



## **What Every Bishop Needs to Understand About Betrayal Trauma | An Interview with Ashly Leavitt**

March 16, 2024

Speaker 1 00:00:02 It is finally available. I've been working on a manuscript for the past four years, and it's 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 is 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 advance 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 00:01:20 If you wanted further insight into a Come Follow Me lesson, you'd probably search in YouTube or get the We Believe app, tough Church History questions. You'd reach out to the BH Roberts Foundation. But what if you wanted to learn to be a better leader? Well, I'm glad you asked. You'd come to Leading Saints. That's why we exist to help Latter Day Saints be better prepared to lead by being familiar with others' leadership experiences. Understand the latest leadership research, and finding a community to share ideas. That's why I'm glad you found the Leading Saints podcast. We hope you will dive into the archives and visit [leading.saints.org](http://leading.saints.org) to find out what are the top most listened to episodes on the podcast. Welcome. You're gonna love it.

Speaker 1 00:02:06 Hey everyone. Welcome back to the Leading Saints podcast. You know, there was, I've touched on this topic before, this topic of betrayal trauma, but I wanted to get an updated, more current episode where I talk with an expert, a therapist, and that person being Ashly Leavitt, who is a remarkable therapist who specializes in this concept of betrayal trauma. Now, some of you are probably hearing this like, what is betrayal trauma? Why should I care? But when you need to know about betrayal trauma, you really need to know about betrayal trauma. 'cause you can be so traumatizing for those involved. So a quick example, you have a great family in your ward. Husband and wife seem to be getting along great. They're happy, they show up to church. Their kids seem relatively well behaved and they're down a path that's going well. Well, there's some betrayal happening behind the scenes.

Speaker 1 00:02:53 Maybe it's a struggle with pornography, maybe it's infidelity. There's a list of reasons. And this comes to the surface and that causes trauma for the spouse in the relationship or the children. It's as if somebody set off a bomb in, in their home and they don't know how to grapple with it. Here we had this trusted husband, father, individual in the community, and now that they, he's betrayed us and how do we grapple with that? And so many people make rash decisions and so many bishops or church leaders put on their shoulders sort of this responsibility of fixing the situation and helping them through it, when in reality there's so much to consider, so many dynamics going on. So Ashly really does a marvelous job with her expertise as a therapist and guiding us through this journey of understanding what betrayal trauma is. How does it show up? Because oftentimes it's behind the scenes, you don't even know what's there, but it's causing so much damage. And so this will be an episode you may wanna listen to a few times as you pick up on what betrayal trauma is, how to identify it, and how to help people through it. So here's my interview with Ashly Leavitt.

Speaker 1 00:04:05 Today I'm welcoming in Ashly Leavitt to the Leading Saint podcast. How are you?

Speaker 2 00:04:08 I'm doing well. How are

Speaker 1 00:04:09 You? Good. Now I gotta give a shout out to our mutual friend Becky Beck. Yes. Who connected us. We grew up in the same ward. And uh, she sent me a message and said, you've got to talk with Ashly. So here we go.

Speaker 2 00:04:20 She's amazing and does incredible work and I'm so honored to connect.

Speaker 1 00:04:23 Yeah. Now I want to, the reason I've been looking for somebody, and we'll probably do multiple episodes around this topic 'cause it is so important and it's like this hidden, I don't know, like this hidden relationship virus that never gets addressed and often becomes a bigger problem. Yes. Because we don't, and that is the concept of betrayal trauma. So assume that we know nothing about betrayal trauma, and maybe let me, like the 'cause especially from a, a bishop standpoint or who's like working with maybe couples behind the scene who are experiencing betrayal trauma, they're sort of trying to untangle this all and understand it. But even like families who will be faced with betrayal trauma and they, they don't know what to do with it. It just feels like a bomb went off in their house. And so assuming we

know nothing, where do we start with betrayal trauma? Okay, <laugh>, what is it? Where do we begin

Speaker 2 00:05:12 In this realm? In this application, we're gonna be talking about betrayal trauma specifically in regards to how one partner in a marriage is feeling emotional distress due to the sexual acting out behaviors of their spouse. Right. And those behaviors might be like physical infidelity. They've cheated with someone. They might be virtual infidelity, maybe it's a pornography addiction that's going on, emotional infidelity. All of those types of behaviors come along. And with those behaviors, there's this subset of behaviors that are usually like the gaslighting and the manipulation, kind of those buzzwords that we're seeing those come along with these kind of sexual acting out behaviors. And those ones are the ones that cause damage. And those behaviors result in the partner that's been betrayed, feeling just this complete confusion about what their life is and where it's going and who they can trust and what's going on. And that experience is what we call betrayal trauma. Right. And it can come with all sorts of side effects, I guess you could say all sorts of like emotional, physical. We see people, their physical health drains when they're going through betrayal trauma, their mental health, their emotional health. It's like PTSD is happening in that person, even though the trauma that they're experiencing is, is less traumatic than say, like a bomb exploded while I was in war. But it's affecting them just as much as that

Speaker 1 00:06:30 May happen. Yeah, yeah. Because trauma, I mean that's sort of the big umbrella concept that we're talking about. Yeah. We're we're talking something specific because, uh, a soldier who goes to war obviously enters a very traumatic situation, almost dies or gets injured and can't sleep at. Right. That, that PTSD t like that is very understandable. But imagine this, instead of being sent off to war, like the worst, the in your house Yeah. Sneaks into your house and suddenly the bomb goes off in your house and then with the most trusted people. Yeah. Right. The friendliest to fire Yeah. Betrays. And now that trauma has a little bit different flavor, not that it's worse or easier or whatever. It's just different. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:07:08 And it's, it's a different in a way that we don't often talk about. I think society has shifted to where we can say PTSD with a veteran who's come and we kind of all go, oh, I understand it's happening, but we don't think about that same kind of trauma and those same types of results of that trauma happening from just like a relationship disagreement. Right. Because we kind of minimize that relationship disagreement to, it's not a big thing, but when betrayal trauma is happening in your relationship, a bomb has just gone off in your relationship and even figuring out which way is up is really hard.

Speaker 1 00:07:37 Yeah. And we'll sort of go back to these general examples. I think what one that a lot of, you know, bishops or church leaders see or loved ones around certain people is, you know, there's infidelity even with not necessarily physical infidelity where there's an affair, but even with, you know, an individual, a wife catches their husband viewing pornography Yeah. And then realizes this has been going on like even before their marriage. Right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And they've been hiding it and I thought I trusted you and now I like, if, if this, then what else? Right? Yeah. And, and that's sort of the, a typical scenario. I hate to generalize things, but that's a general

Speaker 2 00:08:11 Scenario, right? Yeah. Yeah. That's a very common scenario. And those thoughts that you just attributed, I thought I trusted you. And if this, then what else are all very common thoughts to be having during this?

Speaker 1 00:08:20 Now what typically happens is in the church setting is that, okay, this is not okay, you need to go see your bishop. Right. Or Yeah. Or we need to get this fixed. I'm calling the bishop over, I remember being that bishop that gets the phone call and walks into that. Yeah. You know, rampage after the bomb has just exploded. Right. Or they come into the office and it's like, alright, you need to take care of this. Right? Yeah. And as a bishop, sometimes I need to take swift action. I need to do something right? Yeah. When in reality, so much is going on. Right. And the best sometimes just gotta slow down, but I don't, you know, you know how to slow down, right? Yeah. Yeah. So where's like the next step of stepping, stepping into the waters of understanding betrayal

Speaker 2 00:08:57 Trauma? I really like this metaphor. It's called the hit by a truck analogy. And it's a pretty common one in betrayal, trauma recovery. So picture, I'm gonna use just kind of the stereotypical wife is the victim of betrayal trauma, and husband is the one that's done the betraying, but that's not always the case. Right? But so say the wife is just like walking down the street, just her typical, normal day. And here comes husband, he's driving his truck down the road and she's like, oh, hi, there, you're, and then he hits her and she's on the ground, like bleeding out big, big wounds from this being hit by a truck. Now, our immediate reaction in this type of thing is run to the wife and see how she's doing. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But in betrayal trauma, what ends up happening is, oh, husband was driving the truck.

Speaker 2 00:09:39 We better make sure that he knows how to drive. Yeah. Like, let's stop him from hitting people, which is also an important piece. But when we focus on husband, let's take care of your pornography addiction, or let's make sure we figure out what's going on with you. And we ignore the wife, she's just bleeding out on the side of the road. And so often we hear people come up and be like, well, if you'll just forgive him, then you're gonna be fine. And we would never say that to someone lying on the side of the road. Just forget that person that hit you with their truck and you're gonna be fine. That's not what we would do. Right. Yeah. That's great. So there's this importance of like, let's also give focus or sometimes shift focus depending on what's happening with the husband to the person who was wounded in this scenario. Mm-Hmm. And husband's not gonna be able to fix those wounds just by like being sober, no longer engaging in pornography. That's not gonna feel heal the wounds. They need their own help and their own attention.

Speaker 1 00:10:24 Yeah. I, and he could jump out of the truck and say, don't worry. Yeah. I'll never do this. I'll

Speaker 2 00:10:29 Never do it again.

Speaker 1 00:10:30 Wait, but this is the fifth time you've hit her with the truck. But no, this time, this

Speaker 2 00:10:33 Time I'm done. I was, I was, I was just distracted for a second. Right. But right now I'll no longer be, it's not gonna heal the wounds. It's not

Speaker 1 00:10:39 Gonna work. Yeah. And so from a church leader, we see this situation again, not, you know, uh, the metaphor is helpful, but like in a betrayal, you know, sexual betrayal or pornography or whatever it is, we see it like, well, if we can just fix the husband, he'll start stop hitting you with the truck. Yeah. And then you'll be okay. Your, your wounds will heal. We can move on. Mm-Hmm. So let's focus on him. But in reality, like you said, she's bleeding out. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:10:59 Because the pain that is happening is so internal and so private. She probably keeps it very internal because she's not quite sure who to even trust anymore. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And so she's keeping it very internal. So it's almost logical to say, well, let's just fix the person who hit her with the truck. Like, let's make sure that never happens again and she'll be fine, but we're missing this huge thing that's happening. I love that you called it a virus. This virus that's happening in the marriage that's just, it's not gonna be able to survive if the marriage is our focus, the marriage won't be able to survive unless she survives. Right. And she's not gonna be able to survive if she's just left hanging.

Speaker 1 00:11:31 Now, one thing I wanna highlight here is that even the wife, even the spouse can think, yeah, let's just fix him. Yeah. Right. It's, she doesn't realize the trauma that she's, that she's actually bleeding out. Right? Yeah. Yeah. That again, this, nobody's like, we're all, this is such a, you know, there's so much trauma happening, it just rocks our world. Mm-Hmm. That everybody involved can't really see straight at times. Yeah. Especially at the beginning.

Speaker 2 00:11:53 For sure. And it's what's going on with the brain is it just wants us to be okay. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And so the brain's gonna find the easiest path to, this will never happen again. Let's make this be okay. So even her brain might go, oh, you know what? It's actually just him. Let's focus on him. All of my tensions, I love him and support him and have covenanted to be with him for forever. So we're gonna get through this together and I'll support him. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And how often is she coming into the bishop's office to be like, lemme hold his hand while he tells you what it's, and he and how repentant he's, and she's right there, like supporting him because her brain says this will be the easiest way to fix the trauma. Yeah. But even she doesn't know it's this virus that she's got going on in her, in these rooms that

Speaker 1 00:12:32 Yeah. Because the feeling, the natural feeling is, is like, don't you remember the days before your husband was hitting with trucks? Yeah. We should go back to that. Yeah. Yeah. How can we get there the fastest? Yeah. Right. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:12:42 For he, and he's such a good guy and we just wanna get back to that. And then also we have this culture that's very much, you can't change your spouse, you can only change yourself. But if he needs to change himself, then I'm just gonna support him and be here with him, and I'm not gonna worry about me. I'm gonna support him. And it just, we, for the sake of like being kind or Christ, like we put ourselves on the back burner and let me prioritize

him in what he needs to do. Yeah. And kind of, I'll, I'll ignore the things going on with me and support him. And it's kind of this backwards application of, of some of our cultural understanding of what we're supposed to do as a spouse.

Speaker 1 00:13:16 Cool. Anything else that is in terms of, you know, you referenced this, this bucket of behaviors. What does that, what do you mean by that and how does that Yeah. How does that manifest?

Speaker 2 00:13:25 It's fascinating how often I'll have women in my groups or women in my office, they'll come in and just say, you know, it really wasn't actually the cheating on me that hurt. It was the lying about it that hurt. Right. Because that's what really has undone any foundation we might have had. And along with that lying, there's usually some, some gaslighting where the, the wife usually knows, she's got kind of a spidey sense that something is off. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And she'll come and say, Hey, is there something going on? And then he goes, no, we're fine. And that just subtle gaslighting to where now she's like, I dunno if I can believe myself, if I can trust myself when I feel like something is off because he's saying everything's fine, even though I feel like something is off. So there's those subtle gaslighting that kind of chips away at her.

Speaker 2 00:14:04 And then there's the foundation of lies that chips away at the foundation of, of her understanding of the relationship. And then we also often will see like a defensiveness, Hey, were you just using pornography? Or did, or were you meeting up with someone when, and the initial reaction when someone's calling out maybe a dangerous behavior is Dan defensive. And so the husband will respond with, no, I can't believe you would think that I haven't done that. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And so there's this defensiveness and there's some blame shifting. Well, if you would just be more intimate with me, then I wouldn't have to type of thing. All of those behaviors that try to minimize the damage that's being done and shift the responsibility for it over onto the wife are all, they're just abusive behaviors. That's what they're, they, they remove the wife's ability to have agency because it, if she doesn't know the truth of what's going on, or the truth about who you are or the truth about what kind of behaviors you engage in, she no longer has the option to choose how to respond to this relationship.

Speaker 2 00:14:59 So it's removing her agency, it's trying to keep her from having that full truth and having that full understanding. And it's treating her as an object. Either one that's gonna help me or one that's gonna hurt me. Right. Or one that's, and it's putting her in this position of not being a person anymore. And that's the definition of abuse is when there's, when there's that power dynamic that is unequal because one person holds all of the cards of the truth Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> and is using that to control the other person. And so those abuse tactics are what really is causing the damage to the relationship and to the person.

Speaker 1 00:15:30 Right. Even though we're, we're getting the pornography behavior in, in line. Yeah. You know, like, but all these other things are surrounding it under the surface. Right. Yeah. Now gaslighting, again, this become like a, a buzzword Yeah. At times. Right. But

essentially is when somebody is trying to convince somebody that they're crazy for believing what is true. Yeah. Right.

Speaker 2 00:15:49 Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:15:49 That why would you second guess me? Well, because you blew up that bomb in our house. Like, you hit me with a truck. Like, and this is where, you know, the, not only then people think the spouse is crazy a little bit Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Like, I get that he messed up. But if you could just get Yeah. Get your,

Speaker 2 00:16:05 That's how repentant he is. And you're kind of crazy right now. Right.

Speaker 1 00:16:07 But the, the, the spouse, the wife is al always what I've learned is like the barometer Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, even if there's no proof, there's energy there, there's feelings that she's picking up on. Yeah. Then when they come into the bishop's office, that's where the bishop could make the mistake being like, okay, he seems repentant. You seem crazy. Yeah. What's going on here? Like, maybe the problem's you, you, you

Speaker 2 00:16:26 Just need to forgive more.

Speaker 1 00:16:27 And there we're falling in the trap of the what betrayal trauma can cause.

Speaker 2 00:16:31 Yeah. And it's so fascinating how that happens in a culture where we firmly believe in personal revelation and in making decisions based on that intuition because we have this gift of the Holy Ghost. And so it's interesting to see how quickly that's denied. Like, oh, you, you just think that something's up, but really you're being too sensitive or too critical. But her intuition is on Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, like, it's, it's always spot on when something's off, it's because something is off and that's why she's feeling like something is off. Yeah. And so whether it's like he's dove deep down into his addiction and his behaviors has escalated because pornography addiction is an escalating addiction, or it's just he has shifted and started maybe treating her as an object a little bit, gotten into some of those bucket behaviors that happen side by side of the addiction, but aren't necessarily the same engaging in the addiction. She feels that you feel it when someone isn't coming at you with sincerity or treating you as a person or seeing you as a person. Do you feel that because you're a person and you feel that because your light of Christ goes, I dunno. And the Holy Ghost might say, something's off right here. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And it's fascinating how quickly we dismiss that in a culture that really holds that up. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:17:36 And I feel it's a tension like for a church leader, even loved ones that surround it, that there's this tension or this urgency of like, I have to believe one of them. Right? Mm. Because even though she's feeling something's off, she may be incorrect about some facts. Right. And so, correct me if I'm wrong, but like in these situations for the the leader to just sort of step back and just say, I'm just gonna create space for all this. I don't have to decide he's right or she's right or he's lying. Or she's lying. Yeah. But we're just creating some space here because again, the those, the trauma is just reeling. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:18:06 Right. And everyone's just trying to figure it out. He likely is really afraid of what's gonna happen if people see who he is. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, this is just common. That kind of shame spike spiral that happens with addiction. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So he likely is really afraid, which means what he's presenting in his discussions to other people are probably not the whole truth. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> because he's really afraid of sharing the whole truth. So he's probably not where he's presenting. He's, and she doesn't even know what the truth is right now, <laugh>, because for so long she said, I feel like something is off, but he's telling me we're fine. So can I trust it when I feel like something is off. And so her behaviors are gonna be scattered. She's gonna be talking kind of everywhere. And she might be super blaming. She might also be super critical.

Speaker 2 00:18:50 Well, you know, I was doing this and I'm not even sure. And so it's really hard to compare them and try to figure out who's right. Yeah. It's so much better if we just separate for a minute and say, let me work with you, the person instead of you, the marriage, and let's find out what's going on with you so that I can validate you and hold space for you and give you the belief that what you say is happening is happening regardless of whether or not there's any other proof. Yeah. Let's just work from belief for right now.

Speaker 1 00:19:17 Yeah. I, I wanna share something very encouraging that if there's a church leader, you're listening. That's like, the beauty of it is like, you don't have to figure out the situation. You don't have to. I mean you're, that your spiritual guide, you'll be encouraging, you know, one thing I love about our faith tradition is that bishops often are that threshold into professional therapy or help that they do need. Right? Yeah. So the trap though is when you're like thinking, well, you need to forgive, we need to maintain this family. We sort of like, everybody in this relationship is trying to maintain control. Yeah. Like the bishop feels like, I need to grab the reign somehow and save this family, save this eternal marriage. I

Speaker 2 00:19:55 Can't let them get divorced on my watch. Like I'm right here. Yeah,

Speaker 1 00:19:58 Yeah, yeah. And there's, you know, forgiveness and all these things we can go to, but then at the same time, the husband, maybe the, the addict, the husband is, he's maintaining control where this, I've had therapists describe to me as the spotlighting like, okay, he caught him with pornography, but she doesn't know there's actually a woman on the side or there's, there's a lot more history or something. But he's gonna focus on that. 'cause if he can say that, I'm sorry I did this one thing, even though there's 10 Yeah. He can maintain control of what's happening

Speaker 2 00:20:25 And I can be, he can be genuinely repentant for that one thing. Right. And so everyone will see that he's okay. He will feel like he's okay. I won't do those other things again. I'll, I'll make sure I'm very repentant. I

Speaker 1 00:20:35 Just want Now then correct me if I'm wrong, then, then the wife sometimes feels it like, I'm gonna make maintain control, but I'm gonna get the best divorce attorney. We're gonna do this tomorrow and I've got papers filed already. Let, and then everything's moving too fast. Right.



Speaker 2 00:20:48 And well, and it might even be control in a different kind of way because likely throughout the relationship there's been this little bit of, well, if you would be more patient, then I wouldn't be so stressed so I wouldn't have to go act out. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, if you would be more understanding, then I wouldn't be so defensive. If you would be more intimate with me, then I wouldn't have this need. Right. There's this underlying shift of blame that has gone to the wife and her brain feels a whole lot safer if she is in control of what's happening. Because if she is in control of what's happening, then she can change and then it will no longer happen. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And so there's this safety that her brain built of, well, let me just control all of the things because if I can control all of the things, then I'll stop getting hurt because it's my fault.

Speaker 2 00:21:33 Gotcha. 'cause I'm gonna believe that it's my fault because it's so much safer to do that. And so even before it's, let's get the best divorce attorney, there has probably been decades of, let me tell you exactly what to do, lemme get you into recovery meetings, let's make sure that we're doing this. And she's kind of trying to guide this force of coming togetherness. Mm. In her own control way, because that's gonna keep her safe. If she can control the behaviors, if she can control what, what's going on, then she can stop the pain from happening to her.

Speaker 1 00:22:00 Yeah. And a lot of this is happening on a subconscious level. Yeah. Right. Yeah. Because you may say that this is Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:22:04 She's not gonna sit down and be like, this is what I need to do.

Speaker 1 00:22:06 Yeah. Yeah. But then through good therapy, that therapist can sort of help her step back and be like, look at what you're doing. Yeah. Like, because you, you feel unsafe. Yeah. And you're trying to grasp onto anything that's safe that you can control and

Speaker 2 00:22:16 Good for you. Good job trying to keep you safe. Let's find a way that's actually gonna be helpful. I love what you said about the bishop isn't the person that's supposed to be healing all of that. Right. It's not their job. I think it's so important to remember that spouses spouse and bishop is bishop and therapists. Therapists and all of these people have different roles. They're not supposed to be the same people. They're very different roles. And so getting very clear as a church leader, what is my role in this? What does the handbook say I'm supposed to be doing when dealing with someone who's been abused? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. What's my priority with that person? What does the handbook say I'm supposed to be doing here? And then not taking on the roles that aren't yours. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Right. If they need professional help, which they do.

Speaker 2 00:22:54 Going back to the hit by the truck analogy, if you were to come across this person bleeding out, laying on the ground, would you go, oh, it's my job to just gather her up and put her back in the truck and teach him, don't do this again. Or would you call 9 1 1? Right. Like, whatcha gonna do here? What's your role? And so learning that it's not my job to save this family. Mm-Hmm. Family. Because saving might not look like what you think. It's, it's simply your job to get clear on the handbook. What do I do if someone's been abused? What do I do if

someone's engaging in these things? And there're two individuals now just trying to heal from this trauma. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:23:29 Take us to just like, I don't know, like the first four to six weeks, like when that bomb goes off, that betrayal bomb goes off. Like, what are we looking for? Because it, my fear is that I feel like, you know, as a leader, when I was experiencing those, these situations in my ward, like everything was moving too fast. I just wanted to get it slow down, but I couldn't get it to slow down. And then suddenly divorce papers are being filed, or these tragic mistakes are being done because they're gonna cause more problems. So like, what do we, and I'm not just talking from a leadership standpoint, but even for that couple, what should we keep in mind in those first where everything's so raw? Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:24:06 Well, first I think it is gonna be pretty fast paced. Like if we're at a car accident and someone's bleeding out, EMTs are working quick. Mm-Hmm. But it's not my job. So my first thing is get them to someone who can help them in a fast pace. And to not assume that I know what's best. The church is so clear that in abusive situations, the church's job is to maintain the emotional, financial, physical stability and safety of the victim. Hmm. So this wife coming into your office who's talking about betrayal trauma, she just needs to feel safety. Mm-Hmm. And that might look like husband needs to couch to sleep on for a while. There might need to be some space. And that's not as scary as we think. It's, there's an important step that happens in separation that allows for maybe the possibility of healing.

Speaker 2 00:24:50 Mm-Hmm. And sometimes that doesn't happen when we're together because we just keep bumping each other's wounds over and over and over. And so those wounds can't heal. Yeah. So there, there needs to be some breathing room. It might not be out of the home, it might not even be out of the bedroom, but just an understanding of, I'm working with these two on an individual level. Both of them have completely separate needs, so I'm gonna slow down from my frantic, let me save this marriage to let me get these people to the experts that can help them, and then let me work with them as individuals. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:25:19 Yeah. And I appreciate the, you know, the emphasis on safety when someone feels betrayed and is experiencing trauma. Like a great question, correct me if I'm wrong. Great question a bishop could ask is how can we help you feel safe? Right? Yeah. We don't expect you to even live in the same house for a while. Yes. And so what can we do? Yeah. Do you have the the means to, to get a small apartment or to have him get a small apartment

Speaker 2 00:25:41 Or Yeah. He's getting the small

Speaker 1 00:25:42 Apartment. Yeah. Or do you have family nearby? Like Yeah, I think sometimes the, the temptation for truth is just sort of like push the model, right. Being like, well just stay together in the same house, put that smile on for the kids and get through this. But if she doesn't feel safe, that's only going to inflame the trauma that the

Speaker 2 00:25:58 Betrayal. Yeah. It's gonna re-traumatize her over and over and over. And likely her trauma wounds are gonna be bumping up against his shame wounds and they're

just gonna be hurting each other more. And so what can I do to help you feel safe? And some awareness that safety requires being separate from the person who hurt you for a while. Yeah. We're not gonna expect someone who's just been hit by a car to get back in the car with the person that hit them. And so allowing that to not be scary,

Speaker 1 00:26:21 That's, that's really helpful for a church leader. Because again, the temptation is you want to, you wanna fix the problem. Yeah. And you feel a lot of pressure like, well, I gotta keep this family together. But then you shift it from like, no, you, you just have to create safety. Yeah. Now, there may be in your mind as they ask for certain safety, you may think like, well, that's excessive. You know, it, it may be

Speaker 2 00:26:41 That's when you call up a therapist that you know <laugh>. Right. Is this excessive? And what should I do? Because it's not your job. Yeah,

Speaker 1 00:26:46 Exactly. But the fact that you're just seeking for safety, that's your job. You can just ask that question, make sure they get the resources. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:26:53 I want to support you and I want to make sure that you feel safe. Yeah. So what do you need? Right. We have resources. What kind of resources do we need to throw your direction right

Speaker 1 00:27:00 Now? And then it removes the burden of that leader feeling like, I have to believe one of these things. Yeah. I, I need to find the truth. Yeah. No, you don't have to find the truth because this is chaos.

Speaker 2 00:27:08 Right? Yeah. What's gonna be hard though is if her safety need is gonna be additional moments where she doesn't feel like she's with him, he's gonna feel very threatened by that. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, because his shame is gonna start speaking really loudly. And so he's gonna feel like, well, separation is gonna be the death of us and get really big. And so it's gonna be hard to be able to differentiate the two. But recognizing the church's stance in the handbook says that the safety of the victim is the priority over the emotions or the feelings of the betrayer. And so allowing that to be prioritized, even when both are their safety needs are looking different and coming to him with something else.

Speaker 1 00:27:43 Yeah. And I think it's encouraging for leaders to hear, or anybody involved in situations, like in the moment it feels like the pressure to make a decision to do these things. But in hindsight, with a lot of these situations, you realize, oh, like this was a much longer journey. This wasn't like, let's figure out in six months who gets the kids or not. This is like a decade or five years where like we have plenty of time to work with sometimes in the moment we just have to slow it down. Yeah. And

Speaker 2 00:28:09 We'll get there and there's gonna be a lot of energy. But my job is just, okay, hey, while we wait for the ambulance to come and do all of their special stuff, <laugh>, all of their big energy stuff, I'm just sitting with you on the side of the road going, it's gonna be okay. Yeah. I'm right here. They're coming. I've called them. Right. What can we do to help you feel okay right now?

Speaker 1 00:28:25 All right. So here's the, the tough questions here that probably not a clear answer, but sometimes there's this pressure from maybe the wife of being like, oh, you want, you wanna know how I feel safe? What you can do is call a membership council, remove his membership, and you know, put him in, you know, spiritual timeout and forbid him from sacrament. Like you do these things and sometimes it's like, whoa, wait a minute. Yeah. Like there's this push of, again, action. Yeah. Yeah. I need you to punish him. That's what I need to Yeah. How'd you respond to that? Okay.

Speaker 2 00:28:51 The very beginning stages of trauma are gonna look like a lot. Like this is what he's doing wrong. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. 'cause that's the only thing their brain knows right now is his behaviors were wrong and they hurt me

Speaker 1 00:29:02 And it's gotta stop

Speaker 2 00:29:02 And it's gotta stop. Yeah. Right. So your job is, is to just go, okay, thanks for sharing. I hear you. Yeah. Right. You don't have to then take all of their recommendations, but you're not gonna come back and say, well actually you've been doing it. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> just, ah, I can, that's, that sounds so painful. Hmm. So let's make sure we get him the help that he needs. But that's not your job. I'll do that. And that help might look like a membership council over removing the sacrament. God, I and him will take care of that. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So right now in this office, let's talk about what you need. Yeah. Right. Because he's not here. 'cause I'm meeting with you guys separately 'cause you're individuals. So let's talk about your needs. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:29:40 Right. I, I appreciate there's that, those words of I hear you like Yeah. I love a good phrase. We can just fall back on. I dunno what to say. I hear you. I hear you. If that worked,

Speaker 2 00:29:47 Wow. That's good. I'm hearing, and if you can repeat back what they said. Yeah. I'm hearing you say that it was so frustrating that there have been no consequences for him. Yeah. Yeah. I, trust me when I tell you God's got consequences, right? Mm-Hmm. But let's focus on you right now. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:30:00 What's going on? And another phrase that I have used a lot is simply telling someone, you know, you're not crazy for feeling this way. Yes. Like anybody in your situation would feel like this. Yes. I would probably be worse. I dunno. Yeah. And just knowing that, because it feels like, like that when that gaslighting starts, it can feel like, I think I'm the crazy one. Yeah. For

Speaker 2 00:30:17 Sure. Sure. Like there's something wrong with, with me. Right. I end all of my groups with You're not crazy and you're not alone. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Because the, it feels very isolating. One of the tactics that's used by individuals dealing with shame is to isolate, don't tell my story. I'm gonna work on it. I don't want people to think one of the indicators of a trail trauma is isolating. I'm the only one that's going through this. Nobody else has experienced that. And so there's lots of isolation that has happened. Mm-Hmm. And so

reminding them, you're not alone. I'm right here with you. And one of the resources that they're probably gonna need is some priesthood leadership in their home. Mm. Some blessings and some awareness that that particular part of the priesthood is no longer available to them right now. And so what kind of resources can I be, can we, can I come into your home weekly and give you and your children a blessing?

Speaker 2 00:31:01 Can your ministering brethren come and do that? Would you like to come to my office weekly and get a blessing because they don't have access to that in their home right now? And boy does it feel so vulnerable to try to ask for that outside the home. Especially if my husband doesn't want anyone to know what's going on with him. For me to call up my ministering brother and say, Hey, can I get a blessing? All of the questions are, well, why can't you do it? Right. So it feels so scary. So their emotional wellbeing and their like spiritual power, wellbeing, all needs some of those resources.

Speaker 1 00:31:32 Yeah. That's really helpful. So along that vein, there's this, you know, there's so much shame involved in these situations and shame wants individuals to isolate and hide. Right? Yeah. And so a lot of people, everybody involved is like, Hey, let's go into the bishop office. Shut the door. Nobody's gonna know what's happening here. Let's get this figured out. Let's get him back on track. Let's get you better, let's get there. Whatever. Don't let anybody know. But in reality, that only stimulates, it's gonna stimulate shame. Yeah. Now, of course it wouldn't be appropriate to just be like, Hey, you know, the, you know, ward council, the Johnson's like, wow, he messed up. Let's get them. Right. But nonetheless, there can be, I worry about the bishops were like, take this all on their shoulders. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And they're like, I will wheel this, uh, situation into a place of positive healing when, you know, he's trying to focus on the youth and then he breaks down. Right? Yeah. For his own, he needs his own therapy. Right. So like how would you suggest as far as involving community or making sure they have support or, I mean, what comes to mind?

Speaker 2 00:32:30 There are just so many resources. Right? Bishop's job can simply be to direct. We know for sure that Satan thrives in shadows and in secrets. So we know that that's happening. If there's not gonna be a safe place to share, it's gonna be going. That's what's gonna be going on. We also know that it's not appropriate to break confidentiality. So I can't go to someone in the ward and say, Hey, these people need your help. That's not gonna be appropriate. I probably shouldn't even be going to my counselors if I'm president or a bishop that's been kind of disclosed to and brought into the circle of trust, shouldn't be sharing that with other people without permission first. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But I can say to the person, Hey, you're not alone in this and I've got some resources for you. Or if I don't, I can find some resources for you and get you some place. There are all sorts of support groups, all sorts of recovery groups, all sorts of therapists that have connections to support groups and recovery groups so that isolation can be broken without breaking confidentiality. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:33:26 And I, it sounds like, I mean it's all in the asking one, do they have support in place? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> whether it's professional support or family or a friend. Yeah. And then just asking, how else can we support you? Because I mean, in these situations we think of the beautiful meals we take to the sweet mother who just had a baby, which great,

you know, we should keep doing that. But like, nobody needs a meal more than, you know, make this more

Speaker 2 00:33:46 Than this person.

Speaker 1 00:33:47 Yeah. But then there's like, you know, hey, just so you know, there's something going on, right? We, yeah. That shame just gets a special.

Speaker 2 00:33:53 But even if you were to say, Hey, with what's going on in your life, probably cooking food might be the hardest thing to be figuring out right now. Would you be okay if I looped the Relief Society president in and she could just find one or two people to bring you a meal once or twice a week? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And just like, here's an idea because let me know what I can do to help you. Is that phrase that no one's ever gonna say, this is what you can do too. Right? Yeah. Yeah. So, so coming up with some ideas of if my entire world has just disappeared, I don't know what my foundation is with my spouse. I'm not even sure I know who my spouse is 'cause he's been lying this whole time. I don't know how to parent with this person because I don't know anything and this person has hurt me so bad, but I prayed before marrying him, so can I even trust God?

Speaker 2 00:34:34 Mm-Hmm. And now I've got this whole church situation going on and I don't know who I, they don't have the capacity to say, this is what I need. These are all of the detailed things that I need to do in order to feel okay. And so they might not be able to answer that question. You can ask for sure. Right. But if they don't give you an answer, they're not able to give you an answer. Just putting yourself in their shoes and saying, I imagine if I were going through the kind of shattering that you have to be experiencing right now, I wouldn't be able to do laundry. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, I wouldn't be able to to find childcare. Mm-Hmm. Can I help you find some of those resources? Yeah. And just kind of imagining what would I be feeling if my whole world just if I'd just been hit by a truck, but was still having to live life dealing with all of those wounds.

Speaker 1 00:35:15 Yeah. Tell me about the, the children that may be involved. Right. They have kids and bless their hearts, I mean they, they talk about someone who's just victim. All of on all in all ways. But to keep in mind for when there's children involved in this,

Speaker 2 00:35:29 It's so hard. Yeah. What to keep in mind is that so often husband is counseled, really dig in spiritually, it's so important for you to take that time out so that you, and that's not wrong, but when he's busy focusing on how to stop hurting his loved ones, his wife is having to figure out how to do it all. Hmm. She's having to figure out how to do all of just the home management and all of the child rearing and if she's got a job, how to do that as well. And so those kids are probably in need of just some more because we have one parent who's really gotta focus on himself and one parent who needs to focus on herself but isn't giving that opportunity. Yeah. And so the kids know something's going on. Kids are not stupid. They intuitively pick up on things better than we do. So they know something's going on. So you might see them at church suddenly being louder or suddenly wandering around the church or having a

hard time staying in class, or they feel something's going on. And that's gonna come out through actions and through sounds they're

Speaker 1 00:36:29 Trying to cope. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:36:30 They're just, and it's like the rest of us crossing it through their body the way that kids do. So a whole lot of patience and a whole lot of opportunities to offer, can we watch your kids for you so that you can go to this recovery meeting. It happens on Thursdays. Can we set up a babysitter so that you can go to that? Or Hey, I know primary's gotta be really hard getting your kids ready for church. Can we come help get, get them there? Just the kids are gonna be going through a lot. They don't know what's going on. But the mom is going through a lot of trying to figure out how to help her kids go through this thing. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:37:02 And I'll point out here that oftentimes you see like, 'cause the father's dealing with so much of the shame of it all. But what have I done? Who am I, I can't believe I did this, that he'll turn into a super dad. Mm-Hmm. Right. And again, this is part of the thing, like what, why are you getting that from me? Look how good I am with the kids now. Like I'm trying here. Right. Yeah. And again, we're glad he's trying and being a good dad, but these are just indicators of like, there's a lot of shame involved. It's just gonna take some time to get that out of the system Yeah. Of the relationships. Right?

Speaker 2 00:37:29 Yeah. Yeah. And if your couple ends up, if the wife does need space, she's not expecting space and dad to not be a dad at all. Right. She's expecting please come and do all of these things. I just can't be sharing a home with you. So please show up and be part of the kids' lives. Please show up and take them to school and help them get ready and still be all of the father figure stuff. I just can't live in the same home with you right now. Mm-Hmm. And so if you were working with the husband in that case, encouraging him to, hey, she still needs the partner in parenting. She can't share a home with you right now because that's got a whole bunch of other stuff with it. But that doesn't mean you're supposed to just check out Yeah. And not be part of their life.

Speaker 1 00:38:06 Yeah. Talk to me about this, you know, obviously concept of boundaries, that's another, you know, buzzword, but an important buzzword. But sometimes, uh, a lay person doesn't quite understand that even though we all have boundaries in our lives or we, we need more boundaries, and then that you sort of mix in the concept of forgiveness there, where the boundary can sort of feel like, well you're not really forgiving him because you keep putting these boundaries up and you know, we can look at the scriptures and the debate, the theology of what forgiveness is and when we're commanded to do it and all these things. But oftentimes forgiveness can be a long journey. And that doesn't mean anybody's bad Yeah. In this, but we're dealing with a lot of mortals here. Yeah. And they're just incapable of, of some of these. They need that healing and, and all these things to really get to a place of being like, I just completely forgive you.

Speaker 1 00:38:50 Right. Yeah. It sometimes breaks my heart when we sort of highlight some of these people that are, you know, they stand in front of the media after their family's

been murdered. <laugh>. They're like, I forgive the murder. And you're like, are you okay? Like <laugh>? I mean, because I dunno if I can do that. Right. Right. But anyways, but that forgiveness can come. Right. Some, sometimes we feel like we force 'em like we say the words, even though maybe that it hasn't happened. So talk to me all about like boundaries and what a leader should consider about forgiveness and all of that. Where do, where do you wanna

Speaker 2 00:39:19 Go? I, boundaries are my favorite topic. I love boundaries so much. I teach a class on boundaries. I talk about boundaries all the time. I think sometimes we think of boundaries as walls of I have to protect me. And so I am separating myself from you. And it's all of these walls. When in reality all boundaries are is me figuring out who I am and who I am not. So I'm gonna, I'm gonna start making my behaviors based on who I am instead of on these behaviors that maybe aren't in line with who I am. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So that's a boundary of what kind of behaviors I'm gonna have that what I'm okay with and what I'm not okay with. What am I in charge of and what I'm not in charge of. An easiest example of boundaries is just fenced yards. We have yards in our front.

Speaker 2 00:39:55 We have fences around our front yard and we are in charge of planting the gardens in there and mowing the lawns in there and taking care of all of that. And that's gonna be my individual yard. My spouse is gonna have their own yard that they're also in charge of, and it's gonna take care of their, all of their own behaviors. Now, if their behaviors are regularly encroaching on my yard, I'm gonna need to get more space because I have to be in charge of my own yard. If I am, oftentimes my women in betrayal trauma come in and they, they really love to rescue. I call 'em rescuers. I say Welcome to Rescuers Anonymous. Like we just, we just wanna rescue all of the people. But that's not actually my job. My job is to live within my own yard. So I might find myself encroaching over into his yard, oh, well

Speaker 1 00:40:37 Let me help you with your garden. Right, exactly.

Speaker 2 00:40:39 Let me plant your garden for you. 'cause you didn't get it in time. And so I know that that's gonna lead to you not having it, which is gonna sound something like, let me make sure that we drop you off at your recovery group. 'cause I know if you don't go to recovery group, then you're not gonna be on there. Right. So she might need space just to help her figure out what she is in charge of. And it's not an attack on him and it's not meant to be like, danger will Robinson, we're separating and there's all of these walls. It's just I need to figure out what I'm actually in control of. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> what I'm actually in charge of and recenter into my own yard and what I'm doing. So I think of boundaries as defining who I'm and what I'm actually in charge of.

Speaker 2 00:41:14 Mm. And what's interesting is when we get clear on our boundaries and when we're vulnerable with, Hey, this is who I am, this is deep down who I am and what I'm okay with, it opens us up in this really vulnerable way. And that's the only way we're with someone given you clear understanding of who I'm then, uh, we're not, we're not bonding over who we really are. We're bonding over this fake version, this, this kind of shield that we've put up. And so boundaries are this really beautiful opportunity to have love in my relationship. And if I can come to my spouse and say, the, the guest lighting or the manipulation or the sexual



acting out behaviors that you've been experiencing hurt me and I cannot feel safe sharing a bed with you, sharing a home with you, sharing emotional information with you. I don't feel safe that way.

Speaker 2 00:42:05 I've gotta get a little bit more space and a little bit more clarity on what I'm okay with. If my spouse responds with I understand or I hear you, or Okay, I can honor that boundary. We've created this brand new foundation of Okay, I can express my real scary part of myself saying that I'm not okay with what you're doing and I'm not gonna be attacked for it. And they're gonna hold it and honor and see me the person instead of the object. So it starts this new foundation that's gonna be able to build into a healthy relationship where we see each other as people.

Speaker 1 00:42:39 Yeah. And, and I think one thing that often gets missed, and obviously we're, this is a leadership podcast, so if we're talking about the leaders involved here, that the leader, the bishop has his own boundaries. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Right? Yeah. And, and he should keep those boundaries. And that's going back to the question of the spouse is like, well, you need to take action against this guy and, you know, remove his membership and remove this. Like, Hey, you're over my garden here. Yeah. Let's get back to your garden. Yeah. Right. I'll figure out my garden. We'll get there. Yeah. Right. Yeah. And again, not that you'd say that, but that's the dynamic that's happening. Like, oh, like, hey, yeah, I know you're trying to get control, but, uh, let's just,

Speaker 2 00:43:13 And control equals safety for you. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:43:15 Right. Let's, let's find safety. Yeah. So what type of fence? Where do you need to build? And how can I help you build that fence? Right. And then once that's built, then, and again, this is where, when I say like, slowing down the situation without these rash decisions, that's what boundaries help you do. It sort of just slows everybody down. Like you can be able to sleep somewhere tonight where you know you're okay. Yeah. And then that gives us another day to work with. Yeah. And then a week and then a month and we're, we're making progress. Right?

Speaker 2 00:43:39 Yeah. And that's slowing down. It's funny, we're gonna slow it down and give time for all of that, but that doesn't then have a timeframe on it. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> because we've slowed it down. So it might take three months, it might take three years. We don't actually know how much damage was being done behind the scenes and what kind of work that's gonna take. So when we slow it down, it also has this understanding of we're slowing it down and we don't know how long the process is gonna take. It's gonna be probably longer than we had hoped. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Even if we don't haven't, I hope that this will take, if we haven't expressed exactly what our timeframe is, it's gonna take longer than we hoped. Yeah. It's gonna take longer than we hoped. As the wife recovering, it's gonna take longer with the spouse, the pornography addiction recovering, it's gonna take longer as the bishop going, okay, now I'm helping these two individuals, but they still aren't coming together. So are we really helping or are we not? It shouldn't take longer. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:44:30 That's really helpful. I don't know why the so prompt to go this way as far as with disclosure, and I did a great interview with Jeff Stru about the, like how to use therapists for appropriate disclosure. Because some, when the betrayal happens, it may be, you know, it rocks their world. Everybody's world, the spouses world and the betrayer is thinking, oh boy, this isn't even half of it. Right? Yeah. And so, and sometimes there's this feeling, well, you tell me everything, I wanna know it all. Mm-Hmm. Like how long is, you know, when in reality that's just going to traumatize her further and makes a mess of things more? Where, anyways, what, talk to me about appropriate disclosure and things keep in mind there

Speaker 2 00:45:08 As a leader in the church, it's just not your job. Right? Yeah. Keep your boundaries. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So she's gonna need to have disclosure because if you've been, like, if you have a tiny little sliver in your hand, it's gonna hurt until you find the thing that was the sliver. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. You won't be able to say, oh no, I'm fine. It was a long time ago. I don't need to know that it's gonna hurt. And so these little seeds of mistrust, or of abuse or of betrayal, they've been planted. They happened in the marriage and they're gonna need to be seen. We're gonna have to get them out. But my job as bishop, I don't need to facilitate that. My job as relief study president, it's not my job to facilitate that. I can say, Hey, it's gonna be important that we know what the wounds are. We the couple, not we the bishop necessarily. Uhhuh <affirmative>. So let's make sure we get you some help. Yeah. Here are some people and here's how I can support you being able to go see some people.

Speaker 1 00:45:56 Yeah. That's awesome. Alright. Where else said do we need to go that we haven't touched on yet? One

Speaker 2 00:46:00 Thing that's just, that's I've thought about a couple times is it's so, because we're such an eternal family focused culture, which is beautiful and wonderful and important doctrine, it's so easy to go right into what you're talking about of let me save this family. Let me make sure that, and the assumption that I know what will save their family and the assumption that I know what their family is supposed to look like in the end, we just don't have that information. We don't know. We're not God. So, but what we do know is that the worth of souls is great in the side of God, that these two individuals are great in the side of God. And so we might need to pause the eternal family shoving for a second to attend to the thing that is of worth to God.

Speaker 1 00:46:39 Yeah. And that's the, like, even if we did know what the person needed, like it's just, there's so much going on. Like it's almost, we're just setting that aside. We'll get to that. Yeah. It might be in a year or two years. But, and I, I empathize with all leaders who feel that pressure, like, no, these are sacred covenants. Yeah. You know, and ah, you know, and

Speaker 2 00:46:58 That's a thing. Make

Speaker 1 00:46:59 Them feel overwhelming. Yeah. But again, let's just, we'll get to that. Right. And that's the other things of, you know, sometimes the spouse like, oh no, we're divorcing tomorrow. Yeah. Like that. This is what we'll get to that maybe you do need a divorce,

Speaker 2 00:47:10 We'll get that. And sometimes the spouse is, we're in marriage counseling tomorrow. Uhuh, we'll get to that. Yeah. Actually we have two individuals who are hurting from completely different perspectives. And we focus a lot on let's get you through your addiction and sobriety. And over here and over here we focus so much on helping him to maybe find some stability focused on his addiction. Hopefully we also attend to those other buckets of behaviors and remove some of the abuse that's going on. We forget that her side includes a lot of healing and a lot of work, and she needs just as much individual attention and just as much individual face time to just heal, to work through things and to figure out what she feels is forgiveness. I'm not gonna tell her what forgiveness is, but how does that look for her and what does trust look like for her? And how are we gonna build that and give her all of that individual attention? Yeah. Because even marriage counseling tomorrow isn't gonna be helpful. Yeah. Until two individuals have healed, the marriage can't. Perfect.

Speaker 1 00:48:03 And healing does happen. Yeah. I mean, these are the most inspiring stories that I've heard in mortality of these beautiful marriages that come from this. Who they were went through a point where even I was like, oh, this ain't working out like this. There's no way. And just beautiful marriages. Right? Yeah. And even to the point where they get back to sort of the, the net zero, like the, they get back to what they were before, but then they say, oh, we had so much more to work on. Yeah. And they now they're in a place where they can go there. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:48:31 And I would say that they don't get back to what they were before they get back to what is truth. Yeah, exactly. Right. 'cause if there was that level of, of connection that they thought they had, but there was actually this underlying betrayal that was happening that wasn't true. And so they can heal and grow into this level of truth where they have a real relationship now based on vulnerabilities and understanding of who the other person

Speaker 1 00:48:49 Is. Yeah. But that's the temptation. Right. We all wanna just get back to where you were. Yeah. Isn't that awesome? Don't go back there. But in reality when in hindsight all these couples were like, oh, I do it over again. Yeah. Like, no, you know, I don't wanna generalize, but just that journey they went on Yeah. Was so beautiful. And Christ centers in and heals and Yeah. And, and healing happens.

Speaker 2 00:49:06 And healing does happen even when it's a beautiful divorce. The end game, the goal, the prize is in having a healed relationship. It's having a healed person and having a person who feels connected with Christ and having a person who understands his role in their life and having a person who's gone through this stage of my whole life has fallen apart. And now I'm rebuilding my understanding and my faith, my trust and my reliance on the atonement, that individual salvation, that worth of that soul is just as beautiful as the marriage. Even if it, if the marriage ends in divorce, the healed individuals are still beautiful and still miraculous.

Speaker 1 00:49:39 Yeah. Yeah. And that's the other thing, you know, we talk about eternal marriage and this pressure to keep it together, which of course, I mean, we would all love to have our eternal marriage work on the first go. Yeah. <laugh>. But there's processes,

administrative processes to, you know, cancel ceilings. And you again, talk to these people on the second, third marriages. And again, not that we, that's the, i i dunno not the ideal, whatever, but

Speaker 2 00:50:02 Nobody grow the child going, I hope one day I get divorced. Yeah, exactly. That's not, that's not the end goal initially,

Speaker 1 00:50:07 But nothing's lost. Yeah. Like their exaltation is there, the ordinances of the covenants are there. Like, that's the beauty of having our savior is that he still makes that available no matter how many times. And I've talked to people on third, fourth marriages and they, they still get it. Yeah. And it's beautiful. That's redemption.

Speaker 2 00:50:24 Yeah. And whether they individually heal and then are able to heal as a couple Mm-Hmm. Whether they individually heal and then go, it turns out our relationship isn't actually compatible. We have two different wants. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> two different ways that we want to live. Or one individual heals and the other is still struggling, and so the relationship still can't work. Whatever that might be. The covenants and the power and the realness of God's hand in their life is still this miraculous thing to witness. Yeah. Either way.

Speaker 1 00:50:53 All right. Tell me about this awkward relationship at times of the bishop talking with, you know, the bishop becomes a resource, he finds some professional help that he helps they gets, uh, and there's some communication there. Maybe the bishop's helping pay for it, whatever. And so the bishop wants to help and so he talks to the, the therapist. And I mean, anything you would recommend like is how do I know as a bishop that I'm actually getting good help? You know? Yeah. You're, you're someone that has, you know, an expertise in vitreal trauma. So you get all these things, maybe another therapist isn't as helpful or anything you'd say to make sure that we know we're getting good help.

Speaker 2 00:51:26 Yes. It's hard to find and crucial to find someone who understands betrayal trauma specifically. For a long time there was this push of finding someone who has like a sex addiction training. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And that's not wrong. Maybe for that individual, we need to find someone who has betrayal, trauma specific training and understanding of what's going on there. Because someone who doesn't, there's a whole lot of really good healthy relationship information that can really, really, really harm someone in betrayal trauma and therapist trauma is a thing. That's something that happens where you go to a therapist and you think that they're gonna be helpful and it turns out that they're really harmful. Yeah. And so as a leader trying to find someone help, my favorite resource is psychology today.com and you can narrow it down, like

Speaker 1 00:52:11 Filter the results filter.

Speaker 2 00:52:12 That's what I was looking for. You can filter the results to betrayal trauma specific Right. And location specific. And even member of the church specific so that they can understand kind of the cultural nuances that come with experiencing this type of thing.

Speaker 1 00:52:24 Yeah. And this is the hard part because therapy can, that the expense can add up so quick. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But you wanna get good help. But also there's this feeling of like, I need therapy so I go find one therapist to give me therapy. But sometimes it might be a team of people. Right. Yeah. That, and I would imagine maybe, I'm just thinking maybe the, the leader in Podunk, Minnesota who doesn't have just all these resources of therapists, even latter saint therapists, maybe they find a good therapist, a general therapist, but then they could maybe connect with someone like you or another person that's maybe just making sure we're online. Yeah. With the betrayal side. Is that Yeah,

Speaker 2 00:52:59 Absolutely. Teams are so important. And I say therapists are like T-shirts, not all of them are gonna fit on you. Right. <laugh>, you gotta try on a couple. And so trying a few different ones, allowing it, like if the church was being used as a resource to help pay, allowing that person to try two or three, find someone that fits with, with what you're needing and what you're looking for and see if that person works for you. And then I love groups so much. There's so many important things that, that happen in group work. It was interesting, in grad school, I was studying group work and they were talking about all of the benefits of having people that can come together and be able to share their experiences and buoy each other up. And the next day I went to a fast and testimony meeting and I looked around and went, the Lord is so smart. He knows that we need these kind of group experiences where we bully each other up. Those types of things that are beneficial from fast and testimony meeting where we're hearing each other's testimonies and seeing each other's growth comes in group forms for betrayal trauma, where we can see people farther down the road. Yeah. We can see people who, who have just maybe had that day that exploded on them and go, oh, okay, I'm not alone. And there's, there's a big path and there's some patterns that we're following and I can get some help here.

Speaker 1 00:54:07 Yeah. And so group work is when you, it's like a therapist session, but with multiple people who've been through something similar Yeah. Or who are dealing with, and then hearing each other's stories and working with each other, hundreds of supervision of a therapist. It creates a different dynamic That's really helpful. Rather than let's just get in the Secret O office, shut the door. Absolutely. We're gonna work this out.

Speaker 2 00:54:25 Yeah. Yeah. Cool.

Speaker 1 00:54:26 That's awesome. Alright. Anything, I mean, this is a concept that deserves its own 10 so much attention episode series, but anything other point, principle or concept we need to make sure we cover? I

Speaker 2 00:54:37 Love the resource. It's a book written by Ryan Anderson called The Choice to Leave Abuse. And it has that word leave in it. So we kind of get a little bit scared because what about eternal families? But what I like about it is it's, I think of it as the choice to leave abusive behaviors. So if I'm the person who is engaged in abusive behaviors, this is me learning what those look like and choosing to no longer engage in them. If I'm the victim, this is me going, oh, that was abuse. And I actually don't have to say that it's okay. I don't have to take on the responsibility that this is my fault. I'm going to leave that abusive behavior behind. And

it's got a whole section in there for church leaders. It's written by a member of the church of Jesus Christ for Latter Day Saints.

Speaker 2 00:55:13 Oh, really? And so it's all supported by doctrine, it's supported by scripture, it's supported by the church handbook and very clear help there. I love that resource. I think everyone needs to read this book. Okay. It's incredible. And then there's this kind of underlying idea I've ran into, I've spoken with a couple of bishops or really steady presence about it, of, well, that's not happening in my ward. Like I can see why this would be helpful, but my ward's the exception and just the recognition that this is prevalent. Yeah. 10 out of 10 men have been exposed to pornography by the time they graduate high school. That statistic is about two years old. That exposure doesn't necessarily equal addiction use doesn't equal addiction, but it is an escalating thing. So if 10 out of 10 have been exposed, we have quite a few who have escalated into addiction, and eight out of 10 women have been exposed by the time they get outta high school, if eight out of 10 have been exposed, there's this escalation that's going to happen.

Speaker 2 00:56:05 And then the self-report statistics suggests that three out of 10 men have experienced abuse in their relationship and seven out of 10 women. Mm. And so this is prevalent. It's happening in your ward while you're sitting on the stand on Sunday, count your marriages, three out of four women are gonna say that their spouse is engaged in pornography. Use three outta four. Yeah. That's quite a few <laugh>. Like just count 1, 2, 3. You're the only one that's safe. 1, 2, 3. You are the only one that's safe. Right. There's, there's a lot of this. And so it might not be spoken about prevalent your word's, not the exception. Yeah. There's a lot of people that need this kind of understanding and help. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:56:39 What would you say, because I've talked to those leaders who are like, this doesn't seem to be a problem, but I know it is. Like, and they don't know what to do. Yeah. Like any advice on that, like how to desham this, these dynamics enough so that they begin to ask for help.

Speaker 2 00:56:53 Have the conversation. Right. Just have the conversation. Just make it so that it's not taboo to talk about. And I'm not saying we're gonna sit down in our Sunday meetings and say, everyone tell us your greatest sins. Like we don't. Right. Right. That's not what we need to have

Speaker 1 00:57:04 Seven outta 10 of you. I know.

Speaker 2 00:57:05 Right? Right. I know. So yeah. But just in a fifth Sunday meeting or in a ward activity or something, or even with the youth talking about what is abusive dynamics? What do they look like? And making that a conversation, because especially if we've grown up in a scenario where we've largely seen either healthy relationships or super abusive relationships, either one lead us to not understand what healthy relationships are. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Because if it's you've only ever seen healthy dynamics, then you assume that what you're experiencing is just like the backside of those healthy dynamics. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Like, I just need to, and if you've only ever seen abusive dynamics, you think that

this is normal. And so just having conversations about what is healthy relationships and what do things to watch for if maybe you have, if you have some of these dynamics happening in your home, and what kind of resources out there, what kind of help is out there. We had a really cool fifth Sunday lesson where members of the internet Crimes against Children came and gave us this whole presentation about here's how to keep our kids safe. What if we do things like that for, here's what to look for, here's how to make sure your marriage is a healthy one. Here's what it looks like if it's not healthy, and here's where some resources are to get you some help.

Speaker 1 00:58:13 Love it. And uh, one of my go-tos is the simplest form is just inviting some of these couples who've gone through this who've found healing to come and, and share their story. Yes. And just like sharing their story, they're like, oh, you mean you didn't die at the end of this? Like, yeah, if I speak up, I won't just, you know Yeah. Fall over dead. And so it, it de shames it enough and gives a point like, well, I, I have a hard time talking to my bishop, but maybe I can talk with that guy. Yeah. You know, and then the road begins.

Speaker 2 00:58:39 Absolutely. I think there's likely people in your ward who are willing to speak. And so asking them or finding someone in your stake, or even if they're not willing to speak, they're willing to be a resource. So then when you have someone in your office, you can say, this person's given me permission to give out their phone number. Maybe reach out. Right. And encourage them to find some connection. Cool.

Speaker 1 00:58:59 All right. Good. Introductory to betrayal trauma. There's a lot to consider. And this would be one that I think leaders could listen to a few times and just pick up different nuggets. Absolutely. Especially when you're in the moment. Right. You just got that phone call. What do I do? What do listen to this. And hopefully it'll give you a place to, to start moving. Absolutely. Any other principle? We good?

Speaker 2 00:59:16 I think that's all the stuff that was on my mind. If

Speaker 1 00:59:17 People do wanna reach out to you about your resources and your, uh, you're licensed therapist in Utah. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, uh, but you do some coaching out of Utah. Out of Utah. And so where would they find you?

Speaker 2 00:59:26 You can find me@rejoicerecovery.org. Nice. Yes.

Speaker 1 00:59:30 Uh, last question. I have your room full of church leaders who are dealing with these types of things. What final encouragement would you give to them? Oh my gosh.

Speaker 2 00:59:38 You don't understand and that is okay. Don't pretend like you do. It is okay if you have this woman in your office breaking down or looking like she's crazy or she's super angry, all of these emotions are important and necessary and you don't need to fix them. And it's okay to just say, oh, I don't understand this, but I'm gonna go get some resources and I'm gonna go get us some help and we'll figure it out together.

Speaker 1 01:00:05 Hey, you made it to the end of the episode. Wasn't that so good? You know, I tend to pinch myself that this is what I get to do. I get to sit down with some remarkable people across the world, experts, everyday leaders, PhDs, therapists, whatever it be, and have such an impactful conversation. I hope you'll share it. Drop it into text, message an email, and share it to someone who maybe came to mind during this episode. And if you go to the show notes and scroll to the bottom, there's actually a list of some of our most popular episodes. So don't stop with this episode. I mean, you're not done with the dishes or mowing the lawn or working out. So you might as well keep it going at the bottom of those show notes. And, uh, make sure you, you listen to each one, maybe a couple times on a few of 'em. And remember, grab your copy of my new book, is God Disappointed In Me on Amazon or in select Costco stores?

Speaker 3 01:01:02 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.