



## **The Handbook Has One Rule | A How I Lead Interview with David Geens**

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Kurt Francom:

Anthony Sweat has easily become one of my favorite BYU professors to interview. He's been on the podcast several times, and he also has a remarkable presentation about ambiguity of doctrine in our Questioning Saints virtual library. He discusses healthy and unhealthy ways we approach doctrine, how to help others reconcile doctrine they find difficult to believe, especially when we don't know much about it. You can watch Professor Sweat's entire interview in the Questioning Saints library by going to [leadingsaints.org/14](http://leadingsaints.org/14). This will give you access for 14 days at no cost to watch this presentation. You'll be better prepared as a leader when you do. 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 2014 came around we started the podcast and that's really when it got some traction and took off 2016. We became a 501c3 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 we just talk about 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. You're going to like this episode. We head on

over to Europe. Ever heard of it? Yeah. That's right. We're heading there to Belgium and we're talking with David Geens. And he is a bishop in that area. Actually has sort of a unique setup as a bishop. He calls it his five-year mission. He'll tell you more about that. And as a convert of 13 years ago and just rocking in the gospel. Just such an honor to speak with him. and benefit from his faith and his testimony. There's so many powerful principles that he talks about. One, he gives us a good rundown of what the church is like there, the Brussels temple that's coming, really unique setup with what's happening with the temple there. And then talking about principles like how to have a tone as you communicate as a leader that's very encouraging, that instills hope, that keeps out the negative of life and situations. and then a really unique approach to how he interprets the handbook. I know the handbook's always sort of the sticking point there where, you know, wanting to hold on to type and, you know, local adaptation and those types of things. So his approach to the handbook, I think you'll find inspiring. And then just a miracle that he overcame as an individual through leadership and how he's just thriving in life. So this is a fun episode. I love these reaching across the waters and doing international episodes. And hey, if we ever need a Dutch podcast, you just might hear not hear David is the host. He's got another podcast, so he's busy enough. But here is my interview on the other side of the world with David Geens. All right, David Geens, welcome to the Leading Saints podcast. Thank you for having me. Wonderful. Now you are in Belgium. What part of Belgium are you in?

David Geens:

The northern part, the Dutch speaking part, what we call Flanders.

Kurt Francom:

Cool. Now, so Dutch is your first language? Yeah, Dutch is my first language. Nice. Nice. I actually had a brother back in the day serving the Belgium-Brussels mission and he was French speaking. So I know you get all types of languages there. So how's your French?

David Geens:

Ça va, je parle un petit peu de français, je me débrouille.

Kurt Francom:

That sounds good enough for me. So very good.

David Geens:

Living in Belgium means that you learn several languages at school, Dutch, French, English, German. I bet.

Kurt Francom:

I bet. So how did you first come across Leading Saints? Do you remember?

David Geens:

Already a long time ago. I love podcasting. I have my own podcast and I listen to a lot of podcasts. And when I was baptized, I had been searching for several things online and several podcasts. And Leading Saints is one that I'm already listening to for several years because it gives me a lot of insights

Kurt Francom:

Yeah, well, I'm glad to hear that. And, you know, I guess we need one in Dutch. So you better, maybe, maybe you're that host. So we'll see. Who knows? Who knows? We'll see. And, and you're currently serving as bishop, right?

David Geens:

Yeah, that's my current calling. So last June, there was a broadcast worldwide where they were telling members above 50 that they shouldn't wait to serve a mission. And since it was a long life dream to serve a mission, because I'm a convert, I was baptized 13 years ago. So I always felt like missing out something and serving a mission was something that was not not having a checkmark. behind so hearing that my wife and I we really had something like why wait any longer and we talked to our stake president and then a few talks later suddenly he came up with the idea okay we're calling you for a five-year mission in the stake because we still have two kids at home so we couldn't leave the country so the idea was as service missionaries to serve in the stake but then serve as as a bishop in another ward.

Kurt Francom:

Wow. Wow. That's great. And so that's quite the mission because you get to serve from your home and carry on with your life that way Then.

David Geens:

Yeah, I can keep going on with my businesses. But of course, I had to change quite a lot because serving as a bishop, it takes some time. So yeah, a lot of changes were necessary. But okay, it's nice to do that, to stay at home at one end and on the other hand, serve in another ward. Not that far, it's an hour drive from home. But it's lovely to really to serve and to help people.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. Now, you said you got baptized 13 years ago. Is that right?

David Geens:

Yeah, 13 years ago in 2011.

Kurt Francom:

Wow. And where you I mean, did your wife, your wife was introduced to the church and your family all together? Or what's the what's the summary of that story?

David Geens:

Well, it's a quite funny story. I have to go back to the to the year 1984. And especially my wife has to go back to that year, because in Europe we have a song contest, the Eurovision Song Contest. It's getting famous worldwide now. And in 84, three young brothers won the contest, the Herreyes brothers, and they are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You could call them the European Osmans. So my wife was 11 then, and she liked these boys very much she read a lot about them in every interview she read about that they were members of the church so that's how she got an interest and then I skipped many years later we were married already we knew from each other that we both had had a place for God in our life but we didn't do anything with organized religion but we were searching and at a certain moment she told me about this story and she said yeah so do you know about this church and then she introduced me to the Book of Mormon. She gave me her old copy that she once got

from some missionaries years and years ago, back in the 90s. And I started reading it, read it in three days, and after a search for more than 10 years, because I have to mention I'm not raised in any kind of religion. Rather, my father had rather something, don't believe religion. It's all something to stay away from but yeah that reading the Book of Mormon really felt for me okay now I found all the answers I started reading all the stuff I could find online about the church and after three months I knew for sure okay I want to be baptized I want to be a member of this church

Kurt Francom:

Wow. And here you are. Now you're a bishop. Now I'm a bishop. That's awesome. Anything else you would say, just like giving us a, you know, on the ground perspective of the church in your part of the world is, you know, I think Europe sometimes gets a bad rap when it comes to religion, you know, being, you know, maybe overly secularized, or, you know, it's hard to baptize in Europe. But I mean, what do you see? How do you explain what the church is like in that part of the world?

David Geens:

Well, I have to mention first that my previous calling was National Director of Communications. I served for six years in that calling, along with some other callings, but being in that position gave me a unique perspective on how Europe is doing as a church, as about religion, because I also had to make a lot of contacts with other faiths. So yeah, I think my personal opinion is based on all those years and talking with a lot of people is that Western Europe is really one of the maybe toughest parts when we talk about being secularized. Most people here, if I look at all my old time friends and a lot of my business contacts and I tell them I'm a member of a church, they look very strange and they look like really nowadays If you go out here on the street and you ask a question, for instance, what do you believe in? The most given answer will be, oh, I believe in myself and in my own possibilities. So, yeah, I think that's one of the things that's different. When I visit my friends in the States and I get new acquaintances, then I often find that this very first evening over dinner, you start talking about how much money you earn, what kind of profession you're in, what kind of church you're going to. And in Europe, especially here in Belgium, if there are some topics you don't talk about, not even with your closest friends, then it's about how much money you earn, which faith you have and for whom you vote. Uh, no go topics. So that's, that's quite different. And that makes it, it's completely different when, when you start talking about religion, you're, you're a weirdo over here when, when you say that you believe, um, but still respectfully, uh, if you go on and you show a lot of respect, but the first reaction is always a reaction of wait, what? Uh, yeah. Uh, yeah. So yeah, that's, that's different.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah, so is it something that are you do you find yourself just being more closed about it as far as sharing your religious faith? Or do you, you know, wear it loud and proud and just come what may or?

David Geens:

Well, for myself, I don't have any problem with that. From the moment on, I found this church, I knew, okay, I'm in the place where I belong. And I want to share this message with with a lot of other people. That's also why I think I'm I feel missing out ever being a missionary before. So I don't have a problem. I think that's also maybe the reason why I have my own podcast about being a member of the church. I've been serving as communications directors. for me it's quite normal to talk about this but maybe it's also because my life allows it. I know several people in our church that are also very enthusiastic about their belief but they can't talk about it. I know people that say if I would mention this at work it could be risky for my job Um, so yeah, that, that makes it all different for, for all people over here. We also believe every member is a missionary, but for everybody it's different. And, but for myself, it never been a problem. I, I share it wherever I can.

Kurt Francom:

Love it. So the ward that you preside over, it's a, it's not your home ward in the stake, but is there anything unique about it? Or it's just, it's just another, another ward in the area and then they just need your help there. You were called over There.

David Geens:

Well, at the moment, to be honest, they call a bishop from outside the ward only if there is a reason to. And this ward, Sint-Niklaasward, is becoming a small ward. It's one of the oldest wards in the stake. They had converts just after the first missionaries arrived in Belgium, but at this moment they are struggling with people getting older and declining figures. So that means that it is a small world. Lately we have an attendance of yeah, it's a little bit better already, but now we have an attendance of 70 on Sunday by average. And that gives, yeah, of course, the fact then is that, yeah, you always rely on the same people serving the leadership. And yeah, some people say, this is really exhausting being several years, for instance, Relief Society president. Okay, we release you. And the next week you're called as something else, maybe in the nursery room or as youth president. So it's always the same people. And yeah, that that makes it, yeah, you never have one moment of relaxing. And especially in a world like this, yeah, it was a good idea to have people from outside and to give the local people some possibility to make some changes. Yeah.

Kurt Francom:

Interesting. Yeah, that's tough. And, you know, everybody, you can't escape it, right? It just keeps coming around. Yeah. So do you have much of a youth group in your ward?

David Geens:

Well, if on a lucky Sunday, I have maybe, I'm already glad if I have four young men in my lesson as a bishop, and maybe also three, four young women. So often we combine activities, we combine. One of the things I've changed now is that for youth activities, we work now together with another ward and we travel distance to go to another ward so that they have then maybe 20, 25 active youth. So if we then combine, at least we have a decent group and it's more fun and you can do more things than always with with the same people because yeah, once again, we're talking about maybe three families that regularly come with their teenagers. So yeah, if one family then has something else to do, which is perfectly fine on a Friday evening, yeah, then half of your youth is not showing up. What's left then? So yeah, that's one of the challenges that we have.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah, yeah. But it sounds like most Sundays you have a youth group there that you can engage with and teach.

David Geens:

Yeah, we do our best. We see, okay, who's here? How can we handle it? And it's always adapting to circumstances. Yeah, if you only have two young women and two ironic priesthood holders, yeah, then it's hard to have a discussion class with only two. So yeah, then I would decide on the spot, okay, let's put them together so that we at least have four people in the classroom, that's already a little bit easier to have some discussions.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. And then do you have your own church building that the church built or?

David Geens:

Yeah, we have, luckily to have our own church building. That's great. Small one, but it's, it fits our needs. It's beautiful. It's, uh, yeah, it's, it's, it's great to have our own building.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. And do you share it with other wards in the stake or is just you? No, it's just us.

David Geens:

Sharing here is something. We know that it happens in the States, but for us, it is sharing a building.

Kurt Francom:

You're just too spread out, I imagine, right?

David Geens:

Yeah. If you see for the entire country, we say that we have 6,000 members listed, but in our stake, and our stake is half of the country. Yeah, I think in a stake conference, if we would end up between 800 and 1,000 people, then it would be a huge success.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. And then what temple district are you in?

David Geens:

At this moment our closest temple is in is in The Hague, the Soutermeer temple, the The Hague temple in the Netherlands, but a few years ago the Brussels temple was announced and last June they announced where it will be. It's an existing building right in the middle of brussels it's an office building at the moment uh it's just between uh the royal palace and the european parliament and now they will uh yeah we'll we'll make it a temple and a meeting house all together uh from the outside as far as i have heard the outside cannot change a lot because



there are a lot of building rules in that neighborhood since it's an entire office district But yeah, I expect that the inside will be very beautiful and I hope that it will be ready in two or three years.

Kurt Francom:

Interesting. That'll be fun to see that come together. So it's in like a busy downtown urban area that, I mean, it's just going to be part of a bunch of other buildings Then.

David Geens:

Yeah, it's really attached to other office buildings. If you look at it right now, you would have no idea that that will be a temple. And it is really it's if you walk five minutes, you have the Royal Palace five minutes in the other direction. You have national parliament down the street, you have the European Parliament. Yeah, it's really it's really in the in the political center of Brussels.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah, I've watched enough James Bond movies to know that Brussels, you know, Brussels is a big deal. So that's, that's my of Europe. That's there. There you go. So. All right. Well, any other, like a characteristic of your ward or area that would be worth mentioning before we get into your your leadership principles here?

David Geens:

Well, I think it's of course, it's different than what maybe is used to in the States, but not in the rest of the world. We are way more spread out. Ministering service over here can mean that you have to drive more than an hour to visit somebody. Yeah, that makes it all different. You have to adapt. and especially in our ward, since it is one of the smallest wards at the moment. As a bishop now, I have constantly to find out, okay, how are we going to do this? How are we going to do that? Running a full program, it's nice to see it all in the handbook and to talk about, but often it's quite difficult. because you lack the members. And yeah, that makes it different. I wouldn't say more difficult, but at least different. Yeah, for sure.

Kurt Francom:

Are most members as they attend church on Sunday, are they coming by train or by bus or by their own vehicle?

David Geens:

Most will be coming by car because where our church building is, it's not a great place to use public transport. Public transport in Belgium isn't great either.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah, yeah, makes sense. All right, well, let's jump into your leadership principles that you sent over. The first one is always phrase intentions, remarks, motivation in a positive tone. I'm intrigued by this one. Tell me more.

David Geens:

Well, it's one of the lessons that I've learned being a bishop. I, and maybe also has to do with myself, but also with, with the people in the world, they are wonderful people. And often what I noticed is that, that often it happens that people with, with all good intentions, phrase something negatively. I'll give an example, like if, if a member would, or maybe an investigator, would be smoking, you could say, oh, you have to stop smoking. You can phrase it negatively. And I found out that bringing gospel principles and teaching people works way better if you phrase the same thing in positive ways. If I keep in the example, instead of saying, oh, smoking is bad for you, start learning about the word of wisdom and all the blessings it gives, all the positive ways that come out of it. And it's the same thing when I extend the calling and I'm talking with somebody that has ideas like, oh, will this be too difficult and will it take too much time? I've learned to talk about all the positive things and also in helping people, For me, it's like, yeah, if for example, somebody would come to me and tell me that they are struggling with something, I would never focus on the problem they're struggling at. I would focus on, okay, how will we get you back closer to the gospel and invite you? And really, I took this really into all the little details is by choosing my words also carefully, is that I always try to look for positive words and especially positive examples. to to give an example uh recently it happened i think i can i can share this is that during a testimony week uh sunday um there there was one of our i i saw that one of the sisters start crying and uh i went over to her and yeah thing was she said herself, yeah, she could, she barely can walk. She needs a walker. And she said, yeah, I want to share my testimony, but yeah, I cannot get up to the pulpit. She, she used a negative word. I said, I cannot. And I said immediately to her, yeah, but you can give your testimony. Give me a second. And I run around, I search for, for, uh, for a handheld microphone. and people were like looking like what is our bishop doing right now during other members giving testimony but i managed to give her a microphone and say to her yeah please share your testimony from where you're sitting there's no problem with that and that was such beautiful example of of somebody that really wanted to share and thought for all these months yeah but i cannot do it i cannot walk i

cannot go to the pulpit And yeah, that's what I try to do is not focus on what cannot be done, but focus on what can be done. And yeah, that gives a different feeling.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah, I think that's really helpful just because there's sometimes so much pressure as a leader to say the right thing or, you know, and so if you can just say whatever I say, it's gonna It's going to be in a positive tone and an encouraging tone, one that gives hope. And that can do a lot to just continue to encourage people as I think our naturally our brain seems to take everything negative or the negative parts of life seem to stand out over the positive ones at times. And so it's a good habit.

David Geens:

Yeah, but It's a principle that we all know, but sometimes we seem to forget. It's like, okay, sometimes it happens during a Sunday meeting that children are a little bit extra active and making some noise. And yeah, I completely understand that for some older members who may be having a little bit problems with hearing and using hearing aids, that it tends to be more noisy for them. So I completely understand that these people start looking around and look like, yeah, it's bothering me. But yeah, once again, you could go to the children and say, sit down and yeah, and go to the parents, keep your kids quiet. Or yeah, you could do like, okay, there's one running around really wildly. No, I'm going to take him and, and let him sit next to me at the pulpit and see if he's done still noisy and stuff like that. So yeah, simple things like that.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. Awesome. Anything else around that as far as, you know, keeping a positive tone or do we cover it all?

David Geens:

Well, it's really a duty to have this always. And even in meetings, in bishopric meetings, in ward councils, is that often people see problems and phrase things negatively and say, oh, we cannot do this or that's impossible. And yeah, is then flip it around and say, yeah, maybe. And even then don't say, maybe we cannot do that. I immediately switched to, yes, but we can do this and we can do that. And that gives way more positive vibe and people willing to help. I noticed that a lot of members are way more willing to commit if you put it in a positive way.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. Next principle, this is intriguing. The gospel has two basic rules, the handbook just one. Explain that one.

David Geens:

That's one of the things that, because I'm only serving now four months as a bishop, that's one of the things that is quite, I don't say that I've changed it in our world, But that was immediately my principle is that a lot of members when they check out if something is possible or allowed and they refer to the handbook or to a broad culture because they often say, yeah, this is how it should be done and this is how that should be done. For instance, you could say, okay, you can only uh minister the sacrament when you're wearing a white shirt well yeah nowhere in the scriptures it's only a nice habit and it's showing a lot of respect and i'm completely uh pro uh showing showing ourself on on our best attire on a sunday but uh on the other hand um i've explained to to my ward council to my bishopric that I say okay we have learned from Christ that all the laws depend on two laws first love our heavenly father and secondly love thy neighbor as thyself and I say this complete handbook yeah with all the rules and stuff like that i read it quite simply the first and only real rule is for our church as an as an institution as an organization is how do we bring people closer to the gospel and closer to christ and all other rules are dependent on that if you ask me bishop can i do this or can i do that i always check with myself to this first rule is this helping somebody or is this yeah giving a bad feeling to somebody to stay in the same in the same example if somebody without a white shirt and and somebody would react to that oh bishop why did you allow somebody without a white shirt to to minister the sacrament My idea would be, okay, and once again, combined with the first principle, you can go to this person and say, oh, you cannot wear something else than a white shirt, but you can approach the same person with love and say to them, okay, we have a habit. It's only because we want to show respect. it's not a real rule you will not lose your temple recommend if you wear something else but yeah and approach it like that and think about what can I do to help this person to bring him or her closer to the gospel and often that is also again try to be positive and and same thing like with kids if kids are running around and you would go to them and say be quiet be um yeah would they like coming to church i doubt it but instead if they if they have leaders if they have other members that that care about them uh yeah then they feel loved and and Yeah, that's that's for me, just one simple rule. And every time they come up to me and ask me, Bishop, how should we treat this or that situation? I always go back to this number one rule. Our organization is only meant to bring people closer to the gospel.

Kurt Francom:

Love it. That's awesome. I think that's a great way to interpret. you know, the handbook at times as it sometimes feels over overwhelming, you know, so next principle is avoid disappointment. How do you go about doing that?

David Geens:

Yeah, you see the three principles are all tied together. But I noticed that, of course, we have a church here in Belgium, We are losing members. Members are getting inactive. We are still a growing church. We baptize a lot of people, but even a lot of people getting baptized disappear after a few months and that's a pity. When I talk to these people, and I really made it a goal for myself to go talk to a lot of our inactive members, and I build a kind of trust before I ask the question, but then I always ask the question, why don't you come to church anymore? I really want to know, not for blaming or just, I'm curious, I want to know, I want to learn as a new bishop. And then most of the times, 95% of the times, it's because of some feeling of disappointment. Disappointment in other members, disappointment in certain decisions, disappointment in a calling, but often it's a feeling of disappointment. And that gives me the lesson in, okay, And that's why I use also the other principles is what can I do to avoid those disappointments? And sometimes you have to be you have to take decisions. Sometimes you I feel the inspiration to release somebody in a calling. And if that person then is really like, why, then I want to take my time to explain that I really feel inspiration, and that I feel a reason to do that. And that it is certainly not because you're doing your calling in a wrong way, I would... It would be very bad if somebody would leave with the feeling of disappointment because disappointment leads to inactive members for as far as I've learned.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. Fascinating. And I'm just curious, what else have you learned as you go around and visit some of these members? Any tactics from even knocking on the door, what you say first? How do you break through some of those walls that they put up or anything come to mind?

David Geens:

Well, I have, I have to admit, I have one advantage at this moment. I'm, I'm new in my calling, and I'm new in the world. So they don't know me. And Yeah a lot of the disappointments and I have to be honest about this and is that people are getting not disappointed in Christ because that's yeah I wouldn't say that's almost impossible of course it's possible but most of the time people are getting disappointed in other people And with the best intentions, yeah, people, some things say things trying to help somebody, but then it comes out in a wrong way or it hurts somebody. Or sometimes somebody is in a situation where there is no right answer, whatever, yeah? But most of the time, a lot of disappointments come because of somebody said

something, yeah? Even with the best intentions. And I have now the advantage of being new in the world. And I'm not tied to all the things that happened in the past. I'm unbound by the history. So Yeah, I think that's that's one of the reasons why, why Heavenly Father has called me in this position in this world, because I can do that. And for me, it's then easily to go to those members. And they often have something like, oh, that's good. Somebody knew somebody that's that's not tied to the past. And I can I can tell my story. And then Most important is, and especially when I set up the appointment, because yeah, since it is certainly for me with the distance, because my ward is also a distance from where I live, so I never go unannounced. I always make an appointment, but while making the appointment, I make clear I come to listen. I don't come to church. It's not my intention to say, okay, but it's all in the past and next week I expect you back in church. Um, just come to listen. And that helps a lot of people. I have, uh, I've already several times that people tell me, wow, finally i have the feeling that somebody is listening to me and i don't think that in the past other members or the previous bishops or other leaders weren't listening but maybe yeah it's because that that i really say hey i'm just here to listen and i'm shutting up and i'm listening go ahead yeah

Kurt Francom:

Ah, that's really helpful. Really good stuff. Uh, any other point principle story that we want, want to make sure we squeeze in here before we wrap up or how'd we do?

David Geens:

Well, like I said, all these three principles are bound together and sometimes it's a challenge to keep that always active in mind. But for me, it's almost, everybody says, when in doubt, ask the question, what would Jesus Christ do? But I love to do that in small examples. For instance, But I'm not unique in that, but it helps me a lot. For instance, recently we had an extra meeting where we were watching one of the sessions of General Conference and there was a family with a small kid. And of course, this kid was totally not interested in what any of the apostles were saying. So he was running around and I saw the mother struggling and she wanted to listen also. So I had something like, you know what, Yeah, I went up to her and said, would you have a problem if I would take your son to the nursery room together with my wife and go play with him so that you can sit down and enjoy? And yeah, these small things. And because once again, I was noticing that some of the elderly people were having problems hearing what was said on television. So yeah, at that moment, it's those small things that really give me the moment that I think, okay, This is how I want to serve in small things, in small acts of kindness, one by one, and go forth on that.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah, truly inspiring, David. I really appreciate this. Last question I have for you, David, as you think back on your short time being a bishop anyways, but you've been a leader in other capacities. How has being a leader helped you become a better follower of Jesus Christ?

David Geens:

Oh, then I have to go back to 13 years ago. It helped from almost day one. I was baptized and only a few weeks later, somebody from the stake presidency came up and tapped on my shoulder and said, during the second hour, can I have a talk with you? And my first reaction was, oh boy, I'm only a member for two months or two months and a half. Wrong, that somebody of the state presidency wants to talk to me. But surprisingly enough, it turned out that they decided that that I would be becoming an elder immediately. The Melchizedek priesthood was appointed immediately and my next calling was that I would be a counselor in what was then our branch presidency. So I had something like, really? I asked him, yeah, do you know that I'm only baptized two months ago? But from that moment on, for me, being a leader gave me the opportunity to learn the most. Leading is not about leading, but it's about serving. And in serving others, you get to know what was really the intent of Christ. So all the leading callings that I had, going over counselor in a branch presidency, missionary, branch missionary leader, in the high council, it always gives me the opportunity to learn what it is about serving people and to make a difference. And that's why I love this calling now so much because now I see immediate effect. You can have a talk with somebody and you see them come in depressed and you have a talk and you see that go out and they have something like, okay, now we have a solution. And that gives you so much blessing because, yeah, to be honest, my own family is dealing with problems. I have kids dealing with autism and so we have to take care they go to special schools but on the other hand all those troubles seem so far away to use some lyrics just by serving other people and to learn to follow Christ and to learn what his love is about and yeah I had a brain hemorrhage several years ago and they told me that I would never walk again but just my faith and my belief in Christ and knowing that while I kept on serving I would not avoid the problems but I would find the strength to deal with them yeah that that yeah, turned my life up and around. And yeah, nowadays I walk again, I'm serving as a bishop. And yeah, so for me, no better way than serving. It's not about leading, but no better way than serving to find so much blessings in my life.

Kurt Francom:

And that concludes this how I lead interview. I hope you enjoyed it. And 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 experience. And this is how we develop as leaders, just hearing what the other guy's doing, trying some things out, testing, adjusting for your area. And that's, That's where great leadership is discovered, right? So we would love to have you share this with somebody in this calling or a related calling, and that

would be great. And also, if you know somebody, any type of leader, who would be a fantastic guest on the How I Lead segment, reach out to us. Go to [leadingsaints.org](http://leadingsaints.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 see if we can line them up. So again, go to [leadingsaints.org](http://leadingsaints.org) slash contact, and there you can submit all the information and let us know. And maybe they will be on a future How I Lead segment on the Leading Saints podcast. Remember, go to [leadingsaints.org](http://leadingsaints.org) slash 14 to access the remarkable presentation by Anthony Sweatt about ambiguity and doctrine.

Gordon B. Hinckley:

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 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.