



EPISODE 35

GUEST: JENAE NELSON



“The Rock of Our Redeemer”

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 Wednesday.

Podcast Episode Descriptions

Part 1:

How do we stay strong when things around us are in decline? Dr. Jenae Nelson examines the Pride Cycle and the Virtue Cycle and examines how we can strengthen ourselves and trust in the Lord to save His children.

Part 2:

Dr. Jenae Nelson continues to discuss Helaman 1-6, including the power of gratitude for the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Great “Coming Back” to the Church.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part I - Dr. Jenae Nelson
- 02:00 Dr. Nelson's bio
- 03:27 *Come, Follow Me* Manual: Symbolism and intrigue
- 07:09 The beginning of evil bands and Egyptian names
- 08:54 Hebrew Structure in Helaman
- 10:26 Summary of Helaman 1-6
- 16:42 How to identify Pride Cycles and encourage virtuous cycles
- 19:57 Virtue and vices
- 24:04 Protect the private times with the Lord
- 29:50 Scriptures teach us truths that science confirms
- 35:16 Helping teach external motivations
- 40:57 Trust the Lord to give His children spiritual experiences
- 47:25 Trying to control hurts outcomes
- 59:32 Helaman 5:35 - Angels will come to those we love
- 1:03:20 Aminadab and dissention
- 1:06:54 - End of Part 1 - Dr. Jenae Nelson

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II– Dr. Jenae Nelson
- 00:38 Helaman 3:27 - Things are amazing and dark
- 06:24 Helaman 3:35 - Gratitude, pride, and religiosity
- 11:25 How to increase gratitude?
- 15:15 Gratitude builds relationships
- 19:41 Helaman 3:35 - Yielding your heart and prosperity within the Church
- 21:43 Helaman 4:12 - Vices and oppression of the poor
- 24:00 Helaman 5 - Jesus as our foundation
- 26:47 Helaman 5:12 - Dr. Nelson shares a story of a storm and a tent
- 29:38 The Great Coming Back
- 33:37 A member leaves but his descendents are found
- 36:58 Helaman 6:32-36 - Where are our hearts?
- 40:14 Intrinsic motivations and the Savior as refuge
- 45:10 How do we stay hopeful and of good cheer?
- 51:26 End of Part II– Dr. Jenae Nelson

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Biographical Information:



Dr. Jenae Nelson earned her Bachelor's and Doctorate degrees in Developmental Psychology from Brigham Young University. She is currently an assistant professor in the Psychology Department at BYU Provo. Dr. Nelson completed her postdoctoral research at Baylor University, focusing on character development during adolescence and young adulthood, and at Harvard Medical School, where she studied the neuroscience of spirituality. Her expertise lies in the cultivation of character traits such as gratitude and compassion, and the positive impacts of religion and spirituality on youth development. Her work has been featured in publications such as Church News, Music & the Spoken Word, Christianity Today, The Associated Press, Meridian Magazine, and BYU Magazine. Dr. Nelson and her husband have four children, aged 21, 19, 17, and 15.

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Helaman 1-6 Part 1



GUEST: JENAE NELSON

- Hank Smith: 00:00:04 Hello everyone. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name's Hank Smith. I always remember, remember my co-host, John Bytheway. John, we are joined by Dr. Jenae Nelson. We're starting a new book. We've gone through the long Book of Alma. It has been a while since we've had a new book. Tell me about the Book of Helaman. What comes to mind?
- John Bytheway: 00:00:29 Pride cycle, because I've seen the seminary movies and the lesson plans. It starts fast forwarding after Alma. The thing that President Ezra Taft Benson said is that, "Hey, if you want to know what things are like before the Savior's second coming, watch in the Book of Mormon, how they are before his first coming." Ooh, here it comes in the Book of Helaman, a lot of topsy-turvy pride cycle stuff going on here.
- Hank Smith: 00:00:54 We have these two brothers, Nephi and Lehi, who are standout characters and maybe don't get the type of coverage that the early characters in the Book of Mormon do. We're going to change that today. Jenae, before we introduce you, tell us what we're going to do today.
- Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:01:10 We are going to see a lot of contrast in the Book of Helaman looking at Helaman like a survival guide, a survival of the latter days. We're going to learn how to build our lives and our testimonies on Jesus Christ. What that looks like. Talk about dissenters and people who've left and how to go after the one and how to rescue the one. Talk about character and some other cycles. There's the pride cycle and there's some other cycles happening. There's a virtuous cycle and a vicious cycle. We'll begin and end with the heart. The condition of our heart and what a converted heart looks like.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:49 The darkness of these few chapters is really dark, but the miracles are unbelievable, so the contrast, I can absolutely see that. John, Dr. Nelson has never been with us before, so we are very blessed, very lucky today to introduce her to our wonderful listeners.

John Bytheway: 00:02:10 Dr. Jenae Nelson earned her bachelor's and doctorate degrees in developmental psychology at BYU. She's currently an assistant professor in the psychology department. She completed her postdoctoral research at Baylor University focusing on character development during adolescence and young adulthood. And at Harvard Medical School where she studied. Hang on to your chair, Hank, the Neuroscience of Spirituality.

Hank Smith: 00:02:38 Wow.

John Bytheway: 00:02:40 We got to talk about that. Her expertise lies in the cultivation of character traits such as, this is a fave of mine, gratitude and compassion, and the positive impacts of [religion and spirituality on youth development](#). She has been featured in the Church News, Music and the Spoken Word, Christianity Today, the Associated Press, Meridian Magazine and BYU Magazine, and we were talking before. She's also been with Bruce and Marie Hafen on the Faith is Not Blind Podcast. Dr. Nelson and her husband have four children. We're really happy to have you. I'm especially excited to hear about gratitude because I feel like it's such a cure-all for so many things.

Hank Smith: 00:03:21 Jenae, welcome. Thank you for being here.

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:03:24 Thank you. I'm so happy to be here.

Hank Smith: 00:03:27 I'm going to take a look at the [Come, Follow Me manual](#). And then Jenae, I'm excited to hand the reins over to you. Here's how the manual starts. It says, "The Book of Helaman records, both triumphs and tragedies," you already mentioned that contrast, "among the Nephites and Lamanites." It begins with a serious difficulty among the people of the Nephites and the difficulties keep coming throughout the record. Here we read about political intrigue, bands of robbers, rejection of the prophets and pride and disbelief throughout the land, but we also find examples like Nephi and Lehi, the more humble part of the people who not only survived but thrived spiritually. How did they do it? How did they stay strong while their civilization began to decline and fall apart? The same way any of us stay strong in the mighty storm the devil sends to beat upon us by building our lives upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ the son of God, a foundation whereon if men build, they cannot fall. There's a great parallel to our day here.

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:04:31 I think we should start at the very beginning, and I don't know if Mormon did this on purpose, but I think it's really nice how it sets up the whole chapter. There's an event that happens that I

think is quite symbolic. We have the Lamanites coming into the center of the land in verse 26, Helaman 1, "Moronihah had supposed that the Lamanites durst not come into the center of the land, but that they would attack the city's roundabout and the borders as they have hitherto done." This is a great analogy.

00:05:01 Like I said, whether it's on purpose or not, I don't know if Mormon was doing this intentionally, we often leave our centers, our hearts, our homes unguarded. And we focus quite often on the borders, on the people out there that are having problems, the wickedness in the world, and we're not thinking about how can we guard our center? How can we protect our center? How can we build a fortress around our hearts? I like starting off with that, especially because we're going to end in Chapter 6, Helaman 6. We're going to be ending with the heart, what can go right in the heart of the believers during perilous times.

Hank Smith: 00:05:39 The adversary switched strategies. You're thinking, oh, it's going to be same old, same old. This is what they do, and then this has never happened.

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:05:49 This is brand new. We see that today that he's attacking our homes and getting into our hearts. That's a problem, when Satan gets into our hearts and homes.

John Bytheway: 00:05:58 The doctor will say, "You need to strengthen your core," when what you're worried about is how does my hair look? How are my shoes? He says, "No, the center. This is where this all begins."

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:06:08 Exactly, and we see that the strife and these secret bands that start forming, it begins with family fighting. It's these three brothers that are fighting for this chief judge seat. It's interesting. The fighting is starting in a family. It's like Mormon is trying to draw our attention immediately to the center of our lives.

Hank Smith: 00:06:31 I've often thought, Helaman 1, we're fighting so much among ourselves, no one's watching, no one's paying attention to what the enemy is doing because we've got so much inner conflict. Everybody took their eye off the actual enemy.

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:06:46 And it's also extremely hopeful in perilous times to think that the work that I do in my own heart and in my own home can make a difference and it does make a difference.

Hank Smith: 00:06:58 And that's something I can influence. It's difficult for me to influence so far away from me the political stances of the world versus what's right here.

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:07:09 Exactly, and it's interesting that at the very beginning here, Mormon's explaining how these bands start, these secret combinations are starting. They're being introduced here, Kishkumen and Gadianton, and how it's these tiny little seeds that are being sown that we read later on end up becoming the destruction of the entire people. We want to keep that on the forefront of our mind as we're going through Helaman. What are these tiny little incremental changes that are happening that can lead to really large changes over time?

John Bytheway: 00:07:46 I have to read this Hugh Nibley excerpt because it's so interesting. He said there were three sons of Pahoran named Pahoran, Paanchi because anch is where the emphasis is. My dad used to say, don't put the emphasis on the wrong syllable. Pahoran, Paanchi and Pacumeni. Paanchi is one indisputable Egyptian name in the Book of Mormon. Nobody can ever dispute that. Either that Joseph Smith could have invented it or that it could not be pure 100% Egyptian because Paanchi and the way the Egyptologists spelled it, P-I-A-N-K-H-I was a very important person in Egyptian history just before Lehi's day, but this wasn't discovered until the end of the 19th century, this name. [Hugh Nibley](#) says, "There is in the Book of Mormon within one important family, a group of names beginning with P-A." It's hard to explain bullseyes like Pahoran and Paanchi as pure accidents. I'm sure a lot of people aren't out there, "I got to save that for my baby book. Paanchi, I like the sound of that."

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:08:54 I have to tell you guys, as I was preparing for this podcast, I reached out to a friend of mine from Baylor who's a theologian, not a member of our faith, and I asked him if he would be willing to read Helaman one through six with me and then give me his insight. And he did. He's such a good friend. It was so fun hearing his feedback. He could have done this in any part of the Book of Mormon, but he was like, "That's Hebrew structure. You see this in the Old Testament. You see this in the New Testament." And I'm like, "It's almost like this is written by God. Might just be the word of God." It's really neat when you find those little faith promoting things in the Book of Mormon and it's everywhere because there's no way that Joseph Smith could have written this book, that example that you used, John, it's just one of many. There's so many examples like that that testify that this book has a divine origin.

John Bytheway: 00:09:50 Has some ancient roots. He must have gone down to the Harmony Pennsylvania public library and found out or something.

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:09:57 Right?

Hank Smith: 00:09:58 John, Jenae, I don't think people are as familiar with this story in the Book of Helaman as maybe we are with the story of First Nephi. There's a lot of new names, a storyline that can be confusing about who's a dissenter, who's a chief judge, who is a Gadianton robber. John, you're an expert in storyline. Jenae, you're going to be the expert in human development here. I will play the part of student and learning along.

John Bytheway: 00:10:26 I've always wanted to have a class where my students had PhDs. So first I love saying this because I'd love to think that Elder Uchtdorf is my dear friend. Let's take the 30,000-foot view because he is so good at seeing everything that way. If we get way above the Book of Mormon, I mentioned before and [President Benson](#) said, "Hey, you want to know what it's going to be like before the second coming? Look at the first coming in the Book of Mormon." And it's not just the Book of Helaman. Go back to Mosiah. The church is organized. Go to the beginning of Alma. Missionaries are sent forth. Four Sons of Mosiah. Everybody. Anti-Christ's show up, and then there's wars and rumors of wars for the rest of the Book of Alma and then the Book of Helaman and that's where we are today.

00:11:15 We've got the signs of the times. We've got disputes during elections. Does that sound familiar? We've got political contention. We've got wickedness in high places. Secret combinations show up, and then the Lamanites blossom as a rose, and here comes Samuel, the Lamanite at the end of Helaman. And then here comes the destruction of the wicked and third Nephi and the appearance of Christ, mid third Nephi and then almost a mini millennium in fourth Nephi, and then a return to wickedness at the end. Final battles, Mormon and Moroni. There's 30,000 feet. Now let's set autopilot to just go down and look at the Book of Helaman. Now we're at 10,000 feet over Helaman chapter one, Moroni gives the government of the wars to his son Moronihah, Moronihah.

Hank Smith: 00:12:07 Yep.

John Bytheway: 00:12:08 And then we have these P names come up. We need a new chief judge. We've got Pahoran, the second son of Pahoran, the first. Paanchi and Pacumeni, the voice of the people goes with Pahoran. Paanchi is mad about this, so he says, "You're going to

pay." That's how I remember Paanchi, "You're going to pay." Pacumeni says, "I will pack up election for headquarters and go along with the will of the people." He does that, but then Kishkumen comes and murders Pahoran, and then they set up this secret combination.

- Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:12:44 And right away we are starting to see, as we talked about, those contrasts are being set up almost immediately where you have Kishkumen and Gadianton and the way that they're approaching power, and then you have the way that the righteous are approaching it. The wicked are working in secret. They're not law-abiding, they're murdering also the righteous. They're acting in accordance with the law and the voice of the people. It says that several times. We're getting this contrast of wickedness and righteousness and how does that look in the political realm? There's law-abiding versus the secret murderous plots happening.
- Hank Smith: 00:13:23 How many chief judges end up dead here in chapter one?
- Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:13:27 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:13:28 They call it the judgment seat. Right now it's the judgment hot seat or the judgment revolving door. Who wants to even sit on that thing? Paanchi gets executed, like you said, and then here comes this Coriantumr, while they are so concerned, they're distracted, and Coriantumr, a descendant of Zarahemla, a dissenter from among the Nephites comes in to the center of the land. And it says in verse 18, and there's so much contention and difficulty in the government. They hadn't kept sufficient guards in the land of Zarahemla. They didn't think anybody would be so bold as to come in and he slays Pacumeni.
- Hank Smith: 00:14:03 Now all three sons of Pahoran?
- John Bytheway: 00:14:05 Yeah, Pahoran, Paanchi and Pacumeni are all *patay*, which is Filipino for dead, so those guys are all dead. Now, here comes Helaman, is appointed to fill the judgment seat in chapter two by the voice of the people. And while Helaman is out by night, this Kishkumen gave a servant of Helaman a sign to take me to the judgment seat. Here's the secret plan. The servant of Helaman knows this is going to happen, stabs Kishkumen, even to the heart that he fell dead without a groan. Helaman 2 verse 9.
- Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:14:42 We talked about at the beginning these contrasts that are immediately set up. This is a literary device, but this is what's

actually happening in this era is you have these heroes and these villains and then we learn of their tactics. We have Helaman who is working according to the voice of the people like we talked about. He's keeping the statutes, judgments, and commandments of God, and it says that he did right in the sight of God continually. Contrasting that now with Gadianton, he was using flattery craft secret work. He was after power and authority and he ended up proving the entire destruction of his people.

00:15:17 These are nicely contrasted, and the thing that's really important here is that there's very few people who are Helaman-like and Gadianton-like. Like we have these heroes and these villains. These are contrasted for us to see what's the end result of a vicious cycle? What's the end result of a virtuous cycle? We can decide that, hey, this path leads to life eternal. This path leads to death. And Mormon is very clearly laying this out for us in a way that we cannot miss. Sometimes we do miss it. Instead of focusing on the center like we talked at the beginning, we're focused on the society at large pointing outwards and saying, there's all these things that are wrong with society and culture in the latter days, instead of looking internally and asking, "What could I do better?"

Hank Smith: 00:16:06 This seems like it would be a time of breaking news every day, "Breaking news, the election's been decided. Breaking news, Pacumeni is dead. Breaking news, the Lamanites have attacked." When Helaman gets the job as chief judge, I got to be thinking, "Oh, man."

John Bytheway: 00:16:22 Do you really want that job? Why would you want that job? I just wonder how unsettling it would be, but imagine if people keep assassinating the leader of your country and it keeps happening over and over.

Hank Smith: 00:16:37 Over and over.

John Bytheway: 00:16:37 And how unsettling that would be to the whole country.

Hank Smith: 00:16:42 Jenae, you said earlier something that really resonated with me and that is this tiny little problem is starting and they have no idea that it's happening. Things are great, they're wonderful, and yet there's almost like this cancer growing inside of this society. This scares me.

Hank Smith: 00:17:00 Take us where you want to go here. How do you fight against something that you don't even know is there?

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:17:05 As we talked about the very beginning with cycles, you have the typical pride cycle that we all know really well, where the people are righteous, they're blessed, they prosper, they start to worship their riches, and they become prideful and wicked. And then, they persecute the poor, suffering, wars, contentions come in, which humbles them. We all are familiar with this pride cycle, but the interesting thing is that it's leading you to the same place of where you started. You're bad, then you're good, then you're bad, then you're good, you're bad and you're good, but you're never really growing. It's like the cycle of stagnation. Nobody wants to be in that cycle.

00:17:43 But there's two other cycles that are happening at the same time. One that gives us a lot of hope and one that can be kind of scary, like you're talking about, Hank. One is called a virtuous cycle, that means that you're spiraling up and a vicious cycle literally means it's a downward spiral. We have those that are on these virtuous cycles. Nephi and Lehi are examples of this, so we'll talk about what they do, and the humble followers of God. These people that are getting more and more righteous, they're moving closer and closer to Christ. In these perilous times, they're able to do this successfully. So, that's the message of hope for me in Helaman 1 is that there are people who are getting more righteous, even though there's this wickedness that's growing in.

00:18:27 This idea of this incremental change is really nicely played out in Helaman 3. At the very beginning of the chapter, it talks about in verse one, "There was no contention among the people of Nephi, save it were a little pride and little dissensions." So, we start really small. And then, you get to verse three, and all of a sudden, "There was much contention, many dissensions." And then go down to verse 17, "There was great contentions and disturbances." We start from none to little bit, to much, many and great. This is an example of a vicious cycle in action happening on a societal level.

00:19:11 You guys have all heard the quote by [John Wooden](#), the legendary basketball coach. He said, "The true test of a man's character is what he does when no one is watching." It's very significant here that in Helaman we begin to see secret works. It says several times that the murderers couldn't be found. It was secret. They were hiding what they were doing. One of the first signs that you may be doing something you shouldn't be doing is if you try to keep it a secret. I think this is really important, especially for the youth to know, that there's a difference between keeping something secret and holding something

sacred. We know there are certain things in the temple that we hold sacred.

00:19:57 We have really special experiences with the Lord that we will hold sacred in our hearts, but keeping something secret is hiding because you're ashamed of what you're doing, you don't want people to know and you seek to cover up what you're doing or to hide. That's usually the first indicator that you might be in a vicious cycle. We certainly see that with Kishkumen and Gadianton. Obviously, this is an extreme example. It can be much more simple in our life where maybe we're hiding the amount of time that we're spending on the internet, we're hiding the things that we're doing on the internet. The first thing that Satan does when we've sinned is to tell us to hide. "Hide. Cover it up." He knows that if we hide that we are not seeking the Lord and we're not seeking light.

John Bytheway: 00:20:51 I really like what you're saying Jenae. I'm looking in verse 12 of Helaman 1 where Kishkumen came in "in disguise". I mean if we just stop right there, in disguise. Okay, somebody is hiding. Somebody doesn't want to be seen. It's not what it appears to be. "Then Kishkumen and his band had covenanted with him did mingle themselves among the people." So, now they're hiding in plain sight, they're among the people, but you don't know it, and that's where this gets frightening. Like you said, you have to look around and say, "Are there things I'm not seeing?"

00:21:23 I always remember this, sorry to go back to the '70s or '80s, but [President Boyd K. Packer](#) gave that talk about spiritual crocodiles and how they would hide in a waterhole and you didn't even see that the danger was there, but they were right there. And he told this really awful story about being told at an African safari, "Hey, how come there are no animals next to that waterhole?" And the guide said, "Crocodiles." "Well, I don't see any crocodiles." He goes, "No, they're hidden under the mud. Told them years ago, a young man didn't believe it. He saw something. He went out to that waterhole. And President Packer said, "In a moment, a crocodile had him and there's nothing we could do." It was a horrible story, but it was in disguise, it was covert and you didn't know it was there. How nice to have somebody warn you to be on the lookout.

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:22:18 I have heard that story and that reminds me of [Sheri Dew's](#) comment about how prophets see around corners. They can see these hidden dangers. They're warned of the Lord and it's their calling and their job to warn us.

Hank Smith: 00:22:30 2010, [Elder Holland](#), Place No More for the Enemy of My Soul fits exactly what you are saying. This is one paragraph. He says, "Why is lust such a deadly sin? Well, in addition to the completely spirit-destroying impact it has upon our souls, I think it is a sin because it defiles the highest and holiest relationship God has given us in mortality, the love that a man and a woman have for each other and the desire that couple has to bring children into a family intended to be forever. Someone once said that true love must include the idea of permanence. True love endures, but lust changes as quickly as it can turn a pornographic page or glance at yet another potential object for gratification walking by, male or female."

00:23:17 And then, this part, "True love we are absolutely giddy about as I am about Sister Holland. We shout it from the housetops, but lust is characterized by shame, stealth and is almost pathologically clandestine." Doesn't that sound like Helaman chapter 1 and 2? Pathologically clandestine. The later and darker the hour the better with a double-bolted door, just in case. "Love makes us instinctively reach out to God and to other people." And that's what you talk about, that sacredness. "Lust on the other hand is anything but godly and celebrates self-indulgence. Love comes with open hands and an open heart. Lust comes only with an open appetite." So, that contrast you're showing us between secret, hide it, and sacred, cherish it.

John Bytheway: 00:24:03 Good point.

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:24:04 I love that you contrasted a virtue with a vice. We can choose whether or not we're going to cultivate virtuous behavior or these destructive behaviors. I loved from this most recent conference, [Elder Steven R. Bangerter](#) in his talk Foreordained to Serve. And you guys probably remember this, he said that his dad told him to protect the private times of his life. The dad said, "More than any other time in your life, what you do during the private times of your life will have the greatest impact on how you confront challenges and heartache that you will face. And what you do during the private times of your life will also have a greater impact on how you confront the successes and joy you'll experience than any other time in your life."

00:24:45 I like the positive spin on this, that it's not that you're more prone to do evil in these private times, but that also you have this opportunity to connect with God. In the private times of your life, you can pray, you can ponder, you can meditate, you can draw close to the Lord, and that's the best way to use your private time. I really think that's amazing advice for all of us to protect the private time of our life.

Hank Smith: 00:25:11 I love what you said earlier. If you're hiding something, that's usually an indication that... If you can't talk about it, you probably ought not to be doing it.

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:25:21 It's a good rule to live by. And with adults, it's the same thing. The scriptures say, "Anytime that you endeavor to hide your sin..." There's Adam and Eve in the garden. One of the first things, the first impulse is quick, run, hide. Instead of seek the Lord. Go to the Lord for refuge. The Lord can cleanse you and heal you. Satan knows that that is the pathway to freedom and joy, so he doesn't want us to do that. He wants us to stay in chains and bondage of sin. The only way to do that is to hide and to stay away from the source of light and truth.

Hank Smith: 00:25:54 Doesn't that sound a lot like the Jesus to Nicodemus, "They don't like the light"?

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:26:00 Yeah, he goes at night to go and talk with Jesus.

John Bytheway: 00:26:02 He comes at night. "Is anybody looking? I wanted to talk to you, but I wanted to wait."

Hank Smith: 00:26:06 Yeah, and Jesus says, "Those who love darkness hate the light."

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:26:12 And if you have nothing to hide, there's nothing wrong with that. It can reveal good things too, not just bad things. But it's going back to this idea of these little incremental changes that are happening. I think this is really important what Mormon is doing here. And we get the opportunity because of the pace, you kind of mentioned this a little bit at the beginning, Hank, but Alma is long, it's really long. These war chapters, there's like a chapter for every year almost. And then, within these 16 chapters of Helaman, we cover almost the same amount of time, but in 16 chapters. So, it's condensed, it's faster, but it's also similar to being middle age where now that I am in my 40s, I can look back and think about prayers that I said 20 years ago and watch how God answered them. It's so cool.

00:26:59 It's like one of the cool things about being middle-aged. You finally have a little bit of perspective and that you can see. It is amazing to see a prayer answered that you said 20 years ago. There's nothing quite like it. And then, to see all of the pieces that God put into place over time. So, we get this similar type of perspective within Helaman where there's this condensing of time, and Mormon is showing us how they went to be a society that was eventually destroyed. We get to watch this unfold in faster time than usual, which I think is really interesting. But

he's showing us that it happened in these little tiny incremental ways. This reminds me of my favorite scripture, which we've already covered in Alma, but I'm going to repeat it because it's so good and it's so applicable here.

00:27:50 Small and simple things. "So, by small and simple things are great things brought to pass. And by small means in many instances, doth confound the wise. And the Lord doth work by means to bring about his great and eternal purposes and by very small means the Lord doth confound the wise and bringeth about the salvation of many souls." So, this is an eternal principle. Small and simple things bring about great things, either great wickedness or great righteousness depending on the small and simple things you choose to do today.

00:28:23 Here's a great quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson. He says, "Sow a thought, and you reap an action. Sow an act, and you reap a habit. Sow a habit, and you reap a character. Sow a character, and you reap a destiny." As a developmental psychologist, I'm really concerned with how we can get our children, our youth, our young single adults, even adults, I care about the whole entire lifespan, but how can we get our people to develop this kind of character that we see come out in Helaman, this virtuous character that Nephi and Lehi display for us. How can we do this? And Mormon is teaching us, Helaman is teaching us through these small and simple things we can create this virtuous cycle where we're not good, then we're bad, then we're good, then we're bad. We don't want to be on that train forever. We want to actually improve and come closer to God.

00:29:20 And [President Nelson](#) also gave us a great way to think about this when he talked about spiritual momentum. That momentum can be powerful, it can be powerful for good and bad. He says, "With frightening speed a testimony that is not nourished daily by the good word of God can crumble with frightening speed. Thus, the antidote to Satan's scheme is clear. We need daily experiences worshiping the Lord and studying his gospel."

00:29:50 We actually find this in the research. Of course, the scriptures are going to teach us truths, but it's really nice when the research is like a second witness for what we already know to be true. In research study after research study of adolescence and religious development, we find that the number one predictor of staying in the church are spiritual experiences. It's fantastic if you have good friends, it's fantastic if you have a ward that you like, it's great if you go to seminary. All of those little things are oil drops in your lamp. Ultimately, if you don't

experience the Lord daily, President Nelson is telling us with frightening speed, our testimonies can crumble. This is a prophet of the Lord seeing around corners, telling us there's a crocodile. To avoid this crocodile, you need to spend time with the Lord every day.

- Hank Smith: 00:30:55 The staying power of a personal experience with God, there's just nothing like it. Even having family home evening, even having family prayer. All of these, like you said, are wonderful, wonderful things, but it has to lead to, I've had my own experience, my own sacred grove. I knew it, I knew that God knew it and I could not deny it. As parents, sometimes we want to force-feed our children with information when it might be better to turn them to God. "Have you asked God about this? Have you gone to the Lord?"
- Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:31:30 Absolutely. My kids are sick of hearing this, but on Fast Sunday when they're like, "Mom, can I break my fast?" I'm like, "I don't know. Go ask the Lord. It's not my rule. I didn't make it up. You ask him if you're done." And I say the same with church. If they're like, "Do I have to go to church?" "I don't know. Ask your heavenly father. It's a commandment, so it's probably a good idea." But it's a different approach when we send our kids to the Lord for answers. Ask the Lord versus trying to give them all the answers and trying to make them do the right things. And what that actually leads to is what we call extrinsic motivation.
- 00:32:15 There's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is when you're motivated by outside things. You go to church because you're worried what people will think if you don't. You go to church because you're afraid that your parents will be mad if you don't. You buy a really fancy car because you really care about what people think about your appearance. That's extrinsic motivation. And the problem with extrinsic motivation with religion is it actually hurts our youth. The youth that have extrinsic motivation for their religiosity, their religious behaviors, they do not do as well. They don't have as good of wellbeing over time, and they don't have the benefits of religion. This is really interesting.
- 00:32:58 But the kids who are intrinsically motivated. So, intrinsic motivation comes from inside. "I want to do it. It's the right thing." That's what we want all of our kids to have. We want them to do it because they want to. It's agentic versus controlled. So, that extrinsic motivation, even though it may seem like you're making the choice, you're not really free because you're making the choice, because you're avoiding the judgment of other people, versus you really want to do this.

00:33:25 But the kids, the youth that are intrinsically motivated in their religious behaviors, those are the ones that get the most protective benefit out of church. And when I say protective benefit as a psychologist, I'm talking about outcomes that we generally care about, like they don't do drugs, they're not engaging in premarital sex, they get better grades, they're more likely to volunteer and have more civic engagement, things like that. The way that we measure flourishing as psychologists. But I think that we can see that as members of the church. We know when our kids are going for the right reasons

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:34:00 versus when they're going based off of this extrinsic motivation. We even see this, this is really interesting, we even see this extrinsic motivation repeatedly in the Book of Helaman and how it fails the Nephites. They're so concerned with what other people think that even when they repent, they're repenting because they're afraid that they're weak. This is Helaman 4: Verse 24, " And they saw that they had become weak like unto their brethren" and then it says that they recognize the error of their ways. They realized that they had done wrong and then they repent, right, and it says that they become weak because of their transgression in the space of not many years.

00:34:46 But essentially, what's motivating them to is that they see themselves as weak. They're afraid, so they're motivated to repent by fear and by the fact that they're not strong anymore, that this is extrinsic motivation, so it's no wonder that in not very many years later on, we're going to see these people become wicked again. Their repentance isn't sticking, and the reason why the repentance isn't sticking is because they have this extrinsic motivation. They're not doing it for the right reasons.

00:35:16 What does that mean for our youth and how do we translate that to our youth? Because as a mom, I care about that. I want to know how can I help my teenagers to have the right motivations?

John Bytheway: 00:35:28 I really love this idea of having personal experiences with the Lord. It's kind of hard to teach our kids because they see a checkbox when we say, "Say your prayers and read your scriptures" when what we're really after is the outcome. Saying your prayers and reading your scriptures is not the outcome. It's hopefully a method to get to that outcome where you have a spiritual experience with the Lord. We try to share in our teaching that what we want is to have the outcome of these habits and righteous routines is that you'll experience the spirit of the Lord in your life. That's intrinsic.

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:36:02 I work with the youth in my ward and of course, I study adolescent development, so this is something that I'm always thinking about, but specifically with the new changes that have come to the youth program and how we're approaching the for the strength of youth and how the guidelines are changing. We're moving away from these checkbox approaches with our youth and that is exactly what we need. The Lord knows what the youth need, but it doesn't work if you're not sending them to the Lord, if you're not having them have experiences with the Lord because the whole point is that they're supposed to pray to their Heavenly Father. They're supposed to ask, inquire, receive revelation on what is right for their life. If they're not doing that, they're going to flounder. They are going to be worse off than if they had a checklist. It's really important that we send them to the Lord in prayer for them to have those personal experiences so that they can find out what the Lord wants them to do because what a lot of the youth think is that the rules went away.

00:37:02 I hear this a lot that there's no rules anymore. I'm like, "Whoa, that's not the interpretation that we're supposed to have here." Jesus Christ is the standard for youth, so that means that we need to go to Him. We need to go to the Lord and ask Him what we should be doing. That's when it's going to work and when it does work, it works infinitely better than check boxes because check boxes does lead to that extrinsic motivation. You're doing it for the gold stars. You're not doing it because it feels good or because you have a relationship with the Lord, but if we can encourage our youth to have a relationship with the Lord, that's when the for the strength of youth and the youth program, the children and youth program will be working best, and the Lord knows that, but this means we really have to be intentional as parents.

John Bytheway: 00:37:49 [President Nelson](#) prepped us for this so perfectly. First is emphasis on hear Him, learn to hear Him and then be willing to let God prevail, and so, hey, it's not in the book, so therefore I can't. No, no, it's not in the book. Therefore, get on your knees and learn to hear Him and then are you willing to let God prevail? Answer and it's exactly right. Don't skip those steps for the strength of youth is not minimums of behavior. It's doctrines of discipleship. Now, you're going to learn to hear Him and that's harder work, though the Lord is asking the youth to do the work this time instead of let the book do the work. It's not going to spell out everything. You're going to go do the work, which is a taller order for kids. Yeah.

- Dr. Jenaë Nelson: 00:38:38 It is, but it's worth the effort. It is worth the effort because what it will result in is it will result in [Sister Joy Jones](#) said that we need to have a generation of sin-resistant youth. How we do that is by instituting this new program that the Lord has created for this specific generation for our youth today. We learned that Nephi and Lehi, I love this one little line and it's in, let's see, Helaman 3: Verse 21. It's talking about Helaman and his two sons. He gave his eldest the name of Nephi and the youngest the name of Lehi and they began to grow up unto the Lord. This visual, to me, it's this virtuous cycle. They're growing up. I'm 43. I can still grow up if I'm doing this virtuous cycle where I'm doing the incremental things over time that can lead to this strength of character.
- Hank Smith: 00:39:36 My wife is going to like this episode because that's a frequent message to me and my boys. Grow up. Yeah.
- Dr. Jenaë Nelson: 00:39:43 Grow up. You can still grow up. There's hope. I love it. Okay, so this is what [President Nelson](#) said, "We have never needed positive spiritual momentum more than we do now to counteract the speed with which evil and the darker signs of the times are intensifying." I just shared how we said with frightening speed, we can lose our testimony, but now he's talking about positive momentum. "Positive spiritual momentum will keep us moving forward amid the fear and uncertainty created by pandemics, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, and armed hostilities. Spiritual momentum can help us withstand the relentless wicked attacks of the adversary and thwart his efforts to erode our personal, spiritual foundation. Many actions can ignite positive spiritual momentum. Obedience, love, humility, service, and gratitude are but a few." I love this idea that in contrast to this frightening speed with which we can lose our testimonies, we also have within our power this positive spiritual momentum that we can grow up in the Lord and we can move towards this positive, virtuous life.
- Hank Smith: 00:40:57 As a parent, I've noticed, Jenaë, I want my children to have those spiritual experiences, but I have to trust that the Lord will give them those spiritual experiences. If I wrote the Book of James for my kids, it might be if any of you lack wisdom, let me give you wisdom. Here we go. Let me impart of you of my great wisdom and then you can go ask the Lord if what I've told you is wonderful, right? Instead, and maybe it's me having my own. Jenaë, is that part of it? I trust that the Lord will give them spiritual experiences because I have my own spiritual experiences?

Dr. Jenaë Nelson: 00:41:33 I think so. There was a great children and youth broadcast a couple of years ago where they were interviewing the youth on how asking them, how can the adults in your life best help you, and the youth shared this. I'll never forget it, but they said, "Share your spiritual experiences with us because it strengthens us and it helps us to know that those are possibilities for us." You're right, Hank. I think that sharing those experiences that we have makes it appealing to them. Then they're going to want that sweetness, if we share the joy of the gospel that we are experiencing. I had this amazing experience in the temple. Let me share it with you and then they want that for themselves.

00:42:14 As you were talking about your teenagers though, Hank, this story came to my mind. A couple of weeks ago, my husband and I were visiting a man in our ward and we were on our walk. We came across this man, one of our neighbors, and he doesn't go to church. He's a really great person. We ended up sitting in the road talking with him for like an hour and a half. I had bread in the oven that actually burned, but it was such a good conversation. I found myself confiding in him about some difficulties I was having with one of my children. This was interesting because oftentimes with people who aren't members, you think that you're going to go in and you're going to minister to them. You're going to be imparting all this wisdom and he ended up ministering to me and blessing me.

00:42:59 He looked at me in the eyes when I was telling him about this problem I was having with this kid and he said, "Don't you trust that the Lord has a plan for them?" I was like, "You're educating me. You're re-educating me. You're helping me remember. I know this, but I forget." We forget. He said, "It's important for you to keep that in mind that this child has their own path and their own way and you need to trust that they will come to themselves at the time that is best and right for them." He was literally giving me a sermon and it changed the way that I thought about this child and it helped me to think that I can be patient. I can have faith. I can trust that the Lord is like we heard in conference. The Lord is also in relentless pursuit of my child and cares just as much about their testimony as I do.

Hank Smith: 00:43:55 You can talk to your Heavenly Father. It's so simple when you tell us to do this, Jenaë, but there is quite a bit of faith involved that the Lord will talk to you. He will. He'll speak to you.

Dr. Jenaë Nelson: 00:44:08 He will, especially when it comes to our children because that is our most important calling. We get revelation for our other callings. We absolutely, absolutely get revelation in our calling as a mother and as a father. When my son was young, he was

having a difficult time in school. I was really, really stressing out about his future. He's my first child and we have a tendency to really be scared with that first one because we just think we're messing everything up and he was dyslexic. I didn't know that at the time, but that was why he was having such a hard time in school. Because of his difficulty in school, he was also kind of acting out a little bit and I was thinking the worst that he was going to grow up and end up in jail or something.

Hank Smith: 00:44:52

He's going to be a criminal. I know it.

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:44:53

Yeah. I just went all the way there. I was so worried about him and he actually has turned out to be the most amazing man, I should say, but at the time, I was very concerned and the Lord corrected me. The spirit came to me and He said, "Jenae, what's the most important outcome for your son? Is it his grades? Is it that he gets into BYU? Is it that he ends up doing this or that that makes you proud?" And I was thinking about that and I was like, "Okay, the most important thing to me is that he has a testimony, a testimony of the Lord because you're doing the things that you need to do to make sure that that happens and God is at the helm." When you invite the Lord into your home and into your house and into your heart on a regular, consistent basis through these continual efforts, these constant efforts that we're talking about, we can have a surety that the Lord is at the helm. All those other things that we worry about, we don't have to worry about. We need to focus on the really simple, simple things that will lead our children to know their Savior and to trust their Savior so that when they do encounter the storms of life, they are prepared because they have the Lord in their life.

John Bytheway: 00:46:25

I've probably said this before, but it gives me a lot of comfort. When I reread Moses 1:39, the Lord didn't say, "This is your job and your glory. To exalt your children." He said, "Well, actually, this is My work and it's My glory" and then in second Nephi, "I am able to do my work." I love that line. It's like, "I know what I'm doing. You don't, but I do" and He's good at His work. I'll do what I can, but sometimes like Alma the Elder, I have to look up and say, "Would you please help your son?" We don't know how and when he's going to do that, but he's got a plan for them too and that helps me a lot.

00:47:07

Speaking of prayers that are answered 20 years later, God has the long game in mind and He's really good at saving and really good at bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of His children, and that can help us exhale a little bit spiritually.

Hank Smith: 00:47:25 Jenaë, as you've been teaching us, I've had two thoughts. One, as a parent, my efforts to control it actually hurt what I want, right? In my efforts to get the outcome, to control the outcome, I'm actually hurting the very thing that I'm trying to get. And then two, I think we have listeners out there who may be a little like me going, "Oh, I wish I would've known this 10 years ago. Oh, I wish I would've known this 20 years ago." And John, we frequently talk about this, that we don't want anyone in our show to walk out going, "I'm the worst." That's not what we're about here is looking back with regret and anger. It's what can we do as we're moving forward? So if there's any listeners out there going, "Ah, I messed up as a parent. If I would've done it differently, this kid would be fill in the blank." Remember that what John said. This is the Lord's work. He's working with you too. He has some outcomes for you as well.

Dr. Jenaë Nelson: 00:48:24 Many, many people either know or have a child who has left or who is struggling. If I could share, if it's not too self-indulgent a little bit about my background. I hope this can give some parents some hope. In Helaman, we see all these narratives of dissenters and we also find this great story of Nephi and Lehi preaching to the dissenters and there's this mass coming back. So that gives me so much hope that this is happening right before Christ comes. There's this mass coming back, so we had this mass exodus, but there's this mass coming back. I can't wait to see that in our church. That gives me hope.

00:49:04 As an individual level, the hope that I want to share with you a little bit about my story. I was baptized when I was eight years old. My mom was a member of the church. My grandparents were converts to the church. I didn't go to church very often at all. In essence, I was pretty much not even what I would consider LDS, but my mom always believed. She had faith. She taught me to pray. She knew the church was true. She would try to read the scriptures with me, but I didn't want to have anything to do with it. We had a really hard life. I grew up with just my mom and my sister. There were some really, really hard times. There was a time when we were homeless and we lived in a homeless shelter. We lived with family members. It was a really hard time. My mom had severe mental illness and couldn't work. We were on government assistance.

00:49:55 At that time in my life, I thought that there was no way that God could be real because I couldn't see any evidence of Him in my life or at least a loving God. And I thought that if God is real, then He has to be loving and I don't see a loving God in my life. I looked around and I saw nothing but ruin. 11, 12, 13, this age where you're trying to figure things out, all I saw was my life

completely falling apart. I stopped believing in God. I started some self-destructive behaviors. I almost didn't graduate from high school. My mom, as you can imagine, was very worried about me. My mom had been excommunicated, but she still had faith and she still knew that God was real and that this church was His church. She still had hopes for me and she saw that my life was falling apart. Her and my grandpa had a fast for me. They prayed that I would come back or at least come to and

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:51:00

stop doing this really destructive behavior that I was doing. This was when I was 14. I still had a lot of really hard, bad things happen to me. There was still a lot of hardship for me to endure, but two years later, two years after that fast, I think about putting myself in my mom's shoes now and thinking, wow, I fasted and it took two years for something to happen, but when I was 16, I found out through a series of events who my dad was, and my dad happened to be a faithful Latter-day Saint and he had married a wonderful woman and they had six children and they were residing in Utah. I was living in Washington at the time. I couldn't believe that he would be willing to put his reputation on the line to come into my life because you can imagine telling people in your ward, oh, I found out I have this 16-year-old daughter from before I was married.

00:52:07

He didn't care about that. He really wanted to do the right thing. He wanted to do right by me and seeing the things that he was willing to do for me opened me up for the first time in a long, long time to God and to God being real and to God's love, and my dad spoke so openly about his faith. So did my stepmom. They were amazing examples to me. I started to think maybe there's something to this God stuff. Maybe God is real after all because it was this miraculous event for my dad. I grew up without a dad entirely, but then all of a sudden, this man, my dad, came into my life. He cared about me. He wanted to be involved in my life. It completely changed my worldview. It made me see things through the lens of maybe there is a God. I decided for myself, nobody told me to do this. I decided that I was going to pray and that I was going to find out if God was real, and I got a very real answer to that prayer. And a light began to enter into my life just like we see in Helaman with Nephi and Lehi, how they were encircled about with fire. I was encircled about with fire symbolically and it burst the cloud of darkness that had been completely clouding my life. From then on, I told God that if he showed himself to me and if he was real, I would devote my life to him and I have. But I gave my mom a really good scare and the people in my life that loved me, my family, they were so worried about me for really good

reason, for really good reason, but I have to say a couple of things.

00:54:08 The first is that there were certain people that never gave up on me. No matter what I was wearing, no matter how I was speaking, no matter what I was doing with my life, they loved me unconditionally, a family that did that for me and friends, and then there were others that treated me differently. I knew that they didn't love me and they didn't care. I also had different leaders that had different approaches with me. I had one leader, an incredible leader that would come and pick me up because she knew my mom couldn't give me a ride. She would come and pick me up and take me to Young Women's, and it was the only reason why I went to Young Women's for one year and it was the year that that leader was in my life before we moved, and that was incredible that she did that.

00:54:59 She didn't judge. She didn't say anything about what I was wearing. She didn't say anything about what I was doing. She picked me up and loved me and that meant so much because it's a simple thing. I didn't have a ride, but she was willing to give me a ride and I had other people that treated me like a project. They didn't make the time. They just dropped the thing off on the porch and left, and I don't want to give anyone any guilt trips here because I have done the same thing. It's so much easier to drop something off on a porch than it is to actually knock on the door and come empty-handed, but with a full heart. It's perfectly fine to show up to somebody's house empty-handed, but with a full heart because they will know if you love them, if you care about them, the way that you look at them, the way that you make eye contact with them, the way that you reach out to them, those things communicate I love you. My advice is that you can never go wrong with love. You can never go wrong with warmth. If people are coming back and they're not feeling the love of the Savior, then we're not doing it right. It's not just about filling our seats, it's about filling the hearts of the people that come to sit in those seats. We have to share love or we're doing it wrong. The final thing I'll say from my experience that I hope that people can draw and that we also learn from Helaman, never give up on people. Never give up on them. The Lord never gives up on us and the certain people in my life that I knew never gave up on me, I want to be that kind of person for other people. I want to always believe in people. I want to love them. The same as whether they're a member of the church, not a member of the church, for they are a dissenter, Nephite, Lamanite, whatever it is, whatever distinction it is, in the end, we are all children of God and it's our responsibility to treat each other that way.

00:57:09 And the only thing that brings people back, it's not guilt. The only thing that will really bring people back, this leads us right into Helaman 5:12, is bringing people to their Savior through the love of God, bringing them to the rock. That's the only way and that's the only way to keep our youth strong, and it's the only way to really bring people back and to study them, to study them in the faith is to share our love with them and open up our hearts to them in a way that is completely genuine and real.

00:57:47 I noticed this for the first time when I was reading this with my family last year. I had never noticed this great coming back that is talked about where they start preaching to the dissenters right before these events happen where Christ comes and there's this great coming back. I had never noticed that before. It gave me so much hope, but that tells me that we have a unique ministry in the last days not just to gather Israel for those who have never been a member, but we have a ministry among the dissenters. That word seems kind of harsh, but just to use the Book of Mormon language here, but we have a ministry with our loved ones who have left. I would say don't discount the angels that God will send. I want to use this analogy here in Helaman where we have Nephi and Lehi in the fire. Nephi and Lehi as they're in the prison, but they're in the right place at the right time.

00:58:45 God needs them there. So even though what got them in the right place at the right time was not necessarily favorable, they're in the prison right where the Lord needs them, so he situated them there. In verse 27 here in chapter five, " And behold, they that were in prison were Lamanites and Nephites who were dissenters." Here's where I talked about we have this great discourse on dissenters, like how to handle people who have left the church. Here comes the spiritual analogy. Then it says they were overshadowed by a cloud of darkness and we can see that in our loved ones and I've experienced that. I've experienced many clouds of darkness even since my conversion, but this is the part that I think is really, really cool. I want to go back up to the part about the Holy Ghost in a minute, but down here in verse 36 it says that there's... Let's see. No, verse 35.

00:59:42 "There was one among them who was a Nephite by birth who had once belonged to the church of God but had dissented from them and it came to pass that he turned him about," and this is while the cloud is over them and everyone is afraid in the prison, and Nephi and Lehi are encircled about by fire and it says he saw this Nephite by birth who's dissented. "He saw through the cloud of darkness, the faces of Nephi and Lehi and behold, they did shine exceedingly even as the face of angels." I

would say don't discount the angels that the Lord will send into the life of the people that you love who have left the church and don't be afraid to be somebody's angel. My grandma and grandpa were converted to the church and some of their children stayed strong in the faith, but a lot of them ended up leaving the church.

01:00:37 One of them had a daughter, my cousin, a wonderful, wonderful human who she's died of cystic fibrosis a couple of years ago, but while I was visiting them, me and my aunt decided to go to the ward, to my aunt's ward and while we were there, gave their name and number to the Relief Society president so that the Relief Society president would know, hey, you actually have a member here in your ward that you may not know about. We gave them their information, but my cousin was not a baptized member, never been a member, but they assigned my aunt a ministering sister. At the time, there was still visiting teaching. They assigned her a visiting teacher. Her name was Mary Stark and this visiting teacher was the bravest angel you have ever known. She started going over there and she would come over with the bread, knock on the door, invite herself in.

01:01:35 She would come over so frequently that my aunt and her husband, my uncle would let her in, that she made friends with them. She invited my cousin to start going to the singles ward in that area and my cousin started attending the singles ward even though she wasn't a member. This angel in our family, she's an absolute angel to us, was going into this home where other people may not have gone, but she was brave and she did it and she did it with love, with genuine care. She really cared about my aunt and my cousin. My cousin started to feel something different. She noticed that the people in the singles ward where she was going were light and they had purpose and they had direction in their life, and then she compared them to her other friends who had bad habits and kind of aimless and she could just see the light versus the dark in this contrast.

01:02:32 My cousin ended up getting baptized because of the good work of this ministering sister. I'm a member of the church, but I realized I couldn't have been the one to do this. Neither were any of the cousins or aunt or uncles in a position that we could bring back and bring my cousin into the faith we had tried. We've been good examples, but it was the love of a ministering sister that had brought my cousin into the faith and I will always be indebted to Mary Stark. She's an incredible woman and I've always thought she was doing ministering before. It was the higher and holier way when it was visiting teaching. She was

doing that. Don't discount the angels that will be sent into the lives of your loved ones.

- John Bytheway: 01:03:17 Perfect.
- Hank Smith: 01:03:19 Wow.
- John Bytheway: 01:03:20 Do you know what I love about this story that you just told too is that Aminadab who was a dissenter, who was out of the church knew exactly what to do. He knew the gospel enough. He knew it so well, that in verse 40, which I've always loved because there's a lot of people that might not have a physical cloud of darkness, but they might have an emotional one that is so real, it feels like a physical cloud of darkness. And they ask that question, how do I get this cloud of darkness removed from me? Aminadab and if you'll both look at me and those who are watching on video, when I talk about Aminadab, I always do this, Aminadab like that. The dab. I believe he invented the dab, but Aminadab, look at this, the doctrine of Christ. Repent. Cry unto the voice until you shall have faith in Christ, which was taught unto you by Alma the Younger, Amulek living beneath his privileges, and Zeezrom the questioning lawyer. All three of those guys had an interesting past.
- Dr. Jenae Nelson: 01:04:32 I love that.
- Hank Smith: 01:04:32 Dissenters, yeah.
- Dr. Jenae Nelson: 01:04:32 We see in verse 43, Nephi and Lehi, the prophets, that are encircled by fire, amazing fire and light that was encircling the prophets. It wasn't just for the prophets. We see in 43, "That behold we saw that they were encircled about yea every soul by a pillar of fire." This pillar of fire, this incredible witness isn't just for the prophets and apostles. We can have those same witnesses and that same light in our life.



Helaman 1-6 Part 2

GUEST: JENAE NELSON



- John Bytheway: 00:01 Welcome to part two with Dr. Jenae Nelson, Helaman chapters one through six. [Helaman 3](#), the synopsis is really good, "Nephites migrate to the land northward. They build houses of cement." When the Book of Mormon was published, that was an anachronism. Now, it's an evidence. "Tens of thousands are converted and baptized. The word of God leads to salvation." I mean, it's too good. Towards the end of Helaman 3, we have some really great verses that come up, and that's not storyline. That's some great doctrine, so I'm going to let Jenae hit those towards the end of Helaman 3.
- Dr. Jenae Nelson: 00:38 I love that. So, I mentioned that I had a friend of mine from Baylor who's not a member of the church, participate in reading this and then give me feedback on the scriptures. This was really awesome to see his perspective. He pointed out, starting with 27, "Thus we may see that the Lord is merciful unto all who will with sincerity of heart," there's the heart again, "call upon His holy name. Yea. Thus, we see that the gate of heaven is open unto all, even to those who will believe on the name of Jesus Christ, who is the son of God. Yea, we see that whosoever will may lay hold upon the word of God," and it keeps going. "The word of God is quick and powerful, which can divide asunder the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil."
- 01:24 But what he pointed out to me was this is really inclusive. This is inclusive eschatology, and that you have this idea that it's open to all. It's available to all. It's not just the select and the elect. It's whoever wants to. We do believe that. It is so good, isn't it? Anybody that wants to is invited. I love that about our faith. I love that this is the kind of God that I serve is the kind of God that says, "Everyone is welcome. Everyone is invited."
- Hank Smith: 01:53 Chapter three feels so real because you've got, "Wow, things are so great." Well, actually, things are not great. There's these problems all over, but really, things are great. The high priests, it says, are astonished beyond measure of how great the church is doing, how it's prospering. Yet, Mormon is keeping us abreast

of, "Well, there's actually some contention here, some contention there, some war here, some pride there."

- Dr. Jenaë Nelson: 02:26 I feel that that's what's going on now. There are a lot of people who find themselves in despair and how perilous our day is. People have been saying that for a long time, but it feels especially real in our day. The darkness feels darker than ever. The reason why we can rejoice when there are hard times and genuinely feel this kind of joy and happiness despite all of the chaos that is happening around us is because of the joy and the peace that we have in the gospel. Also, this contrast, that Mormon is teaching us, is expanding on the principle that there's opposition in all things. So if you have a lot of darkness and wickedness, you can bet that there's going to be a lot of a righteousness growing and a lot of light growing at the same time.
- 03:12 I get excited about that when [President Nelson](#) has said his now infamous quote about that we will see the greatest miracles from now until the coming of the Lord. Because we are living in such a dark time, we also get to participate in this incredible work where we get to see the most incredible miracles that have ever been, and it's real. It's happening right now, and I want to be a part of the miracles. I want to be part of that virtue building and the coming unto Christ and bringing people and part of the gathering, the greatest work that we've ever had. That's the part that I want to focus on in the latter days.
- 03:48 I don't want to focus on all of the chaos that is certainly there and the perilous times that we are certainly in, but you can really quickly lose hope when that's all that you focus on. When you don't have your eyes focused on Christ, you're going to miss all of the miracles and the wonder and the incredible work that we can participate in right now in our day.
- Hank Smith: 04:12 Wow. I love how you said that. This is... Today, things are amazing, and things are dark.
- Dr. Jenaë Nelson: 04:18 An interesting tidbit from psychology is that our brain is wired in such a way that negative events have more weight in our mind. We remember them more, and that's why it takes five compliments to undo one criticism. It's not an exact number, but you get the point. The negative things are stickier in our brain, so it's a lot easier for us in these days to be focused on all the negative things we hear on the news, and all the bad stuff that is coming into us on social media or whatever. It's going to be so much easier to only see that, but then you miss out on the

joy of the ongoing restoration. You miss out on the miracles that are pouring out from heaven.

04:57 President Nelson has told us the heavens are open. We get to be a part of this. It's exciting. It's happy. We don't have to walk around sad and in despair in the latter days. We can find joy, happiness, peace. President Nelson is telling us all of these things that this is possible. The other thing that I want to point out in this chapter, especially in light of the pride cycle, there's also at the same time where pride is growing in the church, there's also humility that is growing in the church. So in verse 35:3, "Nevertheless, they did fast, and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, this is that building growing up in the Lord, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God."

05:58 So, going back to the heart, going back to the center, we need to have this kind of humility where we recognize that a heavenly father is a good father, and that He gives us all of the good things in our life. We show gratitude. We feel our sense of indebtedness. All of these things can lead and build our humility.

Hank Smith: 06:23 It's one of those verses that has even beautiful cadence to it. You mentioned gratitude here. The word gratitude isn't said in verse 35, but you can definitely see it in verse 35 in humility and filling their souls with joy and consolation. They want to be sanctified. So, what have you seen with gratitude and religiosity? This is a major part of your research.

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 06:45 It's very relevant right now, because even when you contrast this with the people here in the Book of Mormon, the Nephites who are battling pride, they're battling entitlement. They have all these riches. They're growing in prosperity in worldly ways. With this type of prosperity also often comes entitlement and ingratitude. People expect certain things. It's often why poor people are the happiest people in the world, because they're so grateful for anything that they get. They don't have entitlement. They don't have that expectation that they should be getting certain things. This is why I started studying indebtedness to God. I took a page out of King Benjamin's sermon, because he talks about how we're eternally indebted to God.

07:31 This is what he shares with the people right before they have this mass conversion, the idea that everything you have comes

from God, being aware of that, and understanding that you can never repay God for everything that He's given you. He's too good. You can't ever get ahead of the Lord, because then He'll immediately bless you. There's no getting even with the Lord, and it's not supposed to be that way. He wants to be in an asymmetrical relationship with us because He loves us. We're His children. That's how it works with a father and his children that he pours out these blessings. Once you have that realization that, "Wow, God has done so much for me," it prepares your heart to be humble.

08:13 I'm sure you guys have also had this realization, "I'm not making it to heaven on my own. I'm too sinful." We're all too sinful. All of us make mistakes. We're in this fallen world. We're never going to make it on our own merit, but God gives liberally to us, and that should make us feel so grateful that He's willing to remain in a relationship with us. We're never going to be profitable servants. The scriptures say we're unprofitable servants, but that's not what it's about. The relationship is about love. We want our young people to realize that. We want our young people to not try to earn their way to salvation, but we also don't want them to be feeling entitled. If I do these things, I should be able to get this and this and this blessing from God.

09:01 What gratitude does, it acknowledges the sense of, "I'm dependent on God. I need Him. I need Jesus Christ in my life. I'm not making it without Him." That's an encouraging thing, because He wants to see us succeed. I interviewed a bunch of BYU students when I was doing my research on indebtedness. I asked one individual. I'll never forget what he said, "What do you think about being indebted to God? Does that make you uncomfortable?" Typically, when we think of indebtedness, it feels uncomfortable to be in debt. We're like, "Oh, I want to pay it off. I don't want to be indebted anymore." So, I asked him, "What do you think about being indebted to God?" This young man said, "I love that I'm indebted to God, because He's the one that I want to serve. He's a good master. He's the best master, and I want to serve Him."

09:51 This young man had so much humility, and I realized it takes humility to accept the goodness of God in your life. It takes humility to say, "I am never making it on my own," but that you are worth that sacrifice because God loves you, and wants to see you succeed. My son is on a mission in Brazil right now. He's teaching a new convert. She started praying, but a couple of years ago, she had gotten in a really bad accident and hurt her leg, and she had really bad back problems. Because of this, she

wasn't able to kneel and pray. This humble, humble woman wanted nothing more than to be able to get on her knees to pray to her Heavenly father. One day, my son was over at her house.

10:46 He was able to witness a miracle where this woman was able for the first time in years to get down on her knees, and she said a prayer. He said that that prayer was so sweet. The humility, the desire to get on her knees before her maker was so life-changing for him. When he told me the story, I felt that. I felt her faith. I felt her humility. Sometimes, I can't even be bothered to roll out of bed to say my nighttime prayer. I'm so grateful for the humble and meek followers of the lamb as these scriptures say. It's a beautiful example to me.

Hank Smith: 11:25 Jenae, can I follow up with a question? So, gratitude leads to well-being. I want that. Is part of your research teaching, "How do I be more grateful? I want to be more grateful. Can you teach me how to be more grateful?"

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 11:40 Absolutely. I'm so glad you asked that question. There are different types of gratitude which surprises people when you talk about it. There's gratitude that you see on social media where it's hashtag blessed. You're showing off, "Oh, I got this new Tesla #blessed," and it's about your stuff. You're showing like, "Look how blessed I am." It's self-promotion, and it's all about your stuff, and this is what we call shallow gratitude. There's no benefactor. There's no giver other than the self. You are showing off the stuff that you have, and oftentimes with our kids when they're writing their little gratitude list at Thanksgiving or any other time, it's typical for people to write the things they're grateful for.

12:24 "Here's all the stuff I have." The reason why that's problematic is that if you only list the stuff that you have, and you don't identify the giver of the good gifts, you're missing the point of gratitude. What we want for our kids is to develop this kind of gratitude, this rich gratitude where you're looking to the giver. You're acknowledging, "All these good things that I have come from God." King Benjamin really teaches us how to do this. He gives us our very breath. There's nothing that we can get on our own merits. What we need to do with our kids is we need to make sure that when they're writing their gratitude list or any type of gratitude practice that you ask them, "Where did that come from? Who gave that to you?" Because gratitude is supposed to be pro-social.

- 13:19 What that means is it's supposed to motivate people to build relationships. We have commandeered gratitude. Positive psychology has commandeered gratitude as a therapeutic intervention to make the individual feel good, and it does. It works. It does make you feel good, but the real function of gratitude is to build relationships. So, "You did this thing for me. I acknowledge you did this for me. Thank you. Now, I want to do something nice for you," and it creates the relationship of giving and receiving, and it becomes another virtuous cycle where within the relationship, we build love because we acknowledge the good things that people have done for us. So, this can be interpersonal in our relationships, from mom and dad. It can be from teachers.
- 14:08 There are all kinds of people that are giving to our kids, pointing them to the people in their lives that are blessing them, and then of course importantly in our prayers, not just having this be this rote thing, "Thank you for our home. Thank you for our food." Really take a moment in your prayer, think about something that God did for you today. Think about something that maybe was unique to this day, and write that down. [President Eyring](#) says that he would write down in his journal every day something that God had done for him. That's an amazing gratitude practice, and not only is that building relationships, but if you are doing that where you're recognizing the hand of the Lord in your life, you're building your testimony, and that can become the foundation of testimony as you're looking to Jesus Christ and Heavenly father as the source of the good things in your life instead of you as the source.
- 14:59 Within Helaman, we're seeing this... The reason why the riches became a problem is because it said they made idols out of them. They started worshiping their things instead of worshiping the God who is the giver of good things.
- Hank Smith: 15:15 I've heard that. In our day, we love things and use people when we ought to love people and use things. You're the gratitude expert. You studied it. How do you practice?
- Dr. Jenae Nelson: 15:32 Because it's a virtuous site building cycle, you start off with something that may be more concrete like President Eyring did, "Every day, I'm going to write down something the Lord did for me," and then I'm going to think about three things that other people did for me. Then I'm going to think about some things I can do for other people. This is reciprocal relationship, so I'm receiving. Now, how can I give so that gratitude becomes virtuous, because it's not that you feel gratitude, but now you're expressing gratitude. It can be a very concrete practice where

it's a journaling, or I'm going to text five people this week, and tell them thank you for something I noticed that they did that helped me.

16:08 But eventually, it becomes second nature, because if you're intentionally doing this, whether it's writing a journal, texting people, writing thank-you letters, as long as you're doing it interpersonally, it starts to become a habit in such a way that it becomes a filter. Right now, I don't have a gratitude practice. For years, I did. I had a journal where I would write things down, but now, it's become part of my character in the sense of I'm noticing people, but you do have to start off with the habit formation, with the concrete practice. Oftentimes, that's how habits are built, but then the habit turns into the character, and now it's a filter in which I view the whole world. I see everything as a gift instead of something that I should have gotten or an entitlement or something I earned. I just think, "Wow, that didn't have to happen."

Hank Smith: 16:58 I love when our guests, John, open up new insights I've never thought about. Gratitude builds relationships. We all want stronger relationships with our children, with our spouse, with the Lord, with our friends, with our ward. Gratitude is what did you call? pro-social?

Dr. Jenaë Nelson: 17:16 Pro-social, yeah, it should be. It's not always. That's why I'm saying there's two different kinds. There's shallow gratitude that is just for the self, and then there's this other gratitude which is relational and virtuous and builds. Even within these different character traits, we're seeing these two different cycles, the virtuous and vicious cycle, and the focus always almost lies on, "Are you looking outward, and are you looking upward, or are you only focusing on yourself, and are you only focusing on your needs, or are looking outward to reach out to others?"

Hank Smith: 17:52 Well, let me just say I'm grateful for my co-host. I am grateful for our guest this week, Jenaë. I'm grateful for our producers. Wow, this is really working. I can feel our relationships.

Dr. Jenaë Nelson: 18:05 That's good. That's good.

John Bytheway: 18:06 There was a sister. Her name was [Barbara Jones](#), and she used to speak at Education Week. I think it was before she joined the church, I'm not sure, but she used to train the Miss America contestants. She would be hired. One thing I remember that was so interesting to me was these young women would spend a month with her preparing for these pageants, and one of her

things was to have them write five thank-you notes a day, different people every day. You might think, "What does that have to do with anything?" She actually believed it changed their appearance if they were gracious. We all know Moroni's promise is Moroni 10:4.

18:52 But if you miss Moroni 10:3, this is really cool because... Okay, when you receive these things, I'm paraphrasing, remember how merciful God has been since the creation of Adam and until the time you receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts. The result of that is gratitude, and then ask God. Gratitude is the gateway to revelation there, because notice where Moroni is telling us, "Ponder how merciful God has been since the very beginning," and what would that fill you with? Gratitude. You mentioned humility here, and I feel like they're like twinnings, because humility is the realization that, "I'm getting blessings I didn't deserve."

19:41 Can I just say something about that word at the end of verse 35, yielding their hearts unto God? My youngest Bethany just got her driver's license. What is a yield sign? It's not a stop sign, but it says, "Let other traffic go first, right? Let other traffic prevail." If you ask President Nelson, he might say yielding is to let God prevail.

Dr. Jenaé Nelson: 20:10 The humble and the meek are comfortable with their weakness, because they know that weakness is where the miracles happen. Weakness is where grace is made alive in Christ in our lives. God can use us in our weakness. It's the joy of the gospel. I remember learning some things about Joseph Smith early on in my testimony, and thinking, "Oh man, I don't know what I feel about that." That to me can seem like a weakness or something that I thought prophets were supposed to be perfect. At this point, I was naive and immature in my faith, but I realized that what the spirit taught me was, "Isn't it a miracle that the Lord can use us in our weakness?" It's a miracle that the Lord makes weak things strong.

21:00 One more thing from chapter three that we can learn about prosperity, in the same year, there was exceedingly great prosperity in the church. We have a tendency to automatically think money, but listen to what it says, "Inasmuch that there were thousands who did join themselves unto the church, and were baptized unto repentance. And so great was the prosperity of the church and so many blessings which were poured upon the people that even the high priests and the teachers themselves were astonished beyond measure." We talked about that already, but then it says in 26, "It came to

pass the work of the Lord did prosper unto the baptizing and uniting to the church of God." There's lots of different ways to prosper, and here, we see it's in the number of souls. That's the best kind of prospering.

21:43 We're growing in the Lord. We're bringing more people to Christ. That's something to keep in mind. All right, we've introduced the concept of the pride cycle, that there are different interpretations of prosperity, but in verse 12 in [Helaman 4](#), it really does say it was because of the pride of their hearts, because of their exceeding riches. This is where riches becomes problematic. It was because of their oppression to the poor, withholding their food from the hungry, withholding their clothing from the naked, and smiting the humble brethren upon the cheek, making a mock of that which was sacred, denying the spirit of prophecy and of revelation, murdering, plundering, lying, stealing, committing adultery, rising up in great contention. So, we just listed a bunch of vices here.

22:28 This started with a little bit of pride like we talked about. What I really think is happening that's really interesting is not just that pride is growing, but that charity is decreasing. Their hearts were not on God. Their hearts were not on their fellow men. Their hearts were upon their riches. Later on, it says that they made idols of them in chapter six. The point being here is that they were lacking charity. When we talk about what is going on in the people, it's not just that pride is growing but that charity is going down.

Hank Smith: 23:00 Wow. An antidote to pride is humility, love, charity, gratitude. You sound like [President Benson](#).

John Bytheway: 23:09 Speaking of [President Benson](#), pride is the universal sin, and it's listed first in verse 12 and then that laundry list. I just feel like every sin has pride as its root, because you're saying, "I want to do what I want to do." That's maybe why it's at the top of the list, and then everything that comes after it is just another flare up of pride.

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 23:34 Sometimes words like pride, charity, these words that we use a lot in the gospel lose their meaning, because we say them so much. It helps to have synonyms. So, self-centeredness is a great synonym for pride. You can do a lot of things out of self-centeredness. Pride can become nebulous. What does that mean? But we can do our ministering because we want to be seen of other people, extrinsic rewards. You can't be self-centered, and grow up in the Lord.

Hank Smith: 24:00 Center of the Universe syndrome. Jenae, you've mentioned that [Helaman 5](#) is the jewel of this section.

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 24:08 It really is the jewel. I'm so excited not just because I'm passionate about Jesus Christ being our foundation, but because of my passion for the prophets and the apostles and his restored church. I am so excited to testify of these other pieces of our foundation. We were really blessed by our most recent conference talk by [Elder Bednar](#), how he opened up some things to our mind that maybe we'd never noticed before, and he said that Christ is the rock but not the foundation. Did anybody else say, "Wait, have I been paying attention all of these years? I thought Christ was the foundation," but he said, "No, Christ is the rock that we build our foundation on."

24:55 I love this talk by [President Hinckley](#). I don't think we talk about it enough, but President Hinckley actually tells us those four cornerstones. So, we have Christ at the bottom. He is the bedrock of our foundation at the bottom, at the core of our testimonies, but listen to what President Hinckley said are the four cornerstones. This is from his talk Four Cornerstones of Faith February 2004. So, the first one is the reality and the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ as the son of God. Second, the sublime vision given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, ushering in the dispensation of the fullness of times. So, you need to have a testimony of the first vision. The third, the Book of Mormon as the word of God speaking in and declaring the divinity of the Savior.

25:46 Then fourth is the priesthood of God divinely conferred to be exercised in righteousness for the blessing of our father's children. So, the reason why I'm so passionate about this is, because I lost a best friend who had the strongest testimony of Jesus Christ, but did not have a testimony of the apostles and the prophets. It's so foundational. As you follow the prophets and the apostles and your local leaders, you will come to know your Savior better, because that's where the covenants, the ordinances, the temple, the power of the priesthood is all contained within the restoration of the church.

Hank Smith: 26:35 The relationship with Christ is what matters. The church facilitates that relationship. The prophets and the apostles are accelerant on that relationship.

John Bytheway: 26:47 How many of us have received a calling? I can't do that. How many of us have heard commandments, covenants? I can't do that. Well, you're right, but what if we were to bind ourselves to someone who can, bind ourselves by covenant to Christ? He can

do it. In the Book of Mormon, it never uses the language converts to the church. It always says converted unto the Lord over and over and over and over at least 10 times I found, and you just quoted 3 Nephi 28:25, Jenae that says, "They were converted unto the Lord, and united unto the church of Christ." The object of our conversion is Christ, but we unite with the church. It's not multiple choice. It's do both of those for power.

- Dr. Jenae Nelson: 27:31 Exactly. When I think of this scripture, I think of an experience I had at Bear Lake with my family. We got there. The weather was great. The forecast was wonderful. We set up our tent, and we didn't stake it down. Because the forecast was fine, we thought we would be okay, and we were in a rush to go play in the water. While we were down and playing in the water, this storm came literally out of nowhere. All of a sudden, there were tents flying away. We run up the hill. We get to our tent. Our kids get in the tent. They're little at this time. They're screaming, because things are flying away. They're so scared they're going to fly away to Oz or something.
- 28:09 They're in the middle of the tent. My husband and I, because we hadn't anchored our tent down, we had to go outside and each take a corner of the tent. Then our brother and sister-in-law whose tent had already flown away saw the predicament we were in, so they came, and they held the other sides. So, we had four people holding down each side of this tent, and just praying. This storm was so long. I'm sure it was probably maybe 15 minutes, but it felt like an hour. It was so long. We're holding the tent down, and I'll never forget that image in my mind. The rock is no good if you're not anchored to it.
- 28:48 You need to anchor yourself to Christ to keep us safe during the storm. You don't think they're coming, and you don't see them coming. They come. They come to everybody, and thinking of the stewardship that we have to make sure that we really have our homes anchored, that we've created a place of refuge for our kids. We were willing to be out there standing in the storm in order to protect our kids, because at that moment, that was all that mattered, and spiritually, we should have that same kind of energy and protection of our children, and desire to anchor down into Christ.
- Hank Smith: 29:22 That's a perfect segue. Jenae, the church is hit by a major storm. We were doing really well. Things were great, and now chapter four, things start falling apart, and here comes two prophets, Nephi and Lehi.

- Dr. Jenae Nelson: 29:38 I love how it says they did preach with great power, and it said they did to confound many of those dissenters. This is where I said this is the great coming back who had gone over from the Nephites insomuch that they came forth and did confess their sins, and were baptized unto repentance, and immediately returned to the Nephites to endeavor, to repair unto them the wrongs which they had done. Now, we see this is true repentance, because they weren't just afraid of being weak. This is a situation where they actually wanted to repair the wrongs that they had done. There was something right that happened in their heart, and it was because of the power of Nephi and Lehi, which I think is a testimony to them, and how they had grown up in the Lord, and the work that they had done in order to have that kind of power and authority.
- Hank Smith: 30:26 This is fascinating. I've never seen, what'd you call it there? the great coming back. The dissenters who had left are now coming back because of these two prophets.
- Dr. Jenae Nelson: 30:36 I can't wait for that day. There's a podcast called [Come Back](#) with incredible stories. It's happening, but I can't wait to see people who have left come back in great numbers. I think that is going to be one of the mightiest miracles that maybe perhaps President Nelson was prophesying about.
- John Bytheway: 30:55 You've heard of it, raining cats and dogs. Well, at one time, there was a reign of judges. No, just kidding. The R-E-I-G-N, the reign of the judges. It's such an interesting storyline, because Mosiah has four sons, King Mosiah. They are knocked flat by an angel. King Mosiah has nobody to give the kingdom to because they all want to go back to the land of Nephi, and be missionaries. I'm oversimplifying, but he's like, "Let's start a new form of government. We'll call it the reign of the judges. Alma, you were unconscious the longest, so you are the first chief judge." When he sets that thing up, Mosiah gives them laws inspired by God. They are God-given laws.
- 31:34 In Helaman 4:22 when things start to go south, it says, "They had altered and trampled under their feet the laws of Mosiah or that which the Lord commanded him to give unto the people, and they saw their laws had become corrupted." Then we go over to Helaman 5:2, "As their laws and their governments were established by the voice of the people, and they who chose evil were more numerous than they who chose good, therefore, they were ripening for destruction." The footnote to Helaman 5:2 takes you back to Mosiah 29:25 when King Mosiah organized it, and he was like, "This will work as long as the voice

of the people chooses good. But as soon as the majority chooses evil, behold, brace for impact."

32:22 Helaman 5:2 is telling us right there, "Okay, here we go." If that template is true, that this is the latter days, wow, are we getting to a place where we're close? We're more choosing evil than good. That's where this gets a little bit chilling, doesn't it?

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 32:38 It does. I had a friend that was really in despair. This is around Covid when a lot of us were in despair, and she was like, "I just wish the Lord would come already, and make everything right." In that moment, the spirit said to me, "God has already come. Jesus has already come. He already made it right." Ultimately, we can have faith in a God who has already prepared the way. This is how we have hope in the latter days. Again, this idea of hope in the darkness comes from trusting and believing in the rock of our salvation that he already came. He already made all this right. He will come again. He's already victorious over the grave, over sin, and we know that in the end, He wins. We know the way that this ends.

John Bytheway: 33:26 [Elder Bednar](#) says, "The central recurring theme of the Book of Mormon is the invitation to come unto Christ." Just come to him, and then you don't have to worry so much about when He comes again, because you're already there.

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 33:37 Here in Helaman 5 as we're looking at the dissenters and people who have left, I hope to continue giving hope. This story is for that purpose. I have a great, great, great, grandfather named William Atkins Gheen who was a convert to the church at the time of Joseph Smith. He was in Nauvoo, built a home that still stands in Nauvoo. The Nauvoo temple is right there in the center of his view from his bedroom window, and he helped to build that temple. He died before the temple was built, sadly, but he had children and a wonderful wife. After the Prophet Joseph Smith was martyred, his wife and some of his children went with Brigham Young, and they crossed the plains. Eventually, one of the descendants of this Gheen family is Spencer W. Kimball.

34:21 One of William Atkins' sons, Thomas Gheen, is my grandpa, and he did not go west with the saints. He joined a splinter apostate group. Then he ended up marrying a Native American woman, and this is in my Native American side of my family. He ended up serving in the Civil War. He survived Andersonville, which is one of the most brutal civil war prisons of the time, survived that, but then on the way home, he died in a steamboat explosion. He left his wife a widow, and left his daughter

fatherless, and the gospel was completely lost to that family. Four generations later, my grandpa, he's Native American, got a Book of Mormon in his hands, four generations later.

35:14 He opened the Book of Mormon, read the Book of Mormon, and he said, "This is true, and these are my people, and I am part of the covenant," and he joined the covenant community of Christ. He was baptized. We thought that we were a family of converts. We didn't think that there was any pioneer heritage in our family, but we're from this family where the gospel was lost, but it was restored four generations later. Going back to that, God plays the long game. It may not be our generation, the next generation or the next generation, but eventually, God has a way of healing families. He wants to heal families, and He does these kinds of miracles if we can just wait and trust His plan, trust the long game that He's playing for our behalf.

John Bytheway: 36:09 How did you find out this family history in Nauvoo and everything? How did you find out how that all hooked up? That's pretty cool.

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 36:16 My grandpa was really into family history. I remember when he found out, and he told me, I was just like, "So, you mean we're descendants of someone who wasn't faithful, who chose not to follow the prophet?" It is a cautionary tale to me, because I want to be the one that chose to follow the prophet. I want to pass that legacy down to my family, that I anchored to Christ by following the prophet. That's the way that Jesus Christ has established His pattern on earth, that we're to follow his prophets, partake of His goodness through the ordinances and the priesthood that He has established in his church.

Hank Smith: 36:58 Beautiful. Jenae, you've pointed out... This really feels like a parallel to our day. There's political upheaval. There is war. There is the church is prospering. Pride in both in and out of the church is growing. It's both wonderful and scary, though I'm thinking the book of Helaman was written for us, and here comes these prophets and dissenters who left are coming back, a lot of really good news and bad news in these chapters. What happens in chapter six then?

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 37:30 I like that we end where we started with this focus back on the heart. Here symbolically, we're seeing a weakness in the heart in our homes and in our heart. Nine times, the word heart is mentioned in chapter six. Clearly, Mormon is asking us to look inside our hearts. What do we place our heart on? Do we place our heart on riches? Are we placing our heart on God? Are we placing our heart on the poor and the needy? Where is our

heart? Then asking us to do some introspection. Yes, there's political structure that leads to the downfall of the Nephites, but it begins like we talked about in a family with three brothers.

- 38:14 From the family proclamation, it says, "We warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets." If it's going to be the disintegration of the family, the disintegration of the heart, then we really need to be looking at our hearts, and we need to be looking at our relationships within our home.
- John Bytheway: 38:40 If only we had a prophet who knew something about hearts,
- Dr. Jenae Nelson: 38:45 I think God is that good. I actually think He's that good.
- John Bytheway: 38:49 That's elegant. That was good. That was symmetrical. That was really nice.
- Dr. Jenae Nelson: 38:52 Yep. This is the last virtuous and vicious cycle that we're going to see. In 34, it says, "The Nephites did dwindle in unbelief, and they grow in wickedness and abomination, while the Lamanites began to grow exceedingly in the knowledge of their God." So these two paths, these two cycles, that one growing in wickedness, one growing in the knowledge of God. Then in 35, "The spirit began to withdraw from the Nephites because of the wickedness and the hardness of their hearts." It's the condition of their heart that's the problem. It's not society at large that is the problem. It's clearly the hardness of their hearts that's causing the problem.
- 39:34 Then in 36, the very opposite what you just read, "The Lord began to pour out His spirit upon the Lamanites," the exact opposite, "because of their easiness and willingness to believe in His words," the contrast. We can choose a life of virtue, or we can choose a life of vice. The choice is simple. In the small and simple things that we do every single day, the things that we continually do can lead to continuous peace.
- Hank Smith: 40:01 We've talked a lot today about intrinsic motivation. That seems to be what's in Nephi and Lehi, doesn't it? They're really working hard here, and suffering quite a bit, but they don't quit.
- Dr. Jenae Nelson: 40:14 They don't, and that's what gets you through the hard things. When we talk about being built upon the foundation of Christ, it is having a relationship with Him. Because you have a

relationship with Him such that you trust Him, you know He's going to come through for you. You have a history of knowing that He has been there for you in the past. You can draw on that, and say, "I don't know how things are going to work out, but I just know that they will, because God has never let me down before, and He is not about to let me down now," but that comes from creating a history with God. God is always at work in our lives, but we're really bad at noticing it sometimes. This is what gratitude does for us. Gratitude is a remembering practice. In chapter five, we didn't mention this, but remember, remember, remember. It's throughout the whole chapter.

41:03 Gratitude helps us remember the good things that God has done for us. Then as we build this history, if we build this story of God's mercy in our life, we have this beautiful well that we can draw on those rays of light that build a pillar, that pillar of fire that encircles us, that can keep us strong and can give us hope. It is absurd to have hope in times like ours. We're smiling, and we're happy, and we have hope because of who we are founded upon. We're founded upon Jesus Christ who gives us hope.

John Bytheway: 41:38 Love it. One of the fun things that perhaps parents could do with their kids with Helaman 5:12 is talk about some of the not-so-good foundations out there that the world's telling them to build on, and then explore that. What if it tells you to build on your appearance? How long is that going to last, or will you constantly be looking at mirrors or whatever? What if it tells you to build on your wealth? What are all those false foundations? I also love the word not if in there, but when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds. It's like it's coming. It's not if. It's when, and don't be surprised when it comes because welcome to earth life, but it will have no power over you to drag you down. There's been a hundred talks given on that verse, and there could be a hundred more.

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 42:29 Those corner stones of faith are tested. Do I really believe in the first vision? Do I really believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God? Do I really believe the priesthood was restored? Do I really believe the temple is what it purports to be, and do I really believe the prophet when he asked me to do things that I don't agree with? We're all going to be tested on those pieces. I get discouraged sometimes with my own wandering, my own ups and downs of my faith. I just want to share my favorite hymn. Do a shout out for it. I can't believe it was ever removed from the hymn book, but it's back, and we can all be so happy. [Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing.](#)

- 43:08 I'm so happy, so I just want to share this with you, because it's my testimony, and I think that it gives us hope. "Jesus sought me when a stranger wandering from the fold of God. He, to rescue me from danger, interposed His precious blood. O to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be. Let thy goodness like a fetter bind my wandering heart to thee. Prone to wander. Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love, here's my heart. O take and seal it. Seal it for thy courts above." I'm really grateful that we have a sure foundation. Christ steadies me, and I have had a lot of storms. We all have.
- 44:00 I'm really grateful that in the storm, I have a refuge that He's my fortress. My testimony is so firmly planted on Jesus Christ and His church, because He has rescued me and because of the restored church has been a refuge for me throughout my life. The prophets and the apostles, those are the sure cornerstones. When the wind comes and the wind blows, those anchor us to Christ.
- Hank Smith: 44:30 You've hit the message of Helaman one through six. Things are getting dark. We don't have to be blind to that. There is corruption. There is war. There are serious problems all around us. As you're reading chapter six, it makes your blood pressure go up, and the amount of power that Satan has over the people feels astronomical, but yet, the Lord seems one step ahead always. It's always, "Yes, things look dark," but very similar to maybe Jesus in the storm, "Carest thou not that we perish? O ye of little faith." I've got this under control.
- 45:10 Jenae, one last question for you. Let's say I'm in my car commuting, or I am gardening, or I am out for a jog, and I'm thinking to myself as I'm listening to you teach, "I'm scared for this world. I'm nervous." Mormon writes in such a, "Thus we see they were ripening for an everlasting destruction." You're like, "Oh man, it feels that way." What keeps you hopeful? What keeps you smiling and hopeful and excited?
- Dr. Jenae Nelson: 45:45 I love that you said that, Hank, because I think we all have moments of despair. I think it's okay. It even talks about Nephi and Lehi were weary because of the dissensions. It's okay that we're weary. We don't have to be happy smiling all the time when there's really hard things going on. I think it's okay to say like [Elder Wirthlin](#) said, "Mom, I'm having a hard time," but also, his counsel and advice is "come what may and love it." The reason why we can love it is because we know that God is in charge. We worship a loving God. Like I shared with you today, I didn't always believe that, but God is loving. He is even in the hard times. He is especially in the hard times. That's when we

feel Him the most. It's in those hard times. That brings me joy and happiness, true, true happiness.

46:48 I just want to share this with everybody, so they can feel God's love in the way that I feel it. Not because I'm special or different or better, but just because I have tasted of His love, and He heals us. He's the healer. He truly, truly has our best interest at heart. He has a plan. He knows what He's doing. If your life is falling apart, He knows it, and He has a plan to put it back together in the most beautiful way. Same with our culture, our society, things that might be scary that are happening that we don't understand, it's okay to feel that. It's okay to lean into that. We can have empathy for those who are suffering. We can be sad in our own suffering. I don't want to invalidate real sad feelings. That's the beauty of a sunset.

47:44 It's this beautiful burst of color. Right before the dark, it's god's saying, "You don't have to worry. The sun is going to come up again." I know it. I felt it. I've seen it throughout my life. I know that He feels that way about everyone. He cares about everyone to the same degree with the same intensity and the same focus. He has a plan for you. Even though my story, my example might be one of those that's extraordinary. He has the same interest in the little things in our lives that seem to be going wrong. He will save us. He's good at His job. He's good at being a Savior.

Hank Smith: 48:23 I love it. If you're a listener, and you're in your own little Helaman 1 through 6, I think Jenae is telling us that 3 Nephi 11 is coming. Just hold on. 3 Nephi 11 is coming. It may look dark now, but the light is coming. Jenae, thank you for your time today.

Dr. Jenae Nelson: 48:41 Thank you for having me.

Hank Smith: 48:43 Thank you for walking us through these chapters. We've been lucky to have you here.

John Bytheway: 48:48 We have. Changed my life. I am going to go back and look at the dissenters and how they came back. I am so excited about that. Jenae, thank you.

Hank Smith: 48:58 Gratitude builds relationships. Man, I just love it. We want to thank Dr. Jenae Nelson for being with us today. It has been an absolute treat to walk through these first six chapters of Helaman with her. We want to thank our executive producer, Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen.

Every episode, we remember our founder who loved Helaman 5:12, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We've got more of the book of Helaman coming up on followHIM. Before you skip to the next episode, I have some important information. This episode's transcript and show notes are available on our website, followhim.co. That's followhim.co.

49:41

On our website, you'll also find our two free books, *Finding Jesus Christ in the Old Testament* and *Finding Jesus Christ in the New Testament*. Both books are full of short and powerful quotes and insights from all our episodes from the Old and New Testaments. The digital copies of these books are absolutely free. You can watch the podcast on YouTube. Also, our Facebook and Instagram accounts have videos and extras you won't find anywhere else. If you'd like to know how you can help us, if you could subscribe to, rate, review, and comment on the podcast, that will make us easier to find. Of course, none of this could happen without our incredible production crew, David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra, and Annabelle Sorensen.

50:25

Whatever questions or problems you have, the answer is always found in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Turn to Him. Follow Him.

HANK WAS SHAKEN, NOT STIRRED



Hank Smith:

00:03

Hello everyone. Welcome to another followHIM Favorites. John and I are sharing a single story to go with each week's lesson. John, we're in Helaman 1 through 6 today. You know this is about Nephi and Lehi, O remember, my sons. There's a lot more to the chapters than that, but I'm going to focus on that one for my story. I thought of a story to share with you John. I don't know if you've ever heard it. There's this moment where Nephi and Lehi are being taught by their father Helaman, and he said, "I've named you Nephi and Lehi so you could remember those who came before you. Do as they have done." Years and years and years ago back in the 1900s, my dad came to my room and he handed me this big blue book. And all it said on it was the Tye, T-Y-E, Family History. And he handed it to me like I would be really interested in this book.

00:55

And I opened it up, there's copies of newspaper articles, obituaries, old pictures of people who aren't smiling, right? You ever seen those pictures of pioneers? Everybody looks super happy. I look at this and he said, "This is an awesome book." I was like, "Dad." And he said, "No, let's read through this together." I thought, there's just nothing else I want to do. I do remember one specific guy, he showed me his picture, and he said, "This man was very, very wealthy when he joined the church in Denmark." By the time he comes to Utah, he's lost all of his money. He's helping other members of his branch cross. He had lost a lot of business because he had joined the church, sacrificed everything, even buried a child at sea, a 2-year-old girl. So much, and when he gets to Salt Lake, Brigham Young assigns him to go live in Ephraim, Utah.

01:51

When he gets there, he doesn't have enough to build a home. He has to live in one of those dugouts where they dig the side of the mountain, kind of a cave. Unbelievable. I was 16. I thought, "Well, thanks dad." A couple weeks later, fast-forward, I found myself at a party that I didn't know was going to have, things that it shouldn't have there. I go with a friend, we show up to this party. These weren't my usual friends, and I found myself in the kitchen, and there's a bunch of people I don't know. One of

them brings out this six-pack of what looked to me to be juice, because I don't know my alcoholic beverages John, and he starts passing them out. And I'm looking at it going, "Oh, I like juice. That looks yummy." He slides it to me and I remember I caught it, and I look at it and I realize, "This is not juice. This is alcohol."

02:47 I knew I wasn't going to drink it. That temptation wasn't there for me. I have other temptations. But I was surprised at how awkward it felt to try to get out of this situation without looking... I didn't want to look dumb. I didn't want to look like I didn't fit in or anything like that. So I'm looking at this alcohol, and I think I just sat there frozen for so long because people started to look at me because I don't know what to do. So I'm just kind of frozen looking at it. And by the time I look up, there's a couple of people just looking at me. And I am like, in my mind, "This is odd." I don't want you to think this was a big moment with Symphony and Angels, it was just in my mind. I pictured my great-grandfather and he's standing in front of his cave and he's looking at me like...

John Bytheway: 03:42 Hello?

Hank Smith: 03:43 Yeah. I lived in a cave, right? Can't you at least just refuse the alcohol? Can you just set that down and say, "No, thank you."

John Bytheway: 03:56 I could not figure out how the cave was going to come to this party, so I didn't see that one coming.

Hank Smith: 04:02 Yeah, it was just a quick thought, like a little maybe flash of inspiration, I'm not sure. And I thought, "Okay, you're right. I need to say something." Like on the seminary videos John, when you say something and everybody cries and you all go on missions together, you're going to say something so good that it changes everybody's life. I set the drink down and a lot of people are looking at me, and I said, John, I am not joking, I said, "I like orange juice." It was so bad. Life-changing testimony moment. Three of the kids in the room went, "Huh?" And the kid who handed me the drink went, "What?" And even my great-grandfather said, "Huh?"

04:55 Like, "Really?" They kind of looked at me and I just repeated it. One of these guys, I don't know who he was, he looks at the guy who was handing out drinks and he said, "We better get this boy some orange juice." The kid came over and took the drink out of my hand and got me some orange juice. I drank my orange juice really fast and got out. I think I spilled it down my chin, and I was like, "I got to go." We left that party real quick. I

went and found my friend that I went with and I said, "We've got to go. There's alcohol at this party." And he said, "You drank?" And I said, "No, I didn't drink. My great-great-grandfather was there.

John Bytheway: 05:29

"I like orange juice."

Hank Smith: 05:32

Yeah. We laughed and went home. I can't tell you that I felt really good and powerful and spiritual. I felt like, "Oh, I have no friends, and I don't know what to say in the moment." But now I read Helaman 5, where Helaman says, "Remember to keep the commandments of God. I named you after our first parents." I didn't have the name of that great-grandfather, but I did remember him at that time. And so you can remember them. This is your ancestors and you can remember their works. And when you remember their works, you can remember that those were good works. Let it be said of you, that same thing be said of you. Maybe my great-great-grandfather reached through the centuries and just gave me a little bit of extra strength.

John Bytheway: 06:18

I love it.

Hank Smith: 06:19

I wish he would've given me a little more, maybe some insight to say the right thing. And John, I don't want anybody out there to think, "Oh, Hank was Mr. Perfect in high school." I was not. Definitely far from it. That was a moment. We all have moments where we do the right thing. I like to highlight those even though there wasn't very many.

John Bytheway: 06:37

This story brought to you by Simply Orange, available wherever.

Hank Smith: 06:42

If you own an orange juice company, I would gladly be your spokesperson, because I still like orange juice.

John Bytheway: 06:48

Yeah.

Hank Smith: 06:49

We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcast. Come back next week, we'll do another followHIM Favorites.