



“The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom”

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 Friday and Saturday.

Podcast Episode Descriptions:

Part 1:

Would sage advice from a parent be worth treasuring? Dr. Lincoln Blumell explores the book of Proverbs and the book of Ecclesiastes and the nature of wisdom, grief, and what fearing God means for modern and ancient readers.

Part 2:

Dr. Lincoln Blumell continues to examine wisdom, the light of Christ, and how knowledge has been given to various men and women throughout the ages.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Lincoln Blumell
- 01:10 Introduction of Dr. Lincoln Blumell
- 03:38 Background to Proverbs and Ecclesiastes
- 11:38 The timeless quality of Proverbs
- 13:04 Wisdom literature
- 20:59 Wisdom literature human limitations and faith
- 22:55 The Prologue
- 25:57 The meaning of “fearing the Lord”
- 30:22 Proverbs 1
- 34:59 The importance of reflection and Wisdom literature
- 37:02 Trust the Lord
- 38:54 John shares a story about a missionary call change
- 40:54 John’s book *When It Doesn’t Make Sense*
- 42:12 Remembering the Lord and receiving chastisement
- 48:12 President Nelson reminds us to stay on the Covenant Path
- 51:30 End of Part I–Dr. Lincoln Blumell

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II– Dr. Lincoln Blumell
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- 01:12 President Monson story of a German woman in World War II
- 06:51 A soft answer
- 10:50 The dangers of pride
- 13:13 Reputation and humility
- 14:32 Parenting in Proverbs
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- 25:48 Proverbs 30 and 31 and the Book of Mormon
- 29:29 Acrostic poetry
- 35:18 Ecclesiastes is “one who assembles”
- 40:19 Life is fleeting, so remember and keep a record
- 41:51 Wisdom comes through pain and suffering
- 45:41 Dr. Blumell shares his journey of faith and scholarship
- 52:16 End of Part II–Dr. Lincoln Blumell

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Biographical Information:



Lincoln Blumell received a BA with honors in classical and early Christian studies from the University of Calgary; an MA from the University of Calgary in religious studies (ancient Christianity); an MSt from Oxford (Christ Church) in Jewish studies; and a PhD from the University of Toronto in religious studies (early Christianity). Before coming to BYU, he held a visiting assistant professorship in the Department of Classical Studies at Tulane University in New Orleans.

Courses Taught: New Testament, Book of Mormon, Second Temple Judaism, History of Ancient Christianity (AD 100–400), Persecution and Martyrdom in Ancient Christianity, Egypt in the Roman Empire, Classical Mythology

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- Hank Smith: 00:01 Welcome to Follow Him, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their Come Follow Me study. I'm Hank Smith.
- John Bytheway: 00:09 I'm John Bytheway. We love to learn. We love to laugh. We want to learn and laugh with you as together, we follow Him.
- Hank Smith: 00:20 Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of FollowHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I am your host. I am here with my merry-hearted co-host, John Bytheway. John, as I was reading Proverbs preparing for this lesson, I hit Proverbs 15:13, and it said, "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance." And I wrote John Bytheway right there. This is a merry-hearted podcast, I think.
- John Bytheway: 00:48 Absolutely.
- Hank Smith: 00:49 Hey John, we have a Bible expert in the room with us. Tell everybody who's joining.
- John Bytheway: 00:54 So excited to have Dr. Lincoln Blumell with us. And as I read the bio, it's another time, Hank, I'm just going, wow, we're so blessed to have these people with us.
- John Bytheway: 01:06 Lincoln Blumell received a Bachelor's with Honors in Classical and Early Christian Studies from the University of Calgary and MA from the University of Calgary in Religious Studies and Ancient Christianity, specializing in that. And MST from Oxford Christ Church in Jewish Studies, a PhD from the University of Toronto in Religious Studies, emphasizing early Christianity. And before coming to BYU, he held a visiting assistant professorship in the Department of Classical Studies at Tulane University in New Orleans. His areas of expertise are New Testament, Second Temple Judaism, history of ancient Christianity until the Byzantine period. He was the editor of a book called New Testament History, Culture, and Society, which probably a lot of our guests have written. Right, Hank?
- Hank Smith: 01:59 Yeah. Yeah. There's quite a few of our guests in that book.

John Bytheway: 02:01 Yeah. So we'll be excited, especially next year, coming up with New Testament for that. New Testament History, Culture, and Study, and his areas of research include early Christianity in Egypt, ancient Christian letters and Greek. So we're really glad to have you today and so excited to hear how you can help us with the Book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes today. Welcome.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 02:24 Thank you so much for that very generous, kind introduction, and great to meet you and be with you both, John and Hank.

Hank Smith: 02:31 Lincoln, you absolutely deserve it. John, Lincoln and I have worked together for 10 years and he was my mentor at BYU. They assigned me a mentor and I think he was like, "Oh, you got to be kidding me." But you've become friends over the years. And I'll tell you that book, New Testament, History, Culture, and Society. It is a big book and it is worth your time. If you want to know about the New Testament, this will give you...

Hank Smith: 02:57 I'm reading from Amazon. Here's just a small sampling of the writers. Robert Millet, John Welch, Andrew Skinner, Kent Jackson, Terry Ball, Noel Reynolds, Frank Judd. Just a myriad of other professors in which Lincoln edited these chapters. So if any of our listeners are interested, look that up, New Testament History, Culture, and Society: A Background to the texts of the New Testament, came out in 2019.

Hank Smith: 03:21 Lincoln, it sounds like from your bio, you're well-traveled.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 03:25 Yeah. Well, I try, New Testament period, work a lot on there and kind of been around with schools, kind of the England, and then finally made a great stop here in the greatest state of Utah. Really happy to be here at BYU. It's been a great 10 years.

Hank Smith: 03:38 All right. Lincoln, how do we want to approach these, what I've heard called the wisdom literature? How do you approach Proverbs and Ecclesiastes?

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 03:47 That's a great question. It's probably best to give a little of background to this that will help kind of frame what wisdom literature is. And even within the Bible, what wisdom literature is. And so I'll talk about the ANE or the Ancient Near East. You have this tradition that is millennia old of collections of sayings, Proverbs, which is like a maxim or an aphorism. They're short, pithy sayings that are communicated. Typically, the standard format it takes, it's not like the Book of Proverbs, where you have typically somebody addressing a younger individual, like an elder, often a father to a son. And what you have is basically

communicating important wisdom and it's transmitted on. That will then help that individual prosper in their life, have success.

- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 04:34 I think of ancient wisdom literature kind of in general, and this is maybe a little bit humorous, but I think the analogy is apropos, kind of like the ancient's how to win friends and influence people kind of literature that you get. And it's kind of funny, but it really is in a lot of ways. You have this Egyptian culture, Sumerian cultures, these ancient cultures. Of course, Israelite wisdom literature, and it's how to be successful. And we'll talk about Proverbs a little. It's unique because Israelites will have their own spin on this, which will of course tie in with God. But in a lot of wisdom literature, it's rather quite mundane, really quite general.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 05:09 There are sayings of course that remain into our time. Pretty basic stuff like, "A bow strung all day will lose its spring." And so things like, "Okay, well then I need then unstring my bow when I'm done using it." And when you look at this wisdom literature and probably the closest parallels you find again, what we'll see in Proverbs, is coming out of some Egyptian wisdom literature. You have works like the sayings, a man called Ank Shoshenq in Egypt, as well as others who have this, right?
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 05:37 For example, there's an Egyptian who lives, it's believed in the Ramesside period, which is 1300 BC to about 1100 BC called Amenemopet, who leaves a text for his son. And there's some really fascinating parallels we'll look at beginning in Proverbs 22. And so it's just communication that an elder will pass on to a typically younger individual. And so it's kind of framed in Proverbs, like a father to a son, to help them succeed in their life and to prosper.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 06:07 With the Israelite case, of course, it will tie very intimately back to God. And when you think of this wisdom in Proverbs and elsewhere, it might be attributed to God's but often it seems to be based on observation. Just like based on life, here are wise sayings that you should abide by. And if you follow these, it seems to be there's a correlation then between the saying and some kind of prosperity or success in life.
- Hank Smith: 06:30 Okay. So this is imparting wisdom, life experience to the younger generation. John, that's like me and you. You're the elder and I'm the younger of course and you impart all this wisdom to me. Yes, you impart all this wisdom to me. And I feel like you're the proverbial, John Bytheway.
- John Bytheway: 06:49 Proverbial.

Hank Smith: 06:50 Yeah. Who has all this wisdom.

John Bytheway: 06:53 I was thinking of that. I was an amateur verb, but I've gone pro. So I'm a proverb now. I've left the amateur ranks. I was going to ask Lincoln about that because I feel like some of these sound like fatherly wisdom or motherly wisdom. And I thought, I mean, there's not a thus saith the Lord in these. When we look at these, it sounds more like there's a family motto that we've had passed down or things like that. It's maybe a dangerous question to ask, do we hold the Book of Proverbs to the same level we might hold the Book of Isaiah.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 07:26 That's a great question. It's in the cannon. And so we regard it as a standard works, as scripture. When I look at Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, it's interesting that when you look at these two texts, here's one way of kind of looking at this question, there's hardly any JSTs here. There's none in Ecclesiastes for example, and there's a handful in Proverbs, and only one that really makes much of a difference to the text, in 18. We'll talk about probably in the context when we get to Proverbs 31. And so it seems the JST doesn't spend a whole lot of time focusing on these texts.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 07:59 As I look at Proverbs, I think a lot of this is about why sayings handed down. It talks about the whys, or we could say sages. Here is what we've learned, but there is no thus saith the Lord. And I guess maybe to vindicate some of these sayings, I guess, is some of the authority would be, well, if you do this, then you will see the fruits of then doing this saying or maxim or aphorism. You do have the beginning here, the attribution to Solomon in verse one. Although as you read into the book and you start moving through this, it becomes very clear that what we have here is a composite work.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 08:32 Solomon is not the only author here. You get down into, for example, chapter 22 and it now talks about, well, here are now sayings of the sages or the wise men. And it's clearly drawing upon some wisdom that has been passed on from Israel. You then have in 25, it talks about, well, you now have in the reign of Hezekiah. So Hezekiah is now some two centuries after Solomon and they're now compiling this and there's a redactor who's working with this. Chapter 30, it talks about a man called Agur. And then in chapter 31, a king called Lemuel. We'll talk more about Lemuel. And so it's kind of collected wisdom. And so I think some of this wisdom perhaps is probably even there before Solomon, and you have editors who then redact this and bring this into a unit.

- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 09:21 It's not entirely cohesive. It's often you have these short sayings that doesn't always clear why you have a grouping or one next to another. At times, there's a kind a thematic, I'd call a multiverse proverb, but this is related on and it's kind of wisdom from the ages. And so I look at this here as more like it's about probabilities. If you do this, this is probably what's going to happen to you. And it's good counsel. If I were writing in the New Testament, I'll probably do this a lot, where Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, he says, "I'm giving you my opinion. Nevertheless, I'm an apostle." And so it doesn't mean you need to go and disregard that opinion by Paul. But it's saying, I think he recognized... Paul's careful there in 1 Corinthians, where he does this, 15 but also especially in 7 where he says, "Okay, the Lord says this." And he says, "Now, I'm saying this, but remember I'm an apostle." So I think that Proverbs, I'd kind of take it in that light.
- Hank Smith: 10:12 It's a valuable opinion.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 10:14 If you do these things, I think part of the message of Proverbs is, generally good things are going to happen. You'll have success, win friends, influence people kind of thing, but your life will be more meaningful. You can avoid pitfalls. There's lots of warning about pitfalls out there. So that's how I would approach this book and even Ecclesiastes, in this kind of tradition.
- John Bytheway: 10:34 Yeah, it sounds like advice about your relationship with God. It's not necessarily God talking, but they're talking about how to choose... I mean, I love the ponder the path of thy feet, things like that. And trust in the Lord, which is a youth theme this year. In fact, there's an interesting statement in the manual if we want to jump into the second book, we're going to look at. Ecclesiastes. This is from the first page in the Come Follow Me manual. It says, "Proverbs can be seen as a collection of wise sayings from a loving parent whose main message is that blessings of peace and prosperity come to those who seek wisdom, particularly the kind of wisdom God offers." But Proverbs is followed by the Book of Ecclesiastes, which seems to say, it's not that simple. "The preacher quoted in Ecclesiastes observed that he gave his heart to no wisdom, but still found vexation of spirit and much grief." That was, I thought a good way of framing it. There's some great proverbs. It doesn't mean life will be easy just because you know these proverbs.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 11:38 You know, When I think about scripture as we approach it, certainly our ancient scriptures, is sometimes I think it's useful to think about in this term. There are things that can be more timely than timeless. And I think this could apply to Proverbs.

There will be wisdom that they might have that say, this might be a great piece of advice if you are living in the 9th century BC." It might not work so well in the 21st century. And so what I might say to those who are reading this text, who is struggling on some things, I'd say, are there principles behind it? Because I think there's often principles behind it. We can say yes, this principle resonates with us. Even if maybe some of the specific advice might not be as applicable for our day or might do something different is, what are they trying to communicate there? And so look at the principle behind that and then say, okay, this is how then it might inform practice today and how we're then going to apply that. And so I think that's worth keeping in mind.

- John Bytheway: 12:29 I'm writing that down, Lincoln. And some things in scripture are more timely than timeless and that's part of understanding culture, part of understanding their worldview, their cosmology, then you're able to extract the timeless. Does that make sense?
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 12:46 Yeah. There are principles there where yeah, we look and say, yes, there's some timeless principles where practices here may have changed. Really the premise of Proverbs seems to be the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. That's where it all starts with. How do you then apply this in your daily life?
- Hank Smith: 13:04 How could you group these three books, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and even Job, as the wisdom literature? I think you have to see them at least somewhat as a unit. Because, Proverbs is going to give you one end of wisdom, Ecclesiastes is going to give you another facet of wisdom, while Job is going to even offer another. If you don't take them together, you might miss something. You think they're meant to be read together, these three?
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 13:35 Well, I think we have them as a collection together. Look at Proverbs, if you do these things, it will be well with you.
- Hank Smith: 13:41 Yeah.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 13:42 You'll be blessed. You'll even have Beatitudes. What you find, blessed is the person who does this.
- Hank Smith: 13:47 Happy are they.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 13:48 Yeah, in the Sermon on the Mount. So it doesn't entertain the possibility, if you do this it might not go well. Where job then says, "Okay, you could be doing everything as best you can, in

your power, and being a really upright life, and it might all still go to pot." Then, it will probe that question. For example, right? We call it, about theodicy. Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people? An age-old question.

- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 14:12 Proverbs, doesn't engage with that. Where Job now says, "Okay, what do we do now, when you're doing things and it doesn't turn out as planned?" Then there's that discussion. Of course, you have in Job, there's a restoration made at the end. It probes another angle. Then Ecclesiastes seems to be more of a thing where, "Okay, you can go and do good things, and yet it can still be all vanity."
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 14:32 We'll talk about this Hebrew word, hevel, which is like breath, or basically just emptiness. At the end of the day, what you do here, it may not turn out at all how you expected, although it does end with trust in God. It does have that at the end of the text, but recognize there are a lot more complexities in this whole process in life than you think of in Deuteronomy. If you follow me, you do this. Israel, you will be blessed. If you don't, you'll be cursed. That works that nicely, but I think we can all think of our own lives or people where you feel like you're doing some of that stuff and you're like, "Well, I'm doing all I can, but it doesn't always work out."
- Hank Smith: 15:07 I'm not seeing the blessings that are promised. Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 15:11 Yeah. Hank and I have talked about this before, the doctrine of retribution. It sounds so mathematical, and it works... sometimes.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 15:21 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 15:22 Abinadi did everything right, and suffered like Job. Isn't that going to the New Testament, a little bit? The mindset when, who did sin? This man or his parents, that he was born blind.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 15:33 Yeah, John 9.
- John Bytheway: 15:34 It's got to be a result of sin, or else it wouldn't have happened. That thinking, that Jesus had to fix with them sometimes. Those people, that the Tower of Siloam fell on them, Jesus seemed to have to say, "Eh, this is great advice, but sometimes things go badly."
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 15:52 I think that's where Ecclesiastes come in, it complexifies things. It does say, "Nevertheless, have trust in God." But one thing

Ecclesiastes gets in a little bit, in the later chapters, "You don't know the mind of God." It's almost like inscrutable. Have this trust. Yes, things can work out well, but there are no guarantees. What I would go back to Ecclesiastes, even in Proverbs, "I step back and stay right with my salvation." Yes, you'll prosper. I would say this, eternally.

- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 16:19 In the big scheme of things, it will work out. In the big, big picture, it's going to work out. But, it may not work out here in this finite period of mortality, and you might do things right. Again, generally, people will be blessed. But Ecclesiastes is the spectrum, tends to open it up and say, "Okay, some of these things, there's maybe not quite the correlation that seems to be elsewhere." That, it can be a bit more complex. So, it opens that possibility up.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 16:46 Coming back to Hank, we do read these together. The Hebrew canon, Ecclesiastes is actually separated, it comes after Lamentations. You have these three wisdom books. The Israelites, Jews, are still writing more wisdom literature that we have in the Apocrypha- like the Wisdom of Solomon, or Sirach- which is known as Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Ben Sira, which actually the largest wisdom book we have from the ancient world, probably written around 200 BC, thereabouts, which are still probing these questions.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 17:13 We'll, of course, build on this. This really occupies people's minds. You all want to succeed. You want to be blessed. You want to have a successful life, by young standards of society. So trying to convey some of that, yes, there is a correlation. But with Ecclesiastes, yes, not always the case.
- Hank Smith: 17:29 So I'm trying to process this in my mind. Proverbs is, "Good things will happen to good people." Ecclesiastes and Job explore the question of, "What if that doesn't happen in your life? What if that's not the case? What are you going to do?" Life is much more complex than Proverbs seems to say. But at the same time, that doesn't mean we should throw out Proverbs. The probability is there, like you said, that good things happen to good people. This is fascinating. So we have Proverbs that says, "Life is simple." Then we have Ecclesiastes and Job that say, "Hold on a second. It's not as simple as you might think. But yet, trust in God."
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 18:06 Generally, if you do good, you will prosper. Unlike Job and Ecclesiastes, which entertains the opposite, Proverbs doesn't really go to the opposite.

John Bytheway:	18:13	I like what you said, it's like a timing thing. In the long run, the outcomes that you want, the Proverbs are right. Trust in God. Don't lean to your own understanding. In the long run, there are great outcomes. What you said a second ago, it reminded me, in President Gordon B. Hinckley's biography that Sheri Dew wrote, "If you're around him, you will hear him say, 'Things will work out.'" He said that a lot. But that could be a very long-term view, so that helps me with it.
Dr. Lincoln Blumell:	18:47	It makes me think of what Section 122 of Doctrine and Covenants, verses 7 and 8, "If all these things happen, they shall be for your good."
Hank Smith:	18:55	All these terrible, terrible things. He lists these awful things.
Dr. Lincoln Blumell:	18:59	Really hard, terrible things, they'll be for your good. I can't help but think the Lord's thinking, "Well, in the eternal perspective, the perspective that I have, these experiences should be for your good. It's knowledge." Again, Proverbs is all about knowledge, wisdom, it's even used interchangeably, "You will have these things. You will understand."
John Bytheway:	19:18	In those same Liberty Jail sections there is, "Thy suffering and thy afflictions will be but a small moment." I don't know, three or four months in Liberty Jail doesn't feel like a small moment. But, maybe it does in that eternal perspective.
Dr. Lincoln Blumell:	19:34	When I think about this, Peter picks up on this in 1 Peter 1:7, where he talks about your faith of trials. Now, the King James will talk about temptations, but it's clearly trial. They're saying, "This will be for your good," or rather, these precious metals, things like that. If you take this bigger perspective, and you look at like Ecclesiastes, life is ephemeral. It's going to have an end. It's terminal. It's transitory. Therefore, what is permanent? These things that come along, "Go forth things for which will be right, eternal." Wisdom, we can carry knowledge out of this world. I think of D&C. I think it's 88:6 that talks about this, "Therefore, go after things which will be perpetual." This is why it then becomes so valuable, as opposed to things that are just fleeting. So, focus on what will actually last.
Hank Smith:	20:25	Life is temporary. Wisdom is eternal. That's why it's more valuable than money, because money will end but wisdom does not.
Dr. Lincoln Blumell:	20:33	I heard a great quote, "You never see a U-Haul following a hearse, because no one can take anything with them beyond, so

that never actually happens." The author here is saying, "Do those things, which will be of long-lasting value, or eternal value." I like the Peter, of course, picking up the same imagery on here. "These trials can be for your good, if you endure them well," which then brings back to 1:22.

- Hank Smith: 20:59 I was reading from a Bible scholar, not Latter-day Saint, but a wonderful Bible scholar by the name of Christopher Wright. He wrote, "The most challenging difference between wisdom and the rest of the Old Testament arises when the wisdom authors express doubts about, or questions the validity of some of the mainline affirmations of other parts of the Bible." Yet, this is precisely the purpose of this material in the canon of scripture.
- Hank Smith: 21:21 I like this part, "To compel us toward an honest faith that is willing to acknowledge the presence of doubts we cannot dismiss, and questions we cannot always fully answer given our human limitations." So it sounds like we're going to jump into Proverbs here, and hear the likelihood of doing good, wonderful things are going to happen. The other books are going to question that validity, and it's important for us to question that. Does that sound right, Lincoln?
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 21:50 Proverbs 26, "If you raise up your child in the Lord, when they're old, they will not depart from it." Well, I think a lot of people, I can think of Book of Mormon, would say, "Well, we did that. Didn't work."
- Hank Smith: 22:01 We did train up the child. Yeah.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 22:03 I do think there's a probability, there's a correlation-clearly, by going and doing that. Again, children can always come back. There's a correlation there, but there's no guarantee. That's what I like, probabilities, but no guarantees.
- Hank Smith: 22:13 Yeah. You might almost say here, "The odds of the child being active in the gospel is more likely if you teach them while they're young, train up a child in the way he should go." When he is old, he will not depart from it. That's better than not training up a child, and hoping that they choose the right. So I can see what you're saying there, there's always going to be exceptions.
- John Bytheway: 22:34 There's an allowance for agency, as well. But this is still the right thing to do. I think that's really helpful, to frame this before we jump in. I'm excited to jump in. I remember a home evening once with my father, where we just sat at the table and read

Proverbs, and some of them we laughed, and some of them we nodded, and some of them we marked. What are some of your favorites?

- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 22:55 The prologue here, verses 1-6, Solomon talking to a young man training children. I can go back to Nephi and talk about his goodly parents learning in the language of his fathers, having been taught. Verse 7 is really, really key, because this seems to frame the book. It begins the book. Then if you go down to 31:30, the very end, this is then repeated. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction."
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 23:22 Starting off, if you really want to know something, it begins with the fear of the Lord. When I look at fear here, I wouldn't say we're terrified of the Lord. But, I might think of something like reverence, acknowledging that there is a source beyond us, for which we can draw on for knowledge and power, and then starting with that.
- Hank Smith: 23:42 So we had bookend verses there, Lincoln, with Proverbs 1:7, the Fear of the Lord. You mentioned Proverbs 31:30, "A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." I like that. So here's our beginning verse and our end verse. Like you said, that's framing what we're going to get in the middle. We're going to get wisdom and knowledge between these two.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 24:04 Yeah. The acquisition of this. It does make it clear, this does not come easily. These are things that are hard won, by your sweat of your brow, obtaining some of this. But wisdom, instruction, knowledge and wisdom can be interchangeable. But really, the source of it is the Lord. So starting with that premise, and then moving from there seems to be how the book really begins, and focusing on the Lord. Then what you have, as you get into talking about wisdom and its acquisition-in Chapter One here, you get down to something like Verse 19. It starts talking about wisdom being now personified. It's Lady Wisdom that is being talked about here. It's in the feminine, Lady Wisdom. Proverbs 8 talks more about that.
- Hank Smith: 24:51 My wife might want that name.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 24:53 In Greek, that's a nice one. Sophia is wisdom in Greek. What you have just comes from the Lord. It comes out, and this is what you are acquiring, but it's then personified. Even in the Book of Mormon picks up on this. Mosiah 8:20, Limhi talking to his people. "They don't seek wisdom, neither do they desire that she should rule over them." It talks about the blessings when

you allow wisdom to take over and govern your life, tends to be that good things can then follow.

- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 25:20 This is a good thing, when acquiring wisdom. But if I'm going to give a bit of an interplay here, if you get to 1 Corinthians, Paul warns all about wisdom. Says, "Well, beware of that wisdom." You're like, "Well, wait a sec. What's going on here?" There are different kinds of wisdoms. Paul's saying, "Well, the wisdom people are seeking is that not of God, but it comes after the world." Which, at times, the wisdom of the world can be quite different. This is why I think in Proverbs in 1:7 it says, "Well, it starts with the Lord." You recognize the Lord, and then your wisdom then will proceed from there. That will then dictate, predicate upon, what you value as wisdom. That's the source of that.
- Hank Smith: 25:57 Lincoln, when it starts in Verse 7, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge," My kids are going to hear that and think they're supposed to be scared of the Lord. What does the word "fear" there mean?
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 26:08 You can use the word fear here, but I think probably something better is reverence, piety. The phrase "fear of the Lord" appears about 14 times in Proverbs. And so I think starting with a reverence for God.
- Hank Smith: 26:20 Reverence or humility.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 26:22 Yeah. This is a big topic in Proverbs, because one of the things you'll say between the wise person and the fool is the wise person's humbled enough that they can listen when the Lord or an elder chastises them. The KJV puts give them reproof. This is right through Proverbs. They can be humbled enough they can accept chastisement, and they can then learn and grow from that.
- Hank Smith: 26:45 You're willing to be taught. Can I say it that way in verse seven? If I reverence the Lord, if I fear the Lord, I'm willing to be taught. I'm humble enough to be taught. There's the beginning. The door is open.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 26:57 As you recognize there's a higher source and say, "I will submit and be humbled to that." And then, if there is somebody speaking to that source, I will then submit and I will listen to their reproof.

John Bytheway:	27:06	Proverbs 31:30. What it says there is, "But a woman that feareth the Lord," and the footnote says, "or reveres the Lord." So there's our footnote using the same revere or reverences. We use that phrase a lot, these are God-fearing people. We don't mean they're hiding in fear, but they're...
Hank Smith:	27:26	These are God fearing folks. Where are they?
John Bytheway:	27:30	They're running away. No, they're revering. They respect God.
Hank Smith:	27:35	The idea here is the beginning of knowledge is the fact that you realize you don't have it all.
Dr. Lincoln Blumell:	27:39	I kind of like, and you'll know that passage here, where "to be learned is good if you harken to the counsels of God." There's warnings about pride here, where it talks about "pride cometh before the fall" but I think if people were willing to say, "Look, I don't know it all. I can learn. I can be corrected." Well, then the wise can then help you. The wise Lord can really help you and you can progress. And one of the things that Proverbs does and just build upon this, is it talks about jumping to 3:12 for a moment. It talks about, "For whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." If you love somebody, you really do, you care enough to actually correct them. And if they're humble enough and they want to attain wisdom, they can receive that.
Hank Smith:	28:23	It sounds like me as a parent. "I'm teaching you this because I love you and I want you to be a successful adult." I don't know how many times I've said that exact phrase. "I want you to be a successful adult. If I didn't love you, I would just let you keep going this way."
Dr. Lincoln Blumell:	28:37	That really is. If you don't love something, then you don't do anything about it. If you really love something or somebody, you tell them hard things.
Hank Smith:	28:45	Proverbs is a type of scripture that is somewhat easy to read. I remember being in high school and really liking Proverbs. I understood what it was saying. At some point, there's other books of scripture I would read and go, "I have no idea what they're talking about." But this one I could... They were short enough and simple enough for my sophomore mind to grasp, and then I would mark them because I thought that's... I still remember finding "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit dryeth the bones." I still remember that. I

was in high school when I first read that. It's short enough to memorize and it stuck with me all these years.

- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 29:19 You have this title to the book, just to go back to this. The Hebrew word is Masha. The Greek, and even Latin, you get Proverb. But Greek sometimes as Parables. These things side by side, short pithy sayings like aphorisms. You don't have to read the entire book of Proverbs to get it. You can go and read a few verses here and there and it might have a distinct unit on something. You'd say, "Oh, okay. I can see how that can help." So I think in that regard, as you said there, your hunger, you can take time and just read a few verses and say, "Okay, there's something for me that I can improve on or that I can take to heart."
- John Bytheway: 29:52 Yeah. They are really bite-size, aren't they? They're not long stories. Sometimes there's three or four verses rehearsing a theme or parallelisms.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 30:02 Yeah. I think for the most part, they are bite size. Some it's a single verse. Some you get a multiverse where you might have a theme for three or four verses where the same theme is kept up, but they're these distinct clusters that are then strung together. I think that's so helpful because you can remember that. You don't have to remember verse after verse, you can remember a couple verses.
- Hank Smith: 30:22 Okay. Why don't we walk through this. Just start in Proverbs chapter one, two, three. Let's just take them in order and highlight the verses that you want to highlight, and there's no way we could hit it all. Let's look at the ones that you want to focus on.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 30:36 Again. I think verse seven is really key. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instructions." This is really the starting point for acquisition of wisdom and knowledge.
- Hank Smith: 30:48 So if you're a fool, you'll stop reading now. Right?
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 30:51 Yes. You stop. That's it. This begins there in seven. You then have, it warns about don't try to be wise in your own eyes, to rely on the Lord. And it warrants about go try to obtain wisdom and even the simple people. And this is maybe goes back to comment earlier, even in your youth, even simple people can do this. They can obtain shrewdness, sagacity. And I really think, chapter one, if I was going to give a theme there not looking at

every single verse is that if you want to obtain wisdom, you're willing to be corrected. You're willing to be "chastised." And so there's a kind of discipline that goes with that.

- Hank Smith: 31:30 And also they introduce wisdom as a woman, "She uttereth her voice in the street, she crieth in the chief place of the concourse, in the opening of the gates you can find her." It sounds like you can find her anywhere. "... called and ye refused," in verse 24. I want to come to you. Wisdom wants to come to you, but you're refusing her sometimes.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 31:52 I guess it's humility that you mentioned before. Do we have this? Are we self-reflective? Do we listen to wise people of our day? I think apostles and prophets, the wisdom they impart from life experience.
- Hank Smith: 32:04 It's not like it's hard to find, especially these days. It's readily available to us, but we turn from it. "I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded." An apostle is speaking and you're not listening. Is that same, does it continue into chapter two?
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 32:18 As you get into two, it's kind of here again with wisdom, what is this path to wisdom like? And again, it requires work. Well, verse four, "If thou seekest her as silver and search for her as for hid treasure," then verse five, "thou shall understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God." So it requires work.
- Hank Smith: 32:36 So you've got to seek after wisdom as much as you seek after money.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 32:40 Yeah. I think people can relate to going and doing this. I like here the parable of the Pearl of Great Price in Matthew 13, was it 45 and 46? Where the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant man seeking goodly pearls, and he sold all he had when he found it to purchase that pearl. And so to go and to seek, it takes work. Again, he takes work. I think six is really key, "For the Lord giveth wisdom. Out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." To pick up the Lord is the one giving wisdom, James, 1:5. If you lack wisdom, what do you do? Go to God, give unto all people, don't upgrade. I think we're seeing this picked up. Proverb says, yes, you can do this, but it's a path you've really got to search.
- Hank Smith: 33:20 "He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous." So it's there for the taking. Is that what I'm supposed to hear there?

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 33:26 If you will just listen and seek. Even today, so many distractions. Are we willing to put things down, quiet down, and really listen and seek and ask the source of all wisdom.

Hank Smith: 33:37 This is one of those that families can sit down together and read and even children can understand quite a bit of this.

John Bytheway: 33:43 In verse four, Hank, you mentioned that, "... and searches for her as for hid treasures." I mean, imagine the tenacity and the focus if you think you've got a hidden treasure. We could have that same kind of tenacity and focus to seek for wisdom. I like that comparison that you made.

Hank Smith: 34:02 It reminds me when Jesus says, "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst..." And you're thinking, "That's me." And he says, "... after righteousness." You're like, "Oh, there's not very many vending machines, dispensing righteousness." As naturally as I seek after cash, I'm supposed to take that same longing for it and go after wisdom.

John Bytheway: 34:20 Look at wisdom as a treasure.

Hank Smith: 34:22 Fill your bank account with wisdom instead of silver.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 34:25 One of the things we'll see later in the chapter says this very thing. Actually, it'll say, "Better to have a little and yet have wisdom or peace than to have a lot and not have that." This is something that in the big scheme of things is of far more value. And I think then if we can maybe step back and try to take an eternal perspective. Yes, we have to have the cares of the world and go through a routine and do what we need to do, provide for ourselves, our families, all those things, but are we doing eternally what's of most importance? And here it's saying, "Make sure you're seeking after this because this is so important at the end of the day, to go and acquire this and progress."

Hank Smith: 34:59 Lincoln, as we're going through these first two, three chapters here, I'm sensing that Proverbs, in order to read it correctly, you have to do a lot of self-reflection. Kind of like Alma five. Are you thinking through this? Because he says in chapter three, "Let not mercy and truth forsake thee; bind them around thy neck, write them upon the table of thine heart." That takes a lot of reflection. Are mercy and truth written on my heart?

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 35:25 It is something definitely that you can go through and really assess. I kind of like this because there's a lot of interesting

referencing to James in the New Testament. It's really like that, that James he's often saying, "Am I doing this?" So it's a great text to go and self-assess how you are doing. Say, "Yes, I'm doing this." Or, "I can improve."

- Hank Smith: 35:43 It's a lifetime of self-reflection right there. Do I have mercy and truth written on my heart?
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 35:48 Yeah. This table or tablet of your heart. This phrase, of course, appears elsewhere. In Jeremiah, Paul picks up on this in Second Corinthians. That if it's there, then it's really a part of you. It's your most inward core. So you've really taken it on.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 36:00 And then of course you're just going down just two verses from that. Some of my favorite verses in all of Proverbs is there in five and six and three. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart." So it's come in there, have this. "Lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways, acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths." This is the youth theme this year. Really trust in the Lord. You fear while you trust in God.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 36:25 Just a tweak there on verse six, because you could even translate as this, looking at the Hebrew, "In all thy ways..." I would say it's, "... acknowledge him or know him." So in everything you do, know him and he shall direct thy paths. Or you could even say, "And he shall," basically, "make your path straight."
- Hank Smith: 36:42 That's excellent. In all thy ways, know him. Or maybe involve him. In all thy ways, involve him and he shall direct thy paths.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 36:51 Making it straight with help. And I think that's, in a sense, a blessing in trying to say, "Here's a good thing. If you do this, your path will be straight." Because it talks about the way of the wicked is crooked. They're all over, but you can move forward.
- Hank Smith: 37:02 I think in verse five where the writer says, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, lean not unto thine understanding," he might be saying implicit in that statement, might be you're not going to understand. You're going to try. You're not going to be able to see what the Lord is able to see. So maybe the writer of Proverbs here is saying, "Yeah, something might happen where you don't understand, but still trust the Lord when that happens."

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 37:28 I think Abraham, "Really? You want me to go and take Isaac?" Genesis 22. What are you doing here? Doesn't make sense until after the fact.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 37:35 I like the point you brought up, Hank, that sometimes things will not make sense, but you've got to adhere to that trust. Maybe it's only after the fact we'll see, "Okay, this trust has really born out because I did that." It might not be a short time, it might be actually quite a long time before you actually see that.

John Bytheway: 37:49 Yeah. Your own understanding was, "Well, I think I know how to solve this." Or, "I think I know how to do this or negotiate this." But trust God, he's got a better way. Like I said, "Make his path straight," because that's like a John the Baptist phrase.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 38:03 From Isaiah 40. It's actually very similar to that, yes. And so, can I make them straight?

Hank Smith: 38:08 Proverbs 3:5-6 is one of those that I think Elder Scott would say you memorize and it becomes a friend to you because you need a friend in those difficult times where you feel like things went wrong. You need a friend there to say, "Keep trusting in the Lord. He can see things you don't see." What was it last year, John? You cannot behold with your natural eyes for the present time the design of your God.

John Bytheway: 38:35 "Concerning the things which will come hereafter." There's that long term thing again. And I think another thing, Hank, that many of our young adult listeners, "My mission call said I was going here, but then I went here, and then COVID hit, and I came home, and then I got reassigned here."

Hank Smith: 38:52 Was that from the Lord?

John Bytheway: 38:54 We had a kid in our ward who was called to South Africa, and then was called home, and then went to Farmington, New Mexico or something,

John Bytheway: 39:00 and then got called home again. And then it was so great. Because his last line in his homecoming talk was, "My mission did not unfold the way I expected, but it turned out to me more beautiful than I had planned." And he kind of personified that for me. Yeah, it was out there and I was over here and over there, but it turned out more beautiful than I planned. And it's because he had that trust.

- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 39:32 Kind of piggyback on that story, Paul has a plan that he outlines in Romans writing on his mission court and saying "Look, I'm going to go back to Jerusalem, drop off these goods, and I'm going to come and preach the gospel in Rome. That's my plan." By the way, it's a good thing, right? You want to go preach the gospel there, but he gets back to Jerusalem, he gets arrested, he's put in jail for two years, but you get to Acts 26, 27, he eventually makes it to Rome under a different set of circumstances.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 39:58 And the Lord says, "Okay, you're going to go there," and then get to Philippians, which is a prison epistle. He says, "You know what? Me being in chains has really served to further the gospel. Those in the Praetorian are hearing all about the gospel." And so I said there "John, well, no, it's got to be this way." You hear Paul think "Okay, I got to go Rome." So even a righteous desire, but Lord says "No, there's going to be another way. And in fact, it'll even be better if you can do it this way, but it's going to require some hardship and some real trust." You really got to trust.
- John Bytheway: 40:24 So many stories. So many testimony meetings are full of stories where "Wait, why did this happen?" And then "Oh, okay." Testimonies are born every Sunday about that sort of thing where I thought it was this and Hank, you and I have talked on previous podcasts about Jesus on the road that you may ask, well, we had thought he was the one that was going to redeem Israel. See it wasn't what they expected, or Zion's camp, well I thought we were going to do this and Zion's camp turned out to be this, but God was doing something else. And you just have to trust Him.
- Hank Smith: 40:54 John, these verses here remind me of your book, When it Doesn't Make Sense. Is that kind of why you wrote it? This idea of trust the Lord when it doesn't make sense?
- John Bytheway: 41:07 In fact, the story I just mentioned about my young friend Cole, I put that in a chapter about modified missions why I was called here. And I went here and writing about these young people that had discover that trusting in the Lord was exactly what they had to do. I had one missionary who I quoted in there who said "My mission president helped me so much to know that the success of a mission was not going exactly where my mission call said. The success of a mission was how I connected to the Savior during that time and how I strengthened my relationship with Christ during that time, that was a better measure of success than whether everything unfolded the way I thought. And that means you can go anywhere. The success was, have

you had a connection to the Savior? Has your conversion deepened because you served?" And I thought it was such a great comment this young man made, he's actually my nephew, that started out in Panama and then ended up in Southern California and had such a wonderful epiphany about, my mission is to be fully converted to Christ.

- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 42:12 Well, just one other thing I would add here on this, some really great discussion, is when I think of kind of, maybe is it acknowledgement or know Him? I kind of think of covenants here. And the reason why I pick this up is if you go back to this verse one, it says "My son, forget not my law." And law here in Hebrew is Torah.
- Hank Smith: 42:28 What verse was that? That's...
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 42:30 That's three one. So just a few verses before, right? Forget not my law, and the law here is Torah.
- Hank Smith: 42:35 Which is scripture.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 42:37 Yeah. So it's a scripture, I think of kind of a covenant language here. And again, going back to 22, keeping in mind, chapter divisions are totally artificial. These are all added later on after this is written. And 22, "The wicked will be cut off." Well that's covenant language. That's 2:22 and you go right into "Don't be cut off. Remember my law. Know me." And it seems that we know it through covenants. You obtain knowledge was through keeping covenants. I think we kind of expand this.
- Hank Smith: 43:03 And you trust in your covenants. When you come down to verse five, you trust in your covenants.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 43:08 You trust in it. And so you have that in one and then in 2:22.
- Hank Smith: 43:12 And it says in verse eight, "It shall be health to thy navel and marrow to thy bones."
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 43:18 And then in two even, "You'll have length of days and a long life, you find this already in the law. These are things you will get by keeping these covenants." And so I think you do this covenant language right embedded in this section.
- Hank Smith: 43:32 We could spend the rest of our time on chapter three, five, and six, because so many people go through things that they did not see coming. How many of our listeners are going "Yeah, I did not see that coming. I didn't see a divorce coming. I didn't see a

mental illness coming. I didn't see a death in the family coming. I did not see this coming and now I'm in it. What do I do?" Trust. Trust the Lord, that He knows you, that He knows what's happening, and that He is directing your path, even though you can't see it now,

- John Bytheway: 44:09 Because so many things do make sense in the gospel, we want everything to make sense. And I just think we'll go to our death with unanswered questions, all of us will. But as we've talked about, you trust in the Lord and lean not to your own understanding. That is the best path for maximum joy and happiness, even though there will be setbacks.
- Hank Smith: 44:31 Lincoln, what do you want to do next? We've just started three.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 44:34 And seven, "Don't be wise in your own eyes." Probably the 11 and 12, which you touched on a bit, is just taking chastisement. Again, you'll see this throughout, receiving that from the Lord, from the Wises again, when you're chastised by the Lord, it's not a sign that He doesn't love you as in verse 12, it's the very opposite. Again, I would say to your kids, it's when you're chastised by a parent, it's not because they don't love you, it's the very opposite. It's because they love you dearly, and they want the best for you. You do this even as a father does this to his son, and Hebrews kind of picks up on that. "If God does this, then you really are a child." Once you do this, you get on this path of wisdom, 13, "Happy is the man." It's a Beatitude. So you get on this and you're blessed it when you find it. Then you get understanding.
- Hank Smith: 45:26 And as he says, "Be not weary of His correction." John you've talked to me about an airplane being constantly corrected. And that's how it reaches its destination.
- John Bytheway: 45:38 Yeah. Elder Uchtdorf who pointed it out. They'll put this huge jet right on the numbers on the runway that crossed an ocean and was off course most of the time. But it just keeps correcting, makes these tiny corrections, and it lands exactly when and where it's supposed to because it's corrected. And you know what else I thought of was, we've had Brother S. Michael Wilcox on here. And I remember him saying once that Peter was constantly getting corrected in the New Testament.
- Hank Smith: 46:06 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 46:06 Because the Lord loved him and knew he was going to take over and he was constantly getting corrected. And then as you think

about it, that wasn't a sign of that He didn't love him. That was a sign that He loved him so much, He was willing to correct him. A helpful way to look at it.

- Hank Smith: 46:21 Yeah, I think that's really helpful. And Lincoln, what you said is that when you feel the spirit giving you that divine discontent, it's not out of hatred. It's not out of even disgust or, it's out of love. You're better than this. I might be watching Netflix and the show comes on and I keep watching it. And the spirits says "This isn't for you." I shouldn't take that as a sign of, I'm evil, I'm bad, and God is good, and He hates me. It should be, whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth. You guys are like "What are you watching on Netflix Hank?"
- John Bytheway: 46:57 Well, and I'm just thinking and what a blessing that you have a divine discontent, what a blessing that there is something that is trying to turn you. I mean, what if that were gone? I mean, we're so grateful that there is something that's saying "You shouldn't be here."
- Hank Smith: 47:11 Right! It reminds me of one of my students once, we were having a conversation and I said "Doesn't that music that you listen to, it sounds kind of dark." And she said "Yeah, I felt really bad when I first listened to it, but I just kept listening. And eventually that feeling went away." I went "I don't think that's a good thing." Right?
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 47:33 I just think how important wisdom is, this treasure. So 14-15 and you seek it. "More precious than rubies." And this is interesting that in proverb something's really precious, it's more precious than rubies. And so it'll actually get to a woman, right? The very end again, has wisdom is more precious than rubies. Kind of the ideal companion, we'll get to that in 31, but try emphasizes the importance of the acquisition of this and even say "Look, the Lord used wisdom to create the earth," 19. And so what you're getting here is wisdom, these great things. And what is it? I think 18 will be interesting. It's a tree of life. You come there and you get this tree of life, which is repeated about four other times, to go there and to partake of that. You lay hold on her and you're happy and blessed.
- Hank Smith: 48:18 She is a tree of life to them to lay hold upon her.
- John Bytheway: 48:22 Yeah, that's pretty cool.
- Hank Smith: 48:24 That's definite book of Mormon language, lay hold upon the iron rod, right? They'll take you to the tree.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 48:31 And it's funny because you do this and how do you lay hold upon it? Well, you keep on the straight paths. I think you kind of interplay between this and what you have in first Nephi. You stay on that, you press forward, and you don't let go. Even when it talks about those who work, they have crooked path, they're perverting the course, no, you stay on the straight path. Lord directs in a straight path, and you get to that tree.

John Bytheway: 48:50 President Nelson gave us that advice recently. One of his five points I think, was get on the covenant path and stay there. Do you remember that?

Hank Smith: 49:00 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 49:00 That sounds the same thing. The covenant path is the iron rod, is the way to the tree of life.

Hank Smith: 49:05 This is really helpful.

John Bytheway: 49:07 So here is Alma coming out of Ammonihah, wading through tribulation, anguish of soul because of the wickedness of the people in the city of Ammonihah. While Alma was thus weighed down with sorrow, an angel of the Lord, appeared unto him saying "Blessed art thou Alma, therefore lift up thy head and rejoice for thou hast great cause to rejoice." And I kind of think right there, he could have said "Why?"

Hank Smith: 49:29 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 49:29 You know? "They didn't even like me." "For thou hast been faithful in keeping the commandments of God from the time which thou receivest thy first message from Him." And then a whole nother topic, how cool is this? The angel says "Behold, I am He that delivered it unto you." Remember back in Mosiah 27 when I knocked you over? That was me, right? The angel saying you are doing so well, lift up your head and rejoice. He's not talking about the action of the people. He's saying you did what you were asked. And those missionaries that had their mission cut shorter for whatever, you have great cause to rejoice because you did what you were asked. And that is not from me, that's from an angel talking to Alma whose mission in Ammonihah at least, was not what he expected. So I love that little story right there.

Hank Smith: 50:15 I would add John, that we could do modified marriages as well, that sometimes by no fault of your own, your marriage ends

and you did what you were asked. And we could say that about many areas of life, that things change.

John Bytheway:

50:30

Please join us for part two of this podcast.



- John Bytheway: 00:03 Welcome to part two of this week's podcast.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 00:07 Again, focusing on relying on the Lord. Verse 26, "The Lord shall be thy confidence." Well, actually, the word is trust. Going back to the Lord is thy trust. And so hearkening back to what we saw in three. And really, keep your foot from being taken. As you get into four, what you're getting here, it says don't just know wisdom, but really love what wisdom is. And so you really seek it.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 00:28 And then when you get into four, versus 10 to 19, it's really like, well, there's two paths. There's the path of the wicked, and there's the path of the just. And saying, stay on the path of the just, or the righteous. Think in scriptures, this idea of two paths, one Nephi, or you think of the Sermon on the Mount. Choose the right path and stay on that one. Because it's very easy to divert from. So it gives you counsel on how not to divert from that path.
- Hank Smith: 00:56 Perfect. I think what we're talking about here can be illustrated in so many lives. That Latter-day Saints and non Latter-day Saints go through something horrifically difficult, but continue to trust in the Lord. They stay on the path that both of you talked about.
- Hank Smith: 01:12 This is a story from President Monson, April, 2009. The talk was called, "Be of Good Cheer." He talks about a woman who went through World War II. March of 1946, less than a year after the end of the war, then Elder Ezra Taft Benson visits Germany, and he meets a woman who bears this testimony. President Monson tells her story.
- Hank Smith: 01:37 She and her husband lived in idyllic life in east Prussia, then had come the war. Her beloved young husband was killed. She's driven from her home. The journey was over a thousand miles on foot. As the days turned into weeks and weeks into months, the temperatures dropped below freezing.

Hank Smith: 01:54 She stumbled over frozen ground. Her smallest child, a baby in her arms, her three other children struggled behind her. The oldest, just seven years old, pulling a tiny wooden wagon. Then the snows came, and one by one, the unthinkable happened. The tiny forms of her children, all four of them, go cold and still.

Hank Smith: 02:15 It says her despair was all consuming. In this moment of overwhelming sorrow and complete bewilderment, she felt her heart would literally break. In despair, she contemplated how she might end her own life. And then as these thoughts assailed her, something within her said, "Get down on your knees and pray."

Hank Smith: 02:37 She ignored the prompting until she could resist it no longer. She knelt and prayed more fervently than she had in her entire life. And then this is the prayer. "Dear Heavenly Father. I do not know how I can go on. I have nothing left except my faith in thee. I feel, Father, amidst the desolation of my soul, an overwhelming gratitude for the atoning sacrifice of thy son, Jesus Christ. I cannot express adequately my love for him. I know that because he suffered and died, I shall live again with my family. That because he broke the chains of death, I shall see my children again and will have joy and will have the joy of raising them, though I do not at this moment, wish to live."

Hank Smith: 03:21 Let me say that again, because it's so good. "Though I do not at this moment wish to live, I will do so that we may be reunited as a family and return together to thee." It says when she finally reaches a city in Germany where she can stay, she was literally in the advanced stages of starvation. And yet she stands in a church meeting and bears a glorious testimony. That is the epitome of what we've talked about here. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, get on the covenant path and stay there.

John Bytheway: 03:58 Hank, we were as a family the other night watching a church produced video, more recent, called, "The Refiner's Fire," about a woman, I believe her name was Kim Martin, who lost her whole family. Just super inspired by it, but also just thinking, wow. That power of trusting. We watch a story like that or hear a story like that and think, boy, I hope I have that in me.

Hank Smith: 04:22 I hope I have that in me. I like that, John.

John Bytheway: 04:24 That kind of trust. I don't know for sure.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 04:27 This ties in well with four, verse 25. We're talking about this path of the righteous, and get to 25 says, "Let thine eyes look

right on." But I think a better rendering translation should be, "Let your eyes look forward and let the eyelids look straight before thee." So focus ahead. Look forward.

- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 04:46 You think of the tree of life, the Book of Mormon. Keeping your focus. Not everything that's going on, the building, everything else. Focused on the tree, right? The iron rod. I think of the saying, "keeping your eyes forward," I think of Peter, when he is walking on the water for a time with the Savior in Matthew 14. He diverts his glance, looks at the waves and everything that's going on, and then starts to sink. You go this path and look forward. Don't look to the side, keep moving forward.
- John Bytheway: 05:11 Love it. There's this verse 18, reminds me of one of my favorite verses in all of scripture. The path of the just that you just said, Lincoln, "is as the shining light that shineth more and more until the perfect day." Doesn't that remind you of -
- Hank Smith: 05:28 The Doctrine of Covenants.
- John Bytheway: 05:28 Of section 50 verse 24, "That which is of God is light. And he that receive light and continueth in God." That sounds the same as that idea of the stay on the path. "And continueth within God, receiveth more light. And that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day." It's one of those that I thought, wow, I thought that'd probably be footnoted there because they're so close, but it isn't. But that's one of my favorite verses. I have, probably like you Hank and you Lincoln, a hundred favorite verses. No, this one's my favorite.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 06:03 Today.
- Hank Smith: 06:04 Today that one's my favorite. That's my favorite today.
- John Bytheway: 06:06 That idea of light growing brighter and brighter and unto the perfect day in Proverbs.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 06:11 And you think the perfect day here, the Hebrew's are like, the full day. With all the lights out, noon when it's totally bright and then light is overwhelming. You can see everything.
- Hank Smith: 06:22 This is one of those Come Follow Me lessons that you really need to sit down, you and your scriptures and a pen, and really just find what speaks to you. Lincoln, what do you want to focus on next?

- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 06:33 So much here in 50 and 60. But I think verse one is really key, "A soft answer," or you could try that as, "a gentle answer or response turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger." And it's the disposition one ought to have, right? Be thoughtful in how you speak. The wise do this.
- Hank Smith: 06:51 Be gentle. Lincoln, President Hinckley liked this same verse. This is a talk called, "Cornerstones of a Happy Home." And one of the cornerstones he gives is the soft answer. He said, "The writer of Proverbs long ago declared a soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up to anger. I hear so many complaints from men and women that they cannot communicate with one another. Perhaps I am naive, but I do not understand this. Communication is essentially a matter of conversation. They must have communicated when they were courting. Can they not continue to speak together after marriage? Can they not discuss with one another in an open and frank and candid and happy way their interests, their problems, their challenges, and their desires?"
- Hank Smith: 07:35 And he goes on. He says, "There is need for much discipline in marriage, not of one's companion, but of one's self. Husbands, wives, remember, he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty." He quotes another proverb there. "Cultivate the art of the soft answer."
- Hank Smith: 07:49 Isn't that just a great phrase? "Cultivate the art of the soft answer. It will bless your homes. It will bless your lives. It will bless your companionships. It will bless your children." I think as a father, probably the times in my life where I've felt the worst about my parenting is when I didn't have a soft answer. I wasn't gentle, as you said, Lincoln.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 08:12 You can correlate one and 18. And this is also picked up again in James, where he talks about, "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." But again, the Greek word there's actually anger. "Slow to anger, but swift in hearing." I sometimes hear, well, we have two ears. So we should listen twice as much as we speak with one mouth.
- Hank Smith: 08:33 I won't even share with you guys the embarrassing way my mouth has gotten me into trouble over the years. Not listening, but speaking. Or maybe thinking after I speak you ever gotten those out of order? Spoken and then thought about it, when you should probably think about it, then speak.
- John Bytheway: 08:48 That's funny. People sometimes say, "Don't worry about that person. They don't have a filter." And maybe it's just a break.

Not a filter, but just something that slows us down before we answer so quickly. But I just always loved verse 17. "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is," and this is a contention type thing, "than a stalled ox and hatred there with." And so, stalled ox must be the steak and potatoes of that day, right? Compared with the salad.

- Hank Smith: 09:21 So it's better to have a salad with someone you love than a nice steak with someone you hate or someone who hates you.
- John Bytheway: 09:29 Yeah. These are some of those that as a kid, we enjoyed and laughed at, even.
- Hank Smith: 09:34 I'd have a salad with you, John. So did the ancients just keep a quote book? I mean, did they say, "My grandma used to say," and then they wrote it down? Because some of these, they don't seem to fit together. They're just a quote, after a quote, after a quote.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 09:53 You wonder. You have this book of proverbial wisdom. When we get into 16 and really into 22:16, what you're going to find is they may be more arranged around here what they call the royal section of the Proverbs that has to do more with court values and settings, like we'll get here in a few verses. And we'll talk in 10:15 about kings. You will have some thematic units, but yeah, some of the organizing principles, not always discernible.
- Hank Smith: 10:20 Yeah. I was going to say, it does feel that way that sometimes you're just getting a quote, after a quote, after quote. They're wonderful, but you're like, what's going to happen next? There's not much of a storyline when it comes to Proverbs. This is more, you could search it and find the thought for the day.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 10:35 Well, I guess we're into 16, "Better is wisdom than gold," which we've seen. Some of these repeat. Acquisition back in three. I do think 18 is a good warning. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before the fall." And just a warning.
- Hank Smith: 10:50 This would be a time to go read President Benson's talk on pride. I remember as a missionary I read that frequently. I probably should read up more as I'm getting older. There's a funny story of President Hinckley with a man who thought himself was a pretty good speaker. I think of this one often, because it happens to me.
- Hank Smith: 11:07 He thought he was a pretty good speaker, and he went up and he just fumbled his way through his talk. And he sat down all

sad and disappointed in himself. I don't know if this is true or not. If it's not true, it should be. Apparently, President Hinckley said to him, "If you'd gone up the way you came down, you would've come down the way you went up." So if you would've gone up humble, you would've come down happy. You went up thinking you were great, and you came down thinking you weren't so great.

- John Bytheway: 11:37 That's a proverb of President Hinckley.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 11:40 We're getting to the point now we're in a ways, we can see some repeating. So for 20, "Trusting in the Lord, that person is happy." 25. There's some roads again. The roads of life, the road of death. 32, your slow to anger. We just talked about that a moment ago. I do like 31, "A hoary head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness," or gray hair.
- Hank Smith: 12:01 Is that what that, hoary is a gray head?
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 12:03 Yeah. Gray hair. And so you're older. Ideally, you should have attained wisdom.
- Hank Smith: 12:09 A gray head is a crown of glory. How many of our listeners need to mark that one? Proverbs 16:31. The hoary head. The gray head is a crown of glory. John, do you have any gray?
- John Bytheway: 12:20 I think, yeah. My temples. I think that's what they call them. Right?
- Hank Smith: 12:24 I liked 17:17, "A friend loveth at all times." I've had friends like that who have been there for me in dark times, who have come through for me. I could start naming them but I'd forget some. Man, "A friend loveth at all times." That's a great one.
- John Bytheway: 12:40 I got to go back to 16:32. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty." And then the parallelism, "He that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." It's that, are you in control? What would you call it? A self-discipline thing?
- Hank Smith: 12:58 Self-control. Self-discipline, yeah.
- John Bytheway: 13:00 Yeah. Is better than someone who can take a city, but you've got control of your own spirit.
- Hank Smith: 13:06 That is good stuff. Lincoln, you've mentioned a couple of times here that you want to get to Proverbs 22. Let's jump in there. What do you want us to see?

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 13:13 A few things in here. I think the first verse, obviously, really important. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold." This idea of having a name, or your reputation.

Hank Smith: 13:25 Your reputation is valuable.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 13:27 Having incredibly valuable. And here, it's contrasting between what the wise do and what the fools do here in the first 16 verses. So the wise will, they have a good reputation. They have a good name.

Hank Smith: 13:38 The wise will have a good reputation. They'll care about that.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 13:41 Yeah, it matters to them. Four, "By humility and fear of the Lord are riches, and honor, and life." It comes through, right? Putting the Lord first. Your priorities. "Seek ye first, the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you." The Lord says, focus on me first. Have your priorities.

Hank Smith: 13:57 "Seek ye first." That's Jacob two, isn't it?

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 14:00 I think in the Sermon on the Mount.

Hank Smith: 14:02 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 14:02 Matthew.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 14:02 Matthew six, then, yeah, you have it over in Book of Mormon also. But you start with that, right? Your priorities. In this case, the number one priority is fear of the Lord. It all starts with there. You have reverence, and now you move from there.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 14:13 And we've talked about six, already. Training up a child in the way he should go. And when he is old, he will not depart from it. Right? I think probability's here. Wise words, right? To work with your children, to love them, to educate them. And I think here, you'd say chastise them when need be.

Hank Smith: 14:29 Yeah. Correct them.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 14:30 If you love them, you chastise them. Yes.

Hank Smith: 14:32 Yeah. Lincoln, I don't think the author wants us to judge other parents with chapter 22, verse six, "Train up a child in the way he should go. When he is old, he will not depart from it." So I look at John and one of his children, let's say, isn't following the

Gospel path. I don't think the writer of Proverbs wants me to look at others and say, "Well, they must have not have done it well," right? As a parent?

- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 14:53 No, no. I think it's probabilities. You do this, and probability will, hopefully you'll have a good outcome. And of course in scripture, right, Lehi. I can imagine Lehi was a very good parent. Taught his children. And Nephi says, "I had goodly parents. They taught me." Didn't resonate with some of his children. Never gave up. The end of his life, he was still. Well, I would say something like wisdom in the Book of Mormon, right? Second Nephi. He sits down and counsels them at the end, gives them wisdom on what they should do. And so I think as a parent, you never give up. And you're trying. So here, it's just trying to teach them.
- Hank Smith: 15:25 I like that. And we can think of plenty of parents who we'd have to put in the failure category if we started saying that the behavior of their children is the way to gauge their success. Samuel, we've seen this year, Jacob, Israel we've seen this year. You've mentioned Lehi. There'd be Alma. Alma the Elder would be in that group. Alma the Younger would be in that group.
- John Bytheway: 15:53 And then that whole rising generation. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 15:56 Yeah. Mosiah. King Mosiah.
- John Bytheway: 15:57 There's a story I've heard, I don't have a reference on it, but I think it was President Harold B. Lee that someone said to him, "Hey, the Joneses are having trouble with their children." And President Lee said, "Yeah. And Heavenly Father's having trouble with some of his." And so, we're all in trouble.
- Hank Smith: 16:15 That's a great story, John. But I do think, Lincoln, you're right. Training up a child in the way he or she should go is better than not training up a child -
- John Bytheway: 16:23 Than not.
- Hank Smith: 16:24 In the way.
- John Bytheway: 16:25 And I like what Lincoln said, it's a probability. This is wise council.
- Hank Smith: 16:28 In fact, I have a tree outside that needs to be staked. And I told my son, "If we don't get that tree staked right now, it's going to start growing how the wind blows it over." And I think I'm going

to turn it into a lesson now, from Proverbs 22:6. I'm going to go out and say, "Let's train this tree in the way it should go while it's," what'd you say Lincoln? It's because right now it's malleable. But if I let that tree grow -

- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 16:52 If it stiffens and hardens, then it's much more difficult.
- Hank Smith: 16:55 Yeah. Much more easy to work with wet cement, right, than dry.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 17:00 Interesting you bring that up. Because when I think about humility, we talked a lot humility, I think of the word meek. Meekness. Because one of the meaning, yeah, meekness, lowly. But the root meaning of meekness is fashionable. And what it means by fashionable, meaning you can actually fashion it. You can mold it. That's a sense of meekness. It can be molded still. If you're meek, you can be molded. You can be worked with. You don't break.
- Hank Smith: 17:24 I like that. We just don't want any parent listening to go, "I should have done better." If we could even apply a lesson we've already learned from Lincoln today, which is look forward. Trust in the Lord. He's their savior. If you have a child you feel like is off the path, trust that the Lord is mighty to save, and let him direct your path in what you should do. Go to the Lord, ask him. What do I do with this child?
- John Bytheway: 17:48 Yeah. Lincoln brought up Lehi and Sariah. And I just love that the Book Mormon starts out with a family that has problems. It's not perfect. They struggle, and there's ups and downs. And they're in the wilderness and they're having more children. And Lehi has to sit down with Jacob and say, "You've never seen Jerusalem. You've seen the rudeness of your brothers." And it gives him a perfect chance to explain opposition in all things.
- John Bytheway: 18:14 And I think it was President Boyd K. Packer who gave this talk back in 92 about, he called it our moral environment. And he said that judging parents by how their children turned out would only be just if we lived in a perfectly moral environment. And that is not now possible. He became a moral environmentalist in that talk. It was a really helpful, helpful talk.
- John Bytheway: 18:38 And also, Hank, as we brought up, section 46. "We'll be judged suiting his mercies." What does the Lord say? "Suing his mercies, according to the conditions of the children of men." That one gives me hope too. Book of Mormon starts out with a family with all sorts of ups and downs, and the Lord's going to

suit his mercies according to the conditions of the children of men. So hold on to those for some hope.

- Hank Smith: 19:01 And remember the Lord is mighty to save. This wouldn't say trust in the Lord if you couldn't trust in him. You can trust him. There's nothing your child can do that falls outside where the Lord says, "I did not see that coming." The Lord, the great Jehovah. What did Joseph Smith say? Contemplated it at all and has made ample provision for the redemption of all people. Lincoln, let's keep going in 22. What else do you want to see?
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 19:27 We've covered a lot of these. Well, that's funny. 13. "The slothful man," or the lazy, right, "Man sayeth, there is a lion without. I shall be slain in the streets." It's like you give these absurd excuses for not doing something. And that's what they do. The dog ate my homework. This is what the ancient, "dog ate my homework," is. I can't go and do something, because there might be a lion out there. It might kill me.
- Hank Smith: 19:49 There's a lion out there. I might die. I am going to use that.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 19:54 I thought, I got to throw this in here. Lighten the mood a little bit.
- Hank Smith: 19:57 That is funny. I'm going to use that. The next time I get asked, Sarah will say, "Hey, take the trash out." And I'll say, "Whoa, whoa, whoa. There is a lion out there."
- John Bytheway: 20:07 There could be a lion out there. I am not taking the garbage out.
- Hank Smith: 20:11 I will be slain in the streets. Are you crazy? So this is the lazy man coming up with a reason why he can't work. I'd never seen that one before.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 20:21 I love it. I thought it'd be a comical one to throw out. But what's interesting, get into 17, and you actually get a shift now in the Proverbs. So it says, "Bow down thine ear and hear the words of the wise." I think it's saying, there's really an authorial shift now. We're going to hear from now the wise people.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 20:40 And what's interesting is if you go down and you go to verse 20, look what it has here. "Have not I written to the excellent things in councils and knowledge." Now just a note on this, it says excellent things, but a better reading that's been reconstructed now from the Hebrew is not excellent things, but in fact something to the extent of, "Have I not written to thee 30 things." It's sheloshim.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 21:07 In fact, in the Greek and the Latin, it talks about being threefold. And so the Greek and Latin translation's already getting to this. It seems to be widely recognized now for the last century of who are these wise. When you start going through this, there's a number of parallels here and some really quite close to, I said before, there's this Egyptian wisdom text by a man called Amenemope.

Hank Smith: 21:30 Amenemope.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 21:31 Yeah, Amenemope. Lived as best we can tell during the Ramseed period, sometime about 1300 to 1100. And there was a papyrus found, but had in 30 chapters, "The Wise Sayings of Amenemope to his Son." Wisdom literature.

Hank Smith: 21:47 Wow.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 21:48 And when you start reading that, you'll see that it seems to be that as they redact this, they bring in that wisdom and they include this here. It's 30 sayings. And this goes in through chapter 24. For example, you go to 22, "Rob not the poor because he is poor, neither oppress the afflicted in the gate." And in chapter two of Amenemope it says, "Beware of robbing the poor and oppressing the afflicted." There's other parallels that people can find that I think there's too much there to be a coincidence for it not to be a relationship. There.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 22:20 Some people might be troubled. "Oh my goodness. Why is Proverbs relying on some Egyptian wisdom?" I guess I would say, well, the Egyptians can be wise, by all means. And I look at this as, for me here's would be a response for some of this material is section 88:118. And look what it says here. I'll just pick up partway through the verse.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 22:39 "Seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom," right? Wisdom. "Yea, seek out of the best books, words of wisdom. Seek learning even by studying also by faith." And so as I see this, I think they are picking up on some Egyptian wisdom. You already have Solomon, right, interaction, right, early on Israel with Egypt. And so I think it's interesting picking up on, hey, there's other wisdom out there. There's the quote unquote, "best books in the ancient world."

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 23:06 Well, as Israelites, we can draw on and use some of that. Maybe adapt it a little bit to this. If we think about wisdom. Yeah. There's good books out there. What can we use that we can go in and will help us be wise. Lord actually gives this

commandment. And so that's how I look at this interesting section where I think it's pretty clear. There's talk about, here's some Egyptian wisdom now that we're going to draw upon, but we can adapt it. And there's a lot of good benefit from it.

- Hank Smith: 23:28 I like that a lot. I love this, Lincoln. It reminds me of a statement from the first presidency way back in February of 1978. For anybody who's a little bit nervous that the Book of Proverbs is borrowing from this Egyptian sage, Amenemope, listen to this. Quote, "The great religious leaders of the world, such as Mohamed, Confucius, and the reformers, as well as philosophers, including Socrates, Plato and others received a portion of God's light. Moral truths were given to them by God to enlighten whole nations and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals."
- Hank Smith: 24:03 And then this statement, I'm not reading the whole thing, but this piece reads like an article of faith. "We believe that God has given and will give to all people sufficient knowledge to help them on their way to eternal salvation." So I think this is right in line with what you're talking about here, Lincoln.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 24:21 Yeah. I think there's some wisdom of the age that could be useful. That Israelites can come and use. And so they're consulting some of the best books of their own day.
- Hank Smith: 24:30 I think this is fantastic, Lincoln, that you've made that connection with Proverbs 22. We still have a few more chapters to go Lincoln, what do you want to cover?
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 24:39 We got 31, I guess. So that's the one, Come Follow Me, the last chapter?
- John Bytheway: 24:42 Yeah. We better do that.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 24:44 Yes. Well, 31, it's a really fascinating chapter. So 30 and 31, interesting chapters, because here it's clear there are two individuals that we don't know much about. You have the words of Agar in 30, but we're going to look at 31. Here it's the words of King Lemuel. And this is fascinating.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 25:02 Who is Lemuel? Some have thought, the name in Hebrew means to or for God. So maybe it's some kind of cipher for Solomon. I don't think that's probably the case. And it talks about here, it says, "the prophecy that his mother taught him." And again, in verse one, we have this word for prophecy. Is this word here that's being used, and it's Massa.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 25:27 And so some try to say it wasn't a prophecy, really more like an oracle or pronouncement. So some will say, well, this is the words, King Lemuel, the pronouncement that his mother taught him. So she taught something wise. Or another way it is read is, of King Lemuel, and then you have a prophecy, but it's Massa as a place. So it'd be the words of King Lemuel of Massa.

Hank Smith: 25:47 Wow.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 25:48 And Massa, if you go back into Genesis 25:14 or 1 Chronicles 1:30, this is a descendant of Ishmael. And so it's this territory in Arabia. And so some have wondered, is this a king? Some said, well, maybe it's a king in Arabia in the eighth, seventh century BC, which is also interesting. And again, if that is the best reading here on this.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 26:10 It's fascinating, by the way, just as a footnote here, the word Lemuel only appears in the Old Testament twice, verse one, verse four. And so if you have a king in Arabia in the eighth or seventh century BC, and then we have a Lemuel popping up in the Book of Mormon, I find that fascinating with Lehi and that onomastic reference there. But the timing is right. So if that is the case, but again, no one really knows for sure who this Lemuel is.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 26:36 I would probably say most are leaning toward, well, it's probably a king somewhere in Arabia, but again has wise counsel. Right? There's best books. Has some good things his mother taught him. And so his mother's now teaching him, okay, when you're a king, this is what you ought to do and not do.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 26:54 And when you get down to verse two, "What my son, what the son of my womb, and what the son of my vows," the Hebrew there is *ma* or what, but I think the force of it is better like, "No, my son, no son of my womb," like, N-O. "No, son of my vows." Saying no, don't do these things.

Hank Smith: 27:12 Okay.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 27:13 And then she gives strength about what not to do. And says, well, as a king, well, here's what I don't want you to do. Well, first of all, don't give all your strength to women. We can think here, right, well, Solomon, for example. As wise as he was, you read back in one Kings 11, concubines and women were his downfall. So his mom's saying, okay, don't do this. Son, I think another good advice, don't give yourself over to drink. I think

we can think of a lot of examples of royalty or kings getting too much involved in drink.

- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 27:45 I think of Book of Mormon, right? King Noah. Mosiah 11. This is what he does. So she's saying no, avoid this. It'll be a real temptation for you in this position, but do not do this. Don't do this. Don't get involved, spend your energy on all these things or on drink.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 28:01 She does say some rather interesting advice though here, about, well give it to the poorest. They can forget their problems. But you don't touch it. You need to judge. Which is, okay, there's some wisdom, right? 2700 years old. Eight and nine, again, you're given power. And judge righteously, especially over the poor and needy. And so some really sage counsel from his mother.
- Hank Smith: 28:21 Plead the cause of the poor and needy.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 28:23 And this is the responsibility as a king to go and do this. And so you have this council to start here, and then you get into 10. And this is where we have this talk on the ideal woman. I think it's the wisdom, but it's actually a woman here. What is the real woman like? The ideal woman?
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 28:43 So if you look at 10, "Who can find a virtuous woman, for her price is far above rubies." And it says, virtuous here, what's interesting here. If you go to the word underlying this, a better rendering here, I would say, is, "strong," or, "capable." Who can find a strong or capable woman? Finally we get the word virtue. Well, the King James translators are here influenced by Latin, right, vertus. It actually means strong in the original meaning going from Latin.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 29:11 And so it's saying, who can find a strong or capable woman. In fact, even a meaning here, a sense of, a woman who's like a soldier. This is what it is. And it will start now telling you what this woman is. As it goes through the ideal woman, ends then with, well, she fears the Lord. As we saw back in one seven.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 29:29 But there's something even more interesting here in this section, beginning in 10, down to 31. What you have here if you look at the Hebrew, is you have an acrostic. And what an acrostic is in Hebrew, it's where each verse begins with a letter of the alphabet and it goes in succession for all 22 letters, starting with alef and then ending at the end with tav.

Hank Smith:	29:58	That's the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet and the last, Alef, Tav. Yeah, Lincoln, just point these out. So chapter 10 starts with the letter ...
Dr. Lincoln Blumell:	30:03	So verse 10, it begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
Hank Smith:	30:08	Which is?
Dr. Lincoln Blumell:	30:11	Alef. Think of -
Hank Smith:	30:11	Like alpha.
Dr. Lincoln Blumell:	30:12	Yeah, like alpha in Greek. And then each successive verse through the end starts with the next letter.
Hank Smith:	30:18	And there's 22 total.
Dr. Lincoln Blumell:	30:20	22 total. And so it goes through. You have acrostics in Psalms, for example, where they'll do this. And typically it's trying to say, this thing encompasses it all. Right. If you think back New Testament, "I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the end." Alpha the first in the Greek, omega is the last Greek letter. So it's saying, this woman is everything. This is it all.
Hank Smith:	30:42	Interesting.
Dr. Lincoln Blumell:	30:43	We talk about, right, alpha males. Well, here is our alef female. But she's even more than a alef female. She's an alef female. And so it's putting this emphasis on here that this pattern that you don't see in the English, it's not mentioned here, but it's not accidental, this is going on. And so it's really saying, this is the utmost. She encompasses it all.
John Bytheway:	31:03	I love this. This is one of those places where there's things that are hidden in plain sight that you do not see if it's in English, but if you saw it in Hebrew and you knew the Hebrew alphabet, you would see that. So it's like, A is for her altruisticness. B is for her benevolence. C is for her charity. D is for her delightfulness. And you don't know that because we're not reading it in Hebrew, but it lets you know there's more here than, just let's think of a random bunch of traits. It was something that was really worked on.
Hank Smith:	31:34	That's awesome.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 31:35 Yeah. I mentioned earlier. There's really not many JSTs in Proverbs, but it's interesting. Listen, the JST's not here, but the one JST that actually is the most meaningful in all of Proverbs is back in Proverbs 18:22, which reads, "Whoso findeth a wife, findeth a good thing and obtaineth favor of the Lord."

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 31:53 And the JST actually says, here it changes, says, "Who so findeth a good wife hath obtained favor of the Lord." It actually changes this. And I think here, when you get to this time, you say, here is the ideal wife. Idealized woman, what you're looking for. And of course, she'll have the fear of the Lord and wisdom. All the things she does in her household. And so really saying, yeah, her price is far above rubies.

John Bytheway: 32:16 I want you to say that phrase again. And it's an acrostic poem, A-C-R-O-S-T-I-C.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 32:22 Yep. Acrostic. And what you have here, right, in this acrostic, stichos in Greek is a line and acro is the top or beginning of a line. So each beginning of a verse starts with a successive letter and it goes all the way through the alphabet. And so it's saying, there's something important going on here, but it's imputing this, yeah, I think that everything. This woman encapsulates everything, all the letters of the alphabet. She's the all in all.

Hank Smith: 32:45 Was this still going to King Lemuel, or did this start a new section that wasn't part of what his mother had given him?

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 32:53 Well, this seems here, right, the words of King Lemuel, it just goes on. So it seems that he's saying the question, who can find this woman? Who can find this capable woman? Well, this is what she's like.

Hank Smith: 33:03 This is great.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 33:05 You'll quickly see, right, what does she do? Well, she is industrious. Her lights never go out. Of course, this is idealized. Verse 18. "She layeth her hands to the spindle and the distaff." So spinning yarn, doing this. And that's interesting, because you have to find ancient epitaphs, when they have depictions of women, they'll often be holding a spindle on a distaff. Because this is what they'll say for a woman who was very respectable. If you're really trained in this, well, then you're really the ideal woman who can manage your oikos in Greek, your household, well. And she stretches her hands to the poor. She gives to the needy. 21:20, "She clothes her family in clothes," right? They're scarlet and purple. Well, these are actually royal colors.

John Bytheway: 33:45 And her husband's the elder's quorum president in verse 23.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 33:48 There we go. And her husband's known to the gates. He's sitting there talking. She has strength and it says honor or splendor. And when she speaks, what does she have? Well, there it is. She has wisdom. 26. She has that.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 34:00 And so I think in the Book of Proverbs, it talks about young man, young man, young men. Well, women are here, but it's very clear. Note, wisdom is for the woman as it is for the man. It can be acquired by both.

Hank Smith: 34:11 That's fantastic. John, what were you going to add?

John Bytheway: 34:14 I also think if you're not careful, you may read this as a woman and say, "Oh my goodness, I can't possibly live up to this." And that's not what we want to happen either. It's just a wonderful list of desirable traits. None of us are going to live up to the list, but these are some great ideals. They just happen to be in the order of the Hebrew alphabet.

Hank Smith: 34:36 This is President Uchtdorf in a talk "In Praise of Those Who Save". He says, "And now, just one word to those of our single brethren who followed the deception that they first have to find the perfect woman before they can enter into serious courting or marriage. My beloved brethren, may I remind you, if there were a perfect woman, do you really think she would be that interested in you? In God's plan of happiness, we are not so much looking for someone perfect, but for a person with whom throughout a lifetime, we can join efforts to create a loving, lasting and more perfect relationship. That is the goal." So John, that was just a funny reminder of what President Uchtdorf said.

John Bytheway: 35:18 And now we get to go to the book of Ecclesiastes. And I have always wondered what that means, because we talk about ecclesiastical leaders and things like that. What does the word mean before we jump into it? It says Ecclesiastes, or, the preacher in the old Testament.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 35:36 Well, that's a good question. And when you get this word Ecclesiastes, what we're getting here is we're getting the title of the Greek translation of the Hebrew work, where they take this word in Hebrew kohelet, which is translated as preacher, and the Greek comes along and say, well, this is an Ecclesiastes, which is basically, "one who assembles."

- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 35:58 And if you think about ecclesia, our church. Well in Greek, the word ecclesia, it can mean church, but even before Christians start calling things churches, an ecclesia is just an assembly. And so what an Ecclesiastes is is somebody who assembles things. And so it seems to be here, it's one who is assembling material together. We talk about Proverbs, it's assembled together. And now this also is assembled together. Because not unlike Proverbs, this work is not linear in a number of ways. It ebbs and flows, and topics are treated in one sense, then stopped, and then picked up again a few chapters later.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 36:33 And so this is where you're getting this word Ecclesiastes from, somebody who convenes an assembly, or in this case is assembling material. So it would fit with a preacher, but something like an assembler. The one who goes and brings all this work together.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 36:48 And not unlike Proverbs, there'll be some aphorisms, but there are some more sustained, certainly sections here at multiverse. But it'll approach wisdom and a life a little bit differently. Whereas Proverbs is about probabilities of, what you do this, good will happen. This will say, well, you may do what's best. And there are no guarantees. Or they're not nearly as many guarantees, or the probability, actually, is not quite as high.
- Hank Smith: 37:13 So life is more complex than you think.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 37:15 Yes. It's interesting about this text, because we know the rabbis were debating its canonicity. Is this really scripture? Because I read it and said, does this really fit in scripture? And it's already in there. But because the way it reads, yet, some traditionally had wondered that very thing. Today it's actually read in Judaism. They'll read it during the Feast of Tabernacles.
- Hank Smith: 37:38 What's the overall message of the book, Lincoln?
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 37:40 The phrase that will appear most, as you see, verse two, "vanity of vanities." To some other translations. The word here in Hebrew is this word, hevel, which means breath. And so it's literally breath of breaths. But what you're getting at, I would say, is something like it's ephemeral.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 38:01 If I were going to say, what is the overarching motif of this book? What happens? And there's this phrase, "under the sun," i.e. immortality, and under the sun appears about 30 times is, it's ephemeral. It will not last. I think the author's aware of this and says he did all these things, and they won't last. And so

what I would take looking at this book in a positive light, especially in light of the epilogue is, keep your trust in the Lord.

- Hank Smith: 38:26 He is not.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 38:27 He's not. He's permanent. He's not fleeting, but this life is ephemeral. You'll notice a number of times, for example, in 1:14, talk about the vexation of spirit. This is how the KJV rendering is done. Others render this as, this word spirit in Hebrew is ruach, which can also be wind or breath or air. And so a lot of times actually rendered as, everything is vanity. And they'll say, this is basically chasing the wind, right? You're not going to get it. It's transitory.
- Hank Smith: 38:55 So the book starts out with fleeting, fleeting. Everything is fleeting. Why even try?
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 39:04 Things are ephemeral. Therefore, we'll talk about in chapter two, enjoy those things you can while here. Because you do not know how the end may come. In some ways it will say God's purposes are inscrutable, meaning we can't ultimately figure out why some things happen, why they don't. So enjoy your time while you're here.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 39:24 But I wouldn't take this to the form of hedonism. We'll just eat, drink, and be merry. Tomorrow, we die. You get in the Book of Mormon, "Enjoy your time here because you do not know what tomorrow holds. It will be short." And I think with the epilogue, it frames it then, well ultimately just trust in God. Even if things don't work out in here, keep your trust in God. Tie that back to Proverbs.
- Hank Smith: 39:45 So is chapter one basically, life goes by, day after day goes by, what profit hath a man of all his labor, which he taketh under the sun. It's all fleeting. I think human beings have felt this before. Why am I on this planet? So what's next Lincoln? After chapter one is life is fleeting.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 40:04 I think 3:11, it's they're just round the sunset. The sea never gets full. The rivers pour into that. And so I think it's just pointing out that it's hard to discern. We like a linear goal-oriented thing, right? Going back again to Deuteronomy 11, you'll be blessed if you do this, you'll be cursed if you do this.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 40:19 And I think it's saying that you sometimes look at things and it's not altogether clear why it is the way it is. And from our perspective, we may not be able to see any pattern in it. As you

go down to 11. I think it's interesting. "There is no remembrance of former things. Neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after." What you do is fleeting.

- Hank Smith: 40:42 Everyone forgets. It's forgotten.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 40:44 And that's why I like, we talked about you don't remember things. Or keep records.
- Hank Smith: 40:48 So he's noticing that once someone dies, they're forgotten.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 40:52 They are eventually forgotten. This emptiness, this vanity or futility. And so picking up on that. And then you get an autobiographical section from early 12 to 18. "I, the preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem." Now that's interesting. Doesn't actually call himself Solomon. He says in the past tense, "I was the king." And so it wonders, tradition does put this to Solomon, but who?
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 41:14 He says, look, I went and I sought after wisdom in all kinds of ways. He goes, he seeks after wisdom when he was the king. And he talked about, well, it is like a vexing spirit. So it was like chasing after wind. I could never grasp it. And you get down to 17. He said, "I gave my heart to know wisdom and to know madness," Here I think we might say, even revelry might be a good translation here, "and folly. I perceive that this is also a vexatious," or like chasing wind, "for in much wisdom is much grief. And he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow."
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 41:51 Which I think is, again, an interesting concept. It's going to take some work to get wisdom, but also you're going to get grief in this process. The wisdom, it's hard earned, but just think of this mortality. Think about God says, yeah, go to earth, have this mortal experience. You're going to learn a lot, get a lot of wisdom. But yeah, it's going to be a lot of grief. It's going to be hard. You're going to get joy. You'll get a lot of joy, but it's going to be a hard process. And I think he's saying this in a way, in life you'll grow, but it's hard. More wisdom isn't all just a wonderful thing. It'll come with pain and suffering and at a cost.
- Hank Smith: 42:23 Interesting. Is he saying that wisdom comes with grief in that grief I became wise?
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 42:31 Yeah. As I think about this grief or sorrow, think of Moses 5:11, right? With Eve. Where it says "Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad saying, 'Were it not for our transgression,

we never should have had seed. And there should have known good and evil. And the joy of our redemption, eternal life, which God giveth unto all the obedient." Yeah. I think acquisition comes at a cost.

- Hank Smith: 42:53 It's similar to Hebrews five. "Though he was a son, yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered." So grief and wisdom come together. I don't like that.
- John Bytheway: 43:07 So I like your 2 Nephi 2 reference, Lincoln, because there's opposition in all things, but it's part of the learning process. And so we have the, "Adam fell that men might be, men are that they might have joy." And we love that verse, but there's also Moses 6:48 days, where it says, "And he said unto them because that Adam fell, we are. And by his fall came misery. And he said unto them because that Adam fell, we are. And by his fall came death. And we are made partakers of misery and woe". So it's some days there's joy days, and there's misery and woe days. And that's the learning. That's the laboratory of opposition and all things, right?
- Hank Smith: 43:45 Much wisdom comes with much grief. I can see why there's a bit of a pessimistic attitude here.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 43:56 To really have wisdom and know, you experience both.
- John Bytheway: 43:59 That's a really good point to bring up. We have a life of total ease and comfort. It sounds appealing, but we might not learn much. It wouldn't stretch our souls very much.
- Hank Smith: 44:10 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 44:11 I remember, I think it was Brother Truman Madsen that said, when you truly come to love someone, you've doubled your capacity for pain. And I thought, well, that's strange. But what he meant was, then you suffer their joys. I mean, you experience their joys with them, but you can also experience their sadness when they're sad. And every parent knows that.
- John Bytheway: 44:30 My family were watching a video the other night, a church video called, "One on One." It was about this brother named Troy Russell who lost his son. Really unfortunate accident. And how he was just pleading with the Lord one night to take away all of this pain. And he got this just really profound answer.
- John Bytheway: 44:51 The Lord said, "I could take away the pain, but I'd also have to take away the nine years you enjoyed with your son. Or you can

have the nine years you had with your son, but you'll also have the pain." And he made the comment, this brother, that he would prefer to keep that all, which was just amazing to watch.

- John Bytheway: 45:13 Really one of those really super sobering things, but how wonderful to have an eternal perspective of the whole thing. And I guess that's what we're talking about today in these books.
- Hank Smith: 45:25 Yeah. Ecclesiastes one, "For in much wisdom is much grief." I can't tell you I like that Lincoln. I can't tell you that I think that's a great way to go.
- John Bytheway: 45:37 That's my favorite verse.
- Hank Smith: 45:39 Yeah, man.
- John Bytheway: 45:40 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 45:41 Lincoln, this has been a fantastic day going through these two books. I think our listeners would be interested in your journey of education. Oxford graduate, all these different degrees, and being a faithful Latter-day Saint. What's that journey been like for you?
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 45:56 It's had ups and downs. I think staying on the path and looking forward, trusting in the Lord. For me, I tie in a little bit of Ecclesiastes. Having joy with where you're at. I look at the last two chapters of seizing the day. Carpe diem, right? Living in the day, finding joy in that, I think for me is how I've done this.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 46:18 And what's most meaningful, especially in light of what we've talked about. Certainly in Ecclesiastes with things that are ephemeral. A really defining event in my life took place as a young man when I was a senior in high school. Played a lot of sports, played at baseball. Played on a rep team and up in Canada and made it to the tournament that was basically the national championship tournament.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 46:39 In our first game, I was a center fielder. We were playing. In about the second inning there was a rain delay. There was some rain. We all ran back into the dugout. Rain ended, right, ran back onto the field. And I was warming up with the left fielder, throwing a baseball. And out of the blue, there was just a large crack. And I was blown back, and I was on my back. And I was like, what just happened?

- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 46:59 And I looked over and the person I was playing catch with who was a good friend of mine had been struck by lightning and was actually killed instantaneously when he was hit by lightning. And I remember seeing total pandemonium break out at the field. I saw this poor young man, his dad came out on the field was totally distraught. And people trying to help. Waiting for an ambulance to come. Minutes seemed like hours.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 47:22 And in the aftermath, that whole event, you're a senior in high school, you do feel immortal. You feel like, well, life's never going to end. And coming back to Ecclesiastes, life is transitory. That's the one thing I think I learned at a young age, where I thought, well, I'm immortal. No, life will have an end, and it may be sooner than you think. And in some really bizarre circumstances.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 47:44 And coming out of that whole circumstance, what comforted me the most of anything, if the one thing I held onto that helped me the most was the Gospel. It's permanent. It's not transitory. It's going to be there in really, really tough times. And so that was a really defining moment in my life. And of course after that event, it was like, well, what's the most important thing I could do? Well, I need to go serve a mission. Because I saw how that helped me and how friends on the team who didn't have a belief system really, really struggled.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 48:14 And I struggled too. You can't go through that and not struggle somewhat. But for me it made me think how important the Gospel was and the permanence of that. So that was a defining moment in my life where I'm like, we don't know when the end's coming, but let me make the most of what I have while I'm here.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 48:31 In that moment, in your sorrows, your struggle is you really come to know God. And so for me, while some may be challenged with things they read or hear, for me that hasn't had the same effect on me. Where I have questions, but my testimony's only grown. And yes, as it continues to grow, yes, can you have questions. I try to answer them. But just have really an abiding faith in the Gospel. This is permanent. It's something I can really rely on.
- Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 48:58 I can trust in the Lord. I really, really can. No matter what comes, I can get through it. And so for me, that's defined my life and help me with what I've done. And really my scholarship and as I try to be disciple of Christ. And so when challenges come, I'm like, no, I'm going to stand fast and remain firm.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 49:16 And in fact if we have time I'll just share one other brief story. Last couple of years, really, I think everybody did, right, the last two years with COVID had some really tough times. And personally some real big challenges. And I remember where again, just knowing the Lord was there for me.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 49:31 I took my daughters out. We were going back to the Olympic peninsula last July. And driving out and just going through a hard time. Again, valleys in life. There's hills, there's peaks. Tough time. I just pulled over the car at this rest stop in the middle of nowhere in Oregon. Didn't have to use the restroom.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 49:49 I just said, "Girls, I need to take a break." Was feeling overwhelmed. I said, "Girls, let's go get some candy at the vending machines. I'm just going to go and sit down over there's picnic tables there, things like that. I remember walking to the picnic tables being like, "God, I need some help. I really, really need some help."

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 50:04 And I remember just saying, "I really need your help." And I remember getting there and sitting down at the picnic table, and lo and behold in the middle of nowhere, somebody left a copy of the Book of Mormon. Some missionaries left it there. And I said, "Okay, God, I got the message." And I'm like, this can't be a coincidence. The middle of nowhere, I just stopped and went out and behold, there's a Book of Mormon.

Dr. Lincoln Blumell: 50:23 Of course I took it. I have it. And I really treasure that. And so for me, just knowing that even in really hard things you can trust in God. So going back, you can really trust. Keep the commandments. You don't know where your journey's going to go at times. Look forward. Yet you move forward with faith. I've had these experiences where I know God's there watching and helping me. And for me that really trumps anything else.

Hank Smith: 50:46 Excellent. Wow. Both of those experiences. Those are, man. Thank you so much, Dr. Blumell, Lincoln. This has been a wonderful day studying these two books with you. John, I've said it before, but I don't know how we got this job. It's a good job.

John Bytheway: 51:03 I know. It's just a great, those last stories. Some things are permanent, some are transitory. And to have that book there, that here's your answer. That's beautiful.

Hank Smith: 51:14 Beautiful.

John Bytheway:	51:15	Thank you.
Hank Smith:	51:16	We want to thank Dr. Lincoln Blummel for being with us today. We want to thank all of you for joining us. We want to thank our executive producers, Steve and Shannon Sorensen, and our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen. And we hope all of you will join us next week. We'll be back with another episode of FollowHIM.

HANK & JOHN'S FAVORITE PROVERBS



- Hank Smith: 00:05 Hello, everyone. Welcome to another edition of followHIM Favorites. You know the deal; John and I take on a certain question from this week's lesson.
- Hank Smith: 00:15 Well, it's a little bit different this week, because we're going to be in the Book of Proverbs. So instead of asking a question, we're just going to say, what are our followHIM favorite proverbs?
- Hank Smith: 00:28 The Book of Proverbs is made up of short little sayings. It's like the ancient world's Instagram, where you can kind of scroll through and just get little quotes that you like and you can put up on your mirror.
- Hank Smith: 00:39 So John, tell me about the Book of Proverbs. What jumps out at you?
- John Bytheway: 00:44 They're like refrigerator magnets, little quotations.
- John Bytheway: 00:47 I think we probably ought to start with the youth theme for this year, right? Proverbs 3:5. "Trust in the Lord with all of thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thine ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths."
- John Bytheway: 01:01 So that's Proverbs three, five and six.
- Hank Smith: 01:04 Absolutely. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart. Lean not to thine own understanding."
- Hank Smith: 01:10 This one is a little bit of an interesting one. It's Proverbs 6:27. It says, "Can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned?"
- Hank Smith: 01:20 It's kind of a funny question. Can you pick up fire and hold it and not get burned?
- John Bytheway: 01:26 We probably should add, please don't try this at home.

Hank Smith: 01:28 Yes, please don't do this. Please don't do this at home.

Hank Smith: 01:31 The wisdom in this is that when you're dealing with very important things like human sexuality, you've got to be careful. If you're not careful, you're going to get burned. And you don't want to take fire, you don't want to pick it up and go, "Oh wow. This really hurts." It's smart to be wise about things like that.

Hank Smith: 01:49 Okay, John, back to you. Can you find another one?

John Bytheway: 01:52 Yes. Proverbs 4:7. "Wisdom is the principal thing. Therefore, get wisdom. And with all thy getting, get understanding."

Hank Smith: 02:03 "In all thy getting ... "

John Bytheway: 02:03 "With all thy getting ... " Whatever that means. With everything you've got.

Hank Smith: 02:07 Yep. If you're getting a lot, make sure you're getting understanding.

Hank Smith: 02:11 How about Proverbs 14, verse four? See if you can follow this one, John. "Where no oxen are, the crib is clean."

Hank Smith: 02:19 I love this one. "Where no oxen are, the crib is clean."

Hank Smith: 02:23 Now, that's only the first half. And what it means is, if you don't want to clean up oxen manure, don't have any oxen. "Where no oxen are, the crib," or the stall," is clean. If you don't want oxen manure, don't have oxen.

Hank Smith: 02:38 But then it finishes with, "But much increase is by the strength of the ox."

Hank Smith: 02:44 So it's a give and take.

Hank Smith: 02:47 I like this because there's no such thing as a manure-free ox. If you're going to have an ox, you're going to have to deal with both the pros and the cons. You're going to have to deal with the pros, which is the strength of the ox, but also the cons; cleaning up after the ox.

Hank Smith: 03:03 I've used this in marriage many times. If you don't want to have marriage problems, don't get married, but there's a lot of blessings from being married. If you don't want to have kid problems, don't have kids, but there's a lot of blessings that come from having kids.

Hank Smith: 03:17 Just one of my favorites. "Where no oxen are, the crib is clean, but much increase comes by the strength of the ox."

Hank Smith: 03:25 Back to you.

John Bytheway: 03:26 Oh, that's great. And I have heard you use that. I'm so glad you did.

John Bytheway: 03:29 Proverbs 15:13. "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart, the spirit is broken." Skip to verse 15. "All the days of the afflicted are evil, but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast."

John Bytheway: 03:46 And then verse 17. "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

Hank Smith: 03:55 I'd rather ...

John Bytheway: 03:57 How would you like your stalled ox? I'll have mine medium well. And do you have some A1 Sauce with that?

Hank Smith: 04:01 I'd rather have a salad with my friends than a nice big steak with someone I don't like.

John Bytheway: 04:08 And Ruth's Chris with my enemies, right?

Hank Smith: 04:10 That's awesome.

Hank Smith: 04:11 I found a merry heart one as well. Proverbs 17:22. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit dryeth the bones."

Hank Smith: 04:20 That one reminds me of President Hinckley. Remember he always used to say, "Put a smile on your face. When things look gloomy, put a smile on your face. Things are going to work out."

Hank Smith: 04:30 And a little bit further in that same chapter ... This one, I just don't know if I live it as well as I should. Verse 28, Proverb 17. "Even a fool when he holdeth his piece is counted wise."

Hank Smith: 04:43 So if you're not that smart, don't open your mouth and people won't know that you're not that smart. But the problem is, is I keep opening my mouth.

John Bytheway: 04:55 Oh, my dad used to say something. I guess it is a proverb, not biblical, but, "It's better to let people think you are a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt that you are a fool."

John Bytheway: 05:07 Across the page ... This one is for new grandpas; Proverb 16:6. And for old grandpas. "Children's children are the crown of old men, and the glory of children are their fathers." So your children's children, those are called grandchildren. I have one.

Hank Smith: 05:24 That's fantastic. And they are the crown of life.

Hank Smith: 05:28 Skip all the way up to Proverbs 27:17. Think about this with your friends. "Iron sharpeneth iron." If you want to make an iron sword even sharper, you use iron. Those two things can sharpen each other. "So a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

Hank Smith: 05:47 Ooh, I like that one. A good friend is going to make you sharper, is going to make you prepared for spiritual battles. You want friends like that. An iron friend.

John Bytheway: 05:58 Proverbs 27:6. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."

John Bytheway: 06:06 Oh, I just think maybe there's something about the savior in that. He was wounded for us, "The wounds of a friend", for us, "But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." Who kissed Jesus to betray him, you know?

Hank Smith: 06:20 Hmm. Interesting. Yeah, that definitely can be a foreshadowing to Jesus.

John Bytheway: 06:24 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 06:24 All right. Here's my last one. Proverbs 25:28. "He that hath no rule over his own spirit," so self-control, "Is like a city that is broken down and without walls."

Hank Smith: 06:37 A city that is broken down and without walls is about to be destroyed. It's about to be taken over by any other army that's coming along. So we need to make sure that we have as much self-control as possible. We need to have rule over our own spirit.

John Bytheway: 06:54 A couple more.

John Bytheway: 06:55 Proverbs 29:11. Going back to that same thing you talked about; "A fool uttereth all his mind, but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards."

John Bytheway: 07:03 And then verse 20; "See hast thou a man that is hasty in his words. There's more hope of a fool than of him."

John Bytheway: 07:11 But let's end on a positive note. 29, verse 18. "Where there is no vision, the people perish, but he that keepeth the law, happy is he."

Hank Smith: 07:21 Ooh, I love that. When you said, "There is no vision, the people perish," I think of President Nelson. We have vision. Man, do we have someone with vision?

Hank Smith: 07:30 I'm going to throw in one more that I like. I forgot about this one. Proverbs 15, verse one. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." Try to not get upset, raise your voice and get angry. "A soft answer turneth away wrath."

Hank Smith: 07:45 Over in verse 18, same chapter; "A wrathful man stirreth up strife, but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife," or is a peacemaker.

Hank Smith: 07:56 So much to learn in the Book of Proverbs.

John Bytheway: 07:59 Here's another one, Hank. I got to throw this one in. Proverbs 13:20. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise. A companion of fools shall be destroyed."

John Bytheway: 08:10 I heard somebody make the most interesting comment once that if two men are walking down the street and they meet each other, one will adopt to the speed of the other or their stride will start to match. One will slow down, one will speed up. And it's just that idea of, try to have good associations because they'll bless you.

John Bytheway: 08:30 So I'm blessed to be walking down the street with you, Hank. Thank you.

Hank Smith: 08:34 That's awesome. Hey, that was a great one to finish on.

Hank Smith: 08:37 We hope that you will go into the Book of Proverbs this week and find some of your favorites. Get your red pencil out and start highlighting through the proverbs. You might find some that you'll remember for the rest of your life.

Hank Smith: 08:49 Now, we want you to come join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can find it wherever you get your podcasts. This week we're interviewing Dr. Lincoln Blumell, who's going to

walk us through Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. You're going to love his take on all of this.

Hank Smith:

09:04

And of course, join us next week for another followHIM Favorites.