



*“The Family is Central to the Creator’s Plan”*

## **Show Notes & Transcripts**

### **Podcast General Description:**

Follow Him: A *Come, Follow Me* Podcast with Hank Smith & John Bytheway

Do you ever feel that preparing for your weekly *Come, Follow Me* lesson falls short? Join hosts Hank Smith and John Bytheway as they interview experts to make your study for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ *Come, Follow Me* course not only enjoyable but original and educational. If you are looking for resources to make your study fresh, faithful, and fun--no matter your age--then join us every Sunday.

### **Podcast Episode Descriptions:**

#### **Part 1:**

Our attitude toward, “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” is a test for this generation. Dr. Jenet Erickson joins us to discuss gender, the importance of Christlike characteristics, and the importance of familial ideals, and how we often don’t meet them yet, the Atonement covers all of our Heavenly Parents’ children. We discuss how we all belong to the eternal family of God.

#### **Part 2:**

Dr. Jenet Erickson returns to examine “The Family: A Proclamation to the World ” and how social science, psychology, and spirituality intersect in this aspirational and inspirational document that galvanizes Saints to become better stewards in their families, wards, neighborhoods, and communities.

## Timecodes:

### Part 1

- 00:01 Welcome to Part I
- 00:54 Welcome Dr. Jenet Erickson
- 03:13 Background to “The Family: A Proclamation to the World”
- 07:38 Do family structures matter?
- 08:11 All of us fall outside of the ideal
- 09:32 Not a plan of perfection but Plan of Redemption
- 12:28 Study “The Living Christ” and The Proclamation together
- 12:53 The Gathering is a Gathering of the Family of Christ where everyone belongs
- 16:50 The family is central to the plan of salvation
- 19:42 Biological vs psychological gender
- 22:05 Story of Charlie Bird and his sister
- 25:54 Christlike are the characteristics we should emulate and seek
- 27:29 Mother in Heaven and eternal bodies
- 30:27 Jesus died for us to experience happiness in family life
- 31:42 The rise and fall of nations and the study of the role of families
- 35:44 Raising families brings out our most Christlike selves
- 41:21 Developing ourselves is developing family and Christlike characteristics
- 44:00 Do children make a married couple less happy?
- 47:56 The implications of sexual infidelity
- 54:47 Sexuality is given as a gift for married couples
- 1:00:50 It is the cheapening of sexuality that is a problem in media
- 1:01:45 End of Part I
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### Part 2:

- 00:03 Welcome to Part II
- 00:13 The family is ordained of God and science backs that a nuclear family provides greatest likelihood for children to thrive
- 01:46 Affirmation of traditional marriage is obligation to stand up for those who are most vulnerable in society
- 04:17 Support for single parents
- 04:51 The Atonement covers all gaps and makes up for any loses in our lives
- 08:44 Happiness is most likely when based on teachings of Jesus Christ
- 10:55 The importance of marriage at an altar
- 13:19 What “preside” can mean
- 14:58 The science of prayer
- 20:55 The power of repentance in marriage according to science
- 23:45 The Four Horsemen of Divorce
- 25:34 Parenting and Doctrine and Covenants 121:41-42

- 28:19 Elder Holland story about treating son poorly and the Plan of Redemption
- 30:44 What love really is in a marriage
- 32:53 The importance of family work
- 37:50 The research behind women and working outside the home and having a father protects daughters from predators
- 40:55 Men and women are equals in a marriage in presiding, teaching, and nurturing
- 48:31 Brain development in children with mothers and fathers, including oxytocin
- 58:58 The Lord places a strong boundary for abusers and those that violate covenants
- 1:02:38 Need the vision of our Heavenly Parents for equality in marriage and parenting
- 1:05:33 Dr. Erickson shares her experience with faith and education
- 1:10:08 End of Part II

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## **Biographical Information:**



Jenet Erickson, an associate professor in the Department of Church History and Doctrine in BYU Religious Education, teaches The Eternal Family (REL 200) course as well as Introduction to Family Process (SFL 160) for the School of Family Life. Her research has focused on maternal and child well-being in the context of work and family life, as well as the distinct contributions of mothers and fathers in children's development. She is a research fellow of both the Wheatley Institution and the Institute for Family Studies and has been a columnist on family issues for the Deseret News since 2013.

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## EPISODE 51 • PART I



Dr. Jenet Erickson

*The Family:  
A Proclamation to  
the World*



Hank Smith:	00:00:00	Welcome to followHIM, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their <i>Come, Follow Me</i> Study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	00:00:09	I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	00:00:11	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	00:00:11	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	00:00:13	We want to learn and laugh with you.
John Bytheway:	00:00:15	As together, we followHIM.
Hank Smith:	00:00:20	Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with my merry co-host, John Bytheway. Merry Christmas, John.
John Bytheway:	00:00:32	Merry Christmas, Hank.
Hank Smith:	00:00:33	Yes. It's the most wonderful time of the year.
John Bytheway:	00:00:37	I feel so joyful and triumphant.
Hank Smith:	00:00:41	It's also the most stressful time of the year.
John Bytheway:	00:00:43	O come ye, O come ye to our podcast. Thank you.
Hank Smith:	00:00:45	Yes. John, fantastic week this week. We have a wonderful guest who's with us.
John Bytheway:	00:00:54	Yes, we do. I'm so glad we're taking time on our topic today, but first, let me introduce Jenet Erickson. She is an Associate Professor in Church History and Doctrine in Religious Education at Brigham Young University, where she teaches the Eternal Family Religion course, as well as the Introduction to Family Process course for the School of Family Life. She received a PhD

in Family Social Science from the University of Minnesota. Is that, "Go Gophers?"

- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:01:25 It totally is. Go Gophers! Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:01:27 Go Gophers! Okay. Her research has focused on maternal and child wellbeing in the context of work and family life, as well as the distinct contributions of mothers and fathers in children's development. As a Social Science Research Fellow at the Heritage Foundation. Wow! She completed an extensive review of research on the effects of non-parental care on children's development for policymakers. She's a Research Fellow of both the Wheatley Institution and the Institute for Family Studies, and has been a columnist on family issues for the *Deseret News* since 2013. She and her husband, Michael, have been blessed with two children. We are so delighted to welcome you, Jenet, to our podcast today. Thanks for joining us.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:02:16 Thank you so much. Such an honor to be here. Thanks, John and Hank.
- Hank Smith: 00:02:19 We are just excited to have you with your expertise. John, Jenet comes highly recommended by her peers in the Church History and Doctrine Department, and that was a recent switch. Right, Jenet?
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:02:33 Yes, yes, just this fall full-time in Religious Education. I had been full-time in the School of Family Life for a few years, and then when we had children, I left and was part-time and now full-time in Religious Ed.
- Hank Smith: 00:02:46 Now, John, Jenet, we're going to have to take a different approach here because we're not looking at a passage of scripture where we can say, "Okay. What was Joseph Smith, what were his contemporaries doing?" We're actually not going that far back. We're going to go back to 1995. Now, it is the 1900s. So there might be some people listening who are, "Ooh, that is a long time ago, way back in the 1900s."
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:03:13 I love thinking back to when that was given. I remember sitting and listening to President Hinckley give it. It was the Women's Broadcast, and it was striking that it was not reserved to be shared in General Conference, the formal General Conference on Saturday and Sunday, but it was the week before to the women. I've thought often since then there's a statement by President Oaks about the power of women being the voice for the family.

Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:03:39	You might have heard President Kimball talk about the role of women in these last days and that they would be a tremendous power for good, that they would rise up like a sleeping giant, actually. I think there's something very significant about women and their connection to relationships that begins with Mother Eve in her willingness to take the fruit that a family could be born and that deep connection to the relational nature of our reality. There was a reason it was given to the women to bless all the families of the earth. So I'm grateful for that.
Hank Smith:	00:04:12	I remember when this happened, [I was a] senior in high school, I was in seminary. It was the beginning of the school year and they said, "Wow, the Church issued a proclamation."
Hank Smith:	00:04:23	I'm going, "Okay. Wow. This must be a big deal. This hasn't happened in a long time."
Hank Smith:	00:04:32	The most memorable thing for me was the least how unmemorable it was because I remember thinking, "Okay." The most fascinating part for me, honestly, was the signatures at the bottom. I was a senior in high school. My brain wasn't fully developed, but I don't remember being shocked by what was taught.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:04:53	Maybe we weren't as aware in the Church. In fact, I wrote a list of questions that I think were happening at that time to some degree and have certainly increased like this one. Does marriage matter? How important is it? What about alternatives to marriage like cohabitation? Does it matter if people have sexual relations outside of marriage? Does it matter if marriage is between a man and a woman? Do children just need caring adults around them? Do they need a mother and a father? Are they important? Are children important? What are children's rights in relationship to parents? What do parents owe children, if anything? What is the most important thing that parents do for children? Do fathers offer something different than mothers, and what is it, and does it matter?
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:05:42	Just seeing how the Pioneers would never have asked these questions that in our generation these are questions that we have grappled with and we increasingly grapple with. There's something powerful about that. There's something powerful about being forced, in a sense, to ask questions about the deepest truths of eternity, this reality of an eternal family constructed of a Heavenly Father and a Heavenly Mother and children.

Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:06:08	We've been asked to really deeply think about whether those things matter. Someday I think those pioneers will say, "Teach us. Teach us what you learned in that search that was generated by significant cultural questions around these deep things that we took for granted."
Hank Smith:	00:06:27	That's fantastic. I will mention, as I've been preparing this week, I was surprised to see that only five of the 15 men that signed the document are still alive. As of the time of this recording, only five are still alive. You have President Nelson, President Oaks, Elder Eyring, Elder Holland, and President Ballard. Those other 10 are gone now.
John Bytheway:	00:06:54	As I was preparing, Hank and Jenet, I found a talk from President Oaks in October of 2017. In that talk, he mentioned he was one of seven that was still left. So since then, now it's down to the five, and he even talked about the fact that it may not have, I don't remember his exact words, but may not have seemed so significant at the time, but this is what prophets can do. They see. They're seers. They see far off that we would need some clarity on these ... Those questions were awesome. I can't wait to go back and write those down because I think there's such an art to have the right questions. I love those questions you started with.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:07:38	As a graduate student, I remember thinking that this document, as I'm setting all this research, thousands of studies have been gathered over family. Does family structure matter? What do mothers and fathers do? All of that. To think within these nine paragraphs is more social science findings, the confirmatory findings than you could amass in hundreds of studies. Just so condensed what we have seen by experience through research just composed so powerfully in this document.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:08:11	At the same time, I think it's important to realize that the Proclamation can sometimes be a source of pain because it holds up an ideal. The truth is all of us fall outside that ideal. We all know the messiness of family life. I was thinking family life is so filled with messiness because of this growth process that it induces. Marriage and is a profound growth-inducing experience. Children are growth-inducing.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:08:44	Then sometimes it can feel like it's used as a baton to say you don't belong, whether it's LGBTQ questions or a divorced family or whatever situations might seem that they fall outside the ideal. It can feel like we can use the Proclamation, too, as a weapon instead of what it is, which is a light.

Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:09:06	I think this blazing source of light that it provides for us to guide us, not to shame us, but to guide us and to help us understand when we do feel pain, these truths help us understand why there is pain, why there is pain connected to divorce, why there is pain connected to the struggles of family life, whatever those might be. These help us understand that and help us grow towards that beautiful ideal.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:09:32	It is a great story of redemption. It feels like when we have the Proclamation and the Living Christ side by side, that this is not a story of perfectionism. I love Elder Christofferson's recent words in Conference, but this is the plan, not the plan of perfectionism, the Plan of Redemption, and that the Redeemer walks beside us in this journey of family life to help us experience redemption through him as we walk towards this beautiful ideal of truths given to us.
Hank Smith:	00:10:01	That's great. Thank you for bringing that up, Jenet. I've been studying the Gospel of Luke lately in my classes, and you see the Savior going outside. Some had put up these boundaries of who belongs and who doesn't belong. In the Gospel of Luke, he just walks right past those boundaries and says, "These people belong that you had kicked out, that you had pushed away to the fringes. They belong. Come in, come in. We're all part of this big family."
John Bytheway:	00:10:27	I'm glad you used that word ideal. I wanted to just state something that's right in the followHIM [Come, Follow Me] manual. It's on page 215, where Elder Christofferson said, "To declare the fundamental truths relative to marriage and family is not to overlook or diminish the sacrifices and successes of those for whom the ideal is not a present reality. Everyone has gifts. Everyone has talents. Everyone can contribute to the unfolding of the divine plan in each generation," and he goes on, but I'm glad you used that word, the ideal.
John Bytheway:	00:11:02	I put in my margin, I put Moroni USA, which usually isn't words we put together, but what I meant by USA is Moroni is the ultimate single adult because his greatest contribution, his greatest work I think we could say is while he was a single adult, and our marital status does not diminish our capacity and our gifts to contribute to the world, to the gospel, to the Church. So I like that, yeah, that this is an ideal, and it's not a present reality for everybody.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:11:39	John, I was thinking, as you were saying that, that is so beautiful to think of Moroni. There's this beautiful statement in actually the <i>Handbook of Instructions</i> , and it says around the family, the

whole purpose of the gospel being to strengthen the family. It says, "In this life, many people have limited opportunities for loving family relationships. That's just reality. No family is free from challenges, pain, and sorrow. Individuals and families exercise faith in the Lord and strive to live according to the truths he has revealed concerning the family. The Savior has promised he will bear the burdens of all who come unto him." So you think of Moroni walking beside the Savior in that journey as he comforted him during that time right outside of that ideal.

- Hank Smith: 00:12:28 Yeah. Jenet, you mentioned that we are going to study "The Living Christ" or you put them side by side, and we're going to study this next week. I like this idea of here's the ideal, and here's the Christ when you don't reach the ideal.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:12:42 Yes, and when because you all, we all need Him. Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:12:47 "Are we not all beggars?" King Benjamin might remind us.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:12:50 "Are we not all beggars?"
- Hank Smith: 00:12:51 I love that. Thank you.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:12:53 The Proclamation starts out with all of us as the family of God. That is the whole beginning. It says, this is the plan for all of us. All human beings are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit-centered daughter of Heavenly Parents, and as such, each has a divine nature and destiny in this Heavenly family that we are all part of.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:13:17 I'll think sometimes the Proclamation is about our Heavenly family. So when we think of the great gathering, it's so beautiful that the teachings of the Proclamation came in this dispensation of the gathering, and we have President Nelson speaking of the Gathering, as we are gathered temples, the Gathering of Israel into temples to receive and be endowed with the power that is part of that familial order of the priesthood, where we join the eternal family of our Heavenly Parents, sealed to the eternal family of our Heavenly Parents. The Proclamation is grounded in that truth. Every one of us belongs to a family, beloved sons and daughters of Heavenly Parents.
- Hank Smith: 00:13:58 No matter who you are, you fall into that category of we are ... Man, that's great. The Family Proclamation to the World, it's not just about your family, it's about the big family.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:14:09 The big family.

John Bytheway: 00:14:10 We get very used to calling each other brother and sister, but it's a good reminder that, no, this is who we are. We're brothers and sisters in this huge family and how differently we could treat each other if we really took those titles to heart that we get so used to. When I was on my mission in the Philippines, I remember this sister that we found, I think she was less active at the time, and we kept calling her sister. Her two little kids were just giggling in the corner because it sounded so funny because we're like, "Hey, Sister."

John Bytheway: 00:14:52 To me, I stepped back and went, "Yeah, we say that and we get really used to it," but the kids thought they were just giggling that we kept calling her sister because ... we get used to it. Maybe this is a good reminder.

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:15:05 It is literally true. Right? Literally true.

John Bytheway: 00:15:08 This is a fact. Yeah.

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:15:09 I wanted to just mention it, too. At the beginning, we hear that, "Marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God, and that family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of his children." I was thinking about what it was like to sit in General Conference and hear Elder Christofferson talk about the four pillars of the plan of salvation.

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:15:33 Growing up, I'd heard Elder McConkie's words referred to lots. Of course, all throughout scripture, when the plan of salvation is taught it has three core things. It has the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement, everywhere. Here, Elder Christofferson said there are four pillars and the fourth is the family and he describes the family as it supplies the best setting for God's plan to thrive. It's the setting for the birth of children and the environment for the learning and preparation they will need for successful mortal life and eternal life in the world to come, and how core to have the family be the setting for our physical birth and our spiritual rebirth.

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:16:16 We could not have the plan. The Creation, the Fall and the Atonement are all based in the truth of the family and the central role of the family. Our biological families are our mortal families in which we grow and prepare for eternal life. So I thought he had just done something absolutely remarkable. Not new, but just clearly stated. This is a stool of four legs. The plan of salvation rests on all four of these, the family being central to that.

Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:16:50	I just heard Sister Beck. This is a sweet experience. I was just with her a little while ago, and I told her that we talked about her talk in our class on the Proclamation. We talked about a talk where she said, "We must teach the youth of the Church that the family is central to the plan of salvation."
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:17:07	She said, "The Creation provided the setting for a family to live and the family to grow, the eternal family of God to grow. The Fall was that decision for the family to enter mortality for children to be born. The Atonement, its whole purpose is for us to be sealed to the eternal family of God and for families to be united eternally."
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:17:30	So the entire plan is about family. It starts with family. The reason there is a plan is because we are children of loving Heavenly Parents who want to bring us home to them and enable us to become like them. The Fall enabled us to come into a setting where families can be born. The Atonement, the whole purpose of Christ's work is to seal us back to the family of God and enable us to become the kind of people that are like our Heavenly Parents, that can have that level of intimate relationship. It can have that level of closeness and deep capacity for joy in family life.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:18:04	So she said to me as I was telling her that, she said, "Jenet, that talk was given to me by Revelation," and she just teared up. She said, "I will never forget in the middle of the night being awakened and given that talk."
John Bytheway:	00:18:18	Where's that talk again? I've got to write that down.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:18:22	It's given to the youth of the Church. It was given to the CES, all the instructors of Religious Education throughout the Church.
John Bytheway:	00:18:27	Was that the CES Symposium or something?
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:18:29	Yes. 2006. Yes.
John Bytheway:	00:18:32	2006.
Hank Smith:	00:18:32	I remember it was in the Little Theater of the Conference Center. I was there. I remember being there. She said something so simple, but it really changed me. She said, "If something is anti-family, it is anti-Christ." I remember that. It's never left me from that moment.

John Bytheway: 00:18:51 What I like what you said here in that first paragraph, Jenet, the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children." One of the theories out there was that maybe God just made the world like a clock. I can't remember which philosopher this was, and then He just stepped back to see what would happen, disinterested, instead of intensely interested.

John Bytheway: 00:19:16 Just yesterday with my class, we referenced the vision that Enoch had where he saw God weeping and how He's not unaffected by us. He's involved and wants to be in our eternal destiny. I like just restating that this is about His family. He's involved. Our eternal destiny is part of His plan right there in the first paragraph.

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:19:42 Well, let's pick up on paragraph two. As we were talking about this, our Heavenly Father, I was thinking there's something so magnificent in the Proclamation where it talks about our Heavenly Mother and our Heavenly Parents that we are sons and daughters in their image.

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:19:57 Then it says, "Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose." We know that life comes from two, the union of male and female, God the Mother, God the Father. Elder Porter, Elder Bruce Porter, who loved to talk about the Proclamation, he once said, "The differences between men and women are not simply biological. They're woven into the fabric of the universe, a vital foundational element of eternal life and divine nature and cultures all throughout time," whether it's yin and yang or whatever different metaphors or images that capture this reality that this male/female is woven into the fabric of the universe, that it is the essence of life. You have life created only through the complimentary union of these two.

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:20:53 Of course, we live at a time that experiences challenges around gender. I'll talk to my students about how for a long time when we talked about male and female, it was the same as man and woman. You would use them interchangeably. Then in about the 1960s, there was a recognition that we should talk about gender as different from sex, from biological sex, from chromosomal makeup. We should talk about gender, which is our social understanding of what it means to be a man or woman. It's what are the expectations of what it looks like to be a woman, what are the expectations of what it looks like to be a man, how do they act, what colors do they wear, what preferences do they have, and so appreciating the social understanding of gender, of sex.

Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:21:41	That was important because you have cultural ideas that can and be distortions of that idea of male and female. So we get caught up in different ideas about all the restrictions about what a woman needs to do or be like or what a man needs to do or be like that are conformities that are unhealthy.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:22:05	I love the story of Charlie Bird, who was Cosmo at BYU, and experiences same sex attraction, would identify as gay, and he describes as a young man, very faithful Latter-day Saint, but describes as a young man being in church. He knew he was different, which is so often what an individual who experiences LGBTQ questions. They'll just feel different, and it was painful for him, and he stopped going to Young Men. He would go to a sacrament meeting, but it was uncomfortable. He was made fun of and felt different.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:22:36	His sister follows him one Sunday to figure out where he is going after a sacrament meeting. He just tells her, "I'm different."
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:22:45	She says to him, "Charlie, Jesus made flowers."
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:22:52	Then she describes how the traits that he has that are his gifts are the same ones that the Savior had. So she says to him, "The question you should be asking is not whether or not this characteristic is male or masculine, but whether or not it is Christ-like," and teaches him a whole new understanding of what gender means.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:23:15	We just have the gift in the Lord Jesus Christ. It's, Hank, you were referencing. He breaks open some of those problematic gender stereotypes by the way that he was. He refers to himself as a mother, as a hen gathering your chickens. He gives himself characteristics that we would associate with femininity to teach us what a true man is like.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:23:43	So I appreciate that. Then at the same time I'll tell those students the Proclamation does something very powerful for us. At a time when gender today has moved from social understanding of gender to psychological, meaning whatever I feel is what defines my gender, it grounds us in biology because President Oaks has been really clear in saying that when the reference to gender is made in the Proclamation, it is referring to biological sex at birth.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:24:17	So the Proclamation, it takes the confusion. If we were left with just psychological understanding of what it meant to be,

whatever we felt, then there would be non-ending ways of being, ways of understanding oneself. The Proclamation just pulls us back into a grounded place to understand our responsibilities, our stewardships, where we will find joy.

- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:24:46 Certainly, there can be experiences that feel dysphoric from that, that individuals can feel like, "I don't feel like what I think I should feel." Yet, the Lord tells us, "There is gender. You have gender. It's important to your path eternally, and it will bring you meaning and joy as you understand it," and then it grounds us in the role of biology and understanding ourselves in the body, that our bodies matter, that the soul is made up of the body and the spirit, and that this biological founding to our gender is important in the plan.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:25:28 That doesn't answer all the questions, right? It doesn't answer all of the issues that that might bring up, but it helps ground us in seeking and appreciating the role of biological gender in this eternal plan.
- John Bytheway: 00:25:41 I equate that with Nephi's what is forward. I just thought it was a good way to say we're trying to move toward Christ and He is our True North.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:25:53 John, I love that Christward and answer to these questions around gender. It is so powerful. I think when we think about gender, in mortality, we have probably shadows of what eternal gender looks like, but we don't know all that that is, and I think the Redeemer's plan is to help us understand that, help us, that pointed to Christ, we can understand what that eternal gender means, recognizing that mortality is not the source of that eternal gender, it likely contains shadows out of it, right? We don't see perfectly what that eternal gender looks like, but keeping our hope in Jesus Christ, Christ word will teach us, right? He can reveal to us what that means.
- Hank Smith: 00:26:40 It reminds me of this statement in the Proclamation, and I'm moving maybe too far ahead, but it does say happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, our True North, Christward. Sorry to jump ahead though there.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:26:57 No, Hank, I don't know if there's any more powerful place in that. The new Proclamation on the Restoration, there's a statement that says, "This Church is founded upon the cornerstone of the living Christ." I have often thought if we said this family, this life is founded on the cornerstone of the Lord Jesus Christ, that's what he's teaching us. My life is founded on

Jesus Christ. My family is founded on the Lord Jesus Christ, and this Church is founded on the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:27:29 I'll never forget sitting amidst a group of religious representatives, people from different faiths. As I was talking about the plan of salvation, we'd all just been asked to share some, and all of a sudden before I was going to present I thought, "I'm the only one here who knows that I will be resurrected as a woman, and that I existed as a woman before, and that I have a Mother in Heaven who has a body, and I am in her image."
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:27:55 Our belief just at once dignifies half the human race, right? It establishes the reality that we as women, our gender matters, that it is divine, that we are embodied as our queenly Heavenly Mother, and it establishes that beautiful maternal relationship that we have that is eternal.
- John Bytheway: 00:28:14 You walk by the primary and they're in there singing, "I am a child of God," and not even knowing what theological dynamite that is, that it's not a metaphor, that it's really a Father and Mother in Heaven. I think we're unique in that. I don't know everything about all of the different denominations and beliefs, but the idea that God is an exalted man and mother in heaven and exalted woman is I think unique to us, isn't it? Wouldn't Satan want to make that kind of fuzzy?
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:28:52 Yes. So much, John. It means everything to literally come from them, to literally have that eternal relationship of child, and mother, and father, daughter, and son. The next part that we get in the Proclamation talks about how spirit sons and daughters knew and worshiped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan with that eternal divine destiny as heirs of eternal life is the most glorious story to think that's my destiny, that's the plan, each of us, and that's work of families. Families play such a central role in enabling that process. We depend, unlike all the other species on the earth, human beings are born totally dependent for a long period of their life. They've got to be fed, clothed, cared for, and nourished, and nurtured.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:29:45 That reality means so much that our physical setting for birth has so much to do with this developmental process that enables us to experience spiritual rebirth. That's what Elder Christofferson is talking about. This is the setting for physical birth and preparation for spiritual rebirth.

Hank Smith:	00:30:04	If you ever see it, almost any other animal born within a couple of hours, they're able to run away from predators, right? A little infant, a little human infant, it's going to be a long time before-
John Bytheway:	00:30:17	Not so much.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:30:17	Yes, a long time.
John Bytheway:	00:30:17	It's going to be a while.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:30:21	Okay. This beautiful next part is the divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and live in families eternally. There it is, just that whole first section is you are part and an eternal family. This is your divine destiny. "I've given everything." The Lord's saying, "I've given everything possible to enable you to experience joy in eternal life in families."
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:30:52	Remember President Holland saying, "It wouldn't be heaven if Pat weren't here. It wouldn't be heaven for me." President Eyring talking about what would a child, if you asked them what they would want more than anything, "I want to be with my mom and dad. I want to be with my family," that that's what eternal life is and in those relationships.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:31:12	The next part and, Hank, maybe do you mind reading the first commandment, that paragraph?
John Bytheway:	00:31:16	No, not at all. The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for his children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman lawfully wedded as husband and wife.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:31:42	That paragraph has a whole lot. I wanted to stop for just a second about this idea of children. There's this interesting account of the founder of the Harvard Sociology program. There were two co-founder, Sorokin and then Carle Zimmerman. Carle Zimmerman ended up writing a book where he looked across civilizations, ancient Egypt, Babylon, starting with Syria, Babylon, Greece, Rome, the European empires, and he's looking at the rise and fall of nations.

Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:32:13	His question as a sociologist was, what was the role of families? What was their place across this rise and fall? One thing that just was so striking is that at the peak of their creativity and progress, and all of them had this cycle of rising and falling, the family was so central, and it was a particular way of viewing the family. It was an orientation to the development of children within families.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:32:42	So he would say that at all civilizations at their peak and of creativity and progress, the orientation of society was to the nurturing of children within families, that there's something powerful when a society is oriented around the development of children that facilitates the best in that society.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:33:04	It's made me think a lot about what is it that children do for us. What is it that this looking towards nurturing life in families, having children, bearing children, what is it that it does for us? You can just see, right. If you just looked at, first of all, what it means to the GDP, we really depend on life to sustain economies. There's no question. So just those goods that enable survival are really around children, how our policies are changed, how we think about alcohol laws and movie ratings and just all the things that are shaped by concern for the most vulnerable and that it betters us.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:33:42	We see data that it's in having children that parents return to church, right? They'll leave religion. In having a child, they want to go back because they remember that they want what was better for their children. They want that setting. So it just invites better. So Sorokin, who was with Zimmerman, says this powerful thing. He says, "Whatever may be the virtues of age, they cannot compensate for the vitality, vigor, courage, daring, elasticity, and creativity of the young. A nation largely composed of middle aged or elderly people enfeebles itself physically, mentally, and socially, and moves toward the end of its creative mission and leadership."
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:34:29	That's Harvard's founder of the sociology program, but he's just saying, he's commenting on our culture, of dramatic decreases in fertility rates and other things, and what it says of about a society that is not looking to the future and the nurturing and development of children, and what it means to its own stability, creativity, generativity, productivity. So children do a lot for us. Hank, you-
Hank Smith:	00:35:01	Wow. You wouldn't even think of that.

John Bytheway: 00:35:02 Never even thought of it. Dude, try to think of a world of ... That's so funny. Think of a world where everybody's middle-aged or seniors.

Hank Smith: 00:35:13 Enfeebles itself.

John Bytheway: 00:35:14 Yeah. People are leaving their blinkers on all over the freeways.

Hank Smith: 00:35:21 Well, that's interesting, though. As we focus on raising these young people, it brings out the best in all the adults.

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:35:29 Yes. Yes. Hank, I loved, and you referenced before we even started this podcast, you referenced what it meant to have children, and how they bring out ... They expose you to yourself in the most powerful ways.

Hank Smith: 00:35:44 Oh, man!

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:35:44 I've got this great quote about that, but I was just thinking, there's something so remarkable about marriage. Sorokin calls it the marriage family school, that this cultivation in children, he'll say it stimulates married persons to release and develop their best creative impulses for surely the mission of molding their own is as nobling as the creation of a masterpiece in the arts or sciences.

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:36:13 So you just think Elder Hales once gave a talk and he spoke to the women. He just said, "We often think about children as a trap for development." That's kind of the culture, right? Your life ends in the nurturing of the young.

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:36:28 I believe strongly that women need to develop their gifts, and talents, their capacities, their education. I believe so strongly in that, and that may mean doing things simultaneously, education as well as children or some contributions community-wise or professionally as well as children, but we cannot diminish the power of development that comes in the nurturing of children.

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:36:53 So Elder Hales just says, "Motherhood," and I would add fatherhood, "is the ideal opportunity for lifelong learning. It is exponential, not linear."

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:37:03 Just think of the learning process of a mother throughout the lifetime of her children because the needs are so varied and far-reaching. In the process of rearing her children, a mother studies child development, nutrition, healthcare, physiology, psychology, nursing, medical research, and educational tutoring

in many diverse fields, math, science, geography, literature, English, and foreign languages. She develops gifts in music, athletics, dance, and public speaking. The learning examples could continue endlessly, and thinking about what children can bring out in us because we care so deeply about their growth and development.

- Hank Smith: 00:37:40 That's incredible. That's a huge takeaway that I've never thought of because by far, the most I've worked at pushing myself to become better is in my marriage and in being a parent, right? Not in my career or my Church calling, even though those bring out good things I think in me. By far, being a parent and being a husband have pushed me to try to be something better.
- John Bytheway: 00:38:05 I've had to relearn algebra. I thought I was done. When your child is sick or injured or hurting and you've gone through that, you would trade places with them so quickly, "Just give this to me," and helping them through suffering is quite an experience as I'm sure you both know, and I'm sure our Heavenly Father knows and thinking about, "God so loved the world, He gave His Only Begotten Son," and, whoa, the suffering that happened there. Those all contribute to being a parent. I love that whole thing, especially going through school all over again with your kids as they go to school and parent-teacher conferences. I think I learned this once.
- John Bytheway: 00:38:59 I mean, I know of someone who's been a Single Adult all her life, never married, but is a world-class auntie that is an aunt to and gets involved in their lives and helps them and nurtures them as well in her place where she is.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:39:18 John, you and I both know, I was single for a long time. I think you were, too.
- John Bytheway: 00:39:21 I was.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:39:21 I think it's remarkable what a special role you can have in your family, what an important role, all of these individuals, these relationships that we have shared in the nurturing of life. I need the village of everyone who helps me with my children so much. We depend on one another in that work of nurturing altogether.
- John Bytheway: 00:39:47 It was so cool to have my son, Andrew, come home from Iceland and suddenly it wasn't just mom and dad saying, "Let's do scriptures." It was Andrew, "All right. Who's in charge? Okay.

I want you ..." and his younger brothers looking at their older brother going, "Wow! Andrew loves this." I just felt this, "Oh," this relief like, "Look, we're all in this together, and look, now they're helping and teaching each other." I shouldn't just say, Andrew, my daughter, Ashley, too, same thing, coming home from a mission and being so fired up, all helping us with each other in a family setting, "Hey, do you want to take home evening tonight? Okay, great. I'll just buy the pizza, you take over."

- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:40:35 Hank, I have to go back. I love your comment about Michael Novak. He says, "The raising of children brings us each breathtaking vistas of our inadequacy." I think he captures that. I mean, this incredibly brilliant Catholic scholar who's just saying, "Here, this brings me breathtaking vistas of my inadequacy," and then he says this, "My bonds to them hold me back from many sorts of opportunities."
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:41:02 You get that. As a single person, there's some freedom that's very different, right? Yet he says, "These do not feel like bonds. They are, I know, my liberation. They force me to be a different sort of human being in a way in which I want and need to be forced."
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:41:21 I think even if we're not mothers and fathers, whenever we are given to the development of others, that is goodness, that is godhood. Then we become a different kind of person. We become who we want to become in that process.
- Hank Smith: 00:41:36 Wow. That is just beautiful. I remember that, especially that first baby. We had little Madeline and the doctors told us. She was on the scale. You go in and she's on the 107th percentile for her head size. "You're thinking, "Well, we're great parents," right? She was always on the very, very bottom, off the chart on the other side. It was called Failure to Thrive.
- Hank Smith: 00:42:03 So every time we took her in, she's still in the Failure to Thrive Zone and we're going, "Oh." I remember one time she got dehydrated and they said, "We've just got to get her drinking. You just got to do anything you can to get her to drink." Here she is just-
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:42:17 Tiny.
- Hank Smith: 00:42:18 ... a newborn, tiny little thing, and you're just holding her. I remember I had a little dropper. I would get a little, not even an eighth of a teaspoon, and I'm giving her a little drop, hoping it

stays down, just a little at a time here. I am doing this for hours. It's a fond memory now, which is odd, but it was just me and her. Sara was able to get some sleep and I've got my little dropper and I'm trying to get-

- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:42:44 Trying to keep her growing. Ugh.
- Hank Smith: 00:42:47 Yeah. Just get a couple of teaspoons to keep her down and she'd lick her lips or whatever, and then occasionally spit it all back up and we start all over again.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:42:56 Who would you do that for? I remember getting up right over and over again with our baby and thinking, "Who would I do this for?" Yet, I cannot stop myself. Literally, every part of me has to respond, right? Sorokin calls that, he'll say, "That fountainhead of unselfish care and spontaneous help is the foundation of moral life." It's just that this sacrifice. It begins at home in the cradle of the helpless baby that we learn the art of selflessness, of giving for the life of another. It's a special relationship.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:43:31 John, when you reference the Lord weeping in Enoch, and thinking I've watched my parents, that my mom will say to have a child is to have a heart walking outside of your body all the rest of your life, you care so deeply for their wellbeing. When they suffer, you suffer. It is a very atonement-like experience. Just what the Lord is teaching us in this process is such a gift. It's why we need them so much. We need those relationships so much.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:44:00 You know what? I was so grateful this year. For a long time, there's been commentary, "Oh, kids make you less happy," and because you'd see in the marital happiness when we're looking as sociologists or psychologists, you'd see this dip after people have kids, marital happiness goes down, and you get it because you're 2:00 AM in the morning and you're wondering, "Are we even married anymore? Where are you in this story?"
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:44:23 Yet, it's so beautiful that consistently people would say, "But children are meaning. They're the essence of meaning." So 2021, guess what happens? The data shows something entirely different. It says children mean greater happiness. We knew that was true for fathers. We knew it was true for mothers to some degree, but more meaningful lives, less lonely, deeper and more connections, happier.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:44:44 Parents find childcare to be much more exhausting and much more meaningful than their professional activities. They rate

parenting as their greatest joy and believe the rewards of watching children grow are worth the cost. It doesn't come without cost. It brings tremendous meaning. Now, we see that happiness is measured, right? It's people with children that are less lonely and experiencing greater happiness. Their gift.

- John Bytheway: 00:45:09 I'm so glad you mentioned that because you do feel the hard parts, but you feel the joy, too. So my 15-year-old was playing his last football game and he got in for two plays.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:45:25 His last game.
- John Bytheway: 00:45:26 Yeah. In the second play, he is a defensive back, and he is covering his guy and he goes up and one-handed intercepts the ball and falls down with it. There was this crazy man in the stand screaming, "Timothy! Timothy!" Then I realized it was me.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:45:51 Who is that?
- Hank Smith: 00:45:54 Everyone's looking back.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:45:54 It's this crazy man yelling his name. I was just beyond. It was so fun to see and see his teammates jumping around him and look, it's making me emotional just, that's my boy. I think, hopefully, there's heavenly experiences that are like that.
- Hank Smith: 00:46:14 Jenet, I'm looking at this paragraph. "Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness." Further down, "Husbands and wives will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations." It seems like such a sacrifice in that paragraph that this is duty and obligation, but what I'm hearing from you is you're saying these are commandments, but they end up, yes, sacrifices that end up becoming investments.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:46:50 Yes, and blessings to us.
- Hank Smith: 00:46:52 They paid dividends. Yeah.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:46:53 Yes. Oh, Hank, I love that. I'm glad you tied that together. I have this wonderful colleague. He talked to me one time about this idea and he just quoted Section 132 and he said, "Look at what the Lord teaches us about children. He promises us glory." What is the glory of God? Children are the continuation of the seeds. They are the glory of God. They are the way God glorifies

himself. Then we're taught, "Except you abide my law, you cannot attain to this glory."

- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:47:23 So cultures that are abiding by law, what that means is the capacity to bring children into this earth, in families that are nurturing and the growth and development of that society. It's this beautiful what we see in 4 Nephi. They were given in marriage and you just see this growth and development of a culture rising to its fullest in this orientation to development of children within families, marriages, and that that is abiding by law, and it is God's glory eternally. So we need them.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:47:56 Hank, I don't want to skip the part that you also talked about. You also read about, "We declare the means by which mortal life to be created is created to be divinely appointed, that the sacred powers of procreation." As a graduate student, I was at the Heritage Foundation. I had been asked to read a book that was talking about some of the implications of the sexual revolution.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:48:17 When we talk about sexual revolution, it was essentially this idea that people should be free to express themselves sexually just as individuals outside of whatever kind of constraints. In some ways, it was women reacting to a reality that men had been able to have sexual relationships outside of marriage without any implications for them. It was labeled liberating, right?
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:48:39 Yet, I was reading what had happened. I was reading about what had happened to the sexualization of women, reading about what had happened with out-of-wedlock childbearing. It's going from 6% to 41%, now nearing 50%, and in some demographics, more than 50%, 73% in some low income demographics.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:49:00 What that had meant to women, to children, and it was deeply painful. I went into this mentor that I had and I said, "This is hard." He was Catholic and he said, "When Eve took the fruit, she took both sides of the fruit. We are learning about what this precious instruction about where we use sexual powers being within bounds God has set why that is so important, why that matters because we've seen the fruits of when that does not happen."
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:49:34 So when you think about women, what's happened to women because of that call it rapes on college campuses, just all of the tragic consequences when that beautiful sexual power is used

outside of those bounds, what it has meant for women and children and men.

- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:49:52 There's an author recently who published a book called *Cheap Sex*. It's a hard title, but he's a fantastic scholar. He was just looking at the languishing of men. We have a time when men are not obtaining college degrees at the same rate as women. There's a big growing gap. It started in the '80s and has grown, just kept growing with women more likely to obtain college degrees, and also working age men who aren't working. It's like you have this massive increase in just men not attaining, not achieving.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:50:23 He was describing what it meant to have a time period prior to this when a woman would say, "I'm not going to engage sexually with you until you are marriageable," which meant you're going to be able to provide for me, and you're going to be a certain kind of person that I'm going to want to entrust my life and the children who come from that life, too. When that breaking apart of sex and marriage and children happened with the sexual revolution, where they were literally broken into pieces, these three cores that had been bound together are tossed apart.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:51:00 Then you have a languishing of men. He would say, "Men have languished." There isn't the structure that invites their best development. It's why when men are married, they earn more, they save more, they are less risky in their behaviors. There's just a purpose to their life that is part of that beautiful structure.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:51:26 John, as you described that love for that child, you'd do anything. You'd develop anything. You'd work as hard as you could to provide for them. You'd sacrifice and grow, and that is protected. We haven't appreciated enough how that's protected by the structure where sexuality happens that when it's reserved for marriage, it invites better. It invites growth. It protects both children, women, and men.
- Hank Smith: 00:51:52 Yeah. I've told my students that in New Testament times you'd have an arranged marriage and you have about a year, and if there's no house prepared, there's no marriage.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:52:03 Wow. Wow.

Hank Smith: 00:52:05 This young man has to create a home for his new family to live in or else the marriage does not happen, and that prompts the best in you, right?

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:52:18 Yes. Yes.

Hank Smith: 00:52:19 To move forward.

John Bytheway: 00:52:19 Yeah, incentivizes you. One of my heroes in this world is Elder Bruce C. Hafen, and he gave a talk at the World Congress on Families in 1999.

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:52:32 I was there. Remember this.

John Bytheway: 00:52:34 What?

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:52:35 Yes.

John Bytheway: 00:52:36 Oh, my goodness. I heard he got multiple standing ovations in the talk. One of the things he said, which was where you were going, and I'm going to roughly paraphrase something about the women's liberation movement had, in fact, liberated men from responsibility and that, hey, if we want to be as sexually promiscuous as the men are, that didn't help anybody. Anyway, that talk, I think you could Google World Congress on Families in 1990. Was it Geneva? Was it Switzerland?

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:53:18 In Geneva, yup.

John Bytheway: 00:53:19 Elder Hafen's talk, and he's I think a family law attorney, right?

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:53:24 Yes. That's right. "The Moral Force of Women," "The Moral Power of Women." Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:53:29 An amazing talk to go back and read, but I was struck with that idea that the sexual revolution, instead of the best outcome, men should be more responsible, instead trying to say let's all be promiscuous, that was even worse. I thought it was a fascinating observation that Elder Hafen made.

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:53:55 Yes. It wasn't liberating, that it's interesting in that there's a wave of feminism prior to the 1960s in England. You might see it, right? Mary Poppins votes for women. One of the-

Hank Smith: 00:54:06 I remember that.

Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:54:07	... mottos, one of the mottos was votes for women, chastity for men. Isn't that interesting? They realized the best, the most powerful place is within those bonds of marriage, sexual relations and rights for women to own property and vote as well. That's the strongest kind of dynamic that we can have for women, and it's true. The safest place for women and children is within the bonds of marriage. That doesn't mean every marriage is that way, but when we look across broad swaths sociologically, the greatest likelihood of her being protected from other forms of abuse is within marriage, and children as well.
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:54:47	That gift of that instruction, though, I just think the sacred powers of procreation and also tells us how beautiful that they're divinely appointed, that sexual relations are intended to bring tremendous joy, connection, relationship, growth, development to couples. They're divinely appointed.
Hank Smith:	00:55:04	Brigham Young brought that up when there were the great evils of the world. One of the great evils was labeled polygamy, and they were trying to throw these men in jail in Utah and he said, "How many men in Congress have their mistresses?"
John Bytheway:	00:55:21	You see, that's okay, but-
Hank Smith:	00:55:25	That's okay. You're creating laws of the great evil over here of polygamy when you have of the most promiscuous life of all. He called out their hypocrisy, the blatant hypocrisy of what they were trying to say.
John Bytheway:	00:55:42	Let me throw out a name that probably most of our listeners will not remember, but do you remember Elder Mark E. Petersen, Quorum of the Twelve? 1969, so before you were both born, but I was around, and I don't remember this from conference, but I love short, powerful quotations because then I can memorize them with my limited brain capacity, but Mark E. Petersen said, "Humanity will rise or fall through its attitude toward the law of chastity."
Dr. Jenet Erick...:	00:56:16	Wow. Yes.
John Bytheway:	00:56:19	We're seeing that here in that last paragraph four. "Employed only between men and women lawfully wedded as husband and wife."

Hank Smith: 00:56:28 Yeah. Jenet, as you were bringing this up, I just thought the damage done by unchaste men on this planet has been just astronomical.

John Bytheway: 00:56:37 Yeah. Go read Jacob, Chapter 2 and 3 in the Book of Mormon, right? Really lets the husbands and fathers have it in those two chapters. He says you're beginning to labor and send in your thoughts. Maybe some had turned thoughts into behavior, but he really lays it on. Those are powerful chapters. I mean, if the Book of Mormon was written for our day, that was a good one to save for us, Jacob 2 and 3.

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:57:04 Yes. Oh, that reference to the tender hearts of the women and children, he's so sensitive to that.

John Bytheway: 00:57:10 You've come up here. Yeah. "You've come up here to hear the pleasing word of God, which healeth the wounded soul. I'm so sorry. I have to enlarge the wounds with those who are already wounded." It's just, "Oh."

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:57:22 I do want to say, I think as we talk about the challenges around sexuality and, Hank, as you highlighted, what damage is done, that we can develop a lot of anxiety and fear around sexuality and not realize right in here in this same paragraph, the Lord is teaching us the power and gift of sexuality within those bonds. We have these statements from Elder Holland, "such an act of love between a man and a woman is or certainly was ordained to be a symbol of total union, union of their hearts, their hopes, their lives, their love, their family, their future, their everything."

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:58:03 Sexual intimacy is not all only a symbolic union between a man and a woman. It is the uniting of their very souls, but a symbolic of a union between mortals and deity. They are, in mortality, one of the ultimate expressions of our divine nature and potential and a way of strengthening emotional and spiritual bonds between husband and wife. The adversary would want to taint sexuality, would want us to fear, would want us to feel anxious about it, would want us to not talk about it, would want us to keep it in the dark, and I think the Lord is saying, "Pull this powerful gift into the light. Teach about it so that it can be what it's intended to be in marriage."

Dr. Jenet Erick...: 00:58:42 There's growth around that, right? There's growth for couples in understanding the gift of sexuality and marriage, the complementary between men and women, the uniqueness that pressures growth and development, and it is intended to be what Elder Holland so powerfully describes, this symbol of total

union of hearts, hopes, dreams, this gift of divine sexuality, pleasure in its most beautiful form given to us by God within these beautiful bonds. When it is outside of that, it's destruction to the very core of the souls who would be so blessed by its beautiful use.

- Hank Smith: 00:59:19 Thank you so much for saying that. Yeah. We could do a better job. Absolutely, we could in teaching our youth. Not so much bad, bad, bad, but timing, timing, timing, right?
- John Bytheway: 00:59:31 Timing. Yeah. I think President Monson said. It's not because it's bad, it's because it's so good to wait to Alma, to Shiblón, "Bridle your passions." He didn't say, "Destroy your passions." Bridle them. I love to emphasize with the teenagers, bridle your passions, the ye may be filled with love. You got to squelch that, but just like you said, timing.
- Hank Smith: 00:59:56 John, I've often told my students that it's like drinking orange juice and brushing your teeth. They're both good. You just have to get them in the right order or you're going to have a bad experience. You drink orange juice after you brush your teeth and it's not as good. So sexuality and marriage, if they come in the right order, are both wonderful experiences.
- John Bytheway: 01:00:19 Well, I love Jenet, the words you used. Boy, I mean, I want to go back and read on the transcript some of these beautiful ways you've put these phrases together, how bonding and beautiful it is. I think you are quoting from Elder Holland's talk "Of Souls, Symbols and Sacraments." Is that the talk?
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 01:00:40 That's the talk, John. Such a powerful talk.
- Hank Smith: 01:00:43 He gave a shorter version, General Conference, called "Personal Purity," but they're one and the same.
- John Bytheway: 01:00:50 It is something we need to teach our young people. It's just that when we see a TV show or a movie that, "No, shut that off." It's not the procreative act that is the problem. It's when, where, how it's being cheapened, degraded, commercialized, sold like a product. That's the issue.
- Dr. Jenet Erick...: 01:01:12 Yes. Captured so powerfully.
- John Bytheway: 01:01:17 Please join us for Part II of this podcast.

## EPISODE 51 • PART II



Dr. Jenet Erickson

*The Family:  
A Proclamation to  
the World*

John Bytheway:	00:00:03	Welcome to Part II of this week's podcast.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:00:07	John, I would love to have you read this next paragraph if we move on. Does that sound good?
John Bytheway:	00:00:16	“The family is ordained of God. Marriage between a man and a woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness and family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.”
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:00:39	There's just so much that... In that most powerful.
Hank Smith:	00:00:44	Oh goodness. Yeah.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:00:45	You'll remember when Elder Christofferson quotes Dietrich Bonhoeffer, one of my heroes, as writing a letter to his niece and she's going to be married. He says, "You think that this love is just between you and your fiance. But it is a post of responsibility," and he says, "to the world." That in your marriage, it is a post of responsibility to the world.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:01:09	When I look at the data, just the reality that the breaking of family structures, so children who experienced divorce or who grew up outside of the bonds of marriage or who were born to a single parent and just what we see is the risk to them.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:01:27	Even after controlling for socioeconomic differences, for controlling for things is twice as likely to have serious challenges in every aspect of development. So physically, emotionally, psychologically, academically, all of those things.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:01:42	When you look at family structure and it's in social science, we're just working with meager human means to measure effects. But there's so much data that shows the power of a nuclear family for children in terms of providing the greatest

likelihood for their thriving, growing up with their mother and their father who are married.

- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:02:04 That they'll even say in sociology, it's law-like. It is so consistent that there just is... There's just no other institution, Brad Wilcox, not our BYU Brad Wilcox, but UVA's, "No institution reliably connects to parents, their money, talent and time to their children the way that marriage does." This very vulnerable part of our population. We talk about trying to make a family or a child-centered culture because some people will say, when we're in a post-marriage world, the marriage rate has dropped and people are so much older. We're in kind of a post-marriage world. We need to just have a child centered-culture.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:02:42 And you just cannot replace marriage as the institution that secures for children what is essential for their thriving. And so when this statement is made, it just shows up so powerfully. Marriage is essential to the eternal plan and that children are entitled. The reason we care about marriage as a church, the reason there was concern about its redefinition with same sex marriage, it isn't because of rejection of certain people, it's because we care so deeply about the most vulnerable among us who have no say.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:03:22 They don't have any say. They enter life in that structure that they're born into and they don't get to decide what that is. We as a society just... We absolutely have an obligation to protect the likelihood of them growing up in relationships that will increase their chances for thriving and development.
- Hank Smith: 00:03:45 It sounds like you're saying the research clearly shows.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:03:45 It's yes. It's law-like in nature. As much as you can say, social science research is law-like. It is just profound.
- John Bytheway: 00:03:54 That's why I love what you're saying here, because I can come from a, "Here's what I've learned from the gospel background." But you are saying all of this is backed up with social science and research and the Proclamation is restating something that is well founded.
- John Bytheway: 00:04:13 I taught Jacob 2 and 3 the other day in my class. I showed them statistics on outcomes of fatherlessness. There are so many single moms out there just working so hard and we love you and support you and sustain you. Please don't look at it that way. You have a village around you in your ward family and everything, the stats on fatherlessness, as you just mentioned,

what we're the words you said? Academically, financially, socially.

- John Bytheway: 00:04:44 This is just saying, most likely to be achieved. This is the ideal we're stating again. A mom, a dad, a mom and dad loving one another loving their children in a home.
- Hank Smith: 00:04:56 That's an ideal.
- John Bytheway: 00:04:57 It's an ideal.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:05:17 It's not to say that divorce isn't absolutely the right thing to do. In some situations... My husband, his parents divorced when he was just six and, and they were not members of the Church. He's a convert to the Church. And he described it so interesting, coming to understand what that gap had created in his life and a deep witness of the Savior's atoning power to heal all gaps in our lives.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:05:45 I came from an intact family, but I have needed the Savior as he has needed the Savior. I think it's just powerful how we learn over and over again. This is a statement from the handbook I think as well. Individual circumstances may prevent parents from rearing their children together. However, the Lord will bless them as they seek his help and strive to keep their covenants with him.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:06:11 I will tell my students, many of whom have come from these structural challenges, that we're not ideal. Just what gifts that can be as they care. They have a view of things that are special. They understand the pain that comes when parents are not united. Sometimes that can be the most profound motivator to help them do things in a way that I may not even think about. To care deeply about doing things in a better way or what they have learned from those experiences, how it's taught them about the Lord's love.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:06:46 Because of Christ, there is no permanent loss. That's just absolutely true. Even though we look at this data and want to appreciate the realities that for children, this structure of married father and mother is the best setting for their growth and development. And as a society, we have to care deeply about that. We are so grateful for the Redeemer's giving us a chance to grow on earth and redeeming it all.
- John Bytheway: 00:07:14 Yeah. One of my favorite statements of the prophet Joseph Smith, when I think about single moms, single dads, just things

out of their control sometimes he said, "All of your losses will be made up to you in the resurrection, provided you continue faithful. By the vision of the Almighty, I have seen it.

- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:07:35 How can you deny? I have seen it." Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:07:39 All of your losses will be made up to you. Hank and all of us spend a lot of time, all three of us here with a lot of young adults. Yeah, you've come from that. But this is helping you prepare for... You're trying to put together your ideal, trying to strive for that and to reach that. Live in such a way to prepare that, that you have the best chance for this for you.
- Hank Smith: 00:08:04 Yeah. It goes back to what Jenet told us earlier, which is make sure you pair The Family Proclamation with The Living Christ document so when you feel the pain of not of having less than the ideal, you can now turn to the answer, which is the second document that comes just, well, five years later.
- Hank Smith: 00:08:22 Also, I was going to say, the word entitled is rarely used.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:08:27 Yes.
- Hank Smith: 00:08:29 It's often a negative thing that you feel entitled.
- John Bytheway: 00:08:33 That's a good point.
- Hank Smith: 00:08:34 You feel entitled. And then here. I think that if the prophets and the Lord are going to use this word, we better look carefully, "That children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony." If someone has an innate and it's declared by God, we better be careful with that.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:08:54 Yeah. Yeah. Thank you, Hank.
- John Bytheway: 00:08:56 When they're most vulnerable, when they're completely helpless and they have no say in it, as you said, Jenet and they're entitled to be reared by a father and mother who honor marital vows, that's the ideal, that's what we're shooting for.
- Hank Smith: 00:09:10 I would just say, wrapped in one sentence. "Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord, Jesus Christ." That is a lifetime worth of study in one sentence.
- Hank Smith: 00:09:22 I teach the New Testament. We've gone through the Doctrine and Covenants this year. There's so many other scriptures. Just

the phrase, "The teachings of the Lord, Jesus Christ," is enough to give you... There you go. You've got 80 years worth of study.

John Bytheway: 00:09:38 It's a lifetime effort.

Hank Smith: 00:09:38 Yeah. I talked to a woman the other day. Her name is Verla Sorensen and she's 88. She reads the entire standard works every year and the Book of Mormon twice every year. Every year.

Hank Smith: 00:09:58 She is looking for the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. She said, "I want to know. I want to know." If anybody out there thinks, "Well, I think I know the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ pretty well." I think there's a lot we could do. There's a lot we could do there. So Verla, this is a shout out to you.

John Bytheway: 00:10:16 Give me her contact info. I have some questions.

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:10:19 Yeah, I know you have.

John Bytheway: 00:10:21 When I have, I'll get with her. She reads them every year.

Hank Smith: 00:10:24 She says she's gone through the entire thing 47 times.

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:10:28 Wow.

Hank Smith: 00:10:28 47 times.

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:10:29 Wow. Hank, I...

Hank Smith: 00:10:31 Sorry, Jenet. I cut you off. What were you going to say?

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:10:33 I just love that. I love this truth that the Savior I'll... I was 34. We were 34 when we were married and what a miracle to find each other and I'll never forget within that first three weeks of marriage, when you encounter some struggles or vulnerabilities and sensitivities and all that I'd studied, I would think, "Here, it all comes down to the truths of the Lord Jesus Christ," that those teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, of all that He teaches, about turning the other cheek and patience and love, but then also honesty and not judging and all of the profound teachings that are there.

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:11:06 I just thought it's all encapsulated there. If I were to tell anybody throughout the world, what's the best way to have a marriage, it's stated right here. It is founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. What a gift.

Hank Smith: 00:11:21 I've told my students. We get married in the temple, over an altar. If we are over an altar that represents sacrifice, usually represents the Atonement. You are there getting... You are declaring to the world, you are basing your marriage on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Hank Smith: 00:11:40 That's where we're going to bond right here. We are going to make our covenants right here on an altar. And then also, the altar means sacrifice, that happy marriages often mean sacrifice and they're built upon sacrifice.

John Bytheway: 00:11:53 It's not all about you anymore, right?

Hank Smith: 00:11:54 Right.

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:11:56 You were speaking of Elder Hafen, John, I think he quotes Elder Maxwell as saying, "What is that sacrifice? What is it that we sacrifice?" And of course we know the broken heart and contrite spirit, but he says, "The animal in each of us is what we are laying on that altar." And thinking about myself, how marriage and children exposed to us the animal in each of us and the hope-

John Bytheway: 00:12:18 Vistas of it.

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:12:20 Vistas. Yes. And how the Savior says, "I will take it. I will purify it. I will cleanse it. I will change it and give it back to you in a whole way for your relationships so that you can have joy in relationships."

Hank Smith: 00:12:34 Jenet, is that why the life of the first child is so different from the life of the last child?

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:12:40 And Hank, we only have been sent too and I think the poor burned pancakes, it takes at least two pancakes to get it right. I'm like, "Bless us. Bless them."

Hank Smith: 00:12:49 That's so funny. Yeah. I'm the burnt pancake. That's the oldest term. Because I just remember, I've learned so much and by the time we're on baby four and five, John, you got to baby six, we had changed as people. The process of parenting has changed us entirely.

John Bytheway: 00:13:07 I like our friend Jack Marshall talks about with the first baby, if they spit the binky out, you go rinse it off in the sink and maybe put some Listerine on it, make sure it's disinfected, and plug it

back in the baby's mouth. The last baby, it falls in the dog dish, you don't care. They've got antibodies, don't worry about it.

- Hank Smith: 00:13:32 You find out these little humans are pretty durable.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:13:36 Thankfully. Right? Thankfully.
- Hank Smith: 00:13:37 Yeah.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:13:39 That next part. Hank, maybe you want to read about happiness in family life? After that part, successful marriages as it starts.
- Hank Smith: 00:13:45 Sure. "Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities.
- Hank Smith: 00:14:00 By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners."
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:14:23 If we go back to that beautiful list, isn't it so profound that it starts with faith? We've just been talking about faith. I love that. Remember faith. And I love that verse in Section 130, where we're taught, "There is a law irrevocably decreed, upon which all blessings are predicated."
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:14:40 I think I love President Nelson talking about the many laws, that we obey laws and there are blessings that come, but it says a law and it's beautiful to think, "What is that one law? Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, every good thing comes from obedience to that law."
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:14:56 With all of our need for healing, with our need for hope and getting into marriage, that it is faith that takes you through that. It's what carries us through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever Jesus, Howard W. Hunter says, "Whatever Jesus lays his hands on will live."
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:15:13 And so at that altar with the family being formed, it is with Jesus Christ at the foundation. So of course it starts with faith. Faith is the first principle. Then you've got prayer and all the data on prayer, it is just...

Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:15:29	President Hinckley would say, "I know of no other practice," and his wonderful voice. Maybe John could do it. "That will have so salutary effect upon your lives as will the practice of kneeling together in prayer."
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:15:41	There's this great scholar. He's not a Latter-day Saint, Frank Fincham. He's done his career looking at these things that people do kind of in their religious practices and what they mean for marriage and prayer is incredible.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:15:55	They'll put people in experimental groups. You pray for three weeks and you don't pray for three weeks and it's just really interesting how he'll say what it does is it shifts them from a focus on their own needs to the needs of the relationship and the behaviors that will be beneficial. It builds trust, it softens conflict resolution, it facilitates emotional connection. It's just beautiful to look at what prayer can do for couples.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:16:24	He'll say praying as an individual, so maybe your spouse doesn't pray with you, but praying as an individual has powerful effects, praying as a couple has powerful effects. To see in science, literally the power of God come into a relationship through prayer is a beautiful thing to witness.
John Bytheway:	00:16:44	And family prayer. My dad came from a place where, until his quadruple bypass, I don't remember him ever saying, "I love you." Maybe I could count them on one hand. We knew he did. We're not damaged, but in prayer, when everybody had their eyes closed, he could mutter things about how he loved his kids. That was so cool.
John Bytheway:	00:17:10	I can remember because dad was great on, "Gather around the bed. We're having family prayer." Some of my greatest memories, as odd as it sounds, is when somebody during family prayer and this could sound really odd, would start to laugh and we could feel the whole bed shaking.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:17:31	John, we are not surprised those are favorite memories for you.
John Bytheway:	00:17:34	We'd look up and we'd see that it was dad who was cracking up.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:17:38	He was cracking up all-
John Bytheway:	00:17:39	It bonded us together in a family prayer because now my mom was, "You guys..."
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:17:50	Be reverent.

John Bytheway: 00:17:50 You laugh right now. But my poor dad just... He would start laughing, but he could tell us he loved us in a family prayer in different ways, that was a little harder face-to-face because of his own background. I want to put a plugin for family prayer too. You can talk to your kids in prayer and tell the Lord how much you love them in a family prayer. They'll be listening.

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:18:16 It is powerful.

Hank Smith: 00:18:17 In John 17, the Savior does that. In the Intercessory Prayer, He talks about the apostles who are listening to Him pray and He compliments them. He uses prayer to build the people who are listening to the prayer. He says, "Father, they're not of the world just like I'm not of the world." He's building these people.

John Bytheway: 00:18:35 Oh. And then 3 Nephi, the joy that filled our hearts when we heard him pray for us the way they say.

Hank Smith: 00:18:42 That can happen in our families.

John Bytheway: 00:18:43 He's talking about me right now. Yeah, we can do that for each other in our families. You can thank the Lord for my wife sitting here. I can thank the Lord for each of my children by name and have them hear that and feel it. I love that there's research on that, Jenet. That's so cool.

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:18:59 It is awesome research. It's just really fun to see that. When you hear President Eyring talk about when you pray... A family that's praying, even if they're separated geographically, they are one in heart.

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:19:10 I don't know how many times I've had students say what it meant to them as missionaries to know their parents were praying for them, that their family was gathered in prayer for them, the power that, that gave them, the security, the strength. It just is real. It's real and we see it in the data.

John Bytheway: 00:19:27 I just say amen to this thing about a prayer.

Hank Smith: 00:19:31 Thank you. I remember President Monson's son saying he was out fishing with him once and as they were just sitting there fishing, President Monson, looked at his watch and said, "Your brother is about to take the bar exam. Why don't we say a prayer for him. I'll pray and then you go ahead and pray."

Hank Smith: 00:19:52 He said, "That's what I remember about my dad is that he'd use prayer..." It wasn't a, "Okay. It's time for bed, let's pray." It

wasn't, "Okay, it's in the morning. Let's pray." I'm sure they did that. But it was a practical use in life of how we're going to connect our family and all over the globe. John, you've had your kids in France and in Iceland.

John Bytheway: 00:20:15 Iceland, during a pandemic.

Hank Smith: 00:20:17 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:20:18 Can't leave the apartment.

Hank Smith: 00:20:19 The foreign nation of Tucson.

John Bytheway: 00:20:23 Tucson. Yeah. Hopefully off to Tahiti soon. But yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:20:27 The prayers, they're still included.

John Bytheway: 00:20:30 Just this morning for my girl in Tucson. I'm thinking too of... Do you remember the Elder Neal A. Maxwell story? He's in the front lines in World War II.

John Bytheway: 00:20:44 His mother, apparently across the planet, "Get out of bed. We've got to get underneath. We've got to pray for Neal right now." And he put those time frames together and found that was at a scary time for him just... I love that there's research on that. That's really interesting.

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:21:03 I think it changes us and brings unity. It brings miracles. There's no question, but it changes our hearts in the process of praying. That's what enables those family relationships to be strengthened.

John Bytheway: 00:21:17 Who are we praying to our Father?

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:21:18 Yes. Our Father.

John Bytheway: 00:21:21 We're all brothers and sisters. I love it.

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:21:23 Then you have repentance. Just the research on... You look at someone like John Gottman, the guru of marriage and him talking about what it is that predicts divorce and what leads to divorce. You see these features of blame and defensiveness and this link between shame and the inability to be accountable for what you're doing and take responsibility, that kind of... Diffusing your anxiety fusing and you just think, "This is all the research on relationships. It's coming back to repentance, these

truths about repentance, being able to say, 'I'm sorry.' And own one's responsibility for things."

- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:22:02 To not enter a world of shame that leads to blame and defensiveness. But to say, "This is what I've done. And I apologize. And I'm sorry. And I'm so thankful for a Savior who makes this a safe process for us to grow." Anyway, it's just all over in family relationships, what repentance means.
- John Bytheway: 00:22:21 Do you know who Kenneth W. Matheson is? I have a book called *Living a Covenant Marriage* that was edited by Doug Brinley and Dan Judd. I just remember underlining in Kenneth Matheson's chapter, I believe he said, "If I can just get a couple to apologize to each other, my problems are almost solved if I could get that spirit repentance in there."
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:22:50 Yes. It's the crux, right?
- John Bytheway: 00:22:53 As a marriage counselor. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:22:55 Faith for prayer, repentance and forgiveness.
- John Bytheway: 00:22:58 Yeah. You've got to connect those two.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:23:01 Yes. And Frank Fincham he's done work on forgiveness as well and that is a really powerful set of data on the power of forgiveness, which we know from the gospel.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:23:10 But it isn't that beautiful sequence. There's repentance and forgiveness and they depend upon one another. That they go together.
- Hank Smith: 00:23:21 Respect comes next, which is almost as if Jenet, it's saying repentance, forgiveness and respect is part of this, if not committing that same sin over and over and over without boundaries.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:23:34 Yes.
- Hank Smith: 00:23:34 Right. That there's a respect there that I correct these problems.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:23:37 Yes. Yes. You know how President Hinckley, he would talk so much about respect being the foundation of marriage. The core characteristic you need is respect for one another. You think that description of a young man we know right from the early Christian text, when Adam saw her, he couldn't help but stand.

Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:23:59	It's this feeling of I am better because of you. But that isn't right. When you're bothered and irritated, you might forget the divinity of the person in front of you, that's given their soul to you.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:24:12	Reminding, I think intentionally, Hank, so Gottman will say, those four horsemen of the apocalypse of a marriage, the four predictors of divorce and it's incredible he can predict divorce with 95% accuracy within five years. He has just an incredible science around it.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:24:26	But he would say, "When there is criticism, contempt, defensiveness and stonewalling," stonewalling is when you just walk away, you won't even engage. I can't stand this so much I'm walking away. The four horsemen of the apocalypse, apocalypse of the marriage: criticism, contempt, defensiveness, stonewalling and contempt it's that eye rolling. It's mocking.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:24:57	Defensiveness is saying-
Hank Smith:	00:24:58	"You're so dumb."
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:24:59	"Yeah, you did it. You did it." And not taking responsibility. Stonewalling is, "I can't even sit in here and talk to you about this because it's..." He'll just say, when he teaches us, I'll think, "This is what you watch for."
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:25:12	When you enter and it's... We all can. We can all enter into that world of criticism, just bugged as can be at this person that we love so much and being on guard to respect that person and stay away from attributes that are not respectful.
John Bytheway:	00:25:31	Isn't it interesting, I think in our marriage, we feel like if everything's okay in the marriage, we can deal with almost anything else out there in the world because I have this refuge to go home to.
John Bytheway:	00:25:40	My marriage is intact. I'm crazy about my wife. I love my wife and... It's just so nice to have that rock when other things out there are difficult and finances and pandemics and earthquakes and riots and fires but I have this refuge with my wife, with our marriage.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:26:02	It's meant to be that way.
Hank Smith:	00:26:05	Jenet, I wanted to ask you about respect for children. This is one that I've... I find it fascinating and I've had to learn over the

years that just because someone is a child does not mean you can disrespect them, talk to them the way you would never talk to anyone else. Just because they're your child and I find myself sometimes falling into that trap of you're my child and I would never talk to another child this way. Ever. But I would talk to my own child that way. It seems disrespectful.

- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:26:33 Yes. That has been very painful for myself and something to face in myself. I've been thinking a lot about Section 121 and what we learn all throughout the Doctrine and Covenants. I was just hearing Barb Gardner talk about this, but where power comes from, the Lord is teaching us all throughout the Doctrine and Covenants about what his power is like and how it's used.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:26:54 He's wanting to endow with power and what that power. And then in Section 121, he says, "No power or influence except through these beautiful virtues: Patience, long-suffering, meekness, gentleness, love unfeigned, kindness, pure knowledge.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:27:09 Hank, I read it and I think I cannot have influence in the lives of these people who I care so deeply about unless it is through God's way. When I speak disrespectfully, which I do and repent of, try to repent of. But when I do, I am not drawing on the source of true power and influence. He's teaching us about parenting. That's what he's teaching us and how we influence one another is based in his way. When we don't do it that way, we're outside of that source of power. He'll thank you. It is respect.
- Hank Smith: 00:27:45 John, you will laugh at this. I have a distinct memory of my daughter who is now 17, as a six-year-old, she was six. We were having a discussion in which I was being disrespectful to her.
- Hank Smith: 00:27:58 She put her hands on her hips, I remember. She said, "How come you sound so nice on your talks?" And I remember that moment of, "Hey, ouch." "How come you sound so nice on those CDs?" She said.
- John Bytheway: 00:28:14 I have my talks quoted back to me all the time too because I've got a big mouth that's got me in trouble. But Jenet, what you said, because we're talking about repentance and we kind of focused on marriage, but I found there's such power in repenting to my kids.
- John Bytheway: 00:28:30 You guys, I lost it there when the house was like this or sorry about that. I think that's an element of respect, repenting to my

kids for. That they see, "Look guys, I'm the same. We're all trying to live the gospel and I'm down too."

Hank Smith: 00:28:50 I wonder if every parent has had those moments where the child is now asleep, sitting by their bed, just saying, "I am so sorry. I'm so sorry. Look at you. You're so sweet and wonderful and look what I did."

Hank Smith: 00:29:03 Isn't there a great story from Elder Holland-

John Bytheway: 00:29:06 They really are when they're asleep. They're so cute when they're asleep.

Hank Smith: 00:29:09 That's so sweet. He said he got after his child. He's now a General Authority.

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:29:13 Matt.

Hank Smith: 00:29:14 Yeah. Matt. He got after him-

John Bytheway: 00:29:15 Yes. I remember this story.

Hank Smith: 00:29:15 What did he say, John? Later on, he had a dream and the Lord said, "I would never treat you that way."

John Bytheway: 00:29:29 Didn't he mention the look that he got from Patt?

Hank Smith: 00:29:32 Yes.

John Bytheway: 00:29:33 Yeah. That's the dagger. He was just like, "Now, I've got to fix my marriage and my kids."

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:29:40 So grateful for this Plan of Redemption and not the plan of perfection in the family.

John Bytheway: 00:29:50 I wrote that down. That is so good.

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:29:51 I need that.

John Bytheway: 00:29:53 It's a redemption.

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:29:53 You think that is what family... We've never been in families before. We've never been parents before. We've never been married before. We haven't had this emotional experience before and we need redemption and how bonding it is to apologize.

John Bytheway: 00:30:06 I tell my kids that, "This is my first time as a father." I tell them all. "You guys. Am I doing... This is my first pandemic. Am I doing this right?"

Hank Smith: 00:30:13 It's great.

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:30:18 That next set is love and I think we've highlighted if... Here's President Kimball, "If two people love the Lord more than their own lives and then love each other more than their own lives, working together in total harmony with the gospel program as their basic structure, they are sure to have this great happiness."

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:30:39 This, I think, General Conference theme of, "Love the Lord with all our hearts, my mind and strength and loving our neighbors ourselves."

John Bytheway: 00:30:47 Boy, wasn't that a theme?

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:30:48 Such a theme. It's something we intentionally choose, right? I don't always feel those feelings. I don't always feel like saying, "I love you." What a beautiful thing that this is agency, the Lord is talking about an agency based love.

John Bytheway: 00:31:07 Love is a verb.

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:31:07 Act of love. Love is a verb. Yes. Thankfully. Love is repentance. Love is a verb.

Hank Smith: 00:31:14 Yeah. There's no falling in love, falling out of love like we had nothing to do with it. It just happened to me versus I choose to love.

Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:31:21 Yes.

John Bytheway: 00:31:22 Do you know Hank? I'm glad you said that because when I've tried to talk to Young Adults about what does it mean to fall in love? Most of our education has come from songs on the radio and TV shows, which is the worst possible database imaginable.

John Bytheway: 00:31:36 I researched this because like Jenet, I was 33 the day I got married and I was like, "What the heck is wrong with me?" And I'm reading and I found these beautiful statements by President Benson, by President Kimball. When I boiled it down, I felt like you find someone that you respect and admire and that's lasting.

John Bytheway:	00:32:02	I'm so glad respect is in there because I, to this day, respect and admire my wife and feelings of love can go up and down and I'm thankful I still have them. But respect and admiration is what I tell my Young Adults and my kids now to look for. Someone you respect and admire who makes you want to be a better person and they can respect and admire you. When that's mutual, that's just awesome.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:32:31	Jason Carroll, who's such a wonderful scholar in love and marriage, he'll say. He'll talk about... We get the fruits and the roots mixed up. Love is the fruit of loving, of that agency based, it's the fruit of actions and what you've described there, respect, that it breeds that love.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:32:53	We talk about falling in love, it really is choosing who you're going to choose to love every day. That's an important choice. You want someone you want to choose to love every day. But it is going to be a choice to love and I think Hank, as you say for children as well, like choosing to act in love.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:33:14	That next part is compassion. I love Brené Brown. She'll say the way you get rid of shame is compassion. Compassion is the connection. Empathy is the way to repentance kind of a path of that. And then we get to work.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:33:34	I had the privilege of working with Kathleen Bahr, who was a scholar on family work. When we say family, we're literally talking about dishes, laundry, all those things that are part of family life that are just dismissed as being this entropic, have to redo over and over and over again and what in the world is this all about?
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:33:54	Her scholarship on this, she would start with that scripture of Adam and Eve, "Being cursed shall be the ground for thy sake." And it's role in family life. She has this list. She'd say family work gives us endless opportunities to recognize and fill the needs of others. It is an endless opportunity to enact love. We just talked about love and just doing the dishes and caring for one another and doing that kind of work together is an endless call to an act of love.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:34:25	The second thing she'll say is it leaves us, it's the kind of work you can do with your hands and talk at the same time and connect and all the conversations that are possible because your hands, your mind is free in this kind of mindless work that family life is made up of so much of. How many important conversations happen over laundry and over dishes and over that?

Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:34:47	Gardening is important. She'll say watching children, a wise mom, a child at dinner struggling, she could tell. So she wisely calls the child to work beside her, pulls the chair up at the sink and they'd ask at dinner, what's bothering you. He wouldn't say it. A Six-year-old boy wouldn't say what was bothering him. But there beside her at the sink with hierarchy dissolved because you are standing beside one another in this work together, how his heart was opened to ask the question he'd been worried about.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:35:19	Family work has this way of dissolving boundaries because we're all doing it together and there's nobody better or worse or higher or lower. That opens conversation. Even the smallest child can make a contribution. My little sister, Sally, she'd wake up late, her job was to set the table and I remember her saying, getting up late one day and saying, "No one could eat if I didn't set the table."
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:35:41	Just that feeling of, I matter so much and I know I matter because I have a job to do these tasks to do. She would just say it has the power. These are daily rituals of family, love and belonging. You know you're in a family names written up to do vacuuming, because the guest name isn't written up there. You know that you belong and that it's this power to transform us spiritually as we work to serve one another physically.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:36:11	I think, I just feel so grateful for her view. Even though it's not always fun, I can just say at my house, I'll have those beautiful truths in my mind and think this is not fun working alongside each other, trying to get this child to participate or trying to write. But somehow having a view for the potential that it can have in our family life is a blessing.
John Bytheway:	00:36:30	I'm thinking of sitting in primary, singing those songs that they were trying to convince me of something that was counterintuitive. (singing) But I'm like, "No. When I'm helping, I'm not that happy."
Hank Smith:	00:36:46	This is not true. That's so great.
John Bytheway:	00:36:50	I see what you're trying to do here, Primary teacher, but...
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:36:54	Aren't you so grateful it ends with, "Wholesome recreational activities?" I think that the data on that is just incredible. They'll talk about this experience of flow that happens between people when they're engaged in something that's physically a little bit

demanding and also meaningful in terms of a goal that they're completing together and there's this bonding that happens.

- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:37:16 It can be as simple as all the things you probably naturally are dancing in the kitchen and laughing and telling jokes and all of that, relieving from the burden of everyday kind of life that this lifting us to recreation, to being recreated together, renewed together. I love that.
- Hank Smith: 00:37:38 That's fantastic. Yeah. Just going out for that Sunday bike ride or-
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:37:42 Yes.
- John Bytheway: 00:37:44 I ask my kids, you can spend a boatload on Christmas presents, but then you ask them, "What was your favorite part?" "It's when you sat down and played a game with me. It wasn't the bike. It was a little bit of time."
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:38:02 That General Authority who describes taking their family on a big trip, I think it was a Church History trip of some kind.
- John Bytheway: 00:38:07 It was. Yeah.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:38:08 And at the end, as the son is there, laying down looking at the stars and this son talking about, "It was time with you, dad, that meant everything." I love that, John. Not the trip, not the big events but these that are the recreating of our relationships.
- Hank Smith: 00:38:25 The moment we just chatted.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:38:27 Yes.
- Hank Smith: 00:38:28 We just did something together and talked.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:38:30 Hank, you went ahead and read that beautiful part about fathers asked to preside over their families of love and righteousness and mothers and it lists those three Ps: preside, provide, protect.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:38:46 I think the data on this is so interesting that when you look at... I can just quote a couple of powerful things but when you think about the role of fathers in providing, sometimes we diminish that because there can be this. A woman can provide as well and earn money and has many opportunities to do that today.

Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:39:06	We surpassed women having more jobs than men in January of 2019 in the United States. But when we look at where children thrive and the effects of poverty on children's wellbeing and the effects of single parenthood with relationship to poverty and children's wellbeing, you just cannot overestimate the significant work of fathers in providing. It is so powerful and important.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:39:34	I think for women, so often I've done lots of data on what women's preferences are in terms of work. You'll find out that women that have the greatest amount of choice, meaning they're married to someone who is providing, they're not the primary provider, their choice is not typically to work full-time.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:39:51	Some do and enjoy that, but they want to be able to be free to care for their children and prioritize the needs of their children, where they feel irreplaceable. That providing that a father and a husband does is incredibly, incredibly beneficial to mothers and children.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:40:10	I think we can underestimate that.
Hank Smith:	00:40:13	And you're speaking from research right now.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:40:16	Yes, yes.
Hank Smith:	00:40:17	Yeah.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:40:18	Then there's protection. There's something very interesting about the role of fathers in protecting just by their sheer size, their voice, their presence in that family.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:40:31	Researchers will describe it. It's like they signal to... They just signal to potential predators, "This child is going to be protected." You were talking about fatherlessness, John. One of the interesting data points is what father's presence in the life of a daughter means in terms of her sexual trajectory.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:40:51	Some will say, "His presence literally sets the sexual trajectory of her life." Meaning her likelihood of engaging in relationships that would be destructive to her too early or with people that would not be good. It's like he signals and gives her... It's like she walks out of the door, even if he's not there, that dad's not there beside her, with a sense of what she should expect from the men who are around her. And a sense that I am protected by a father who monitors, cares and watches over me.

Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:41:27	Men are very important in signaling that protection. It's really beautiful. And then of course, we have that presiding and I love tackling presiding because presiding is a tricky word. We get this notion of president and he's like... There's one that makes the decisions. I think we can get a sense from the Church that what it means to preside is that he is the ultimate decision-maker, the bishop or the stake president.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:41:55	The truth is in marriage, it's a partnership of equals. There is no president. When you kneel at the altar, you kneel as equals. There's that beautiful triangle. Christ in the center, and you are equal. And the authority is outside both of you. It lies in God. There's some powerful statements.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:42:15	"A husband and wife are equal." This is from the Handbook. One should not dominate the other. Their decisions should be made in unity and love with full participation of both. Adam and Eve set an example for husbands and wives. I think right there from the beginning, you have Eve seeking greater light and knowledge. She partakes the fruit and she comes to Adam. She explains why and he hearkens to her.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:42:43	In a sense, she is dependent on him offering those beautiful ordinances of salvation through his priesthood keys that allow her access to eternal life. And so you see this beautiful interdependence. She enables life procreation, the creation of life. He enables access to eternal life through sacred ordinances and covenants.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:43:04	So in some ways it's these beautiful interdependent equals that Adam and Eve show off, this rib metaphor. They are equal side by side and perfect complementarity and equality in their relationship, hearkening to one another, coming to a decision together. Yet there's an interdependence in that he depends on her for this life to come and she depends on him for the ordinances of salvation. He presides in offering those ordinances of salvation to his family, blessings and baptism and confirmation and ordination. She offers life, this continuation of life.
John Bytheway:	00:43:45	Beautiful.
Dr. Jenet Erickson		I think the word preside can be threatening to women.
John Bytheway:	00:44:56	Yeah. Because of unrighteous dominion. There are men who have used priesthood to say, "I'm in charge." And have been bad about it. Have been wildly inappropriate about it.

Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:45:07	Inherited traditions that way, right? But John, I think women are asking, "When it says preside it says what it means to nurture ...is he actually saying you are the primary gospel teacher in the home". That was 2019. I was like, "Did he just say that?"
John Bytheway:	00:45:23	Wow. Interesting.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:45:24	I think it's interesting we've assumed some responsibilities that way, that may not be. So in the Handbook, it says presiding in the family is the responsibility to help lead family members back to dwell in God's presence. This is done by serving and teaching with gentleness, meekness and pure love following the example of Jesus Christ.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:45:47	Presiding in the family includes leading family members in regular prayer, gospel study and other aspects of worship. It is highlighting fathers as presiders and ensuring these things happen. That's from the Handbook of Instruction.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:46:03	Then it says, "Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children." To nurture means to nourish, teach and support following the example of this Savior. So in both cases, it says, "Following the example of Jesus Christ."
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:46:18	In unity with her husband, a mother helps her family learn gospel truths and develop faith in heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Together, they foster an environment of love in the family. So in the Handbook, it does distinguish fathers helping lead family members in prayer and gospel studies and other aspects.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:46:39	But it talks about them both being nurturers in gospel instruction, helping learn gospel truths. They're both primary gospel teachers in a sense and he's given that special responsibility of ensuring that these structural pieces are in place. The family prayer and family scripture study and other aspects of worship.
John Bytheway:	00:47:01	I'm glad for that source, the Handbook, because as a bishop, this is what mothers were complaining about. I have always felt like even if I just say, "Everybody, come downstairs. We're doing family..." My wife is so appreciative, even if I'm just sending the message, this matters to me, family prayer matters to me and that she wants the kids to see that family prayer matters to dad and family home evening matters to dad.

Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:48:35	It feels like women are... They tend to feel they're doing so much to orchestrate family life. They feel so responsible, getting children signed up for the activities and homework and lunches and whatever else. To have him say, "I am going to make sure this happens and I'm going to do it in a way that is with love and uniqueness and gentleness. I'm going to call us to..."
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:49:00	That lifts a burden. I do believe that. Maybe the question is how we decide those things because the challenge, it's interesting that the preeminent principle here is equal partnerships. We have these stewardships, but the preeminent principle, the overarching principle is equal partnership. If it ever feels like in his presiding, there's some inequality, you've botched it.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:49:29	I think that has to do with deciding together. Maybe it's as simple as deciding together, just saying, as a husband and wife, it would help me if you did this. This is how I feel. If you took... And deciding that process together, so you feel like you bet. We've been equals in making the decisions. And if she decides actually I want to do the calling for family prayer, whatever, if that's what seems to be best for their family, because you're gone or for whatever else, we've worked that out together.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:49:58	So it wasn't one person deciding, it was us making decisions about how we do family things together. Who's helping with the dishes? Who's earning? All those things are kind of brought out into the open as we want to create this equal partnership in collaborating around this family together.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:50:38	This is what feels like it's easy... I think actually it's a perpetual question. I think when this is what's hard for a woman is she'll feel like, "We want to have this happen." And I actually feel bad, like I'm overstepping to call the family for prayer.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:50:54	When President Eyring says, "You don't need to feel like you're behind him in being the primary gospel instructor. You're responsible for that." And then she feels like okay, I love it if you did this, but I'm going to make this happen and I'm not going to feel bad about making sure this happens.
Hank Smith:	00:51:11	Nor should I.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:51:12	Nor should I. Yes.
John Bytheway:	00:51:12	I think the good thing that's happened of all of this discussion is the phrase in here that's so important is they do this as equal partners.

Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:51:32	Yes. Equal partnership is the preeminent and overarching principle. Nurturing and presiding are subservient to equal partnership. That's just the truth. These stewardships are equally sacred, equally important. Here's President Ballard, "Do not of any false ideas about domination or subordination. Each stewardship is essential for the spiritual progression of all family members, parents, and children alike."
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:51:58	We've talked about presiding and providing and protecting, but to underestimate the influence of a mother, I'm going along in research and I get to this statement. This is hundreds of studies. I get to the statement that says, "Maternal sensitivity." That's a measure of maternal responsiveness, maternal engagement. It's not being a perfect mother it's, but it's someone who's responding to emotions and not being intrusive too much, that kind of thing.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:52:24	It's the strongest most consistent predictor of a child's cognitive social and emotional development. John, you know how much fathers mean, but literally from the birth of that infant and even in utero, we can now watch. Neuro-biological data allows us to watch the brain growth of that infant. Now, researchers will say that growth happens from within a relationship. It can only happen from within a relationship and it's a mother's body, mind and heart, literally growing the body, mind and heart of that infant.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:53:03	You can watch how her right brain, which is the emotion side of the brain, the moral side of the brain, the relational side of the brain is doubling in size in that first year and it's literally her right brain to that infant's right brain is having this incredible communication process.
John Bytheway:	00:53:21	This is so interesting.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:53:21	It is so amazing. It's not the language side of the brain. It's not flashcards and teaching them words and all of that. It's literally from heart to heart, this language of love these authors out of Berkeley will say. Through the language of love, the two of them have a common language years before speech where that brain is literally growing.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:53:43	And then dad, dad's influence steps in really powerfully in that 18 month to two year period where you see his relationship with that infant having a really... That toddler now, having a very important impact. They kind of in sequence play very significant roles that are complementary in the development of that, from the foundations of life. When a prophet says,

President McKay, she leaves a stamp on the development. She awakens the light of Christ within that infant. That is literally what is happening in neurological development.

- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:54:22 We can't diminish what she means in the nurturing of life. I think women have a sense for that. They have a sense of how significant that relationship is. It's not to diminish men. In fact, if you could just... For me, I'll think this watching the complementary relationship between men and women, you'll hear this, when a woman has an infant, she's holding that infant, she coos and cuddles. What does a man do with the same infant? He tickles and tosses that infant.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:54:53 Both of them are experiencing this flood of oxytocin, which is the bonding hormone. My husband, who'd never been around a baby. He's an only child. He has no young cousins. He'd never seen anything like that. Within just days of us bringing her home from the hospital, he's doing calisthenics with her and I'm like, "What are you doing with her?"
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:55:12 And then for me to study, he's having a flood of oxytocin, which is this bonding hormone. He's forming a bond with her. I am. And the same hormone in each of us elicits different behavior. In me, it elicits cooing and cuddling, a wrapping around.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:55:27 In him, it elicits stimulation, excitement, openness to the outside world. You just see that all across development. You see fathers, mothers will hold... They'll have a child and they'll be talking to the red ball that's in front of them and they'll describe it. The mom will say, "It's red, it's a ball." Dad takes it, bops them on the head with it or bops them on the belly with it. The same ball.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:55:48 Both of them have this remarkable complimentary way of influencing the domains of development, their social development, their cognitive development, their emotional development in distinct and absolutely foundational fundamental ways.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 00:56:05 It's not really who's working or earning the money. We think about that kind of roles, but all this power that's happening just in their physiological makeup that invites them to interact in ways that allow for development to be whole. Dads, you'll watch too, parents behind a child helping them with a math test. They're having a little test and the mom will step in, "Remember how to do this? Remember how you add these questions together?" She does that.

Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:56:31	He's sitting beside the same child and says, "You can do it. You got this. And you know how to..." Doesn't step in. And so you'll see... Some scholars, Andrew Doxey would say, you watch dads, he'll say to that child, "Put your own backpack on. Make your own lunch." And the mom's like, "What kind of sandwich do you want?"
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:56:48	And the dad will say, "Make it. You know how to make it." She said, at first it looked like, "Dads are just... What are they? Selfish. Disengaged." And then saying, nurturing involves two core fundamental processes. It's holding clothes and it's letting go. Dads are particularly adept at facilitating the growth needed for independence.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:57:11	He'll say, "You can do it. Go higher, go higher up that tree." She's saying, "Get down here." He's saying, "Go higher. I'm underneath. I'll catch you." Encouraging risk taking from a place of safety is what he's doing. Creating a foundation of security and identity is what she's doing. Both are really core to healthy development. You see a dad...
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:57:33	One last example. My husband, he would hold the baby and he'd hold her like a football. He'd never watched anybody hold a baby. But as soon as he gets her] in church, he's holding her like a football. And I'm like, "What are you holding her like that for?" And you see that all the time. Men will tend to hold that baby looking outward at the world and she's wrapping that infant.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:57:57	And it's emblematic of what their influence is because dads, John, as you noted, fatherlessness has so much to do with academic achievement. It's the biggest predictor of college graduation. It's incarceration rates or related to the presence of a father. It's how that child relates to the outside world.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:58:16	That mother is building this core and I'm just saying it roughly, but their complimentary capacity to influence development, as emblematic and even the way they're holding that child is just remarkable. We need them. We need them both in their uniqueness.
John Bytheway:	00:58:38	I love this. This is so interesting and so true.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:58:41	Okay. We end the Proclamation with needing to necessitate adaptation, individual adaptation and that extended families play a role when support is needed.

Dr. Jenet Erickson	00:58:52	I think that's the whole family of God, families, aunts and uncles, cousins. I love Sister Beck. I remember hearing once Sister Beck share a story, but just how influential the men in the relationship of the family who'd had a father leave, how important those bishops and young men leaders were, their presence in their lives and you just can't... Who can say what the influence of intact families is on those who aren't in intact families even if they're not biologically related, just the power of that example and home and connection.
John Bytheway:	00:59:33	Some of the things I've heard recently is the Young Adults are asking, "Why do we need a church again?" And I think you just answered some of that.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	01:00:26	It's interesting how much my students will talk about leaders and how they were or coaches or teachers.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	01:00:36	And they'll say, what I saw in them as a father, what they were like as a father, what they were like as a husband. The power comes in strengthening their relationships. Interesting, right there, capacity to have those kinds of happy relationships.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	01:00:50	That's where you really want to be an influence, is helping them know what these beautiful relationships can be like so that they have the opportunity to establish those in their own lives.
Hank Smith:	01:01:02	The one thing I was going to say is this would be a great plug for everyone who wants to hear more about preside is our Episode 31 with Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	01:01:15	Oh, that's wonderful.
Hank Smith:	01:01:16	When we went through Section 84 with her. If you haven't heard that, if you're listening to this podcast saying, "I'd love to hear more about this." Go back into our podcasts and go to section Episode 31 on Section 84 and listen to those because she did a spectacular job of teaching us about men and women and presiding in priesthood. It was spectacular.
John Bytheway:	01:01:37	Absolutely.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	01:01:37	Hank, thank you for mentioning that. She just, yes, understands this so deeply from a scriptural standpoint. Yes. There's that, "We warn that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse, spouse or offspring or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God."

Dr. Jenet Erickson	01:01:56	I think that paragraph is just really sobering, for all of us who are struggling to be what we want to be in family life, probably growing in that way. And then those who intentionally participate in destructive acts, it's a very serious thing, these souls that are given to us, these vulnerable souls that are given to us.
Hank Smith:	01:02:19	That's interesting. Jenet, it also doesn't say, "Those who don't live perfectly." It doesn't say that. We warn that individuals who are not perfect parents will stand accountable for that. It's violating covenants and abuse.
John Bytheway:	01:02:38	I've always loved that the Book of Mormon starts out with a dysfunctional family. And if that sounds too strong, "Hey, let's kill Laban. No, let's kill... Oh, I'm sorry. Nephi. Let's kill dad and Nephi], then we'll all feel better."
Dr. Jenet Erickson	01:02:52	Pretty dysfunctional.
John Bytheway:	01:02:53	Lehi's going, "What are you doing?" Sariah is going, "What are you doing Lehi?" "I'm writing all this down." "What? Our family problems. Who are you going to send that to?" "Every nation, kindred tongue and people."
John Bytheway:	01:03:05	To me, it gives me comfort that the Book of Mormon starts with a family that had their own ups and downs, their own problems. And the children as different as they are described can come from the same parents and it's not a perfect family, right, Hank, as you were just saying.
Hank Smith:	01:03:21	Yeah. Right. But he does put a strong boundary up on violating covenants and abusing family members. That's a very firm boundary for the Lord. It's a sobering important boundary that is not going to be shied away from.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	01:03:35	Yes, we have to take it very seriously. Right, Hank? It's interesting. Around the world when we look at cultures and we see really strong traditions that can be very diminutive and destructive to women. There is just no question that there are patterns that abuse and diminish and do not see women as equals.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	01:04:00	When we see cultures rejecting marriage, they are rejecting a distortion of what marriage is intended to be. What our Heavenly Parents embody, which is a perfect equality, a beautiful, complementary, a oneness. That is the vision the

world needs of marriage. It does not need a vision of traditional problematic gendered ways of dividing and oppressing.

- Dr. Jenet Erickson 01:04:30 It needs a vision that God has given us, our Heavenly Parents of equality. We have to take it very seriously. Women are by nature, physically less strong. They're less sexually overtly driven. And so they are vulnerable. They are vulnerable to this size and kind of physical power and potential abuses of men just by nature.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 01:04:57 That's what the beautiful teachings of priesthood are. This is what this looks like. This is what priesthood power looks like. Both men and women are endowed with priesthood power and the keys that men hold teach them this pattern of service and kindness and respect and honoring and anything, anything that is outside of that is not of God.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 01:05:20 There's a lot to work on in the world in terms of understanding equality. I'll tell my students, "Your generation is tasked with this beautiful task of understanding equality between men and women in ways that have not been understood before." And it will bring great power into the church and into families.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 01:05:40 I think it starts with women knowing more who we are and the power that we have been endowed with and what God would call us to do. And then you get this ending statement that says, "We warn that the disintegration of the family will bring on individuals, communities and nations calamities." And it describes calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 01:06:05 I think when, when Carle Zimmerman is looking at the rise and fall of nations, the rise and fall of all the great empires and he's saying, "This hinges on the disintegration of the role of the family in society." And to take very seriously its core central role in the thriving of individuals, of families and communities, that we depend on families as the foundations. That's why it says it's the fundamental unit of society.
- Hank Smith: 01:06:37 I looked up the definition of calamity and if you don't use that word very often, you might not hear the gravity of it. It's a disastrous event marked by great loss and lasting distress, a state of deep distress or misery caused by major misfortune or loss.
- Dr. Jenet Erickson 01:06:57 Wow.
- Hank Smith: 01:06:58 Just so we're clear on what a calamity is.

Dr. Jenet Erickson	01:07:01	Just one comment. There was a writer, she's marvelous, Mary Eberstadt, a Catholic writer. She described during the really intense difficulties, the rioting and very intense difficulties during July of 2020 when we were in the heart of these very big challenges. It was interesting to have her insights on fathers,, the fatherland, the father of a home and the father of nation and the role of these protective institutions and when they're not in place, so fatherlessness leads to chaos.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	01:07:35	That's what you see John in that data. Fatherlessness is... It's an un-tethering of the grounding in the relationships that lead to health and civility and strength. She was just commenting, "We have lost God. We have lost the sense of fatherhood in a nation. We have lost our fathers in a tremendous culture of increased fatherlessness."
Dr. Jenet Erickson	01:08:04	What you will have is you will have chaos, people searching for something to look to, something to find and the destructiveness to society. We can throw that out but it's a very powerful comment about the relationship of families in keeping cohesive, structured ways of relating to the civility of society. We see the fruits of it.
Hank Smith:	01:08:33	Would it be correct to say that in your experience, the proclamation, the family proclamation is though not answering every question, that any human being can have in their own experience, they need to have that personal relationship with God. But in general, it seems like the family proclamation is backed by social science across the board.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	01:08:56	Yep. Unending, to be honest. It's really remarkable. Yep. For sure. I think that's because it is an experience. When we talk about social science research, all it is is gathering experience, real experiences and immortality. We will see evidence of the laws of God play out. Of course, we will.
Hank Smith:	01:09:20	But never to be used as a weapon. I liked what you said in the beginning. Don't use this proclamation as a weapon. It was never intended to be used as a weapon.
John Bytheway:	01:09:28	It's a light. It's an ideal.
Hank Smith:	01:09:32	Yeah. Jenna, this has just been a spectacular day for us. I think our listeners would be interested in your experience as a social scientist, a PhD and yet a very faithful member of the Church.

Hank Smith:	01:09:48	Can you walk us through that, your experiences, your journey? What's your experience been with your education and your faith?
Dr. Jenet Erickson	01:09:58	I appreciate you asking that Hank and it makes me think of an experience. I was sitting in graduate school. I was sitting amongst wonderful, wonderful fellow students, none of whom shared my faith. And I had been sometimes told, "Well, you've been protected. You haven't known things because you've been kept away from certain ideas. You've had less academic freedom because of your religious upbringing."
Dr. Jenet Erickson	01:10:25	And these religious truths, you've been taught about the family. I had sometimes had people say that and I will never forget sitting there and into my mind, came a lesson that I had instruction I'd been received as a nursing student at BYU about the eye. The eye can see only with light.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	01:10:45	It requires light to discern shadows and shapes and colors. As I sat there, I was filled with gratitude for the blazing source of light that the Gospel of Jesus Christ was in my life with those two foundational teachings, the gospel of the Savior who redeems us and <i>The Family: A Proclamation to the World</i> . President Oaks puts those together.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	01:11:11	The light that allowed me to see, to discern shadows, to discern shapes, to discern what I could not have seen without that blazing source of light, I don't know how I would express gratitude enough for prophets of God, for a Redeemer who loves us, who sends messengers to communicate truths, for the purpose of enabling us to experience love, his love and to experience love together in the relationships that matter the most.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	01:11:49	When we don't, to redeem us so that we can't and have that eternally. I just think the proclamation is just a profound gift. I think I said before in those nine paragraphs, the distillation of literally thousands of social science studies into succinct statements is just... Could only be divine and I am so grateful for it and bear witness of it with all my heart and with my mind as well, that has been exposed to studies about that.
Dr. Jenet Erickson	01:12:22	That it is true and we can see it as a blazing source of light to guide us and with the Savior walking beside us, enable us to receive those beautiful blessings eternally, of deep relationships of fulfillment, like our Heavenly Parents experience. I leave that testimony in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hank Smith: 01:12:44 Amen. What a great day. John Bytheway, what a great day.

Dr. Jenet Erickson 01:12:50 Absolutely. So good.

Hank Smith: 01:12:53 I will see this document differently from here on out. I think a lot of our listeners will as well. We need to thank Dr. Jenet Erickson. Thank you so much for being here. Thank you to all of our listeners. There's now hundreds of thousands of you out there and we are grateful for each one of you.

Dr. Jenet Erickson 01:13:15 Our brothers and sisters.

Hank Smith: 01:13:17 Our brothers and sisters in this big family. Thank you to our executive producers, Steve and Shannon Sorensen and our incredible production crew. We have Will Stoughton. We have Kyle Nelson, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson and the incredible wonderful, beautiful David Perry, because it's his birthday. So we had to kind of give him a wonderful shoutout today.

Hank Smith: 01:13:43 We hope that all of you will join us on our next episode of followHIM.

Hank Smith: 01:13:52 Hey, we want to remind everyone to come find us on social media. Our wonderful Jamie Neilson runs our Facebook and Instagram pages. We would love for you to subscribe, to rate and review the podcast. If you don't know how to do that, ask someone who was born after 2001 or 2002 and they'll help you.

Hank Smith: 01:14:12 We want you to come to [followhim.co](http://followhim.co) for show notes and transcripts. There's even transcripts there, John, in French, Portuguese and Spanish of the podcast. Yeah, please come over and come over to the website: [followhim.co](http://followhim.co) [followhim.co](http://followhim.co) and you can find all of that.



Hank Smith:	00:00	Hello, everyone, welcome to followHIM Favorites. My name is Hank Smith, I'm the host of a podcast called followHIM with my good friend, John Bytheway. Welcome, John.
John Bytheway:	00:10	Thanks. Thanks, my good friend, Hank.
Hank Smith:	00:12	Yeah. And this week we welcome our wonderful, brilliant guest, Dr. Jenet Erickson. Welcome Dr. Erickson.
Dr. Jenet Erickson:	00:21	Thank you.
Hank Smith:	00:22	Yeah. We're going to have a good time today. FollowHIM Favorites is where we do a very small version of our podcast, where each of us gets to choose one thing from this week's lesson to talk about. For those who just ... they have a really busy life, John and Jenet, and they can't listen to the entire podcast, but they can listen to a tiny one. So, John, what is this week's Follow Him Favorite? Our lesson this week is on The Family: A Proclamation to the World.
John Bytheway:	00:48	I just think there's so much here, and we've talked about so much. This is the hardest I've ever thought about what could I possibly say? Because I'm so excited for everybody to go back and listen to the whole thing. The things that Jenet talked about out with regard to the science backing up so much of this. Anyway, but I just remember a story that has always helped me about this father that came home ... This is an old story. He came home from work, grabbed the newspaper. Now, anciently, we used to read the news on a newspaper instead of on a screen. Anyway.
Hank Smith:	01:20	If you don't know what that is, you'll have to ask someone..
John Bytheway:	01:21	Yeah, what is a newspaper? So, he's reading the newspaper and his little boy keeps tugging at him, "Dad come and play with me," and he's like, "Just a minute, I'm reading a paper." "Dad come and play with me." "Just a minute." And it goes on and on and finally the dad sees on the back of the newspaper, this advertisement with a big picture of the planet, the whole world in this advertisement. And so he tears it up in little pieces,

throws it on the floor and says, "Hey, here's a little puzzle for you. When you put that together, that planet together, then I'll come and play with you," and goes back to reading the paper.

- John Bytheway: 01:57 Well, in very short order, all of a sudden, little boy's tugging at his dad again, "Okay, dad, I'm done." And he looks over and sure enough, he's put this whole puzzle of the planet together. "How did you do that so fast?" And the little boy said, "Well, I guess you didn't see it, but on the other side of the paper, on the other side of the world, there was a home and that was easy to put together. And when I put the home together, the world fell into place." And that's how one of those movies that the church made ended years ago, and I love that idea that our world is stronger when our homes are stronger. And all of you young people listening, look forward to your home and your family and your marriage. And right now, be a help to mom and dad, to brother and sisters, to help that home be strong, where you live right now. That's my favorite.
- Hank Smith: 02:49 Wow. That's awesome, John. That's fantastic. I love that. The idea that if every family in the world lived by these nine paragraphs, the world would fall into place. Everything would do very well.
- John Bytheway: 03:00 Yeah. We try to fix the world with legislatures and stuff, but why don't we just start with our homes?
- Hank Smith: 03:05 Yeah. My followHIM Favorite is going to be in, oh goodness, paragraph 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, I think it is paragraph seven.
- John Bytheway: 03:15 The big one.
- Hank Smith: 03:16 One statement ... Yeah, the big one, that just said, "Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ." Sometimes we skip over that sentence. I've read it many times, but that last little phrase, "The teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ," in that is a lifetime of studies. We have a lifetime worth of studies of the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. I teach the New Testament at BYU, and I have been teaching this for 11 years now, I think at BYU, John and Jenet, and it just is never ending. I find more all the time when I read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and that's just a portion of the Savior's teachings.
- Hank Smith: 03:56 We have the Doctrine and Covenants, so we've been studying this year. My followHIM Favorite here is if you want to increase the happiness of your family, then let's get into the scriptures

and find the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ and then live them. All throughout the book of Mormon, all throughout even the Old Testament, there are principles and never ending principles that will bless your family. And by the way, if you keep listening to followHIM, we are going to help you find those principles. So, I hope you'll listen to the entire podcast. Now, the reason we're here, John, is to just be side dishes for the real main event here, and that's Dr. Erickson. So, Dr. Erickson, tell us what your Follow Him favorite is.

Dr. Jenet Erickson: 04:42

Yeah. I love the favorites you shared. I think, John, that whole idea of that last line, the proclamation that says, "The family is the fundamental unit of society." And just across all the data, when we look at it, this beautiful relationship of children with their parents being nurtured and the extension of extended family bonds as well, you just see that is the strength of nations. It literally rests upon that. And so you're exactly right. Then to hear, Hank, you talk about throughout the proclamation that founding, that a family founded on the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is the place. Truly whatever he lays his hands upon lives, and his teachings give us the light, the path of joy in our relationships. His teachings are all about how to have stronger relationships.

Dr. Jenet Erickson: 05:29

My favorite part is the way this proclamation starts out. And when the Lord tells us through his prophets that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God, he's telling us about the relationship our heavenly parents have with one another. And that the family is central to the creator's plan for the eternal destiny of his children. That the reason the earth was created was for family to come. That the reason there was a fall, Eve knew we have to have life. She wanted greater light and knowledge, that lead her to seeking for a family to be born and Adam following, seeing the truth in that. And then the atonement being the way that families are sealed together. And that we, as the eternal family of our heavenly parents are sealed to them, sealed up to them forever is just so beautiful. And then it says, "All human beings, me, male and female are created in the image of God as children of beloved heavenly parents."

Dr. Jenet Erickson: 06:30

And to think of what that means for women to be in the image of our heavenly mother, who is an equal with our heavenly father, God, the father and God, the mother, and that we come from them is just foundational. And we have the divine capacity because we are their children, their literal children with their spiritual DNA to become as they are, to become the kind of people that can be in that kind of marriage, that kind of family,

and that's our Savior's homework. He promises us, "I will change you. I will enable you to be the kind of person that can be." That husband, that father, that wife, that mother. And when I fail, the beautiful thing is every day, as I'm learning and growing in this great gospel redemption, this plan of redemption and not perfection, I love to be able to tell my children, "I cannot be a perfect mother or father to you.

Dr. Jenet Erickson: 07:28

I want to be all that I can be, but you have a perfect mother and a perfect father, and they will never abandon you." And they will teach me, their work is to teach me how to be better for you, and to teach you how to prepare to be the kind of parent you need to be for your children. So, it's this great plan where we're part of a family here on earth and we're part of this grand family where we have already been redeemed and given perfect parents to lead and guide us, and a savior to give us the power to become as they are. That's the foundation of the proclamation right there, and we're all part of that.

Hank Smith: 08:09

That was wonderful. If you want to hear more from Dr. Erickson, you need to join us on the full podcast, followHIM. If you don't know how to find a podcast, find someone who knows how to find podcasts so you can find us. Use your Google and Thummim, type in followHIM Podcast, you're certain to find us, certain to find us. You want to hear our episodes with Dr. Erickson. But if not, we understand. We hope you'll join us next week for followHIM Favorites.