and the community. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:08:04 So as you read, while the hard do you, can you think of like the particular principles or points that jumped off the page to you?

Speaker 2 00:08:12 Yeah, so really the, the one that resonates with me is, you know, he has his three things, your your adventure to live, your battle to fight, and your beauty to rescue. And the thing that resonated to me was that that adventure, um, that there, there was something there. Do I remember the, the story that resonated with me. It's right at the beginning of the book. He talks about, uh, working on or going to spend the summer with his grandpa on his ranch in, uh, Eastern Oregon or Washington, something like that. And he, uh, he talks about being a young boy and going with his grandpa, and they went to the, the local farm store, and they bought him, his grandpa bought him a BB gun and some bbs, uh, 'cause he had pigeons, pigeons on the farm that needed to be taken care of. And, and he said, I walked in, I'm paraphrasing.

Speaker 2 00:09:03 He said, I walked into that store, kind of a squirrely little kid, but I walked out as Sheriff Wyatt Earp, you know, ready to, ready to take on the town. And, and it kind of, it resonated with me in the fact that I, I think so often, at least in my life, I'd felt like, um, maybe any additional responsibility or more going on was some, some burden that I was obligated to bear, right? I'd taken, I'd made certain covenants, I'd done certain things, and so I was obligated to live a certain kind of life. And it changed that, that little story changed my perspective to, you know, there's, there's an adventure here. There's something, there's something big here that's not, not just some duty or some obligation, but there's, there's a really cool life, life to be lived, um, by taking on those responsibilities and doing those things.

Speaker 1 00:09:55 Yeah. Because it's really common, right? For a as, as a, as a man, you know, creeps into those adult years and maybe, you know, yeah. Gets married and starts having kids. There's sort of the shift of like this uber heaviness of a responsibility that needs to be watched over here, you know? Absolutely. And, and so you, you, we hyperfocus on those responsibilities and, and in doing so, we often lose ourselves and in, in, or in other words, we, we lose the adventure of life. Yeah. And, and absolutely what fuels us and helps our heart come alive.

Speaker 2 00:10:26 It's very true, very true in my life. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:10:30 So as you're reading this, I mean, what do you do with that? Like, uh, you think, I mean, how do you, did, did, was there the sense of going and finding adventure or was it like a job change or was, I mean, what do you do with that information?

Speaker 2 00:10:41 You know, I think I'm still working on that really. My, my life externally hasn't changed a bunch since then, but my attitude towards how I view, uh, the little things has changed a little bit. Um, for instance, one of the, one of the things I thought about is when I was, many years ago, I was still married, but it was quite a while ago, I remember going to a, a stake priesthood meeting. It was one of those 7:00 AM uh, stake meetings. Yeah. And I, for some reason, I remember not being super thrilled to be there. I was there because I was supposed to be, and, and it was just a general priesthood meeting. It wasn't anything fancy. But, um, and I remember going, and I remember just one of the talks, uh, really kind of rubbing me the wrong way. It was kind of a, one of those call to repentance talks that we get occasionally full

Speaker 1 00:11:37 Of shame. Is that what you're saying?

Speaker 2 00:11:38 Yeah. Yeah. The guilt

Speaker 1 00:11:39 Trip was

Speaker 2 00:11:39 Plenty. And be, and to be honest, it probably wasn't, wasn't nearly as bad as I felt. I was probably bad that morning or something <laugh>. But, um, uh, and just kind of feel not really feeling it and, and kind of thinking to myself, man, I'm up at 7:00 AM I'm here doing what I'm supposed to do. I like, I don't need, you know, I don't need to be read the riot act here. And, and it, and I just, I, I kind of forgot about it and moved on. And then, uh, later on the last few years I've been thinking, and one thing a wild at heart helped me realize is that those

calls to repentance or those calls to do more can real, are really a call to adventure. I thought about just the, the concept of ministering in the church. You know, something that we all kind of struggle with.

Speaker 2 00:12:27 It's the, the eternal battle is how do we do ministering? And and I remember thinking, uh, to myself and talking to my wife and thinking what, imagine the life that we could have if we really took that to heart. If ministering really became a part of us, we really took it to heart. Um, think of the stories we'd be able to tell, you know, when I'm 80 years old and talking to my grandkids or the, the adventures you'd get to have, the people you'd get to meet. Um, and so yeah, it was really kind of just a, a shift. And like I said, I'm still going through that shift. I'm by no means, you know, a 180 degrees different or, or so much better than I was before. But definitely my attitude towards, towards that adventure and my duties and responsibilities have changed.

Speaker 1 00:13:15 Yeah. Yeah. That's fascinating because, um, I think this is worth sort of sitting with and, and exploring that. Uh, 'cause often I'm just thinking of, uh, the elders quorum president, or the bishop stake president who, who's listening to this and thinking, because, because there's such a fine line between the, the guilt trip message of, Hey, you know, you gotta get out there and do ministering. Like people are suffering. Like go get 'em. But also this call to adventure, and, and sometimes we, we attempt that call to adventure and, but it turns into a guilt trip. Right? And, and, and just thinking in church history, was it the William Martin Ha Hancock company where like Brigham Young stood up like one general conference, and he is like, they're out there, guys. Like, yeah, they're suffering, they're out of food. We're gonna go get 'em. Right? Like, this is this moment of call to adventure of like, who's with me?

Speaker 1 00:14:05 Who's gonna load your wagon up and go get 'em? And for the masculine soul like that, that awakens us from it. S Yeah. We want to be the person that can go out on the frontier and rescue those who need it, right? Absolutely. Now, you translate that to a modern day context, and sometimes the need, it's so hidden, right? I mean, so much of the hurt and the struggle is so deep under the surface that it's hard to see. Or we make the attempt like, Hey, I'm here to rescue you. And they're like, how about you get off my porch? I don't need rescuing. Right. Like, or Yeah. But I don't know. It's like we're sitting with that. There, there, there is a call to adventure that we can offer the, you know, we're specifically talking about the men in the church, but sometimes it's tricky and I can't Yeah. Accidentally slip into that guilt trip, uh, context.

Speaker 2 00:14:55 Yeah. That, uh, stake priest of me. That's probably what it was. It probably was a call to adventure that I, I was too, uh, too, uh, tired to hear or something. But yeah, it, it, it is a fine line between, you know, get up and do more and berating people and, uh, and inviting them to something. Yeah. Inviting them to something bigger.

Speaker 1 00:15:16 Yeah. So, and maybe we'll come back to these principles. I'm curious, like, uh, again, how, uh, so you're, you're reading Wild The Heart, you're sort of discovering this adventure. Maybe keep us going on that timeline as far as what you did with that information. Yeah,

Speaker 2 00:15:28 So really, I just kind of sat with it for a long time and, and thought about it. Um, my wife probably heard way too much about what was going on in my <laugh> in my mind from that. But, um, I, I'm also, I, I tinker with things. I'm one of those jack of all Trade Master now. I love learning new things and doing little things. Awesome. Um, but I never become an expert at it. And at this a couple years ago, I, uh, I wanted to learn a new skill. I didn't know what it was. I just wanted to learn something new. And so I, uh, started tinkering around. I, I, I liked the idea of like, web development and, and stuff like that. And so I started tinker, tinkering around with building a website and doing different things just, just for kicks and giggles.

Speaker 2 00:16:11 And then, um, and one of the things I was trying to learn is how do you build a, how do you build an online store? I didn't have anything to sell or do, but I was curious. I was curious how you did it and what the, what the workings were like that with that. And I do that. And, um, and so one of the things I was learning, I was trying to build like an online store, and I was, uh, building it out. I didn't have, like I said, I didn't have a product to sell, so I was building it out to be like selling the blue light filtering goggles, just, just for fun, just uhuh. And, uh, I can't remember if someone suggested it to me or what, but I thought, why not turn it into a blog or something about all these things I've been thinking about and the things I've been feeling and reading about and, you know, share some of my thoughts.

Speaker 2 00:16:56 And then maybe, you know, you sell a couple t-shirts in the shop or something, and I put it out to my, I have a group text with some of my brothers and brother-in-Law and my dad, and ask, you know, what, what would you name some if you were to name like a group or a club or something that had this kind of theme to it, you know, this kind of masculinity, you know, calling men to rise up and be better, but also with, you know, with God as the, as the central focus of that, which called, and my, my little brother immediately emailed Back Sons of Thunder, and I thought that was, I thought that was pretty cool. And, um, and so it just kind of stuck and I just kind of ran with it. And so I created, you know, that website and, and ended up reaching out to, uh, other men that I had admire, uh, Sean Ray being one of 'em, uh, to, you know, to share some of their thoughts, you know, as I shared kind of what I was thinking. And, and they would write some blog posts and things for me and, and share some things. And so, yeah, that's kind of how it came about. And it's been, you know, something I, I wish I was a little more consistent at doing, but it's been, it's been a lot of fun in a way to express some of the, the thoughts I've had. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:18:02 So, and so what's the URL for that? It

Speaker 2 00:18:04 Sons of Thunder project.com.

Speaker 1 00:18:07 Nice. And, and so the, the main purpose is for men to just share different stories, or

Speaker 2 00:18:12 You, you know what, some of that's still being fleshed out, but Yeah. Okay. So I've reached out to other men who have just shared thoughts that they've had, and it, it's not necessarily specifically about, uh, being men, but, but topics that relate to Man, for

instance, there's one about, um, increased love and in, and increased responsibility. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Um, so, you know, when we, or increased expectations, not responsibility, increased expectations. So, you know, when we love someone, our expectations for them are naturally high. If we don't have high expectations for someone, we don't, we don't really love them. I had a, um, there's a member of our bar stake presidency actually, who's a, a chaplain in the military and has been for many years, and he, he wrote one kind of about controlling what we say, you know, controlling our, as men, controlling our tongues.

Speaker 2 00:19:01 You know, sometimes things don't need to be said, and how do we balance that with, um, making sure we speak up when we're supposed to. Um, but yeah, so there's a, there's a few different things on there that, that have just been fun. And so, yeah, I mean, the, the direction that's cool. The end goal is still to be determined, I guess, but it's been a lot of fun. Um, allowed me to have some really fun conversations as I, we have like a booth at, you know, the Payson City Town days, our Onion Days down here, and having different conversations with people about why the Sons of Thunder and James and John and all that.

Speaker 1 00:19:34 Ah, that's great. And you got some cool swag on here as well, shirts and hats and things. I love that. Yeah, I love that. That's really cool. So, and, and there's, there's a few things I just wanna underscore here, is that, uh, first of all, like, nobody called you to do this, right? This isn't like, no,

Speaker 1 00:19:49 No. Your elcor president said you, I mean, you're the elders quorum president, I guess, but you know, a church leader has sent you down and say, we need to do this. Right? And, and this is like, this is part of the adventure, right? That it's not necessarily that we've even been asked to do it, but there's sort of this, uh, rumbling in our soul a little bit where Yeah. And this happens with so many men. Like you sit down with a man at lunch or in a casual setting and really, really drill down. You'll discover these things of like, you know what, I always, I always thought I would do such and such, or Yeah. You know, I always saw myself going back to school or Yeah. Now the MBA has sort of been calling me, you know, I should really go back to school and get that MBA, you know, like there, there's so many examples of it or something like this. Like, I just felt this call to put out a call, you know, to to other men and, and start, uh, resonating with them through the Sons of Thunder, right? Yeah. It's been fun. That's cool. That's cool. Um, so the, the main idea is this is sort of a rallying point, it sounds like. I mean, yeah. For other men to just come together and there's some, and you blog on here as well, not just you, but others, uh, share thoughts or perspectives as far as maybe something, some principles that would resonate with other men,

Speaker 2 00:20:54 Right? Absolutely. Like it's non, it's non-denominational. It started out kind of non-denominational uhuh. But what I found is I was going through like 90% of my, uh, my experiences and my, my perspective, or I guess a hundred percent of my perspective comes from, you know, being a member of the church when it comes to involving God. And so it's really kind of leaned, um, I, I'm not shy about, you know, the fact that I'm a member, and that's kind of come through a lot that's kind of leaned I would just naturally, but,

Speaker 1 00:21:24 So I'm curious, you're, you're currently an Elders quorum president, like I said, right? Yeah. How long have you been the Elders quorum president?

Speaker 2 00:21:29 Uh, not quite a year, so how, wow. Probably nine, nine months. I think June or July will be a year.

Speaker 1 00:21:35 Nice. Is this your first go at it or have you had other

Speaker 2 00:21:37 This is, this is my very first go. I haven't been, uh, around the elders quorum for a long time. Oh,

Speaker 1 00:21:43 Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:21:43 <laugh>.

Speaker 1 00:21:44 Uh, maybe what, how would you describe the, the dynamics of your elders quorum? I mean, it's Paeon, Utah, pretty established latter Saint community, right? So, yeah. I mean, anything out of the ordinary for a Utah Payson ward,

Speaker 2 00:21:57 We have one of the, I think, one of the most engaged elders quorums that I, I've been a part of. And it's been really cool. Um, my job is really easy with the group. We've, like I said, I've been, my wife and I, since we've been married, have been in tons of different wards. We, especially in our early years of marriage, we moved around a bunch. And this one has been, uh, refreshingly engaged. It's really cool. Our, um, our elders Quorum instructors are fantastic. The, the engagement by the men is really good. Um, so, so yeah, I mean, I, I don't know if that's unique. I think there's, it's unique in my experience to have a group that's disengaged and gets along so well, but, uh, nice. But yeah, it's been a lot of fun.

Speaker 1 00:22:41 All right. I wanna lean into that a little bit here, so, okay. I mean, and I don't know, I'm curious, like these principles or concepts you've explored through the Sun Sons of Thunder project, like how does that show up in your elders quorum?

Speaker 2 00:22:52 That's a great question. Um, so really there, there's is a, a desire among our elders quorum feels at least the majority of the members to, to be involved and to be engaged and to do something. Hmm. And I wouldn't say it's all of 'em, but there's enough that the rest of the group kind of comes along and it's Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> it's been really good that way. Just a, a lot of good guys that aren't afraid to get their hands dirty and get involved.

Speaker 1 00:23:23 Yeah. So is there anything like, uh, how would you describe your general approach as, as being Elders quorums there? I mean, is there, uh, as far as running the meetings or connecting the group or anything coming to mind?

Speaker 2 00:23:36 I, I don't know that there is really, I've been blessed with, we have one Elders quorum instructor right now that's just phenomenal. Hmm. Um, and then we, we try to do a lot of visits and we've focused a lot on ministering interviews, just making contact, uh, yeah. With, with the men in the ward, and that's been, that's been huge and really good. But as far as,

as far as how we, uh, lead meetings and how we do things, I don't know that there's anything specific. I know for me, and I mean, my approach, it's just I've shifted my focus to be more like, this is an adventure for me, you know, going and knocking on someone's door that maybe I've never met and should have met, or, uh, you know, some of those things that maybe may have felt awkward or still do feel awkward. Um, now it's part of the adventure, right? Yeah. We get to go and we don't know what's gonna happen at the doorstep, but it might be something awesome. Yeah. And so,

Speaker 1 00:24:30 Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And that's is an adventure time, right? Especially when you don't know who they are or whether they're gonna be happy to see or not. Right. Uh, and I'm curious with this instructor in your Ridge Corps, is there anything specific he does? Is it he's he just a charismatic guy, or like,

Speaker 2 00:24:46 He's a pretty charismatic guy. He's not afraid to ask very direct questions and kind of sit in it. He asks really good questions, and then he, he's not afraid to dig deeper on things, um, and engage and engage people. And some of it is that people have been willing to engage. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, you know, we kinda have that image in our mind, or at least I did. I spent a lot of time out of the elders quorum with the young men. Um, I had the kind of image in my mind of the teacher asks something and they're silence, and there's five guys in the back that are on their phones and two, two others asleep. Um, but we get some really good engagement and that, that leads to, to deeper things, and it's helped us come closer as a quorum, I think.

Speaker 1 00:25:25 Nice. That's cool. Yeah. Um, anything as far as, uh, that, that comes to mind as far as how you work with your counselors or, you know, do you have a regular presidency meeting or do you Yeah. Share responsibilities in a certain way? Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:25:39 So years, years ago, um, I was just, my wife and I were newly married. I was called to be the young men's president, uh, and I had a chance to talk with the, the gentleman that was leaving who was the young men's president I was replacing. And he, I thought he was just phenomenal. I'd currently been in the Priest Corps as an advisor, and I remember asking him, I, I, I was kind of in awe of him and how well he seemed to run the Young Men's program then. And I kind of asked him like, what, how do you do it? Like, what's, what's kind of the secret sauce as I step into this for the first time as a young kid? And he, I remember him saying, you have to hold your meetings, um, your regular meetings. And I thought about that a lot and have had other calling since.

Speaker 2 00:26:29 And I really come to lean on that, even if you don't have anything to talk about or you don't think you do, having a consistent regular meeting where you touch base and you identify, uh, needs or just even just kind of chat for a few minutes and see how things are going with your presidency, it makes a huge difference. Um, and so we've tried to do that. We, we regularly hold, um, presidency meetings. We hold presidency meetings every other Sunday morning, and then on every Wednesday we go out on visits and we go, uh, knock doors or make appointments and go, go visit members of the ward.

Speaker 1 00:27:04 Yeah. And, um, anything worth mentioning as far, like, with these visits, is that, does that involve some of the, like ministering interview responsibilities and things, or, uh, how do you approach those visits? Yeah,

Speaker 2 00:27:16 So the ministering interviews usually separate. We kind of schedule those, um, uh, separately. The visits can be to people that we're having trouble getting to come in for administering interview. We may, uh, try to do that. A lot of it are, uh, members that have come up in ward council or people that may have specific needs. Um, for instance, we had a, a new member that moved into our ward and needed a help getting a couch downstairs. And we heard about it from a member of the Bishop Rick. And so that became our Wednesday meeting. We went over to, to meet the, meet the new guy, and we moved a couch for him and

Speaker 1 00:27:51 <laugh> nice.

Speaker 2 00:27:51 And stuff like that. Um, one of our goals was we wanted to have some sort of face to face interaction with every, every elder in the ward, active or inactive. Everyone was on the records. And so we've been taking around birthday cards as their birthdays come up. Uh, we take around a birthday card, just we have some sort of interaction. Wow. And there've been some really positive experiences with that. Members that have been inactive that I'd never met before, after four years being in the ward, never met. Um, they actually invited us in and we had a, a great chat with them. Some of 'em just kind of take it, and you can tell they kinda want you to get off their porch, but <laugh>, uh, most of it's been, most of it's been really good.

Speaker 1 00:28:29 So, birthday cards, is this like a, like, like, do you get out the crans and, and create your own birthday card? Or like, tell me how

Speaker 2 00:28:37 That works? So we, yeah. I just ordered a box of generic birthday cards on Amazon, a hundred some odd.

Speaker 1 00:28:43 They got everything

Speaker 2 00:28:44 Birthday cards. Yeah. It's, but it is hard to find ones that aren't girly, that aren't, that aren't really kind of feminine. There

Speaker 1 00:28:51 Needs to be a Sons of Thunder line of card,

Speaker 2 00:28:53 A thunder card, happy Card. Yeah. <laugh>. Yeah. That, that awesome. That could take me a while. And the ones we got are still, maybe not feminine, but, uh, they're pretty juvenile, just says big crayon letters on the front, happy Birthday, and, and we just write a little note inside and, and sign it for 'em. But, uh, I love

Speaker 1 00:29:10 It. But

Speaker 2 00:29:11 Yeah. Love it. It's been, it's been good. And it gives you an opportunity to meet people in a kind of a, a less awkward way. You're, you're just, Hey, we heard it's your birthday this week. We wanna to come say hi and drop, drop off

Speaker 1 00:29:22 Birthday. That's cool. Yeah. I mean, and it's so simple, you know? Yeah. That's what I love about it. Yeah. I

Speaker 2 00:29:26 Actually learned that I had a bishop, um, I served in his bishop Rick, uh, a few years back, and he made a point, I, I was so impressed by this, by himself, not as a member of the Bishop Rick or anything else, just by himself. He took a candy bar to every member of the ward on record, I believe, from age eight up, uh, every, every year.

Speaker 1 00:29:49 Yeah. I, again, so easy, right? Because I mean, so easy. I think the Relief society, they're more of like my, you know, my wife would be like, I'm, I'm gonna whip up a, a pan of brownies. And I'm like, Ugh. Like, it's like a lot, you know? Yeah. I don't wanna, I don't wanna bake some brownies, but I don't know. And so for men, it's like, yeah, you don't even need a, a treat just like, Nope, birthday Picard, but

Speaker 2 00:30:08 Just something simple. You can take

Speaker 1 00:30:09 A treat. Yeah. Grab a candy bar at the store.

Speaker 2 00:30:11 Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:30:11 Yeah. So <laugh>,

Speaker 2 00:30:13 Yeah, it's a lot simpler than we think, but, but yeah, sometimes just that's the activation energy just getting started is, yeah. It's just hard.

Speaker 1 00:30:22 Alright. Any other like, nuanced little things you do like that that, uh, that probably seem like no big deal to you, but, or maybe unique?

Speaker 2 00:30:31 Um, we hold an annual, uh, men's retreat.

Speaker 1 00:30:35 Okay. Now we're getting somewhere <laugh>, here we go.

Speaker 2 00:30:37 So I started that, uh, when I back, I was in the Bishop brick before, before this calling. Uh, so kind of, um, but I was having these thoughts right, of, of manhood and masculinity. And it'd been a few wards since we'd ever had a fathers and sons or done anything. And as I talked to, you know, with, in our bishop Rick, with the bishop and, uh, the clerks and stuff, I said, what do you guys think about doing a, like a fathers and sons again? I think it's important for men to, to get out and be together and interact and, and do something, uh, you know, kind of tough and masculine and camp and have a fire and let the kids light sticks and stuff. Yeah. Um, and they thought it was a good idea. But one of the clerks mentioned know, he said, you know, one of the reservations I've had 'cause is that he only has daughters.

Speaker 2 00:31:27 He said, I kind of feel awkward going to fathers and sons 'cause I only have daughters. You know, and there was the thought about, um, you know, suggested maybe we do just a, you know, a a dad and kids thing. And I thought, was it kind of, it kind of defeats for like, I want to get men out. I wanna get men specifically out. Yeah. And so it turned into a, a men's retreat. We'll have our third one this year, but we go out, um, we try to keep it somewhere close by. We're blessed to be able to do that down here. There's some pretty nearby places to camp, and we, we hang out, we have food and we have a, a devotional that night. Uh, we, we talk about different things. Um, and yeah, we, uh, we play games and just kind of hang out and just, just be guys for a while. Nice. And it's just a quick overnight kind of thing, but it's been, it's been a lot of fun.

Speaker 1 00:32:23 I bet there's some good unity that comes from that. Yeah,

Speaker 2 00:32:25 Absolutely.

Speaker 1 00:32:26 Wow. Wow. And again, very simple, right? Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:32:29 Nothing, nothing fancy.

Speaker 1 00:32:31 Yeah. Yeah. Love it. Cool. Anything else that, uh, your, your, uh, secrets to success there as elders quorums? Think

Speaker 2 00:32:39 So, uh, nothing really. We have, we've had really good success using, uh, group messaging like via WhatsApp or GroupMe, rather than the Oh, really? The old email thing that's helped

Speaker 1 00:32:48 Like the entire quorum.

Speaker 2 00:32:50 Yeah. I, I was really surprised. I thought we'd get a lot of pushback on it. People not wanting to add a new app to their phone or do something else. But, um, it's made, it's made my life a lot easier when we have move-ins move outs that, you know, with short notice, you send out a quick message and, uh, usually get really good response, uh, from there. And our Elders quorum instructor, he sends out the lesson and some thoughts in advance and, Hey, we're gonna talk about this and I'm gonna be asking these kind of questions. And it's been a lot of fun. People asking to borrow tools and everything else. It's nice. It's worked out, it's worked out pretty well. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:33:25 Ah, I love it. Yeah. Just a simple system. And there are things like, uh, GroupMe that you can download the app or you can just use text. Right, right. So there's um, ways of, if you do get pushback around that. Yeah. So yeah. And just that casual, um, especially in 2024. Right. There's just, uh, people are, are u more used to that maybe like the, the texts they'll step into any text message feed as long as they can step out <laugh>. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:33:49 You know,

Speaker 1 00:33:49 Nobody likes to get caught in a Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:33:51 And I could see how it could get a little overwhelming and we try not to, to overwhelm people with messages. 'cause yeah, it's, we all have a lot going on and having your phone peeing all the time. 'cause Dave down the road needs a wrench or something can be rough. But it's, it's worked out pretty well for us.

Speaker 1 00:34:10 Awesome. So you'd recommend people read Wild at Heart?

Speaker 2 00:34:14 Absolutely. I keep extra copies to give out to people at my house. 'cause it That's cool. It's been a big deal.

Speaker 1 00:34:19 Yeah. Now and, and as I've said before, like, um, it's written by, you know, John Eldridge, who's evangelical. So there are some doctrinal points you just have to wave past. But again, uh, generally speaking, it's a great sound resource that, um, I've, man it has impacted my life and I've heard over and over the lives it's impacted and, and it's just like a good, like, I'm just thinking like that you, that newly called Elders quorum president, who's just like, all right, where do I start? Like, how do I even begin to tap into the heart of, of a man <laugh>? Yeah. And, uh, and it's just, it is a good place to gain some perspective and be like, okay, like I, maybe I don't understand it totally, but I, I kinda have a starting place here. I can lean in and absolutely help some men. So it

Speaker 2 00:35:01 Definitely, it definitely kinda, for me at least, opened up my thought press where I pursued a lot more. I started looking a lot deeper to see, you know, what, what am I missing or what, what is there out there, uh, for, yeah. So it opened up a lot of that.

Speaker 1 00:35:13 Awesome. Well, um, and I encourage people to check out, uh, maybe or tell 'em where to go to remind 'em again, where to go to check out more Sons of Thunder stuff. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:35:21 Just Sons of Thunder project.com and yeah, we're always looking for, for people with great experiences or even without great experiences, guys that wanna share their thoughts or, Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, everything's, um, not on that aspect of it.

Speaker 1 00:35:35 Alright. Uh, Aaron, last question I have for you is, as you look back on your time as a, as a leader in the church, how has being a leader helped you become a better follower of Jesus Christ?

Speaker 2 00:35:44 Um,

Speaker 2 00:35:47 I think it has helped me realize how individual the gospel is. Um, as, as we function our capacities as leaders, I think one of the things I've noticed most is how aware our heavenly Father is of individual circumstances and individual, uh, needs. And it's helped me, uh, better engage with those things that are, that are right in front of me, like the, the needs of my family and Lord, knowing that, uh, that the, the gospel is very, very personal and very, a very individual that there's a lot of good group things that come, but our Heavenly Father knows us specifically. And so it gives me kind of an excitement and a drive to, to follow my savior, knowing

that he cares about me be and I know he cares about me because I've seen him care about so many other people, uh, through, through opportunities to lead.

Speaker 1 00:36:55 And that concludes this how I Lead Interview. I hope you enjoyed it. And, uh, I would ask you, could you take a minute and drop this link in an email, on social media, in a text, wherever it makes the most sense, and share it with somebody who could relate to this, this experience. And this is how we, how we develop as leaders, just hearing what the other guy's doing, trying some things out, testing, adjusting for your area. And, uh, that's, that's where great leadership's discovered, right? So we would love to have you, uh, share this with, uh, somebody in this calling or a related calling and that would be great. And also, if you know somebody, uh, any type of leader who would be a fantastic guest on the How I Lead segment, uh, reach out to us. Go to leading saints.org/contact. Maybe send this individual an email letting them know that you're going to be suggesting their name for this interview. We'll reach out to them and, uh, see if we can line 'em up. So again, go to leading saints.org/contact and there you can submit all the information and let us know and maybe they will be on a feature how I lead Segment on the Leading Saints podcast. And remember, grab your copy of my new book, is God Disappointed In Me on Amazon or in select Costco stores?

Speaker 3 00:38:13 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 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.