



“My Work Shall Go Forth”

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:

Should we be remembered for our biggest failure? Professor Rob Eaton discusses the loss of the 116 pages and learning to serve God and having faith in His plan.

Part 2:

Professor Rob Eaton examines Doctrine and Covenants 4 and the Lord’s power given to those who ask and serve others.

Timecodes:

Part 1 -

- 00:00 - Part 1 - Prof. Rob Eaton
- 04:43 *Come, Follow Me Manual*
- 05:59 Sections 3 and 5 - Elect yet stumbling
- 07:53 Gospel Library - Church History Tab Resources
- 11:34 Saints
- 15:07 Listening to Martin Harris
- 19:42 Being remembered by our successes or failures
- 24:52 A modern analogy to the loss of the 116 pages
- 28:00 Schooled in First Principles and the 10-year incubation of Joseph
- 30:09 Had they lost their souls?
- 36:45 Restoring Harmony, Pennsylvania, USA
- 38:13 D&C 3:3 Fearing damnation and God's planning
- 43:11 Learning vs defending behavior
- 46:17 The value of tasting "the bitter"
- 49:48 D&C 3:10 - God is merciful
- 51:08 D&C 3:4-8, 15 - Fearing man more than God
- 53:44 Whose approval matters to me?
- 57:44 The kindness of Sister Reyna Aburto
- 59:41 Steve Sorensen teaching in the workplace
- 1:03:45 Putting religion on your resume
- 1:04:35 D&C 3:15 - Let God direct
- 1:07:46 D&C 5 - Divine course correction
- 1:10:29 End of Part 1 - Prof. Rob Eaton

Part 2 -

- 00:00 - Part 2 - Prof. Rob Eaton
- 00:08 D&C 5:11-28 - Martin needs to humble himself
- 03:10 *Witnesses and Undeniable*
- 04:00 D&C 5:7 - Intellectual evidence isn't enough
- 05:56 A What If Exercise
- 8:37 Salvation dependent on valiant testimony
- 10:45 D&C 5:34 - Lord prepares a way
- 11:44 Oliver Cowdery's backstory
- 13:42 D&C 4:1 - Gathering Israel's importance
- 15:55 D&C 4:2 - Embark
- 19:16 Football and doing things part way
- 22:29 Anxiously engaged without formal assignment
- 26:33 D&C 4:3 - Motives in God's economy
- 29:09 Remembering the message, not the messenger
- 33:44 Seek to bless, not impress
- 37:27 Serving with love as a teenager
- 39:46 D&C 4:4 - Setting goals based on agency
- 43:37 D&C 4 testifies of Joseph as a prophet of God

- 45:12 D&C 4:5-6 - Who we are and why we serve
- 47:39 Helping young missionaries
- 50:25 Serving under protest
- 52:07 How to serve as Mission Leaders
- 56:09 Seek and expect miracles
- 57:32 Asking and receiving miracles
- 1:00:58 Professor Eaton shares his testimony of Jesus Christ and the Restoration
- 1:05:48 End of Part 2 - Prof. Rob Eaton

References:

“Arguments for Freedom: The Many Reasons Why Free Speech Is Essential.” The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, November 1, 2022. <https://www.thefire.org/news/arguments-freedom-many-reasons-why-free-speech-essential>.

Bennett, Richard E. “Carefully Schooled in the First Principles and Ordinances.” Ensign Magazine, March 2001 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, March 1, 2001. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2001/03/carefully-schooled-in-the-first-principles-and-ordinances?lang=eng>.

Bennett, Richard E. “School of the Prophet: How the Lord Taught Joseph the Gospel.” Amazon: School of the Prophet: How the Lord Taught Joseph the Gospel: Richard E. Bennett. Accessed January 21, 2025. <https://www.amazon.com/School-Prophet-Taught-Joseph-Gospel/dp/1590389964>.

Bishop L. Todd Budge Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric. “Seek Him with All Your Heart.” General Conference October 2024 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 6, 2024. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2024/10/45budge?lang=eng>.

Black, Susan Easton. “Undeniable: The Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon.” Deseret Book: Books, DVDs, Music, Art & more for LDS Families - Deseret Book. Accessed January 21, 2025. <https://www.deseretbook.com/product/6026638.html?srsId=AfmBOoqp5Z033QfGL2KudOaYtTDuhFIZ-2VXnmJ5mjEDGm31TkdrFSm1>.

Black, Susan Easton. “Martin Harris: Uncompromising Witness of the Book of Mormon.” Amazon; Martin Harris: Uncompromising Witness of the Book of Mormon: Susan Easton Black. Accessed January 21, 2025. <https://www.amazon.com/Martin-Harris-Uncompromising-Witness-Mormon/dp/1942161557>.

Bytheway, John. “Embark!: A Message About D&C 4:2.” Deseret Book: Books, DVDs, Music, Art & more for LDS Families - Deseret Book. Accessed January 21, 2025.

https://www.deseretbook.com/product/5129676.html?srsId=AfmBOorqAjpmdttr3rfCzG4o_h02F FJ4z29uBWdMf6UcSAzLZPtgiPxA.

The Chosen: Season 1. Accessed January 21, 2025.
<https://watch.thechosen.tv/group/309237646073>.

“Church History Library.” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Accessed January 21, 2025. <https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/landing/church-history-library?lang=eng>.

Clark, John E. “John E. Clark.” FAIR: Faith Answers, Informed Response. Accessed January 21, 2025. <https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/testimonies/scholars/john-e-clark>.

Daniel Kahneman doesn’t trust your intuition (transcript). Accessed January 21, 2025.
<https://www.ted.com/podcasts/rethinking-with-adam-grant/daniel-kahneman-doesn-t-trust-your-intuition-transcript>.

Davis, Mitch, and Mark Goodman. “Witnesses.” IMDb - Interpreter Foundation - Redbrick Filmworks, June 4, 2021. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt13820428/>.

“Doctrine and Covenants 3–5.” Come, Follow Me - January 27–February 2: “My Work Shall Go Forth,” January 1, 2025. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/come-follow-me-for-home-and-church-doctrine-and-covenants-2025/05-doctrine-and-covenants-3-5?lang=eng>.

Eaton, Robert. “I Will Lead You Aong: The Life of Henry B. Eyring.” Deseret Book: Books, DVDs, Music, Art & more for LDS Families - Deseret Book. Accessed January 21, 2025.
<https://www.deseretbook.com/product/P5112821.html>.

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Reverence Invites Revelation.” General Conference October 1991 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 2, 1991. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1991/10/reverence-invites-revelation?lang=eng>.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. ““As Many as I Love, I Rebuke and Chasten.”” General Conference April 2011 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 2, 2011. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2011/04/as-many-as-i-love-i-rebuke-and-chasten?lang=eng>.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “The Witness: Martin Harris.” General Conference April 1999 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 2, 1999. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1999/04/the-witness-martin-harris?lang=eng>.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Timing.” Ensign October 2003 - From a devotional address given on 29 January 2002 at Brigham Young University. - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1, 2003.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/liahona/2003/10/timing?lang=eng#title1>.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Why Do We Serve?” General Conference October 1984 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 2, 1984. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1984/10/why-do-we-serve?lang=eng>.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “That Ye May Believe - Part 1: University of Utah, August 28, 2022.” Part 1: University of Utah, August 28, 2022, January 1, 2022. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/that-ye-may-believe/part-1?lang=eng>.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “That Ye May Believe Part 2: Brigham Young University–Idaho, October 30, 2022.” Part 2: Brigham Young University–Idaho, October 30, 2022, January 1, 2022. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/that-ye-may-believe/part-2?lang=eng>.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “A Standard Unto My People.” “A Standard unto My People” - An excerpt from an address to religious educators at a symposium for the Book of Mormon, BYU, 9 August 1994, January 1, 2004. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/teaching-seminary-preservice-readings-religion-370-471-and-475/a-standard-unto-my-people?lang=eng>.

Elder Lynn G. Robbins of the Presidency of the Seventy. “Which Way Do You Face?” General Conference October 2014 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 2, 2014. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2014/10/which-way-do-you-face?lang=eng>.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Yet Thou Art There.” General Conference October 1987 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 2, 1987. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1987/10/yet-thou-art-there?lang=eng>.

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Valiant in the Testimony of Jesus.” General Conference October 2016 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 2, 2016. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2016/10/valiant-in-the-testimony-of-jesus?lang=eng>.

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Making the Right Choices.” General Conference October 1994 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 2, 1994. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1994/10/making-the-right-choices?lang=eng>.

“Global Histories.” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints - Church History - Global History. Accessed January 21, 2025. <https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/landing/global-histories?lang=eng>.

Harper, Steven C. “Joseph Smith and Hearty Repentance.” Joseph Smith and Hearty Repentance . Accessed January 21, 2025. <https://rsc.byu.edu/vol-12-no-2-2011/joseph-smith-hearty-repentance>.

Haws, J.B. “The Lost 116 Pages Story: What We Do Know, What We Don’t Know, and What We Might Know.” The Lost 116 Pages Story: What We Do Know, What We Don’t Know, and What We Might Know . Accessed January 21, 2025. <https://rsc.byu.edu/coming-forth-book-mormon/lost-116-pages-story-what-we-do-know-what-we-dont-know-what-we-might-know>.

“Inspiring Scripture Study - Listen to the Followhim Podcast.” followHim Podcast, January 20, 2025. <https://followhim.co/>.

“Joseph Smith Papers Podcasts.” josephsmithpapers.org. Accessed January 21, 2025. <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/articles/joseph-smith-papers-podcasts>.

“The Joseph Smith Papers.” josephsmithpapers.org. Accessed January 21, 2025. <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/>.

MacKay, Michael Hubbard, and Gerrit J. Dirkmaat. “Let’s Talk about the Translation of the Book of Mormon.” Deseret Book: Books, DVDs, Music, Art & more for LDS Families - Deseret Book. Accessed January 21, 2025. <https://www.deseretbook.com/product/P6012373.html>.

MacKay, Michael Hubbard, and Gerrit J. Dirkmaat. “From Farkness Unto Light.” From Darkness Unto Light . Accessed January 21, 2025. <https://rsc.byu.edu/book/darkness-unto-light>.

Madson, Truman G. “On How We Know.” BYU Speeches, October 19, 2021. <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/truman-g-madsen/know/>.

Michelle D. Craig First Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency. “Divine Discontent.” General Conference April 2018 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 6, 2018. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2018/10/divine-discontent?lang=eng>.

Neill F. Marriott Second Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency. “Yielding Our Hearts to God.” General Conference October 2015 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 2, 2015. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2015/10/yielding-our-hearts-to-god?lang=eng>.

“Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service.” Homepage - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, February 2, 2018. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/preach-my-gospel-a-guide-to-missionary-service?lang=eng>.

President Russell M. Nelson and Sister Wendy W. Nelson. “Hope of Israel.” Worldwide Youth Devotional - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, June 3, 2018. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/broadcasts/worldwide-devotional-for-young-adults/2018/06/hope-of-israel?lang=eng>.

President Russell M. Nelson President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. “The Power of Spiritual Momentum.” General Conference April 2022 - The Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-day Saints, April 3, 2022. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2022/04/47nelson?lang=eng>.

Rethinking with Adam Grant. Accessed January 21, 2025.
<https://www.ted.com/podcasts/rethinking-with-adam-grant>.

“Revelations in Context.” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints - Church History - Revelations in Context. Accessed January 21, 2025.
<https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/landing/revelations-in-context?lang=eng>.

Rowling, J. K. “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone.” Amazon: Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone: J.K. Rowling. Accessed January 21, 2025. <https://www.amazon.com/Harry-Potter-Sorcerers-Stone-Rowling/dp/059035342X>.

Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “The Work of Salvation: Parable of a Father at Bedtime.” 2013 Worldwide Leadership Training - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, August 6, 2013.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/broadcasts/article/worldwide-leadership-training/2013/06/the-work-of-salvation-parable-of-a-father-at-bedtime?lang=eng>.

Tanner, John S. “Reflections on Sin, Sinfulness, and Homecoming on the Day of the Atonement.” BYU ScholarsArchive. Accessed January 21, 2025.
<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/re/vol24/iss1/4/>.

Taylor, Scott. “President Eyring Defines How Leaders Can Help Missionaries Choose to Serve.” Church News, January 11, 2024. <https://www.thechurchnews.com/2019/6/27/23215167/president-eyring-2019-mission-leadership-seminar/>.

Welch, John W. “Study, Faith, and the Book of Mormon.” BYU Speeches, December 3, 2024.
<https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/john-w-welch/study-faith-book-mormon/>.

Biographical Information:



Rob Eaton is a Teaching Professor. Rob and his wife, Dianne Hansen Eaton, have four children and live in Payson, Utah.

Rob earned his BA at Brigham Young University in international relations and graduated with distinction from Stanford Law School. He practiced law and worked as a health insurance executive in Seattle for 10 years. After teaching seminary and Institute for three years, he joined the religious education faculty of BYU-Idaho in 2004. From 2009 – 2013, he was the associate academic vice president for online learning and Pathway, which now serves over 60,000 students in over 180 nations.

Rob and his wife served as mission leaders from 2013 – 2016. From 2017 – 2020, he again served as an associate academic vice president. In that role, he helped develop and teach a semester-long course for new faculty at BYU-Idaho. Rob is the author or co-author of multiple books, including President Henry B. Eyring’s biography, and was the compiler of *Return: Four Phases of Our Mortal Journey Home*, by Elder Robert D. Hales. Most recently, he is the co-author of *Improving Learning and Mental Health in the College Classroom*.

Fair Use Notice:

The *Follow Him Podcast with Hank Smith and John Bytheway* may make use of copyrighted material, the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright holder. This constitutes a “fair

use” and any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law. In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, the material on this podcast is offered publicly and without profit, to the public uses or the internet for comment and nonprofit educational and informational purposes. Copyright Disclaimer under Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976, allowance is made for fair use” for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research. In such cases, fair use is permitted.

No copyright(s) is/are claimed.

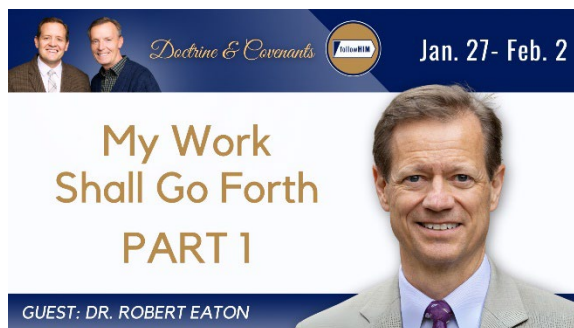
The content is broadcast for study, research, and educational purposes.

The broadcaster gains no profit from broadcast content. This falls under “Fair Use” guidelines:

www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html.

Note:

The *Follow Him Podcast with Hank Smith and John Bytheway* is not affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints nor Brigham Young University. The opinions expressed on episodes represent the views of the guest and podcasters alone. While the ideas presented may vary from traditional understandings or teachings, they in no way reflect criticism of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day leaders, policies, or practices.



Hank Smith:	00:00:00	Coming up in this episode on followHIM.
Dr. Rob Eaton:	00:00:04	If you were a life coach for a fraud who's pretending to be a prophet, you would say, this thing you're calling a revelation, it makes you look bad, it makes your primary financial backer look bad. This is not what we want. We want something that makes people think you're a saint, that you're perfect. What an odd move if it was part of an elaborate hoax to have sections three, five, and ten among your first recorded and published revelations in which the Lord publicly rakes you over the coals.
Hank Smith:	00:00:41	Hello, everyone. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name's Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with my co-host John Bytheway, who has embarked in the service of God. John, that's Doctrine and Covenants 4:2, O ye that embark in the service of God.
John Bytheway:	00:00:57	I love that word, Hank. I'll take it. I researched this once. Guess how many times embark appears not just in the Doctrine and Covenants, not just the Book of Mormon, not just the Bible, not just The Pearl of Great Price, in all of the standard works, guess how many times?
Hank Smith:	00:01:12	I know it's more than one because I'm reading it right here.
John Bytheway:	00:01:13	One time.
Hank Smith:	00:01:15	It's not more than one.
John Bytheway:	00:01:16	That's the one time in the actual text. I think somebody uses it in a synopsis, but in the text, one time.
Hank Smith:	00:01:24	John, our guest this week is Dr. Rob Eaton. Rob, thank you so much for joining us. This is your second time on followHIM.
Dr. Rob Eaton:	00:01:32	It is and that's surprising. Thanks for having me back. I appreciate it so much because I learn so much in preparing for

these podcasts. Oh, good. I rarely got a second date in college, so it is nice to be asked back.

- Hank Smith: 00:01:45 John, Doctrine and Covenants Sections 3, 4, and 5, pivotal sections, early sections of the Doctrine and Covenants, and I think Section 3 is the first written revelation from Joseph Smith. What comes to your mind when you think 3, 4, and 5?
- John Bytheway: 00:02:02 It's before the Book of Mormon was published obviously, before the church is organized, Joseph Smith really gets chewed out in Section 3. It's this really heart-wrenching time for them, so it's very interesting. And we see that if you're going to publish something where you really were chastised for not keeping the commandments, would you want to publish that? But like you said, let's send this out to all the world and that's the first one. It's amazing.
- Hank Smith: 00:02:30 That is fantastic. Rob, how about you? As you've been preparing for Sections 3, 4, and 5, these aren't new to you, where do you want to go today?
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:02:39 They're not new to me, but here's a connection that was new for me as I looked at them unitedly in concert. Joseph is called to stand as a witness in Section 5:2. He's told that he has been called. Martin's being prepared to be a witness, and Section 4 is really for all of us who get to stand as a witness of God at all times and all places and in all things. I see this as a wonderful trio of sections on witness preparation, if you will, for all of us as we stand as witnesses of the Savior, of the Book of Mormon, of the joy of the gospel in our lives.
- Hank Smith: 00:03:16 That's beautiful. Section 4 brings a little bit of trauma to my ears because first day in the mission field, my mission president, I got there and he said, "Elder Smith, recite for me Doctrine and Covenants Section 4." And I was so lucky that for some reason I had this one close to memorized. He helped me through it a little bit. So any missionary who's listening out there or someone who's got a mission call, you might just want to go through these seven verses and commit them to memory just in case that's your first day when you meet your mission president.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:03:51 In fact, these may be the most recited verses of scripture in the church apart from those containing the sacrament prayers. Worry sometimes they're more frequently recited than understood, so I'm looking forward to taking a deep dive into Section 4 together today. Interestingly, it's actually not given as a missionary section. There is no missionary work. There is no

church. That's, in fact, going to be one of my main points about Section 4.

00:04:17 As wonderfully applicable as it is to full-time missionaries, this is really a charter for anyone who embarks in the service of God. I fear that many of us in the church miss that and think, oh, this is the missionary section, and don't ask, how could this help me as a primary teacher, a newly called member of an Elders Quorum presidency, or simply someone who's freelancing for God, a concept we'll talk about today.

Hank Smith: 00:04:43 I love it. Let me read from the [Come, Follow Me](#) manual, and then Rob, let's turn it over to you. John, I'm excited to learn from you as well. Doctrine and Covenants 3, 4, and 5. My work shall go forth. Love the opening paragraph. During his first few years as the Lord's prophet, Joseph Smith didn't know everything about the marvelous work he was called to do. But one thing his early experiences taught him was that to do God's work, his eye must be single to the glory of God.

00:05:12 For example, if the Lord counseled him to do something he wasn't sure he wanted to do, he needed to follow the Lord's counsel. And even if he had many revelations and power to do many mighty works, if he felt that what he wanted was more important than God's will, he must fall. But Joseph learned something else just as important about doing God's work.

00:05:33 God is merciful. And if Joseph sincerely repented, he was still chosen. God's work is, after all, a work of redemption and that work cannot be frustrated. What a brilliant way to say, all right, let's dive into these sections. Rob, how do you want to start this? There's a lot of names in these sections that maybe not all of our listeners know very well.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:05:59 I want to package together Sections 3 and 5 if that's all right, because I see them as this wonderful story of a couple of God's most elect servants stumbling, receiving divine correction, repenting, getting back up and mercifully being given second chances and standing up even stronger. In fact, I see this early experience as a galvanizing experience for Joseph that prepares him to stand tall and courageously against the tides of the opinions of men and women for the rest of his life.

00:06:31 He learns from, I'm going to say, the stumble or mistake, but actually the Lord would call it sin. He learns from making this mistake, but gets that second chance. So we'll start with the backstory of Martin Harris and what Gerrit Dirkmaat reminded us last time around might be better called the stolen 116 pages

than the lost 116 pages. Lost is what I would've had happen to me. I'm sure they're somewhere. I would find them one day with my keys and all the other things I've lost so many times.

- Hank Smith: 00:07:01 I do remember that, Rob, four years ago, we should [link](#) that episode in our show notes because John, do you remember how adamant he was?
- John Bytheway: 00:07:08 He was adamant.
- Hank Smith: 00:07:09 It was stolen.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:07:12 Gerrit, he is great and that's a great episode. I told you before the show, I was amazed at how good you guys were right out the gate with this podcast, and I love listening to that episode. He goes into even more historical detail than I'll get into today perhaps because he knows about 10 times as much about this as I do, but we'll get into it some. But if you want to learn more, that's a great episode to explore.
- Hank Smith: 00:07:34 We haven't really talked about previous episodes we did four years ago, John, but we should start linking those just in case someone thinks, wonder what they said about this four years ago? You'll hear probably quite a bit about pandemics because that's kind of where we were.
- John Bytheway: 00:07:47 That's what we were in the middle of.
- Hank Smith: 00:07:49 The scriptures change as our lives change, don't they? What we see.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:07:53 As we tackle some of the backstory, I thought it's worth highlighting some of the resources in the [Gospel Library Church History](#) tab that could be relevant to users all year long. Is that all right?
- Hank Smith: 00:08:04 Yeah, please do.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:08:05 Go to the Gospel Library homepage and click on Church History. For me, it's the fourth row of icons down there. And let me just ask each of you, are there any resources here that you want to make a plug for? In my Foundations of the Restoration course, one of the things we do is help students to discover each of these resources. And many of them they were superficially acquainted with, but they come to love. Any of these resources in the Church History tab that you just love and think people ought to discover?

Hank Smith: 00:08:36 One for me, Rob, John, you remember and I reference this episode often because it was such a touching time for John and I, [Dr. Melissa Inouye](#) came to talk about Mosiah 18, and she pointed us to these [global histories](#). And it's probably something honestly I may have not ever clicked on because I thought, well, there's so much here, but she said, "They're short. We wanted to make them short on purpose just so you wouldn't feel overwhelmed. They're no longer than the Savior's parables," I think she said.

00:09:09 They are brilliant. You can click on almost any country in the world and you'll see a four paragraph summary of its history with the church. It is really fun to just go through. And I think I was sitting in an airport once and thought, well, let me go through some of these, and they were brilliant.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:09:27 By the way, if you travel, it's wonderful to read about the history of the church in the country you're going to. So then when you're in Edinburgh, Scotland, rather than just hiking up Arthur's Hill or Arthur's Seat with hundreds of other tourists, it's wonderful to know something about the history of the church in the country where you are. Love that one.

John Bytheway: 00:09:47 They actually published a little book called [Revelations in Context](#). It's on here. Really nice to know backstory of every one of these sections, and that's what we talk about here, but that Revelations in Context is a lot more thorough.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:10:03 I find the better I understand the backstory to these revelations, the better I understand the text of the revelations themselves. In fact, that's especially important for the Doctrine and Covenants. In the Book of Mormon and in the Bible, we get the stories. And then sometimes in the Book of Mormon, the Thus We Sees, the Doctrine and Covenants is just the Thus We Sees part. It's the Lord's answer to questions in so many cases or his response to circumstances.

00:10:28 And if we don't fully understand those circumstances, we may miss out on the original meaning of some of what he said. And I found the better we understand that, the easier it is to apply these scriptures to ourselves. We'll see that today, especially with Section 4. Overlooking the backstory, we often overlook the original meaning of the section to jump right to the one that's become most common today.

00:10:51 I love Revelations in Context, and one of my students just pointed this out because I was complaining it can be hard to figure out which of the essays goes with which section of the

Doctrine and Covenants. My student raised his hand and said, "Brother Eaton, it's the icon in the upper right-hand corner." So if you go to Section 3, there's a little icon in the upper right-hand corner. You click on that and it takes you right to the relevant essay from Revelations in Context. A tremendous resource. Oh my word!

Hank Smith: 00:11:18 Now, Rob, this is sarcasm here. There might be some who say, "Oh, the church hides its history. There's nowhere I can go to learn about the church's history." How many hours of content are on this tab that you've shown us?

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:11:34 More than I have still listened to as somebody who teaches Foundations of the Restoration. And in fact, I learned things the second and third time I listen to and read Saints. Saints is an extraordinarily transparent, faith-building, accessible, well-written summary of church history. I'm just beginning to listen to volume four. I love Saints. If you haven't already discovered that, I hope you will this year as we study the Doctrine and Covenants together.

Hank Smith: 00:12:03 A lot of our guests, Rob, will tell us their worry is not that Latter-day Saints will study too much church history. It's that they'll study too little. This tab that you've shown us, if you were to consume all of this church history, that's a solid background in the history of the church.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:12:21 A couple others just to point out, but there is one church history topics and so we've got entries for people, for places, for events. It's rich and wonderful. You've got the [Joseph Smith Papers](#) and [Joseph Smith Papers Podcast](#). They've got great podcasts on priesthood restoration, Kirtland, Carthage, eight-episode series that are marvelous. And all this is collected together in one tab that I looked at in preparation for this and I thought, I didn't realize they had organized it there and in that way.

00:12:52 It's historical resources. So if I click on historical resources Doctrine and Covenants 3 through 5, it's gathered together then all these different sources that relate to this passage of scripture. A great place to go. And now the church is also doing that for us this year in a little section called People, Places, and Events in the Come, Follow Me manual, but only in the online version. Some great resources that I drew on preparing for today that I hope our listeners will take advantage as well.

Hank Smith: 00:13:20 John, if we were to tell our listeners, hey, go into this tab, Church History tab, and don't come back to our podcast until

you've gone through all of this. I think they'd come back and we'd be old and gray and gone. And they'd say, "Oh, what happened?" One of my favorite quotes, you've heard me say it before, Rob, is from Stephen L. Richards. He said, "It is good to be faithful. It is better to be faithful and competent."

00:13:44 I think what that is about, it's not just I have a testimony, which obviously is wonderful. It's I have a testimony and I know why. I know where it comes from. I know our history. It's there for us. If you really want to become competent in the history of the church, the information is there. It's ready for you.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:14:03 I'm so glad to be alive and teaching in this part of this dispensation where we have more information than ever before, more access to it, and a period of great transparency about church history. I love that we get to teach the Foundations of the Restoration course in which we tackle head-on historical issues that can challenge some students' faith.

00:14:24 I think we found that the best way to do this is to approach it honestly and within a faith-filled framework that actually leaves students coming out of that class and I hope church members coming out of this year as we know more feeling even more secure in our testimony of the truthfulness of the restored gospel.

Hank Smith: 00:14:42 John, I know you'll agree, the more I study the history of the church, the more impressed I am with not only the Lord, but with these imperfect people who have done extraordinary things.

John Bytheway: 00:14:54 And as we talked about already, it's like young people, they're young adults, a lot of them with no experience in, hey, guys, let's start a church. No, that wasn't their intention.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:15:07 In fact, one exception to the young people part is [Martin Harris](#). So let's jump in there if I may.

John Bytheway: 00:15:12 Let's do it.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:15:13 Hank and John, any thoughts on why it's understandable that Joseph Smith really wanted to help Martin out with his request to borrow the 116 pages if he could? Why would that have been something so tempting for him despite the first answer being no?

Hank Smith: 00:15:30 I would say, one, this is the first person I believe outside of his family that believes him. Doesn't Martin have a little bit of money to help out this poor farmer who's been called to do something way beyond him and way beyond his resources?

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:15:47 In fact, when Joseph wants to get out of town because he's encountering more persecution, he's got some debts he's got to pay off, he's able to do that only with the help of Martin Harris. \$50 doesn't sound like a ton of money in our time, but as Brother Dirkmaat pointed out last time, Joseph bought 14 acres, a house, and a barn for \$200. So that was a quarter of that price.

00:16:12 That gives you a feel for what \$50 was worth. He's beholden to Martin Harris. In fact, not only that, at some point he's got to be thinking, we probably need to publish this book that we're translating and that's going to cost money. How am I going to get that done? He has no other option than Martin Harris. This is his sole financial backer. He needs Martin's help if he's to get the book published into the world.

00:16:39 Certainly that could have played into his thinking as Martin makes what seems to be a very reasonable request. I've got to placate my wife. Can I borrow the 116 pages?

Hank Smith: 00:16:51 That's a rough spot to be in. Like you said earlier, Rob, this is an important lesson that Joseph Smith is going to learn.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:17:00 A painful one, and therefore a memorable one. Two other factors that may have weighed in here. One is Joseph's seen firsthand how demanding and difficult Mrs. Harris can be. She's ransacked the Smith home looking for the plates. When Martin tells Joseph, "I really need this to get my wife off my back," that's a very understandable explanation. And here's one last thing I think we sometimes overlook. I have often. Joseph is 22 at this time. Martin is 47. These aren't two buddies.

00:17:34 These are relative ages of a college student and a professor, a full-time missionary and a mission president. I think that age gap may have been something that might've weighed in Joseph's mind too, just thinking, here's somebody who's older, who's been kind to me, who believes me, who spent a couple of months helping me translate. Can't I get a green light to give him what he's asked for?

00:17:57 And he asked enough times that he gets that green light on the third time reluctantly from the Lord, and then later discovers why he was told no in the first place.

Hank Smith: 18:06:00 Being on faculty at a university, I know the difference between a junior faculty member and a senior faculty member. I'm not so junior as I used to be, but I remember saying, I really want to help this person who's asked me for this. I really want to do what they've asked me to do. They're a senior faculty member. There's a desire to be helpful.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:18:26 But with all that in mind, it seems quite understandable that Joseph would've gone to the Lord three times, and yet he is reprimanded, Martin's reprimanded. But I want to jump a little bit to the end of the story and even though we'll talk about Martin's shortcomings today and Martin's sins and Joseph's, how should we remember Martin in the end? What would you want listeners to take away about our indebtedness to Martin Harris?

John Bytheway: 00:18:54 Martin Harris lends credibility to the whole thing, and I think Joseph Smith knew that. Not only just the financial backing, he's a respected farmer there. He's a successful whatever that meant back then farmer. Listen, Martin hasn't been baptized yet. It's kind of like we remember doubting Thomas instead of courageous Thomas who said, "Let's go die with him."

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:19:18 Great analogy

John Bytheway: 00:19:20 And I think of Martin Harris, listen, he financed it. He came West. He never denied it. Let's remember that about Martin. I want to remember the outcome of all this because of Martin Harris, not for this bump in the road right here because this is before he was even baptized. This is before anybody was baptized, wasn't it?

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:19:42 All of us hope we'll be defined by and remembered for our best moments and contributions, not our biggest mistakes and sins. So I think we can extend that same mercy to Martin Harris and honor him. We're as a church institutionally, collectively indebted to him and Joseph Knight and Isaac Morley and John Tanner and people like the Sorensens, people who've been prosperous and consecrated that prosperity to help build the kingdom of God.

00:20:12 [Martin Harris](#) is really the first in the long line of people who fit that wonderful mold and we're grateful for them. President

Dallin Harris Oaks is particularly grateful for him. He says, "Having a special interest in Martin Harris," he's his great-great-grandnephew, "Having a special interest in Martin Harris, I have been saddened at how he is remembered by most church members. He deserves better than to be remembered solely as the man who unrighteously obtained and then lost the initial manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon."

Hank Smith: 00:20:43 We are defenders of Martin Harris here at followHIM. Rob, if I'm new to the church, if these names are new to me, we actually haven't told this story yet, can you give us just a brief overview of who Martin Harris is and what happened that's leading up to this dramatic situation? John, feel free to jump in as well.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:21:06 I was going to say let's do this Wiki style. I'll start and you add detail as you see fit. Martin Harris is this benefactor and believer in Joseph's words. In fact, he's had some spiritual epiphanies of his own that were preparatory. I learned, in preparing for this podcast, things I didn't know about a theophany that he had had just a few years before this happens. He's been spiritually prepared and is looking for this restoration.

00:21:33 Quick to believe in Joseph, and yet like all of us with some natural man tendencies in there, still doubting himself at times and not helped along by his wife, who quickly becomes antagonistic towards what he's doing. And in her defense, he's spending a lot of money and a lot of time for what, if you haven't had confirmation by the Spirit, might seem like an outlandish undertaking that's highly unlikely to be what it claims to be.

00:22:01 He ends up becoming Joseph's scribe and helping translate initially 116 pages, has this manuscript and thinks that perhaps that will be evidence that might placate his wife. Pleads with Joseph for permission. Joseph asks, is told no. Asks again, told no. Asks a third time and the Lord reluctantly says yes. He takes it home, but he's placed under strict covenant to show this to a very small group of people and sticks to that for a while, but then forgets or deviates.

00:22:31 We don't know a lot about the why, but then shows it to a broader group of people. He's not just a completely innocent victim here. He's not kept the covenant that he's made, abided by the terms and conditions he agreed to in borrowing the 116 pages, and eventually discovers they are gone. But as Dr.

Dirkmaat noted, that they were not lost, they were stolen, and the Lord tells them as much later.

00:22:57 Finally, Joseph, who's in Harmony, his wife nudges him to go because Martin hasn't come back. They're worried. He leaves his wife under difficult health circumstances and goes and asks for Martin to come. On the designated morning, Martin finally comes and cools his heels. I mean, just not wanting to go in and deliver the bad news to Joseph. For two or three hours, keeps the whole Smith family waiting for their breakfast, finally comes in and delivers the bad news.

00:23:25 And Joseph thinks his soul is lost. Martin believes his soul is lost. And indeed, Joseph loses privileges over this. Loses the Urim and Thummim for a season, has it taken from him until he repents adequately and has that restored. When he does, the angel, I read this just this morning in Lucy Mack Smith's version, the angel was happy to give them back. Heaven was rooting for Joseph to make the changes necessary to get back the privileges that had been suspended for a season.

00:23:54 They weren't happily and angrily punishing him for his mistakes, but they wanted him to make the changes he needed to make in order to get that second chance that God then gives to both Joseph and Martin. Martin eventually comes back, gets to become one of the three witnesses. We'll talk more about the rest of the story in a bit.

John Bytheway: 00:24:14 Oh, I'm just thinking about the historical context just because I think all of us have lost things, lost documents. But what's the question you ask your students, Hank? Well, didn't you save it? Didn't you save a copy? There's no Google Drives. This is how many hours do you suppose in 116 pages of manuscript and that's what I think about too is the time investment it would take for that. So to let that out of your hands, it's kind of frightening to think about, 116 pages in a document that you can't save, that there is no copy of it.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:24:53 John, I don't know if you've experienced this, or Hank, but you're right, as you're typing something, if you ever then lost a document, even though I know I could type it again, it's so frustrating. I worked so hard to get just what I wanted onto my computer and now it's gone. I absolutely hate that feeling. And for them, in fact, they won't get these 116 pages back. Although I can't help but wonder, I'm sure Joseph gained experience as a translator and the process that was invaluable and that he didn't lose that.

Hank Smith: 00:25:25 I think I get frustrated if I write a 116 word text and somehow lose it.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:25:31 Yes.

Hank Smith: 00:25:33 That took me so long to put together. Rob, so let me make sure I got the story straight. Last week we talked with [Dr. Scott Woodward](#) about Joseph obtaining the plates. He's now married. He's back in New York, and the persecution is so great. People want these plates. It's interesting today that Joseph Smith's critics claim he never had plates when his enemies of that day, that's all they believe, right? That he has them.

00:26:03 So he needs to move back to Emma's home, which is how many miles? Over 120 miles. For us, that's a three-hour drive, but for them it's quite a journey. He doesn't have the money to make the move. Martin gives him \$50, like you said, to make the move back to Pennsylvania. And then Martin comes down to visit and also to serve as a scribe as they're figuring this out. I think we talked last week, John, about Martin going to New York seeing, okay, how are we supposed to get this done?

00:26:36 He talks to Charles Anthon, comes back, continues to work with Joseph. Rob, is Martin traveling back and forth between Harmony, Pennsylvania, which is right on the New York border. Some people might not understand how the Knights, who live in Colesville, New York, can be close to the Hale family, Emma's family, that lives in Harmony, Pennsylvania. Well, they're both right on the border, Southern New York and Northern Pennsylvania. So is Martin going back and forth at times?

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:27:05 Looks like he's invested a significant amount of time, maybe even more valuable than the money he's contributed to Joseph.

Hank Smith: 00:27:11 Right. So then Martin says, "Look, things are really hard for me back in New York. Let me take these manuscript pages. They're beautiful. They're amazing. Let me take those back. The people who are criticizing me will be convinced that this work is amazing. It's from God. I'll bring it right back. I promise I'll bring it right back," and he doesn't come right back. Did I get the story right there, Rob?

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:27:37 Yeah, that's my understanding, and it tells you something about how beautiful those 116 pages must have been, the stories, the texts, the teachings, that Martin thought it would be compelling enough to convince those who doubt it. It wasn't for reasons that we'll discover in Section 5 that the intellectual proof

wouldn't make a difference to the hard-hearted, but it must have been a beautiful, powerful text.

- John Bytheway: 00:28:00 We've mentioned a couple of times on this podcast the name of Dick Bennett or [Dr. Richard Bennett](#), and he's been on the podcast. He wrote a very insightful article years ago. I think it was called Carefully Schooled in First Principles, and I had never thought of this, but Hank, you know that I love First Principles and Article of Faith 4, the Doctrine of Christ, and his whole thesis was Joseph Smith didn't just, let's see, what are some of the first principles?
- 00:28:26 Let's say faith. Let's say repentance. He talks about the first vision, the faith required for that, the faith required for Moroni, and then he talks about losing the 116 pages and repentance. Joseph Smith didn't just say, "Oh, repentance." He lived it. He lived sore repentance and going through that. And then as they continued to translate, start over again, baptism.
- 00:28:52 It was a great article thinking, oh yeah, he lived this stuff before he taught faith in Christ and repentance and baptism. And I hadn't thought of that before, but this is a sore repentance type of episode right here that Joseph Smith was schooled in before the Wentworth Letter, the Articles of Faith were written.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:29:15 I just love the notion that all of the prophets about whom we read and whose teachings we read were spiritual experiential learners. When Mormon talks about charity, the pure love of Christ, he's not writing from book knowledge. He has learned to love his enemies, literally in his case.
- Hank Smith: 00:29:36 John, Dr. Bennett actually turned that into a book. It's called [School of the Prophet: How the Lord Taught Joseph the Gospel](#). He calls it the 10-year incubation period where he's got to learn faith, repentance, baptism, and the Holy Ghost before he can teach faith, repentance, baptism, and Holy Ghost. And we love Richard Bennett. All of us here have great love and respect for Dr. Bennett. Can I read you both something? This is way back in 1994.
- 00:30:09 [Elder Holland](#) was speaking to a group of seminary and institute teachers. It's a talk called A Standard unto My People. He talks about the loss of these pages and what a faith promoting experience it can be to those of us who are now looking back. This is what he says. If the loss of those 116 pages was simply the disappearance of some thoughtful wisdom literature and a few chapters of remarkably deft fiction as opponents of the Book of Mormon would say, what's the big deal?

- 00:30:45 Why all this business about Joseph going through the depths of hell, worrying about whether he was going to get the manuscript back, and fearing the rebuke of God? He's a quick study. He's a frontier talent. He can just write some more. Listen to some of the emotion of that difficult moment. When Martin does not return and does not return with the manuscript, although Joseph was now nearly worn out, sleep had fled his eyes. Neither had he any desire for food, for he felt he had done wrong.
- 00:31:11 And how great his condemnation was, he did not know. This is coming from his mother. When a fellow traveler inquired about Joseph's gloomy appearance and the cause of his affliction, Joseph thanked him for his kindness and mentioned that he had been caring for a sick wife and child and that the child had died. As a result, his wife was very despondent, but he refrained from giving any further explanation beyond that.
- 00:31:33 When pressed about the situation, Joseph replied as before, that he had left his wife in such precarious health that he feared he would not find her alive when he returned. Furthermore, he had buried his first and only child just days ago. There was another trouble lying at his heart which he dared not mention. Again, that's from his mother. Another trouble, this is Elder Holland, deeper than those? Deeper than a wife who's on the threshold of dying and a son who already had?
- 00:32:00 How deep can such a trouble be and what could possibly be the nature of? Well, this is Elder Holland, you and I know the answer to that. The next morning, 8:00 came. Then 9:00, 10:00, 11:00. Finally, at half past 12:00, Martin is seen walking with a slow measured step toward the Smith house, his eyes fixed remorselessly on the ground. Then he pauses at the gate, draws his hat over his eyes.
- 00:32:27 Finally, summoning the courage to enter the house, he takes up his knife and fork to eat a noon meal with the Smith family, but immediately drops his utensils. Hyrum Smith observing says, "Martin, are you sick?" Upon which Martin presses his hands to his head, cries out in a tone of deep anguish, "I've lost my soul. I've lost my soul." Joseph, who has not verbalized his fears until then, springs from the table.
- 00:32:54 "Martin, have you lost the manuscript? Have you broken your oath and brought down condemnation upon my head as well as your own?" "Yes, it's gone," Martin says. "I know not where." "Oh my God!" Joseph clenches his hands, "All is lost. All is lost. What shall I do? I have sinned. I tempted the wrath of God. I

should have been satisfied with the first answer." He weeps and groans and walked the floor in anguish. At length, he tells Martin to go search again.

00:33:25 "No", Martin says, "It's all in vain. I have ripped open beds and pillows. I know that it's not there." "Then", says Joseph, "how do I return with such a tale as this? I dare not do it. How shall I appear before the Lord? Of what rebuke? I am not worthy from the angel of the most high." Can you guys imagine Moroni? We talked about this. For years we talked about this. You can read this whole talk. We can link it in our show notes, but I want you to see how Elder Holland then talks about this.

00:33:59 He talks about that whole scene and he says, "My goodness, that's an elaborate little story which makes absolutely no sense at all, unless, of course, there really were plates, there really was a translation process going on, and there really had been a solemn covenant made with the Lord, and there really was an enemy who did not want that book to come forth in this generation." Talk about a literary flair and a gift for fiction. This is called sarcasm. Those of you who are...

00:34:29 Wait, what? Lucy Mack Smith gets an A, right along with her son. If all of this is an imaginary venture to say nothing of the terrific performances by Mr. and Mrs. Harris and the entire first generation of the church, which is only to say, which many have said before, if Joseph Smith or anyone else for that matter created the Book of Mormon out of whole cloth, that to me is a far greater miracle than the proposition that he translated it from an ancient record by an endowment of divine power.

00:35:03 I had never thought about that before, Rob, that all of these people in this family already believe him. There would be no reason for this big dramatic scene if they're making it all up.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:35:15 Absolutely. In fact, along those same lines, if you were a life coach for a fraud who's pretending to be a prophet, you would say, "This thing you're calling a revelation, it makes you look bad. It makes your primary financial backer look bad. This is not what we want. We want something that makes people think you're a saint, that you're perfect." What an odd move if it was part of an elaborate hoax to have Sections 3, 5, and 10 among your first recorded and published revelations in which the Lord publicly rakes you over the coals.

00:35:54 In my life story, I hope they don't start with, "Here's his major mistakes. Let's walk through those first." Who in their right mind would put this first unless they thought, well, it's from the

Lord. I've got to put it in. I mean, we'll see that Peter, Martha, Lehi, the brother of Jared, are all rebuked publicly by the Lord, and those rebukes, that chastisement, is canonized. Can you imagine having your most severe reprimands from God being canonized for people to benefit you?

- John Bytheway: 00:36:25 Do we have any idea how long this 116 pages took?
- Hank Smith: 00:36:29 I'm not an expert on this, but it looks to me like it's a period of a couple of months. And Rob, isn't this also years of being tutored by the angel? This is a process that started way back in 1823.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:36:45 In Harmony, and if you have not been to Harmony, I just went last May, what a sacred place. You can see why President Nelson loved dedicating that restoration site. Near the home where Joseph was doing some of the translating is the burial spot for that baby. I have no idea what role that unique, terrible affliction that I've not experienced might've played in shaping Joseph.
- 00:37:11 As you were reading that account and talking about the difficult circumstances Joseph was in personally at the time he then goes back to Palmyra, it reminds me of this verse from the Joseph Smith translation of Hebrews 11:40. God having provided some better things for them, and then this addition in the Joseph Smith translation, through their sufferings. For without sufferings, they could not be made perfect.
- 00:37:37 It seems to me that all that Joseph experiences here is part of a refining process that helps him become the disciple he needs to be to exercise this extraordinary gift of translation that gives us this incomparable volume of scripture, The Book Mormon.
- Hank Smith: 00:37:53 Rob, you've been studying this a long time. In your words, how does Joseph feel when he knows these pages are gone? Because for you and I and John and our listeners, oh, we know this is going to work out. Oh, Joseph, don't worry, there's a lot of great things coming, but he doesn't know that.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:38:13 In fact, he fears his soul is lost. That's why as we jump now into the text of Section 3, verses one and three must have been sweet, good news. Even though they're followed by some severe reprimands, Joseph had to take a lot of hope from verses one and three. The works and the designs and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught. Remember, remember, I'm in verse three now, that it is not the work of God that is frustrated but the work of men. Any

thoughts from either of you on why that would've been so comforting for Joseph to hear at this time?

- John Bytheway: 00:38:48 I'm just wondering if he's thinking, oh, there's a backup somewhere. The way he's talking right now, there must be a backup plan. I always love that word, the design. God has a design for us and for the work. The fact that he's not disinterested just watching it unfold, but he has a design in mind is always comforting to me.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:39:12 In fact, in his foreknowledge, I think what the Lord wanted to come first in the Book of Mormon all along was 1 Nephi. He was not surprised by this and he paved the way for a wise purpose I know not, Mormon said.
- Hank Smith: 00:39:28 Rob, I think it's important to do what you're telling us to do here, which is pause and put yourself in his situation. Here's someone who's been tutored for years and feels like he has failed.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:39:44 I think Emma said he could not be consoled. And then to discover there's a divine safety net, that he hasn't fallen, he's not broken his neck spiritually, he's going to be able to bounce back from this, well, I think this is comforting for all of us who make mistakes and sin in our journeys in life and in trying to build the Kingdom of God. I think these two verses should relieve unnecessary angst and anxiety that we experience sometimes worrying about whether we might've frustrated God's work.
- 00:40:14 I remember, now this wasn't my mistake, but the first time as a young missionary in Germany, we had someone who was committed to baptism who came to church. The talks were not the talks we were hoping for in sacrament meeting. I don't know if you've had that experience before. Afterwards, I was trying to find my way to this good brother to do some damage control.
- 00:40:34 And before I could say anything, he said, "Gott ist unter euch." God is among you. I'm like, yes, he is. Just what I was thinking. That's right. Somehow with divine compensation, those talks still served as revelatory catalyst for him that this was the Church of Jesus Christ despite the imperfections of the speakers. I take some confidence and hope in these two verses to know that when I'm trying, God will make up the difference for me.

Hank Smith: 00:41:06 All three of us have been young fathers and to bury that child and then to have this, and then the Lord lets him sit there for a while, right, Rob? Lets him sit in that pain for a while.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:41:18 This is a painful preparatory period for young Joseph that I think is necessary to galvanize his resolve, to never again want to succumb to the pressures of trying to please people, but to be absolutely riveted on trying to please God. And as we get into the substance of the rebuke, we'll talk more about that, but first, maybe let's dwell a little bit more on this principle as we think about this pattern of extraordinary people who've been reprimanded publicly in scripture for our benefit, and that principle to me is simply that divine course correction is a crucial part of God's curriculum even for his most trusted disciples, maybe even especially for his most trusted disciples.

00:42:07 [Elder Maxwell](#) said, "The Lord is truly there to chastise those whom he loves, including the spiritually preeminent. So when we sense some divine chastisement, we shouldn't think, I'm on God's list of spiritual losers. But instead, the coach cares enough about me to help me improve my game. Apparently the team needs me." [Elder Christofferson](#) said, "I would like to speak of one particular attitude and practice we need to adopt if we are to meet our Heavenly Father's high expectations.

00:42:35 It is this, willingly to accept and even seek correction. Correction is vital if we would conform our lives unto a perfect man." He's quoting Ephesians 4:13 now. "That is unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Paul said of divine correction or chastening, for whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth." Quoting Hebrews 12:6. "Though it is often difficult to endure, truly we ought to rejoice that God considers us as worth the time and trouble to correct." We see examples there of the Lord chastening those whom he loves.

00:43:11 For me, I have to tell you, this is one of the most difficult spiritual characteristics to develop. I'm still working on it, because my natural man is defensive and wants to justify myself. I remember a story that Elder Paul Johnson told years ago to the faculty at BYU. I actually reached out to him to get an accurate version of the story and his permission to share it. As a general authority, on one occasion, he was being corrected by a member of the 12, who had a mistaken understanding of the underlying facts.

00:43:44 And here's why Elder Johnson's where he is and I certainly am not, he does not correct the record. He cares more about learning from this apostle than about looking good. And my

natural man would be all about saying, "No, no, no, that wasn't my fault. I'm not the one who made that mistake." What he said was, "It was afterward that I realized that although the details of that specific situation were not accurate, there was an underlying personal weakness of mine that his correction addressed.

00:44:14 I realized that if I had said something, I probably would've missed the lesson the Lord had for me." That's an amazing level of humility that I do not have, but I want to become more like Elder Johnson, more like Joseph Smith, and more like Martin, all of whom respond well to divine correction that leads to greater spiritual opportunities and growth for them.

Hank Smith: 00:44:39 Do you remember [Sister Michelle Craig's](#) talk, Divine Discontent, where she said divine discontent leads to humility, not to self-pity or discouragement that comes from making comparisons in which we always come up short? Just a beautiful talk where she says, "It's okay, welcome the Lord's correction."

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:44:59 I was listening to [Adam Grant](#), who's a great writer and academic, and he had written an article that successfully challenged a finding of Daniel Kahneman, who's a Nobel laureate and just an icon in his field. Then got to sit down one day with the senior academic Nobel laureate whose work he had challenged and Kahneman thanked him and said something like, "I'm less wrong today than I was yesterday. Thank you."

00:45:28 That's a great humble attitude to adopt, to welcome divine correction and say, "Thank you. I now know something about myself and how to get better and how to improve that I didn't know yesterday."

John Bytheway: 00:45:40 I remember listening to a talk 20 years ago by an archeologist named [John E. Clark](#). And at the very beginning of his talk, he showed all of the supposed anachronisms in the Book of Mormon. And then said, "Our critics have done more than we ever could have," because they pointed out all these things. Then the archeologists ever since then have found all of these supposed faults in the Book of Mormon or anachronisms in the Book of Mormon, and then he showed how answering those has flipped everything around.

00:46:17 It was very interesting to see that, to thank the critics for pointing out stuff that would need further study and it would clarify it. Have you ever had that feeling? I will never do that again. Do you think Joseph now had this? I will never do that again. There's a verse that I have always loved in The Pearl of

Great Price, just a little comment. It's Moses 6:55, "And they taste the bitter that they may know to prize the good." And I think a lot of us go through that. I don't want to feel that way again. I don't want to do that again. There becomes a lesson in this carefully schooled in first principles.

- Hank Smith: 00:47:00 In part of my dissertation research, I had the opportunity to study some Supreme Court case briefs. I just took a note of this one. This is [Anthony Kennedy](#), who served as a Supreme Court justice. He said, "For those on the receiving end of criticism, I offer the following advice. See the criticism as valuable information about how to do better, not as a personal attack. Also, take responsibility for the criticism rather than jumping to the defensive."
- 00:47:29 And then this one jumped out at me, Rob, because this rebuke is coming from the Lord. Justice Kennedy, "Finally, see the criticism as an opportunity to work together with the critic to solve the problem. It's not an adversarial situation." So maybe these divine rebukes that come from the Lord, we can see them as opportunities to now work with the Lord even closer.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:47:53 Even when somebody else is mostly wrong, there's a kernel of truth to what they said. When I was vice president of systems consolidation at a parent company for Blue Cross Blue Shield companies in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Utah, I had a colleague, we were peers, we both reported to the president of the company, and he chewed me out one day for 30 minutes and I felt it was totally out of line. It was the least professional thing I've encountered in my career.
- 00:48:24 He was offended that I'd not consulted with him before doing something, felt like I was usurping his role in some way. And I had the good sense just to apologize, not defend myself, tell him I'd do better in the future. But that night as I prayed, I guess what I was hoping for was some divine affirmation that my colleague was a jerk and out of line. I'm not sure how I phrased the prayer exactly, but I think that was the gist of it, if I was honest. Lord, don't you just hate him as much as I do?
- 00:48:52 Instead, the response I got was, yeah, yeah, he was out of line. But for you to accomplish the things I want you to accomplish, I need you to do better. And that was a lesson I will never forget. That in terms of communication and avoiding unnecessarily offending some people, that there were some things I could do to be more intentional and be more careful, and I hope I've learned some lessons from that.

Hank Smith:	00:49:19	Wow! John, what's the phrase someone taught us, the Lord is easy to please and impossible to satisfy.
Dr. Rob Eaton:	00:49:28	And it's clear in these sections, he's a God of high love, also high expectations. Sometimes we minimize that a little too much if we focus exclusively on God's mercy and love and not on his high expectations and justice. He does call Joseph and Martin to task because he needs them to do extraordinary things.
John Bytheway:	00:49:48	If I could jump ahead to verse 10 a little bit because boy, you read this part, this first part, the works, designs, purposes of God cannot be frustrated. Verse four, you set at not the counsels of God. But then, boy, verse 10, but remember God is merciful. Therefore, repent of that which thou hast done, which is contrary to the commandment which I gave you.
	00:50:09	And this line, Hank, you quoted from the lesson manual, thou art still chosen. One of the tough questions that I've heard out there is, hey, I've messed up. Does my patriarchal blessing still count? And I love that line, thou art still chosen and art again called to the work. I don't know if it answers everybody's question perfectly, but I love the idea that Peter was called the Rock before he waffled and he's still the Rock, right?
Dr. Rob Eaton:	00:50:45	And in verse nine, behold thou art Joseph and thou wast chosen to do the work of the Lord. We might put in our own names, thou art John, thou art Hank, thou art Rob, thou wast chosen and you're still called to do those things in your patriarchal blessing. I love that insight, John.
Hank Smith:	00:51:03	The Lord is such a good teacher, isn't he? Be more careful. Be more careful next time.
Dr. Rob Eaton:	00:51:09	Let's read verses four through eight and fifteen and look at the substance of the rebuke and see what we learn. Maybe we can take turns reading those. I'll do four. "For although a man may have many revelations and have power to do many mighty works, yet if he boasts in his own strength and sets at naught the counsels of God and follows after the dictates of his own will and desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him."
Hank Smith:	00:51:35	Verse five. "Behold, you have been entrusted with these things, but how strict were your commandments? And remember also the promises which were made to you if you did not transgress them."

John Bytheway: 00:51:47 Verse six. "And behold, how oft you have transgressed the commandments and the laws of God and have gone on in the persuasions of men?"

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:51:57 That's my favorite line in this whole section, we'll come back to it, probably because it's the counsel I most need from the Lord. "For behold," verse seven, "you should not have feared man more than God. Although men set at naught the counsels of God, and despise his words, yet you should have been faithful; and he would have extended his arm and supported you against all the fiery darts of the adversary;" and even Mrs. Harris. "And he would have been with you in every time of trouble." And then verse 15, Hank?

Hank Smith: 00:52:29 "For thou hast suffered the counsel of thy director to be trampled upon from the beginning." Oh man!

John Bytheway: 00:52:36 Ouch is right.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:52:38 God does not hold back. In fact, later he's got even tougher things to say about Martin. We don't know when Martin first reads the revelation that we know as Section 3, but he certainly gets to read Section 5. He's called a wicked man and told he needs to humble himself and repent. But before we go to how Joseph and Martin respond, what stands out to you about this divine chastisement? What lessons do you think we should glean from this painful lesson that Joseph learns?

John Bytheway: 00:53:10 I see the Lord saying, "God's will, your will. Which one are you going to choose? If you choose mine, I will support you through everything."

Hank Smith: 00:53:20 I just hear the Lord saying in verse eight, "I wouldn't have left you alone. Maybe you would've lost Martin as a friend. Maybe you tell him no and he leaves forever. I would've been there for you."

John Bytheway: 00:53:32 In every time of trouble.

Hank Smith: 00:53:34 I would've been there for you. I would've extended my arm and supported you. Why were you so worried about losing Martin when I'm standing here ready to help?

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:53:44 I think one of the most critical questions for every disciple of Jesus Christ is, ultimately, whose approval matters most to me? Whom do I want to please? For a teenager at a party, they could ask, how will my friends react if I leave? Or they could ask, how

will God feel if I stay? Which question we choose determines our behavior. And here Joseph's taught to care more about God's approval than anyone else's and not to go on in the persuasions of men.

00:54:19 This isn't just a question of good or evil. When I was applying to teach at BYU-Idaho, I was brought in as a finalist, and I prepared a lesson and I had an opener to start with. I actually felt I'd been inspired with the particular opener, and I bounced it off of my wife and my dear friend Mark Beecher, two of the teachers whose opinions I respect most in the church.

00:54:40 And both had said, "Yeah, not that one." I come up with a different one and both had said, "That's great." So the night before in my motel room, I'm practicing and I'm feeling unsettled about this new opener I've got. And I pray and I get this distinct impression. I gave you mine already. I gave you the one I want you to use.

John Bytheway: 00:54:59 Wow!

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:55:00 And I went with that one. Diane and Mark are saints, consecrated saints, so I wasn't choosing between someone trying to offer me heroin and a terrible life. I was choosing between good people who had great ideas whose judgment I had great cause to respect. And yet in this case, God gave me different instructions and I felt like was almost testing me that if I wanted his help and his blessings, I needed to go with what he was asking me to do.

John Bytheway: 00:55:26 Wow!

Hank Smith: 00:55:28 Wow! Sometimes in our house, Rob, we quote Dumbledore like he's a 13th apostle, and he makes a great statement to Neville Longbottom. I don't know if either of you read [Harry Potter](#), but I say it to my kids in Dumbledore's voice, so this might sound a little bit cheesy, but he says, "It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to your enemies, but a great deal more to stand up to your friends."

00:55:55 That's what Joseph had to do. He had to turn to Martin and say, "I love you. You're my friend. And no, I'm not doing this." And that takes a lot of courage. You can think of young people all over who have to stand up to their friends when they say, "Come do this. It'll be fun. Come." No, I'm not going to. You're my friend, but no.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:56:17 It's too bad we didn't get Harry Potter in a spiritual setting. Harry, you cannot please God without upsetting Satan. That's actually [Elder Richard G. Scott](#) said, "You can't please God without upsetting Satan." [Elder Lynn G. Robbins](#) said, "When people try to save face with men, they can unwittingly lose face with God." I mean, this has been a problem for natural men and women throughout time and thus a point of frequent prophetic emphasis throughout time.

00:56:45 You mentioned in your prior episode on this, Hank, Isaiah talking about this in chapter 51 verses 12 and 13. Behold "who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die and the Son of Man which shall be made as grass." You're worried they're going to melt. You're worried about them? Seriously? You got me here, the maker of the universe, and you're worried about displeasing them instead of displeasing me? What are you thinking?

00:57:08 One of the most tragic verses of scripture to me, couple verses, John 12:42-43. Jesus has raised Lazarus from the dead in the previous chapter. And John writes, "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also, many believed on him. But because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue, for they love the praise of men more than the praise of God." Joseph has to wean himself from desiring the approval of men and women and focus laser-like on having the approval of God.

John Bytheway: 00:57:44 Hank, can you imagine, for example, if we had done an entire podcast recording... I mean, this manuscript probably took days, weeks, I don't even know how long, 116 pages. What if we lost a two, three, four hour recording? Can you imagine such a thing?

Hank Smith: 00:58:01 Can you imagine? You know who comes to mind, John, is [Sister Reyna Aburto](#), who was with us last when we lost her entire recording. Sister Aburto, if you're out there, we still feel awful about that. John, she had to come back and re-record her entire episode, and she was so gracious. And that was, what, a couple hours worth of work?

John Bytheway: 00:58:25 That was a few hours.

Hank Smith: 00:58:26 We were devastated.

John Bytheway: 00:58:27 We were mortified and felt so bad and felt so bad that she had to come back and do it over again. You both have probably seen episodes of [the Chosen](#). My favorite character in those early

episodes is Nicodemus because he's so conflicted, especially when his wife says to him, "I love our life." Ugh! He's presenting at Symposium. Everybody respects him, and he's so conflicted inside. I think he's my favorite actor so far. What you just said, Rob, is, ooh, I could be put out of the synagogue maybe my life that my wife loves. Maybe I'd be giving all that up. It made it really real for me.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:59:10 I love what The Chosen does in highlighting the Savior's invitations and inventing a fictionalized one, but watching how Peter, James, John, and Andrew react to that invitation, and then Matthew, and then Nicodemus almost, but not yet. But for Nicodemus, the good news, as for Martin Harris, is it's not the end of the story, but still it underscores the notion that at some point in our lives, we all have to decide whether we're going to follow Jesus Christ at some social cost.

Hank Smith: 00:59:41 Steve, our founder, Steve Sorensen, one of the first times I met him, I went out to speak for his business out in California, most of whom the employees are not members of the church. And there, Steve stands up and he starts talking about Elder Uchtdorf and what he learns from Elder Uchtdorf at General Conference and he quotes from it. I looked around and here's all these non-Latter-day Saints that are taking notes and listening to him. He had just no problem declaring who he was.

01:00:15 This is my love. This is what I do. This is what we can all learn from this. He wasn't telling them to convert. He wasn't telling them that his religion was right. He was saying, "Look, here's something I learned from this great religious leader that I had." I took a lot of courage from that, because I had been told early on in my life if I wanted to be a public speaker, I had to either choose to be an outspoken Latter-day Saint or I could choose to be a public speaker, but I couldn't do both because one would really hurt the other.

01:00:45 I've never forgotten that moment. Those who knew Steve, he was not ashamed of teaching. In fact, at Steve's funeral, his children, they knew that most of the people listening were not Latter-day Saints. And they all said basically the same thing, "If my dad were here and had all of your attention, he would want me to tell you about the Book of Mormon, so that's what I'm going to do." It was so impressive. And then I want to tell on another friend, who we all love. His name is Kerry Muhlestein.

01:01:17 You both know how brilliant Kerry Muhlestein is. His dissertation in Egyptology from UCLA won all sorts of awards. And then Kerry had to make the decision if he was going to

publicly back the church, specifically the Pearl of Great Price as an Egyptologist. He told me, he said there was a moment where I was going to hit submit on a paper and he asked his wife to come over. Do you want to hit this with me because this is going to end my credibility with Egyptologists all over the world? And they hit it together. This is what we believe. This is who I am.

- Dr. Rob Eaton: 01:02:01 I actually had on a very small way, when I was on your show a couple of years ago, it included John 14:6. There is no other way. I had been dipping my toe, still am, in the waters of teaching at other universities to professors on learning and teaching and have since been blessed with some opportunities to be keynote speakers there.
- 01:02:21 But it occurred to me, somebody Googling me, because they'd seen my book or seen me somewhere, the first thing they might find was my appearance on your podcast and they would listen to it and how might they respond if they heard me defending and explaining the Savior saying, "There is no other way." And I got the distinct impression, yeah, whatever. This is the truth I need you to teach.
- 01:02:45 Don't worry about those consequences. Those don't matter. In fact, I think one of the best ways to resist peer pressure or succumbing to the desire to be approved of others is to follow the Prophet's counsel, to think celestial. When I have that eternal perspective, I worry so much less about the consequences in the moment. I love the post-resurrection, not his resurrection, but the Savior's resurrection, Peter.
- 01:03:12 And in Acts 4:19-20, he's given a gag order by the Sanhedrin, who could order him to be killed just like Jesus. And he says, Yea, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than God, you go ahead and decide. I'm going with God. And what are you going to do? Kill me? I'll resurrect, it turns out. You got nothing on me, boys. I'm going to preach, and good luck with whatever it is you're doing over there for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. That's thinking celestial.
- Hank Smith: 01:03:43 That is beautiful.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 01:03:45 Hank, hearing about Brother Sorensen doing that reminds me of a time when I asked the placement advisor at Stanford Law School, should I keep my mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on my resume or do I need to take that off? She was not a member of the church and said, "Rob, tell me, is

being a Mormon a big part of your life?" And I said, "Actually it is."

01:04:06 She said, "I kind of suspected that. So if a law firm hated Mormons, when would you want to find that out? I'd keep it on." I love that advice saying this is integral to who you are. You don't want to sneak into a law firm and then have to try to hide that. Let them know who you are. Make sure you don't end up at a place where that doesn't work for them.

Hank Smith: 01:04:27 Rob, you get that from Section 3. Are you on my side or are you not? If you're with me, then be with me.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 01:04:35 I love verse 15. It may be the only place in scripture where we get this. Let me be thy director who's calling the shots here. By the way, that's just so critical. My wife and I had agreed on one thing. She's from San Francisco, spent early childhood years in Maryland, and then junior high and high school years in Evansville, Indiana. I grew up in the Seattle area. One thing we had agreed on was that we would not live in a predominantly LDS area. Now we've spent much of our married life living in Rexburg, Idaho and now Payson, Utah and loved it.

01:05:11 I'm grateful that at some point we stopped calling the shots and just ask God, where wouldst thou have us go? And we've been so blessed by letting God be the director in our lives and not trying to direct him. Again, I hope that's the big takeaway that listeners will have is that Martin comes out amazingly well in the end and stands steadfast as a witness of the Book of Mormon to the end of his life.

01:05:36 And that said, I had sent an email to a couple of church history colleagues about verse 12 saying, any evidence that wicked meant something different to readers in 1828 than it means today because that seems tough? They actually both came back with some interesting thoughts to say, maybe we don't need to water that down and try to explain that away. In fact, my friend John Thomas pointed me to this recent talk by [John Tanner](#) formerly at BYU and then BYU-Hawaii, but this is fascinating.

01:06:05 He said, "In the church, we seem reluctant to talk about sin. Typically, we speak in euphemisms that reduce sin to mistakes, errors, weaknesses, faults, slip ups, and the like." John Tanner continues, "When we do actually speak about sin, it is in reference to discrete transgressions as if the problem is merely our individual sins. Rarely do we speak about sinfulness at all, but what needs fixing goes beyond mistakes and errors. It goes

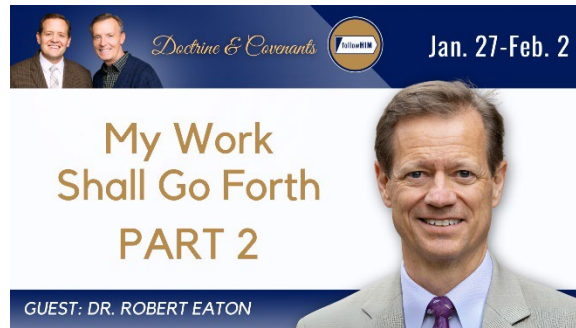
beyond even our individual sins. What we need to get right with God is deeper than this.

- 01:06:37 Gratefully so is the reach and power of the atonement that Christ makes possible. Christ not only forgives sins, he is able to root out sinfulness and free us from its bondage. He not only blots out specific stains and impurities, he heals our brokenness and makes us whole. His atonement not only satisfies the demands of justice, it redeems our fallen natures. So I guess we don't have to apologize for the Lord calling Martin wicked when he's told us through King Benjamin that natural men and women are all enemies to God.
- 01:07:10 I love what Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn wrote, the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either, but right through every human heart and through all human hearts. That was true for Joseph and for Martin, and it's true for us. We can take some hope from the fact that the Lord calls this wicked man to be one of the three witnesses, and he will use you and me despite our sinfulness and sins when we take advantage of his merciful invitation to repent and come unto him.
- 01:07:46 And in Section 5, we get that rest of the story from Martin Harris, as he and Joseph both respond well to this divine course correction. And frankly, learning to respond well to divine course correction may be one of the most important qualities for us to develop as disciples of Christ.
- Hank Smith: 01:08:04 Rob, don't you think calling sin sin helps us have clear vision to make choices? I think of Joseph of Egypt, Genesis 39. He doesn't say, "How could I slip up like this?" He says, "How could I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Because he sees it clearly as a sin, that gives him the motivation to say, "I can't do this."
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 01:08:32 We can't fully repent when we minimize sin, especially our own sin.
- John Bytheway: 01:08:38 Well, I've put off the natural man, but he keeps coming back.
- Hank Smith: 01:08:46 Coming up in part two of this episode.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 01:08:48 A sister in the ward who had a son with a severe case of cerebral palsy, so he was wheelchair bound. And she was a single mother and then also had other foster children. She developed some back problems, so she couldn't get him into

the bathtub alone. She had asked the bishop to ask for a couple of priests every Saturday night to help get Sammy in the tub. We show up the first night. 17-year-old boy. He's not clinically trained. And we got to take Sammy's clothes off.

01:09:18

I think he got a bath once a week. Then there he is without any clothes on. We try to get him to the bathtub, touching him as little as possible. This is just way outside our comfort zone. We get him in the tub. We let her know, "Hey, we got Sammy in the tub," and she says, "Yeah, just go ahead and give him a bath. I'm cooking dinner." And we're like, "What? Give him a bath? What?"



- John Bytheway: 00:00:01 Welcome to part two with Dr. Rob Eaton, Doctrine and Covenants sections three through five.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:00:08 I was reading this as a one-time extraordinary event, but eight months later when Martin then goes to Harmony and now has an even more audacious ask, really, he's now saying, "I'd like to see the plates." His wife's brought a fraud trial against Joseph. He'd like to see the plates before he was just asking to borrow the manuscript for a while. So in [section five](#) verse 21, this is apparently an ongoing process for Joseph Smith that he's not yet completed eight months later. And similarly, Martin's made progress and is told conditionally he can be one of these three witnesses if he repents. So verses 11 through 13 and 18, John, would you read those four? So 11 through 13 and I'll read 18 in section five now.
- John Bytheway: 00:00:53 11 through 13?
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:00:55 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:00:56 "And in addition to your testimony, the testimony of three of my servants, whom I shall call and ordain, unto whom I will show these things, and they shall go forth with my words that are given through you. Yea, they shall know of a surety that these things are true, for from heaven will I declare it unto them. I will give them power that they may behold and view these things as they are;"
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:01:24 "And their testimony shall also go forth unto the condemnation of this generation," that's verse 18, "if they harden their hearts against them."
- 00:01:34 But then before being able to do that, Martin's told he's got more humbling to do. In verse 24, "he exalts himself and does not humble himself sufficiently before me; but if he will bow down before me, and humble himself in mighty prayer and faith, in the sincerity of his heart, then will I grant unto him a

view of the things which he desires to see." And oh, what a view he gets.

00:01:57 And then verse 28, "And now, except he humble himself," and this is back to what Hank was just saying, "and acknowledge unto me the things that he has done which are wrong." So he couldn't say, "Yeah, but I'm the victim here. Look, I was stuck in this terrible situation." In fact, both Martin and Joseph could have said, "I'm the victim here," but the Lord's saying, "You need to own up, you need to acknowledge what you did that was wrong. You covenanted to do something, you broke that covenant." And then continuing in verse 28, "And covenant with me that he will keep my commandments, and exercise faith in me, behold, I say unto him, he shall have no such views."

John Bytheway: 00:02:36 As you're talking, I keep replaying through my mind this scene from the movie *Witnesses*. They did such a good job of showing this scene. They're all in there waiting to eat and Martin Harris is outside by the fence like you described, and he doesn't want to come in and the way they portrayed that I thought was really, really well done. You can get *Witnesses* on Living Scriptures. I think it's on Amazon Prime too, and you can watch that depiction of that moment where Martin comes in to eat and finally tells them, "I've lost my soul. I've lost the manuscript."

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:03:10 I watched [Witnesses](#) in preparation for this, thoroughly enjoyed it and thought-provoking. I also had previously listened just coincidentally to Susan Easton Black's book, [Undeniable](#), a wonderful concise overview of the process of the three witnesses and the lives of each of them. I learned things I didn't know. Very well done.

00:03:29 As we focus on their lives, as everyone knows, it's interesting that each of the three leaves the church and yet remains true to their testimony of the Book of Mormon. Then [Elder Oaks](#) in his talk, *A Witness*, said all three went their separate ways with no common interest to support a collusive effort, yet to the end of their lives, periods ranging from 12 to 50 years after their excommunications, not one of these witnesses deviated from his published testimony or said anything that cast any shadow on its truthfulness.

00:04:00 We know that intellectual evidence alone is not going to be enough to change people's minds. In fact, in verse seven of section five, the Lord tells him, "Joseph, if you show people the plates themselves, it wouldn't convince the hard-hearted." And we know from one Corinthians chapter two, Paul's marvelous

teachings that it's only through the Spirit that we gain a lasting witness of spiritual truths.

00:04:22 [Elder Bednar](#) said, "A witness of truth by the power of the Holy Ghost that we invite into our soul produces a spiritual knowledge and illumination, a conviction more sure, more powerful, and more enduring than can be received through seeing, hearing, touching, or rational argument alone." Sort of like spiritual oatmeal, stuff that stays with you is that conviction born of the Spirit.

00:04:44 But that said, the Lord sees the witnesses' testimonies as playing a role, maybe giving people an intellectual reason to pause and take this story seriously and then undertake the work that will be necessary for them to eventually receive that spiritual witness, because he continues to have us publish the testimonies of the three and eight witnesses with the Book of Mormon, wherever it's published.

John Bytheway: 00:05:09 We're looking back a couple of hundred years, but think about the communities right then with those witnesses, the three and the eight, that guy that lives down the street, how much more powerful that could be that when they're right there and they're among you in your neighborhood. I've always thought about at the time what that meant for them. I love the phrase that Alma uses, "If you'll give place," love those two words. And I feel like maybe read these witnesses of the three and of the eight read how they're different. I'm sure we'll be talking more about that, and if that can allow you to give place to go from, "I doubt it" to "I wonder." Oh, that little step from, "I doubt" to "I wonder." Oh, can give place.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:05:56 To anyone listening who's not yet studied the Book of Mormon and taken it seriously, will you extend that invitation? Do this what-if exercise, just open your mind and heart enough to contemplate the possibility that there were actually plates and then study the Book of Mormon seriously and ask yourself, which seems more likely that the young Joseph Smith with so limited education in such a short period of time, about 66 working days, produced this extraordinary work and lied about how he did it or that you're actually reading the words of Nephi and Jacob, Mormon, and Alma, and Moroni. See which feels more plausible to you and then take that answer up the mountain, if you will, to the Lord and ask, "Did I get it right?" And when you ask in faith and real intent, through the power of the Holy Ghost, Moroni promises us, you can come to know the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon even as Martin learned it

for himself. Even though we won't get the angels, we'll know through the Spirit just as surely of its truthfulness.

- Hank Smith: 00:07:03 John, do you remember our episode with [Joe Spencer](#) on Second Nephi 27? It can't be about the book, it has to be about the words of the book.
- John Bytheway: 00:07:13 So good.
- Hank Smith: 00:07:14 We'll link that in our show notes too. There's a lot of extras you could go to this week, but that episode with Dr. Spencer really changed the way I see, "Hey, why can't we show the plates to everybody?" Because it's not about the book, it's about the words of the book. The plates might convince you, but the words convert you.
- John Bytheway: 00:07:33 And speaking of the designs of God long-term, who is second Nephi 27 quoting? Isaiah, who saw a book that was sealed and that would be spoken upon the housetops.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:07:50 So, John, you've already talked some about the rest of the story with Martin Harris's life, but let me just kind of walk through that quickly. He and Joseph respond, again, well to some pretty stern rebukes from the Lord and that allows Martin to get this privilege three months later to become one of the three witnesses. And, again, I love how that's depicted in the film Witnesses. August 1829, he mortgages his farm, which he later has to sell to finance the publication of the Book of Mormon. In June 1830, he and his wife separate, never reuniting. If Martin fears he might lose his wife, it turns out it's a well-placed fear. He makes an extraordinary sacrifice to be true to what God's asked him to do here at the cost of his marriage.
- 00:08:37 In 1835, he and two other witnesses get to select and ordain the men who eventually become the Quorum of the 12 Apostles, but in 1837 he has a falling out with Joseph over the failure of the Kirtland Safety Society and he's excommunicated. And then he bounces from the Shakers to the Strangites, to the church of Christ, he serves as the caretaker of the Kirtland Temple for years. Something else we should be indebted to him for. And then finally, after multiple invitations in 1870, he joins the Saints again in Utah, is baptized again, dies in 1875, and like the other two witnesses, his dying words are literally his testimony of the Book of Mormon. It's as if they feel their salvation hinges on being valiant witnesses.

- 00:09:25 [Elder Cook](#) has suggested that maybe ours does too, not of the Book of Mormon, but in terms of being witnesses of Christ. He taught in all things we should remember that, "Being valiant in the testimony of Jesus," quoting Doctrine and Covenants 76 verse 19, "is the great dividing test between the celestial and terrestrial kingdoms. We want to be found on the celestial side of that divide." God has high expectations for all of his servants, but especially those he trusts with sacred responsibilities. And fortunately, he's not only just but he's also merciful. So when we sin, if we then repent and receive divine correction, well, he blesses us with second and third chances and even greater opportunities.
- 00:10:11 And the Savior invites all of us who follow him to stand like Joseph as witnesses, to stand as witnesses of Christ and his atoning sacrifice and his teachings of Heavenly Father and his plan and his mercy, of the restoration and of living prophets. It's a privilege, as it was for Martin Harris, to stand as a witness of the Book of Mormon for all of us who follow Jesus Christ to stand as His witnesses, but doing that requires us to care more about what God thinks of us than what anyone else thinks of us.
- Hank Smith: 00:10:45 Rob, one thing I find interesting at the end of section five is the Lord says in verse 34, "Yes, we're going to halt here for a portion of time. I will provide means whereby you can accomplish the thing which I've commanded thee." The Lord has already put the process with Oliver Cowdery in place. "I have another way we're going to do this. Yes, you sinned. And don't worry, I will provide ways for my work to go forward. It's going to be okay."
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:11:14 When you think of that along with John talking about how Isaiah was inspired centuries earlier to do this, Mormon was inspired to translate and include first and second Nephi, for a wise purpose he knew not. It reminds me of something [President Eyring](#) said often when I interviewed him for his biography, "God plays infinite dimensional chess." We see that going on here.
- John Bytheway: 00:11:38 It's almost like the designs of God can't be frustrated or something.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:11:44 So speaking of Oliver Cowdery, it's interesting to know his backstory and how he ends up in Harmony, Pennsylvania, literally at the prophet's doorstep. Joseph Smith Sr., who is an interesting character in church history, let's just say his resume looks quite different than that of the current members of the first presidency and Quorum of the 12, he was not a world-class

heart surgeon or jurist or academic leader. He struggled to make ends meet as a farmer and yet I love him then as sort of a placeholder for all of us in the church, as he receives the revelation that becomes section four. He's got a question about what his role is in whatever it is that's unfolding.

00:12:29 In February of 1828, he travels over 120 miles to Harmony to see his son and to get the Lord's direction. Now, at the time, he and his wife had a boarder in their home who'd been peppering them with questions about Joseph and the plates, and frankly it had not gone well when they talked publicly about those things in the past and they were understandably gun-shy. They didn't give them a lot of information. But after receiving the revelation that we now know as section four, Joseph Smith Sr. returns home and opens up, and apparently he and Lucy open up and testify so effectively that this young border gets a spiritual witness of his own so strong that it impels him to make that trip of over 120 miles to Harmony, Pennsylvania. And that is how Oliver Cowdery ends up at Joseph's door.

00:13:21 Joseph Smith Sr. then becomes in effect one of this dispensation's first member missionaries and that's one of the main points I want to make with this section is while it is marvelous for full-time missionaries, it's great for all of us sharing the gospel. Frankly, it's a charter for any of us who want to serve in the Kingdom of God.

Hank Smith: 00:13:42 Like you said, this was not a missionary section originally. There is no church, there is no missionary service.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:13:49 Yeah, there were no callings, let alone name tags. The church has not yet been organized. And so I think this is a sweet but important example of how we get more out of this text, more out of this revelation, when we understand its backstory. This was not just something delivered to missionaries in the MTC, though it is certainly relevant for them.

Hank Smith: 00:14:10 Robert, can we go verse by verse?

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:14:13 Let's do it. John, would you start with reading verse one?

John Bytheway: 00:14:17 Absolutely. "Now behold, a marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men."

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:14:24 [President Nelson](#) has taught there is nothing happening on this earth right now that is more important than that, referring to

the gathering of Israel on both sides of the veil. There is nothing of greater consequence, absolutely nothing.

00:14:37 My wife and I love serving as mission leaders, but it's exhausting. Someone asked us just a few days after we'd gotten home, "Do you miss it?" And I thought, "Have you run a marathon? Five minutes, 10 minutes afterwards, you're not eager to go run the marathon again even though you're so glad you did it." But if you gave it your all, you're emotionally spent, sometimes even in the middle of it, I found myself maybe too consumed by the most challenging aspects of the call, but one Sunday I had just a sweet day where I got to use a little bit of my German, I got to connect with a woman whose husband was not yet a member but had faithfully come to church for years. By the way, whose baptism we attended seven years after that Sunday.

John Bytheway: 00:15:19 Wow.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:15:19 It was a long time. I was speaking in sacrament, I felt blessed and guided by the Spirit and the Spirit whispered to me, this was just a few months past the halfway point of our mission. "This is your dream calling. What are you whining about? Lean into the good parts." And that was really helpful, transformative counsel for me to focus on the joy that comes from serving in God's Kingdom and not focus on maybe the most difficult and emotionally challenging aspects of the call.

Hank Smith: 00:15:48 Yeah, we get tired in the work because we're mortals but we don't have to get tired of the work.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:15:55 Verse two, let me read the first part of it. We'll pause there, because I want to hear what John has to say about embarking. "Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God."

Hank Smith: 00:16:05 John, the reason you know so much about this verse is because you wrote a great talk, I've listened to it many times, on wasn't it the youth theme four years ago?

John Bytheway: 00:16:15 Yeah. And that's when I discovered just some interesting stuff. First of all, [embark](#), like I said, only appears once in the entire standard works. You might find it in a synopsis, the italicized text before a chapter, but in the actual text of the scriptures, one time. When I looked it up on dictionary.com, it said something like to board a ship, or aircraft, or vehicle, as for a journey.

00:16:41 And I laughed out loud because I thought you can't sort of embark. If you sort of get on an airplane and it leaves, this can cause great physical discomfort. You can't sort of get on a ship and leave. It kind of has that both feet-in type feeling to it. If you're going to embark, embark, and when you keep going, "See that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind, and strength," I mean this sounds like get both feet in, "that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day."

Hank Smith: 00:17:15 John, I've heard this talk many times. I want everybody to hear about Halfway Harv.

John Bytheway: 00:17:21 Okay. There were a couple of boys, they were neighbors, named Marvin and Harvey, or Marvin and Harv. And Marvin went to bed one night, got a full night's sleep, got up, got showered, got fully dressed, had a full breakfast, said to his mom, "I love you with all my heart," went off to school where he went to all of his classes, had a full lunch, went to football practice afterwards where he was a fullback, came home, had a full dinner, read his scriptures, and went to sleep. Now, his neighbor Harvey, his friends called him Halfway Harv because he seemed to do everything halfway. He got up one morning, still kind of half asleep after half a night's sleep, got half-dressed. Think about that. Okay, that's long enough. Made half his breakfast, said to his mom, "I love you with half my heart." We don't know how that turned out.

00:18:09 He went halfway to the bus stop. He said to the bus driver, "Can't you meet me halfway?" And then he went to half of his classes, he had half of his lunch. He went to football practice afterwards where he was a halfback. And then he went halfway home, ate half his dinner, read half his scriptures, said half a prayer, and fell half asleep. Now if you think that's a strange story, you don't know the half of it, you should meet his Auntie Almost. We went to see her once, but we only got halfway there.

00:18:35 So anyway, I want to read the scripture the way Halfway Harv might read it. "Therefore, O ye that halfway embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with half your heart, half your might, half your mind, and half your strength," here's the scary part, "that ye may stand half blameless before God at the last day." If you read it that way, it's just like, "Eww," isn't it? Because at first it sounds kind of overwhelming, "All your heart, might, mind, and strength," but when you read it, that halfway part, you can kind of go, "Yeah, I don't want to do that either." We don't want to be Halfway Harv, so we want to embark.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:19:16 John, your halfback and fullback thing reminds me of seventh-grade football. I'm a small guy. I was the smallest guy on the seventh grade football team. We didn't have enough seventh graders, so we scrimmaged with the eighth graders. And at that time of life when people were growing, the eighth graders were bigger and the biggest eighth grader was Eugene Tufts. And we did this drill where we lined up in single file lines and squared off with the guy, the head of each line, about 10 feet away from each other. They didn't even designate one line as offense and one as defense. They just said, "Ready, set," you got down in your stance, they blew the whistle and you ran into each other. But that's what we did. So we were lining up to run into each other.

00:19:56 As I'm in the line, I've got one thought, which is, "Anybody but Eugene Tufts, please not Eugene Tufts." He was the biggest, strongest eighth grader. I get up there, sure enough, it's Eugene. So I start thinking this through in my seventh-grade mind and I think, "Maybe if I run at kind of half speed, it won't hurt as much." I don't understand the laws of physics, but it hurt both on the impact with Eugene, and then after I went through the air, the impact on my backside as I hit the ground. And then to rub salt in the wound, the coach comes, stands over me and yells at me and makes me run a lap.

00:20:35 I'm thinking, "Eugene hurt me. Yell at him. Why are you yelling at me?" But he was yelling at me not because I wasn't big enough or strong enough, but because I wasn't brave enough, because I went halfway in. In fact, I learned a strange principle, and I don't know the physics of it, but at least on defense, no, even on offense, when you initiated the contact, it hurt less. When I went all in as a football player, it was more enjoyable, and the same was true for our full-time missionaries. Some, not many in our mission and it didn't last very long, they changed quickly, but some seemed to have the goal of doing as little work as possible without getting in trouble, and their missions actually ended up being more painful for them during that period than once they embarked and went all in and said, "I'm going to serve God with everything I've got." There's far more joy and far greater blessings.

00:21:29 In fact, if I were to chart out blessings and effort, you might be tempted to think it's a straight line graph, that if you're 75% obedient, you get 75% of the blessings. And this is not doctrine, this is just my own take and my own experience, but I think it will be a curved graph where a disproportionate number of God's blessings come as we approach that end of the spectrum, not where we're perfect but where we go all in, where we strive

to serve Him with all our heart, might, mind, and strength. There are an inordinate number of blessings that come to us once we really do that.

John Bytheway: 00:22:02 I know this doesn't apply only to full-time missionaries, but that is what I think of because I remember it seems like those that were able to get both feet in the mission field, actually it was easier when they went home to say, "What's next?" Than if you were only halfway there. And if you're listening and you're thinking, "I'm halfway here," thou art still chosen, just get your other foot in, be a fullback.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:22:29 Again, Joseph Smith Sr. gets this council and no calling. Now, I love callings. They're a distinctively powerful feature of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They give us focus and cause us to stretch and do good and become good in ways we otherwise would not. I would never voluntarily have gone on a campout with 12 and 13-year-olds without a calling that led me to do that, and I would never have developed some of the patience I hope I've developed along the way, and the love actually for those young men that I did. Maybe one danger in the church culturally of callings is that we can become too dependent upon them for our spiritual growth and thus our spiritual growth might just track our calling. So if it's a really soul-stretching, time-consuming calling, we get growth. But when we're released, then we sort of retire and don't do much.

00:23:20 The Savior asks his followers to be anxiously engaged in a good cause even without formal assignments. My father taught journalism for his career at Green River Community College and in the summer sometimes he worked as a reporter and at least on one occasion he worked as a freelance reporter. So that meant he got no salary. He had to go find stories on his own rather than just doing what the editor assigned him to do and then he would sell those stories to a newspaper. My wife and I had talked with making this transition from high level of scaffolding that full-time missionaries have to very little scaffolding the churches helped provide more, and I'm so grateful for it for those young men and young women as they return home, but we talked about them continuing to make the cause of Christ their cause and finding ways to engage in that whether or not they had callings that required them to do so.

00:24:11 So when we got home, we focused on freelancing for God and we've strived to pray daily for opportunities to be instruments in the hands of the Lord regardless of what calling we had. During a period where I've had no calling and served as a Sunday school teacher, a deacon's quorum advisor, a stake

president, then no calling, and a counselor, and an Elder's Quorum president, there's been a remarkable consistency in the number of opportunities I've had to serve God. Even when I've had some of the most time-consuming callings, some of the most spiritually rewarding moments in my week have come from things that were unrelated to the calling as I've strived to embark in whole-souled service of God.

00:24:52 There's a woman in our ward who's such a good disciple, she won't let me use her name. She's over 70. Her husband is in the later stages of Parkinson's disease. He's in a wheelchair, he can't say much. She pushes him on a walk in that wheelchair, snow or rain or sun. Last Saturday, it was a four-mile walk, she showed me the map as we walked together to church. She serves him in remarkable ways. She has no calling and as she walks the ward, she also does another walk alone. She stops and talks and I swear she knows, loves, and cares about more people in the ward than anybody but the bishop and maybe even more than him. She knows everyone, a youth lover, everybody loves her, and she just goes about doing good. Second to last ministering visit to her, she was asking me to show her... She was having some problems getting a referral submitted.

00:25:46 So I'm focused on the technology, helping her get her missionary referral submitted, and then I finally asked her, "Wait, what? You have a referral for the missionaries? How's that?" And she says, "Oh yeah, we've got this home health worker who comes in and we're getting Richard dressed on Saturday for the Saturday session of General Conference, getting him dressed in a white shirt and tie, and she was asking why we dress him up, so I told her." She just naturally shared the gospel, not because she was supposed to or had to, but because she wanted to, because she has embarked in wholehearted service of God. I honestly think she does as much good as anyone in our ward boundaries and she does it even though she has no calling requiring her to do so.

John Bytheway: 00:26:31 She's got both feet in.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:26:33 Both feet in for sure. Well, let's go to verse three. John, would you read that for us?

John Bytheway: 00:26:38 "Therefore, if ye have desires to serve God, ye are called to the work."

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:26:43 In God's economy, motives matter a lot. Why do you think that is? Why does it matter to God why you serve a mission as long as you serve a mission, why you show up at the ward service

project as long as you do, why you minister as long as you're there? Why do you think God cares so much about what it is that drives us? Because here he talks about having the desires to serve, and in verse five, he talks about doing it with an eye single to the glory of God.

John Bytheway: 00:27:11 One way that it's been put is it's not just what we do, it's why we do what we do. There's some motives that aren't so good out of fear of punishment, to be seen of men, things like that. And then I guess it's getting to that motive in verse five of an eye single to the glory of God that's probably kind of a process.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:27:32 Pretty much describes the journey of almost every missionary we had serving in our mission as mission leaders. We welcomed them, we were grateful, but they moved through the whole spectrum of reasons we serve that [President Oaks](#) talked about in his very first talk as a member of the Quorum of the 12 Apostles, he said in that talk, "Service with all of our heart and mind is a high challenge for all of us. Such service must be free of selfish ambition. It must be motivated only by the pure love of Christ," but then this merciful kicker, "Perhaps none of us serves in every capacity all the time for only a single reason. Since we are imperfect beings, most of us probably serve for a combination of reasons and the combinations may be different from time to time as we grow spiritually, but we should all strive to serve for the reasons that are highest and best."

John Bytheway: 00:28:21 Imagine, "Well, I'm a ministering brother, but I'm not going to do anything until my motives are pure." You could stagnate. It's better to go even if your motives aren't perfect than to not go at all, wouldn't you say?

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:28:36 Yeah, that's been true for me, that's true for my missionaries. So you get up and you serve no matter how imperfect your reasons, but then you strive to move up and to have pure motives. Hank, I was so impressed with what you said as we talked before we began, you reminding us about the very real needs of listeners. I think for any of us, but especially those of us who engage in full-time service of the Lord or who are blessed to be professional teachers of religion in the church, there can be a temptation to make it about us.

00:29:08 I remember hearing a fellow institute teacher say, "I bristle when I hear students mention my name in the closing prayer because I don't want them to remember me, I want them to remember the message." And that stung because I thought, "I kind of like it. My natural man desires that." But wow, when I interviewed President Eyring, he has done this. I can't

remember if we got this story in the book or not. I think we did. I think he was a counselor in the first presidency by then, maybe not yet. President Hinckley's there. Anyway, there's a copy of a book by President Eyring, and President Hinckley picks it up, thumps it and says, "Vintage Hal Eyring, vintage Hal Eyring." I go home and write in my journal that President Hinckley says that was Vintage Rob Eaton. I'm thrilled with that compliment.

00:29:53 President Eyring is troubled by that compliment and talks with me about it for 10 or 15 minutes trying to find the words about to describe why he was frustrated with it, but it was because he didn't want someone to come away remembering him. He wanted someone to come away remembering what he had taught. I asked him once, "I think I've got it figured out. You would rather have someone say, 'This was a great talk. I can't remember who said it' than to say, 'You gave a great talk, I can't remember what you said.'" And he sort of nodded in agreement, said, "Now even better is that they go do something as a result of my talk and can't remember that I'm the one that said it."

00:30:32 For all of us engaging in full-time service, it's a process and not an event, but of striving to move up this spectrum motivation so that we eventually serve out of love of God and for His glory, not for our own. If you're a young missionary, you've been competing to get into college, to get into a major or later in life to get into graduate school, life is competitive. And even later in life you compete for the honors of men, you compete for raises, for promotions. God asks us to undergo a huge paradigm shift here to set aside building resumes and focus on building the kingdom and building up other people when we embark in His service.

John Bytheway: 00:31:13 I bet both of you have dealt with this, your students coming to you as return missionaries and going, "I just feel like this is so selfish. I'm working on my classes and my degree and my major and I feel so self-absorbed right now." And I don't know, there's a little bit of, "Well, you got to sharpen the saw." You want to become an instrument in the Lord's hands and this education, it's enter to learn, go forth to serve type of a thing. How do you guys answer that?

Hank Smith: 00:31:42 I usually say that same thing that you said, which is, "Look, you're just trying to become a better instrument. And yeah, you got to tune the instrument, it's got to be made."

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:31:51 I also tell them, if I could go back to my college years, I would worry just a little bit less about getting into the very best law

school I could and a little bit more about serving in the moment, about praying for opportunities to be an instrument in the Lord's hands. We had a roommate, Brad Tahara. Wonderful guy. Somehow he found the time in the summer, spring or summer term when they put on the Special Olympics in Provo to host a young man who came and lived with us. And we had him for dinner, it was great, but I remember thinking, "Wow, how has Brad found the time to do this?"

00:32:26 I think if even in that season of life students while recognizing that preparing for a career and learning as much as they can is part of what God wants them to do, that he's not asking them to put serving others on a shelf. And if they'll instead lean in to an assignment to minister to others who might have great needs right then, that they'll set a great pattern for their lives. In fact, all of us will have to balance this throughout our lives, these competing needs to decide. But when our overarching purpose is the cause of Christ, we approach life differently than if our overarching purpose is to gain all the praise of the world that we can.

Hank Smith: 00:33:08 [Truman G. Madsen](#) told a story I love of President Hinckley. He was watching a young man speak, a young adult, and the young man felt he was a really strong speaker, a really great teacher. So he went up to the pulpit full of confidence and really flopped. It just did not go well. He came down from the pulpit really humbled, and apparently President Hinckley said to him, "Well, if you would've gone up the way you came down, you would've come down the way you went up."

00:33:44 Rob, you mentioned what we talked about before, it really was the results of working with incredible teachers for a long time and then me reflecting on lessons I had taught or talks I had given, and I thought, "Why did that work?" And then giving another one saying, "Why didn't that work?" And I came to the conclusion that often, very often, it's my lesson is better when I seek to bless and not impress. If that's my focus, how can I bless these people, not impress these people? And when I get those flopped, when I forget and I thought, "I'm going to impress some people," I end up neither impressing nor blessing.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:34:23 I think that's true in part because people can read us. We are less effective instruments in God's hands if people sense we're doing this for us and not for them. [President Nelson](#) has said, "The most effective missionaries always act out of love. Love is the life of good missionary work." I'm sure that's true for ministering elders and sisters and primary and Sunday school teachers that when we serve because we love, we do things

differently. My wife's love language is getting things done, not just verbal affirmation. So for Mother's Day and her birthday, we will go do project day on the closest Saturday to it. Last month on her birthday, we helped clean the church. We pulled all the plants out of our little garden, and what I found is that doing them because I want to, not because I have to, doing them out of love for my wife, transforms my service and makes it more enjoyable, makes it more effective.

00:35:20 Whether it's cleaning the church, ministering, sharing the gospel, or attending the temple, when we do things for the Savior out of love for Him, it transforms our service and it doesn't take any more time. I loved [Bishop L. Todd Budge's](#) talk in the October 2024 conference. He said, "Let me suggest that what may be needed is not necessarily more time but more awareness of and focus on God during the times we already set aside for Him." Here's one of those opportunities, we got to be instruments in the Lord's hands. I was back visiting Rexburg, going on a morning workout with my buddy, my dear friend Todd Hammond.

00:35:57 We're driving down the hill and we see a BYU-Idaho student with a full set of luggage rolling it down the hill, and we kind of look at each other. Todd's got a pickup and we pull over and offer the student a ride. He's headed back to Mexico and he's headed actually to a Greyhound bus stop that's like a mile away, so he's grateful that we throw the luggage in. And we start talking to him, we ask him how old he is and what his plans are. We somehow sense that maybe a mission, a full-time mission isn't in his plans. And so I say, "You know what? It so happens my buddy here was a mission president. Can he make a little pitch for you about how your life would be blessed by serving a full-time mission?" So Todd gave this great pitch.

00:36:37 And then I just added, I said, "Here's one other reason to serve. Make it a thank you card to Jesus. Think about what Jesus Christ has done for you, and one of the best ways you can show Him your gratitude is to go share his gospel." I don't know if he's going to serve a full-time mission or not, but he told us at least that he was now thinking about it much more than he had been before he got in our truck. It was a simple but wonderful opportunity the Lord gave us unrelated to callings that either of us had at the time, and I just connect that with the notion that when we do things for the Savior, it changes us.

Hank Smith: 00:37:11 Yeah. And your motive was to help that young man, not to get another missionary in the field, "Wow, look what I did." It was,

"Look, I really, really want you to be happy and have a blessed life. Here's what is the best way to go about it."

- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:37:27 And speaking of that, it will bless you and the notion that it's okay to start with lesser motives if they get us going. But when I was a young priest in a quorum with just three priests, a sister in the ward who had a son with a severe case of cerebral palsy, so he was wheelchair bound, and she was a single mother and then also had other foster children, she developed some back problems so she couldn't get him into the bathtub alone. So she had asked the bishop to ask for a couple of priests every Saturday night to help get Sammy in the tub. We show up the first night, seventeen-year-old boys, not clinically trained, and we got to take Sammy's clothes off. I think he got a bath once a week. Then there he is without any clothes on. We try to get him to the bathtub, touching him as little as possible. This is just way outside our comfort zone.
- 00:38:15 We get him in the tub. We let her know, "Hey, we got Sammy in the tub." And she says, "Yeah, just go ahead, give him a bath. I'm cooking dinner." And we're like, "Give him a bath? What?" And so we did it, and to be honest, we did it out of duty because my dad, the bishop asked us to, we knew we were supposed to. And I'm sure it didn't happen on a pivot so sudden as I remember it, but one time when we went and I'm giving him a bath, his hand comes down in the water hard and water splashes up in my face. And I look over at him and he's laughing. And I say, "Sammy, did you just splash me?" And he laughs.
- 00:38:57 We learned more about his condition. We learned that his intelligence was not impaired, his muscles were. He would ask us to read. He didn't know the citation. We did. He wanted the chapter where Jesus heals the people in the Book of Mormon, so we read third Nephi 17 to him multiple times. We came to see him differently. I think we came to see him a little more like God sees him. Years later, when I moved away from Washington and I went back to visit Sammy in a home, it wasn't because I was supposed to, it was because I wanted to. I had come to love him. My motives had changed over time and that made all the difference. I had been transformed by my service.
- Hank Smith: 00:39:44 That's wonderful, Rob.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:39:46 Well, let's go to verse four. John, can you do the honors again?
- John Bytheway: 00:39:50 Absolutely. "For behold, the field is white, already to harvest, and lo, he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same

layeth up in store that he perisheth not, but bring salvation to his soul."

- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:40:04 Let me just say this about this verse. In the aggregate, it's absolutely true that the church has seen astronomical growth, but not every missionary in every season of their mission will see the kind of success they would like to in terms of baptism. For that matter, not every elders quorum presidency or relief society presidency or young men or young women's leader, and if we come to define ourselves and our success by the choices others make, we can get pretty hard on ourselves, so I love what Preach My Gospel says about this in the new edition, which is marvelous. I love the original edition of Preach My Gospel so much that I was shocked at how much more I love the new edition.
- 00:40:46 This is what we read. "Your success as a missionary is determined primarily by your desire and commitment to find, teach, baptize, and confirm converts, and to help them become faithful disciples of Christ and members of His church. Your success is not determined by how many people you teach or help to bring to baptism, nor is it determined by holding leadership positions. Your success does not depend on how others choose to respond to you, to your invitations, or to your sincere acts of kindness. People have agency to choose whether to accept the gospel message or not. Your responsibility is to teach clearly and powerfully so they can make an informed choice. And then further, remain focused on your commitment to Christ and your missionary purpose, not the outward results. The results often are not evident immediately. At the same time, keep your expectations high regardless of the challenges you face. High expectations will increase your effectiveness, your desire, and your ability to follow the Spirit."
- 00:41:43 I think that's great counsel for any of us embarking in the service of God. I had two daughters who served full-time missions where they didn't get to see a lot of baptisms. In fact, one of them attended a baptism on a Saturday before coming home on a Tuesday, and it was the first baptism she had attended of someone she'd helped teach. And yet, by this definition, she may be one of the best missionaries in the church because she remained absolutely committed and worked with faith and energy and love her whole mission. She thought, "I still... I'm praying, I want to help bring people unto Christ through faith, repentance, and baptism." She never lost sight of that, never gave up on it. By that measure, she was extraordinarily successful.

00:42:27 I think we can help with this a little bit. Sometimes we accidentally compound the problem if we sing the praises of people based on the number of baptisms they have. So let's say child number one goes to a place where lots of people get baptized and you're excited about that, maybe even boasting about it to others, and then child two or three goes somewhere else and they've heard you define success in that way, and now they begin to think, "Maybe I'm the problem and I'm not successful like this older sibling." [President Eyring](#) encouraged mission leaders to be careful in how we praise missionaries. I think all of us can be careful in how we praise success in building the Kingdom of God.

Hank Smith: 00:43:05 That's great. John, I know this is important to you, setting goals based on your agency.

John Bytheway: 00:43:12 Hank, should I set a goal that my favorite college football team will win games? Do I have anything to do with that goal's outcome? No. And in the same way, I love what [President Oaks](#) has said, "A missionary's goal should be based on what he's going to do or what she's going to do, not on what others will do." And that's just what you read to us right there, Rob.

Hank Smith: 00:43:37 I'm just realizing this section of the Doctrine and Covenants early, early in Joseph Smith's prophetic mantle, seven verses, yet a lifetime of study. How long would it take you to take each word? How long could you study faith, hope, charity, virtue, temperance, patience? What does that tell you about all of these sections the Doctrine and Covenants we're going to look at? What does that tell you about Joseph Smith? What does that tell you about the Lord?

00:44:09 If someone is out there going, "I sure wonder if Joseph Smith is a prophet," this is one small section of the Doctrine and Covenants in how many chapters of the Book of Mormon, sections of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price. This to me, the fact that I can take section four of the Doctrine and Covenants and literally spend hours, weeks, months on it tells me this is not of man.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:44:37 I don't know if you ever go back to a song or a movie from your childhood that you thought was great and listen to it again or watch it again and think, "That just didn't hold up very well," but the Beatles hold up well over time. I tell you, the Book of Mormon section four, these things hold up extraordinarily well. Again, if you think Joseph Smith is a fraud, you think he's a genius because this is so rich with wise divine counsel.

Hank Smith: 00:45:06 I think it was [Hugh Nibley](#) who said, "These things will wear you out long before you wear them out."

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:45:12 And by the way, verses five and six you'll notice are much more about who we are and why we serve than tactics we should use. And there's a role for tactics, but this section also how comforting to this fairly unsuccessful farmer, Joseph Smith Sr., who's had none of the formal training that people called to the ministry typically get has none of the kinds of secular accomplishments that he might be tempted to rest on. Instead, God takes him as he is, helps him become who he needs to become, and asks him to focus on becoming this powerful instrument in His hands by developing these attributes of Christ.

Hank Smith: 00:45:53 Not tactics, not strategies, attributes. And like you said, Rob, there is a place for strategy. You think of Ammon thinking, "Okay, how can I best go about this?" But the strategy isn't going to work if the attributes aren't there.

John Bytheway: 00:46:07 Hank, I have in my margin, I don't know if this is from four years ago, but here's this list in verse five, "Faith, hope, charity, love, an eye single to the glory of God qualify him for the work." And I have in my margin, "Not a bank account. Joseph Smith Sr. didn't have one." Is that from four years ago?

Hank Smith: 00:46:28 I don't know. I'm writing it now.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:46:30 It is because I listened to the podcast and remember you saying you'd written that in your margin. By the way, John, I love how you model being a lifelong learner. That relates to knowledge in verse six, but you are so well-informed and wise already, but both of you, your willingness to learn from your guests models how we should all become lifelong learners.

Hank Smith: 00:46:50 No. Well, this is our favorite thing.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:46:53 Back to this why we serve and who we become, [Preach My Gospel](#) says, "Just as vital as what you do is who you are and who you are becoming. I remember one couple who got baptized while we were mission leaders saying about the wonderful sisters who taught them that as they approached their house and talked with them, they said, "We want some of this God juice. Whatever it is they're drinking, we want that." It was who they were that caught these people's attention and not how well they knew things. Though we want to work to develop those skills, it's important that in all our efforts to go about doing good, we don't lose sight of striving to become

good with the help of the Savior and His atoning sacrifice. This is a process of shaping us as well as helping others.

Hank Smith: 00:47:39

Rob, can I ask you a question? The young people that go out and serve these full-time missions, these 18-year-old, 19, 20, 21-year-olds, how can we as members of the church best help them? These are fragile, good kids who are trying.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:47:57

As we think about the motives for serving, serving God with an eye single to His glory, it's interesting in sharing the gospel or other aspects of the church that sometimes in our righteous zeal we can become overzealous. If we're not careful, we can become more concerned about meeting statistical goals that we've set and how that might impress other people. A young missionary can be forgiven if you've been working on your batting average, and your GPA, and all these numerical things, the number of baptisms you get may seem the next logical step in that sequence, and God asks us to shift gears and serve for different reasons. Incidentally, I think the likelihood that those who join the church will come to stay increases when missionaries and their leaders serve out of pure motives, not trying to get baptisms for themselves.

00:48:51

In fact, the missionaries who serve with the right motives when people aren't getting baptized are concerned not because the missionary is not baptizing, but because people aren't making a covenant that could lead to exaltation for them. They're more concerned about the welfare of others than their own personal success. I just think for all of us as leaders in the Kingdom, that when we think celestial for our missionaries, for those they're serving or any other context, we tend to connect things to the Savior. We do more to help people serve out of the right reasons and those have longer lasting results.

00:49:26

We used to do a little exercise with our new missionaries and their trainers, we'd call it missionary rule boggle, and say, "Okay, in 90 seconds come up with all the commandments or rules you can think of that missionaries are supposed to keep, go." And then we would share them on the board, write them all down and say, "Look, we agree with all these. We want you to get up on time and stay with your companion and do all these things, but we don't yet have the two most important rules in this mission on the board. Will you go with us to Matthew 22 verses 36 to 40?"

00:49:54

"In this mission, the two most important rules are to love God with all your heart, might, mind, and strength. And the second is like unto it, to love His children. And the sooner you get to the

point where you serve for those reasons, the more effective you'll be as a missionary and the happier you'll be. If you came because you didn't want to disappoint your mom, god bless you for coming. We still want you. But ask your trainers how they made this transition because all the people we've called as trainers, they're here now because they serve out of love for God."

00:50:25 We can even help people facilitate that transition. I think I can share this story without the missionary's name. I had one missionary who was, it seemed to me like he was there under protest. And I was going to call him on it and the Spirit in an interview said, "Not yet." So I waited for another interview or two, and then finally I said, "Elder, are you here under protest by chance?" And he laughed and said, "Oh, that's a good description of a lot of things I do. Yeah." I said, "So why are you here?" And he said, "Well, my mom, couldn't disappoint my mom." And I said, "Well, God bless you for coming. You got three weeks."

00:50:59 And he said, "What?" I said, "How old are you?" And he said, "I'm 18." I said, "Okay, you're of majority. You're an adult. We don't keep people here who don't want to be here, so you've got three weeks to decide. So three weeks and a day from now, you'll either be here and when someone asks why, it's going to be because I want to be or you'll be at home and if you decide to go home, I'll do everything I can to talk you out of it because it'll be the biggest mistake you ever make, but you're going to own it."

00:51:25 I didn't tell him I probably didn't have the authority to send him home just for that reason and he's the only missionary I ever had that conversation with. My goal was not just to browbeat missionaries into browbeating people into getting baptized. My goal was to help change missionaries and have changed missionaries help change people for the longterm to have enduring conversions. And that may have led to fewer baptisms, but I hope to more conversions, and I think it's important to never lose sight of that. It turns out that missionary chose to stay. It changed him and it changed his mission, and it changes us when we can get to the point where we serve for the highest and best reasons.

Hank Smith: 00:52:07 Rob, not a lot of people get to serve as a mission leader, so I think it'd be kind of fun to let us into the heart of you and your wife as mission leaders. Is there even a temptation for a mission leader to fall into, "Oh, we need more baptisms? I'm the mission

leader, this is a reflection of me and who I am"? Is that there at all?

- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:52:30 No. I'm joking. I can't speak for everybody else, but for me it was, it's a natural man tendency to want to succeed in things and a natural man tendency to try to succeed by the wrong metric. President Henry B. Eyring taught me on more than one occasion, "Choose the Lord's metric." And here, the Lord's metric wasn't the number of baptisms, even though we clearly wanted to be focused on doing everything we could to help as many people as we could be baptized but in the Lord's way, in the succinct instruction of President Dallin H. Oaks, we wanted to teach repentance and baptize converts. So there was some temptation to push and do all that it took to get more people to be baptized.
- 00:53:15 And for those lesser reasons that we talked about in section three, for the praise of the world, to want to impress other people, I found there was a real need to be true to God and what he asked me to do, and to do it in his way, to not try to take any shortcuts, to serve out of love for my missionaries, helping them have lasting conversions, and helping them help as many people as possible, but have those lasting conversions. So I think for any of us, whether we're mission leaders or anything else, to be aware of those temptations and be intentional about asking God for direction about how best to do his work in a way that pleases Him.
- Hank Smith: 00:53:55 And we just say, Rob, be gentle with those young missionaries. We love them, we look up to them, but they're new.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:54:04 We love our missionaries. And now, more than a decade after we served with many of them, we still interact with them, go to a dinner or go to the temple with them, and love them. If you get focused on the short-term results, I think you miss out on some of those long-term blessings. Sometimes if we focus too much on those short-term results, people end up serving because they want to hit a goal or a quota rather than because they want to serve the Savior. Whether others perceive us as salespeople or servants of God hinges much more on our character than on our competence and much more than on our motives, than on our moxie.
- Hank Smith: 00:54:42 Yeah.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:54:43 This rebuke came to me from the Spirit. I felt a little frustrated that people were coming down on us about numbers and not thanking us more for a job we didn't volunteer for, and then I

was teaching in a zone conference and the Spirit whispered, you know that thing that bugs you? You're doing exactly that. How about starting here by thanking them for coming on a mission? How about thanking them for serving in the rain? How about thanking them for persisting despite perpetual rejection? In fact, I saw a wise presiding member of the Seventy who I think had gotten instruction from the Spirit, maybe somebody else or others do the same thing with us as mission leaders. He stopped and thanked us for 30 minutes at the beginning of a retreat that we had.

00:55:39 I learned more stuff during that retreat about how I could do better than maybe any of the other five retreats, but he began by acknowledging what we were doing and the sacrifice we were making, and that's a lesson I'm still trying to take to heart whenever I'm speaking anywhere as any kind of leader, thank the people first, first acknowledge the good that they're doing before I maybe lovingly share an idea or two about how we might be able to do things even better.

Hank Smith: 00:56:07 That's beautiful, Rob. It really is.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:56:09 Thank you for asking about that. [President Nelson](#) said, "Seek and expect miracles. The Lord will bless you with miracles if you believe in him doubting nothing. Do the spiritual work to seek miracles. Prayerfully ask God to help you exercise that kind of faith." Once I moved away from Seattle where I had countless opportunities to share the Gospel that I didn't take advantage of and worked in a sea of people who had temple recommends, I realized I had to be more intentional anytime I traveled about sharing the Gospel, so I began praying earnestly for opportunities to share the Gospel. And as I did, I've been blessed with someone on at least one leg of every trip with whom I've had an extraordinary gospel conversation. So now I expect it, I seek and expect that miracle whenever I travel.

Hank Smith: 00:56:55 Rob, the context you gave us. Look, this is before a church. This is before really you can come and be baptized. We forget that. We think section four is all about, "Okay, I'm going to baptize people and have them join the church." There was no church. This wasn't the Lord saying, "Go baptize and build up the membership of the church," although that is important. This is not about tactics, this is about motives and attributes.

John Bytheway: 00:57:21 And I've noticed, Hank, I've read verse five and six over and over just sitting here, I can't find salesmanship in there anywhere. It's not tactics.

Dr. Rob Eaton: 00:57:32 One last verse that I want to highlight is one that I've glossed over too often and I learned things just in preparing for this podcast. Ask and you shall receive, knock and it shall be opened unto you. [President Packer](#) says, "No message appears in scripture more times and more ways than ask and ye shall receive. And yet ironically because we hear it so often, maybe we become kind of numb to it. I think asking is a critical thing to do in embarking in the service of God, both in praying for things and praying about things as we seek to increase our capacity to receive revelation. My wife has taught me that specificity is a hallmark of faith when we pray. I might pray, "Please bless those kids," whatever their names are in our family, and she prays for each child and their spouse and their children, and I learned things in prayer about my family that I didn't know because my wife does and she prays very specifically.

00:58:30 One time we were traveling to a family reunion. She and the kids went a day ahead of me. I was a young lawyer and busy and couldn't come until a day later. It was in the pre-smartphone day. I landed in Nashville, was going to a state park in Kentucky. And it was late at night, I had instructions, but they weren't your current Google Map instructions. So I get on the freeway, I'm heading away from Nashville, and it says, "Take exit 33." And I don't know how many miles it is. Well, I see the next exit is 99, 100, 101. So I do something I rarely do, I pull over and I look at a map. And as I look at the map, I think, "Oh, there's a state line. I'm going to cross the state line. I'll start over."

00:59:11 So I hop back on the freeway. Sure enough, that's what happens, I get there. My wife says, "Oh, honey, I'm so glad you found it all right. Did you have any trouble?" And I'm like, "Honey, it's me, I'm good with directions, right?" And she said, "All my brothers got lost. When I noticed the problem in the directions, I prayed that when you encountered that problem, you would pull over, look at a map, and notice the state boundary." Specificity in prayer is a hallmark of faith. The more we ask and the better questions we ask, the more answers we get. As a mission leader, that was one of my big takeaways. I fear I've left a lot of revelation on the table as it were in my life, that there's more revelation to be had, ask and you shall receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, the Lord tells us, and President Nelson loves that verse because he's learned how to receive revelation and wants us to do the asking we need to do to receive more revelation, especially as we embark in the service of God.

John Bytheway: 01:00:12 Learn to hear Him. There's two steps before you ever open for the strength of youth guide, learn to hear Him, have a heart of,

"I'm going to let God prevail." Instead of saying, "Okay, what's my minimums of behavior here? What will God permit?" Instead, learn to hear Him, let God prevail, and then learn doctrines of discipleship instead of minimums of behavior. You can tell I've given this speech before, Hank, but don't skip those steps, and I love that President Nelson has emphasized, "Learn to hear Him." What a lifelong pursuit, but what a priority. Was it Craig Manning that talked so much about praying with specificity?

- Hank Smith: 01:00:58 Same thing, yeah, it's our lesson in third Nephi, double witnesses there. Rob, before we let you go, you've seen a lot, you've been a mission leader, you've gone to law school, you've been a vice president at universities, you're a professor. You've done a lot, you and your family, your wife, you've experienced a lot. And yet, here's this restoration, this young farmer and his wife, Joseph Smith, just getting started here. Here's the Book of Mormon that was written really on a farm, two farms. What are your feelings given all that incredible secular experience, what are your feelings for this restoration, this prophet?
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 01:01:42 President Eyring once said as I was interviewing him, "If you gathered all the prophets who'd ever lived in a room and Joseph walked in, they would stand up." That's the Joseph I know and love. I stand in awe of what he did as a translator, as a prophet, as a leader. I love Joseph. He never claimed to be perfect and he wasn't perfect. In fact, he published his flaws and the Lord's rebukes for us in these sections.
- John Bytheway: 01:02:12 Canonized it.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 01:02:14 And yet he let God prevail in his life and shape him and change him and help us become. When I think of section four, I love what it teaches us about who we can become. I had one of our missionaries who said, "President, I'm afraid of going home boring." I think he was worried that if he let go, if he jumped in with both feet, John, that God would turn him into some kind of spiritual automaton, some weird robot his friends wouldn't like, but becoming like Christ doesn't require us to give up our personalities, just our sins.
- 01:02:48 [Sister Neill F. Marriott](#) in a beautiful talk about being yielded and still said, "If we earnestly appeal to God, he takes us as we are and makes us more than we ever imagined." That's true for Joseph, it's true for us. He transforms us when we engage in whole soul service. President Eyring said, and this is a new quote in this second edition of Preach My Gospel, "This is the Lord's Church. He called us and trusted us even in the

weaknesses he knew we had. He knew the trials we would face by faithful service and through his atonement, we can come to want what he wants and be what we must be to bless those we serve for Him. As we serve Him long enough and with diligence, we will be changed. We can become ever more like Him." I see that in Joseph's life, I strive for it in my own, and I find when I lose myself in the service of God, he changes me in ways that I love, not in ways that I fear.

- John Bytheway: 01:03:50 Rob, I can't write fast enough. "Becoming like Christ doesn't require us to give up our personalities, just our sins." Oh my goodness.
- Hank Smith: 01:03:59 In fact, I've become a more fun person. Rob, honestly, if we wanted to, how much longer could we talk about sections three, four, and five?
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 01:04:09 We could teach a semester-long class on it and not run out of stuff.
- Hank Smith: 01:04:12 Yeah, it's inexhaustible.
- John Bytheway: 01:04:14 Joseph F. Smith said that section four has enough material for a lifetime of study.
- Hank Smith: 01:04:20 Yeah, just one section. Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 01:04:23 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 01:04:25 I loved it. I'm sure that our listeners out there, everyone listening, is going, wow, wow, they have a new-found love for these sections and these stories. In fact, those of you who are listening, if you want to come onto YouTube or come to our website, followhim.co, and leave Rob a comment and we'll make sure he gets those because it's fun to find out where you're listening from and what you thought. Rob, thanks for spending your time with us today. It has been a joy, really.
- Dr. Rob Eaton: 01:04:53 Thanks for having me on, and thanks for doing this to bless the lives of so many people.
- Hank Smith: 01:04:58 We want to thank you, Rob, for being with us today. We want to thank our executive producer, Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen. And every episode we remember our founder. He would've loved this, Rob, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We're on in the

Doctrine and Covenants on followHIM. Thank you for joining us on today's episode.

01:05:23

Do you or someone you know speak Spanish, Portuguese, or French? You can now watch and listen to our podcast in those languages. Links are in the description below. Today's show notes and transcript are on our website, followhim.co, that's followhim.co. Of course, none of this could happen without our production team, David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Nielson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra, Amelia Kabwika, and Annabelle Sorensen.

followHIM Favorites



- Hank Smith: 00:02 Hello everyone. Welcome to followHIM Favorites. My name is Hank Smith. I'm here with John Bytheway. This is where we tell a single story to go with each week's Come, Follow Me lesson. John, this week we're in Doctrine and Covenants section three, four, and five. You've told me you have a story prepared, I'm excited to hear it.
- John Bytheway: 00:20 Yeah, it's one that some of our listeners might've heard before, this little verse in section four, very oft-repeated section, "O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve with all your heart, might, mind and strength," which sounds like all of you, right? You got to be all in. The church made a little movie years ago called Dayton's Legs, and it all started in Arizona, there was a Teachers Quorum President whose name was Spencer, I had to look hard to find his name, but the Teachers Quorum President said to the Teachers Quorum, "Hey guys, let's do a triathlon." We were always doing that, right, Hank? When we were in the Teachers Quorum?
- Hank Smith: 00:57 It's always our first activity of choice.
- John Bytheway: 00:59 Of course, let's do that. All of them were excited, except they had a member of their quorum named Dayton who had cerebral palsy. They were like, "Well, what should we do for Dayton?" And Spencer was like, "No, I got it, I'm going to take him as my partner." "Oh, well, how are you going to do the swimming part?" "Well, I'm going to put him in a little inflatable boat and I'll tie a rope to my waist and I'll swim that part with him." "Well, how are you going to do the biking part?" "Well, I've got a trailer, I'm going to hook it up to my bike and I'm going to pull him along in this trailer." "Oh, well, how are you going to do the running part?" "Well, I'm going to take off the trailer and push it in front of me."
- 01:33 This 15-year-old, I assume, this Teachers Quorum President, takes Dayton and runs the triathlon. The coolest thing about watching the little movie in here, and I just think this kid is

serving with heart, might, mind and strength, is watching as they interviewed Dayton's parents to imagine a Teachers Quorum President who really knows what it means to be a brother in a quorum, takes this brother with him. And he says in the article, you'll find in New Era, article two, that towards the finish line, he says, "I was beginning to run out of strength, and then I saw Dayton smiling. That gave me the strength to be able to run past the finish line. And that was the Spirit," he said, "Helping us to run past the finish line and finish that race."

02:19 And I thought, okay, I'm an old guy. This is a member of the Teachers Quorum who's showing me what it means to serve with heart, might, mind and strength, to minister to your brothers, to push Dayton along and watch his parents' reaction, their gratitude for a brother in the quorum who knows how to treat somebody and serve with all of this heart, might, mind, and strength. So you can find that movie. You've seen it before, haven't you, Hank?

Hank Smith: 02:44 It's beautiful.

John Bytheway: 02:46 Yeah, go find Dayton's Legs and find a New Era article about it as well. It'll motivate you to serve with your heart, might, mind, and strength.

Hank Smith: 02:54 John, I love that. Wouldn't it be wonderful if every young man had that type of attitude towards the less fortunate, those who are in a rough situation? There are plenty of young men that are conceited and cruel, but I'm hoping every young man listening decides to be confident and kind.

John Bytheway: 03:15 Yeah, and when you see this picture of Spencer pushing his buddy, his brother in the quorum, you see this is an athletic kid and he could have been conceited or confident and all that, but whenever I show those pictures in a PowerPoint, there's a few sisters out there going, "Do you have his contact information? I'd like to meet that guy."

Hank Smith: 03:38 Apparently kindness is attractive.

John Bytheway: 03:41 Yeah, yeah, something about that.

Hank Smith: 03:43 Hey, we hope you'll join us on our full podcast, it's called followHim. You can get it wherever you get your podcasts. We're with Dr. Rob Eaton this week, he's going to take on section four. He's been a mission president, so he's going to give a lot of wonderful advice to missionaries, so please come join us

over there and then come back next week, we'll do another followHIM Favorites.