



*"I Will Go and Do"*

## Show Notes & Transcripts

### Podcast General Description:

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

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

### Podcast Episode Descriptions:

#### Part 1:

How does recognizing Jesus Christ's voice in the Book of Mormon change our personal study? Dr. John Hilton III explores new and familiar territory in the beginning of 1 Nephi and teaches us new study techniques to enhance our testimonies of Jesus Christ.

#### Part 2:

Dr. John Hilton III examines acting in faith, sacrifice, and hearing Jesus's voice throughout our lives by applying principles in 1 Nephi 1-5

# Timecodes:

## Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. John Hilton III
- 02:00 Introduction of guest
- 02:52 *Voices in the Book of Mormon* and “The Book of Mormon: A Masterclass”
- 06:15 A family story
- 07:50 Dr. Hilton shares a personal story about study
- 10:26 Hank shares a personal study about listening vs. reading
- 12:51 Time studying vs. amount studying
- 14:49 Steve Sorensen and memorizing verses of the Book of Mormon
- 16:30 Writing things down and using various study techniques
- 18:01 Nephi begins his record
- 20:14 The importance of keeping records
- 23:17 President Eyring on keeping records
- 26:23 Lehi’s Jerusalem and how prophets pray
- 29:58 Powerful phrases and mining for gold
- 31:32 Focus on Jesus Christ when studying scriptures
- 34:15 President Jeffrey Holland’s *Christ and the New Covenant*
- 36:13 Safety in listening to the Lord’s prophets
- 38:35 Elder Bednar and “The Tender Mercies of the Lord”
- 40:25 Hank’s talk “He Knows You”
- 42:44 Lehi and his family leave Jerusalem
- 46:22 Dr. Hilton shares a personal story about traveling in Israel
- 47:33 Teaching children and keeping eternal perspective
- 51:29 President Eyring “To My Grandchildren”
- 55:52: End of Part I–Dr. John Hilton III

## Part 2

- 00:00 Part II–Dr. John Hilton III
- 00:07 One of the shortest verses
- 01:56 Softening our hearts
- 04:43 God makes things possible
- 6:10 Nephi’s great idea
- 08:26 The long Saturdays
- 08:44 Go and Know and Know and Go
- 11:55 Sariah’s perspective
- 14:29 Helping our students know for themselves
- 16:54 Nephi slays Laban
- 21:20 The impact on Nephi and Zoram

- 23:36 Sacrifice and burnt offerings
- 26:49 Principles in this lesson
- 29:59 Dr. Hilton shares his feelings about the Book of Mormon
- 34:58 End of Part II– John Hilton

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### **Dr. John Hilton III**

John Hilton III is a Professor of Religious Education at Brigham Young University. John and his wife Lani have six children. They have lived in Boise, Boston, Miami, Mexico, Jerusalem and China. John has a Masters degree from Harvard and a Ph.D from BYU, both in Education.

John has published several books, including *Considering the Cross: How Calvary Connects Us with Christ*. He is also the author of the video course and podcast “The Book of Mormon: A Master Class” and “Seeking Jesus.” John loves teaching, reading, spending time with his family, doing humanitarian work, snowboarding, and practicing magic tricks.



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## Real Family: Real Problems

GUEST: JOHN HILTON III



Hank Smith:	00:04	Hello my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with my goodly co-host, John Bytheway. Welcome, John.
John Bytheway:	00:12	Thank you.
Hank Smith:	00:14	I, Hank, having had a goodly co-host. Therefore, I was taught somewhat in all the humor of my co-host. John, welcome to another episode. We're on our second episode of the Book of Mormon. We had a great time last week with Dr. Woodward and Dr. Griffiths. Tell me what you're looking forward to today. We're actually jumping into the text.
John Bytheway:	00:33	It's just such a fun, interesting family story where people are gaining testimonies at different times of what's going on, and it's fun to see how each person deals with what Lehi is saying we got to do. I'm just looking forward to watching this family story unfold here at the very beginning.
Hank Smith:	00:53	Yeah, I would say that most of our listeners are pretty familiar with 1 Nephi. We're revisiting some things that many people have read before, but I'm excited this year just in general to see things I've never seen before, that's often what our guests bring, not just reading these scriptures that we've read before, but new insights, new angles, new ways of looking at it.
	01:15	Speaking of wonderful guests and old friends, we are joined by an incredible individual who I love and adore. His name is John Hilton III. He's so great they made three of him. John, what are we looking forward to today as we jump into the Book of Mormon?
Dr. John Hilton III:	01:32	Well, I love that we're going to see several patterns, things that come up over and over again, Nephi talking about the importance of records. And we'll see some scriptural themes around doing and knowing. Sometimes knowing drives the doing, sometimes doing will drive the knowing. And ultimately,

like John Bytheway said, we'll see a story of a family with not everything going perfectly all the time, which I think is really helpful for all of us who live in a very imperfect world.

Hank Smith:	02:00	Hey, goodly John. John Hilton is not new to our podcast. He's been here many times. He's going to be here many times in the future, but for maybe those who are new or have forgotten, why don't you tell our audience all about him?
John Bytheway:	02:12	Yes. We are delighted to have John Hilton III. He's a professor of religious education at Brigham Young University. He's published several books. His latest, it's called Voices in the Book of Mormon. I think it's behind him there. He also has a free online course we want everybody to know about called The Book of Mormon: A Master Class. Can you tell us more about that?
Dr. John Hilton III:	02:35	It's free. You can access it through my website <a href="http://johnhiltoniii.com">johnhiltoniii.com</a> , or it's on YouTube or wherever you get your podcasts. You can look up Book of Mormon: Master Class. We walk through 1 Nephi 1 through Moroni Chapter 10.
Hank Smith:	02:49	What a treat, because John is a master teacher.
John Bytheway:	02:52	John, tell us more about the book, Voices in the Book of Mormon?
Dr. John Hilton III:	02:56	It's something I'm super excited about. Many years ago, my grandfather studied word prints in the Book of Mormon. Some people might be familiar with word prints, kind of statistically different patterns and how people speak. Once I became a religion professor at BYU, I started picking up some of the threads of that research, and it's really fascinating to see distinctive voices.
	03:17	We'll look at Nephi's voice mostly today, but when we get to Jacob who speaks both in 2 Nephi and in the Book of Jacob, his voice is statistically different than Nephi's. Here's just one simple little example. Think of the words God and Lord. For me, I would think of those as interchangeable terms, but Jacob uses the word God more often than Lord, and Nephi is the reverse. When you look at 2 Nephi 9 and 10, this is right in the middle of all of Nephi's writings, but it's Jacob who's speaking, and it's in those two chapters you get God way more than Lord. Whereas in 2 Nephi 4, 5, 11, when Nephi is speaking, you get Lord more than God.

	04:02	I definitely wouldn't base my testimony of the Book of Mormon on little statistical nuances like this, but it's really cool and some of them are I think more intricate. Like Jacob will use the word anxiety more than any other person in the Book of Mormon. And by looking specifically with the lens of the voice of the person who's speaking, you start to feel the distinctive witnesses of Jesus Christ. These are unique individuals. This isn't just a book I'm reading. I'm reading several books authored by individuals, and to me that's really helped the Book of Mormon shine in a new light.
John Bytheway:	04:38	Oh, that's amazing. In fact, a lot of them will use words that no one else uses in the whole book.
Dr. John Hilton III:	04:44	One today from Nephi, so the phrase, "My soul delighteth." Nephi uses that phrase 11 times across several different chapters, but he's the only person in the Book of Mormon who says that. I think about some of your friends, you could probably identify certain slang vocabulary that your friends use all the time. You're like, "Oh, that sounds like Hank. Oh, that sounds like John." You see the same thing in the Book of Mormon with some of these subtle phrases that either people exclusively use or use way more than others.
Hank Smith:	05:13	I definitely notice when we switch, John, from the record of Nephi and his descendants to Mosiah, Words of Mormon and Mosiah, I mean there's an absolute completely different person talking.
Dr. John Hilton III:	05:26	It's one of those little nuances where you ... Last week with Scott and Casey, you were talking about the translation process of the Book of Mormon, it's coming forth. There's no way that Joseph Smith with the limited education he had, and especially in the manner in which the Book of Mormon is translated, there's no way that these subtle differences of narrators having different voices could have been created by him.
Hank Smith:	05:47	Right. Absolutely.
John Bytheway:	05:49	And another thing that's interesting is this part we're going through today was one of the last parts to be translated because we lost the Book of Lehi. If he were making this up, he'd have to do it out of order.
Dr. John Hilton III:	06:00	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	06:01	It's just crazy.

Hank Smith:	06:03	All right, goodly John and J.H. III as I called him, John Hilton III. Let me read a little bit from the Come, Follow Me manual and then let's jump in and see where you want to go.
	06:13	"The Book of Mormon begins with an account of a real family experiencing real struggles. It happened in 600 B.C., but there are things about this account that might seem familiar to families today. This family was living in a world of wickedness, but the Lord promised them that if they would follow him", kind of like that part of the manual. "If they would follow him, he would lead them to safety.
	06:35	Along the way, they had good moments and bad moments, great blessings and miracles, but they have arguments and contention. Rarely in scriptures there's such a detailed account of a family trying to live the gospel, parents struggling to inspire faith in their family and worrying about their safety, children deciding if they will believe their parents and brothers dealing with jealousy and contention, and sometimes forgiving each other. Overall, there is power in this imperfect family's examples of faith." With that, John, how do I approach this book to get the most out of it?
Dr. John Hilton III:	07:09	Well, first of all, I think we should point out that the paragraph you just read from the manual is so beautiful. One time I heard someone say, if you want to hide the secrets of the Kingdom somewhere, put it in the church manual, because no one is going to read it.
	07:21	I think especially now that they've condensed the four Come, Follow Me manuals into this one manual, this is a good reminder that the Come, Follow Me manual can be a great asset in our scripture study. There's probably questions that we're going to have and questions we might not think of that we'll be guided to from the manual. But ultimately, it's not the manual, it's not the FollowHIM podcast, it's not any masterclass, it's our personal engagement with the Book of Mormon that will make the difference.
	07:50	And I want to start out by sharing an experience that happened to me my freshman year in college. I had two back then home teachers, ministering brothers. They came and they knocked on my door at the start of winter semester and they shared a message from President Ezra Taft Benson. He said, "There is a power in the Book of Mormon which will flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of it." And then he gave these promises. "You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You will

find the power to stay on the straight and narrow path. When you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, you will find life in greater and greater abundance."

- 08:35 As soon as my home teacher shared this with me, I realized that although I'd had a habit of reading a chapter or two each day from the Book of Mormon for a long time, I wasn't seriously studying it. That winter semester, I started to seriously study the Book of Mormon. And the promises that President Benson talked about, they came true for me. I felt a power flow into my life, a spiritual power and a connection with Jesus Christ.
- 09:03 My guess is that we will never have had a time in the history of the church when so many people have the opportunity to seriously study the Book of Mormon. Before we even dive into 1 Nephi Chapter 1, verse 1, I'd love to hear your thoughts, John and Hank, what do you see as the difference between reading the Book of Mormon and a serious study of the Book of Mormon?
- John Bytheway: 09:26 Yeah, I love this idea. We talked briefly in our last podcast about different approaches we have to try to get people to read the Book of Mormon. Do you remember that, Hank? A guilt or shame or bribery, but Gerald Lund suggested promises, and he read that Ezra Taft Benson quote and mentioned that the promises are immediate.
- 09:45 I mean, what did President Benson say? The moment you begin a serious study of the book. We can go from a casual reader to a serious student. So, maybe that first part is focus. Deciding, "I want to seriously study this." That changes the way we read. Maybe it's not an allotted time or an allotted chapter, a slow study looking at footnotes, underlining things. My son has been following what Elder Bednar said. "Get a new copy and go through it looking for an answer to a specific thing. Go get another copy next year and look for that specific thing, and that makes you a serious student."
- Hank Smith: 10:26 I like what you've both said here. John, as you said, never before in the history of the church have so many people had this opportunity. And I thought how much content there is available. I like to make my little 20-minute commute to work a little gospel study. Rather than listening to music, I usually will listen to someone talk about scripture.
- 10:50 I remember once in a ward that I was in years and years ago, but I distinctly remember this. A man came to church, he'd never been before. His wife had always come alone. He was a

truck driver and he went up to the stand in fast and testimony meeting. I'd never seen this man before. He said, "I don't read." It's not something that he does. He said, "I don't read." But somebody got him those ... This was a long time ago. Someone got him the cassettes of the Book of Mormon, someone reading the Book of Mormon. And usually, he listened to whatever on the radio, but he decided to listen to those cassettes.

11:23 And he said, just driving his truck, listening to someone read the Book of Mormon. He received a powerful witness, an overwhelming witness of the book. And I thought, "That's amazing." I would think you'd have to be sitting with the book and reading it. But the text, the ideas, the Spirit can definitely travel through that. I would encourage everyone to make their car time. I mean, how much time do we all spend in the car? Make your time in your vehicle this year about the Book of Mormon, whether it be a podcast, a class, or listening to the text itself.

Dr. John Hilton III: 11:59 A special shout out to all those who are right now listening to this podcast in your car.

Hank Smith: 12:03 Yeah. Anyone who's listening right now. With my kids this year, we'll be spending hours in the car, driving to the grocery store, and driving to family and other events. Why not make that time about the Book of Mormon? And they'll get used to it. John, don't you think that same power can come into my life? I don't know if I'd call that a serious study, but it's an increased study.

Dr. John Hilton III: 12:27 I love those suggestions. I think we all agree that what's going to work will be different for every family. We definitely don't want anyone to feel guilty if your three-year-olds are throwing Cheerios at you when you turn on the Book of Mormon instead of their favorite music. And you're like, "Well, I guess we just have to do that." No, part of it is the mindset. I love in your commuting example, Hank, you just had the mindset. There's stuff I might want to listen to, but I'm going to focus on the Book of Mormon.

12:51 For me, one quote that's been really influential in my serious study of the scriptures comes from Elder D. Todd Christofferson. He said, "You should care more about the amount of time you spend in the scriptures than the amount you read in that time." It's what I used to do, I'd read a chapter or two each day from the Book of Mormon. But if my favorite TV show was about to come on, I'd just be like speed read through it. But for me, having a specific amount of time where I know I'm going to dedicate this amount of time each day to scripture study helps

me to do what you were saying, John, slow down, mark the cross references, because it's not a race.

13:33 And in fact, continuing with Elder Christofferson, he said, "I see you sometimes reading a few verses, stopping to ponder them, carefully reading the verses again. And as you think about what they mean, praying for understanding, asking questions in your mind, waiting for spiritual impressions, and writing down the impressions and insights that come, so you will remember and learn more."

Dr. John Hilton III: 14:01 Then Elder Christofferson finished by saying, "Studying in this way, you may not read a lot of chapters or verses in a half hour, but you will be giving place in your heart for the word of God, and He will be speaking to you." For me personally, it's been really helpful to pray and to talk with Heavenly Father and say something like, "Look, I want to do your will all the time. I'm very busy. I have lots of commitments I'm juggling. Help me to know about how much time should I plan to spend each day in thy word." The specific amount of time I've spent at least in my life has varied from season to season, but then that really helps me to prioritize a sacred amount of time each day that I'll devote to a serious study of the Book of Mormon. That's been something that's been helpful for me.

Hank Smith: 14:49 That's awesome. I want to tell you both a story at the funeral of our founder, Steve Sorensen. Many of his eight children that spoke talked about memorizing scriptures from the Book of Mormon that that's what their dad would have them do, and I remember one specific story. It was Benjamin who was trying to memorize the scripture and he had to pass it off to his mom, Shannon, who's our executive producer. And he didn't want to go all the way up the stairs, so he shouted up the stairs his memorized verse, this is third Nephi 5:13. I picture this, a little boy shouting up to his mom, "Behold, I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, the son of God. I have been called of Him to declare his word among His people that they might have everlasting life." I just love that idea. That's part of your serious study, is choosing for your children a number of verses to memorize and pass off. All of this is what we're talking about, right, John?

Dr. John Hilton III: 15:44 Beautiful. Yep, I agree. And again, I want to emphasize that a serious study will look different for each individual. This is something we can pray about and think about what's best for our own families. Even just as we've been talking, I've had ideas for how in my family we can level up in our Book of Mormon study. And if you're sensing that if there's a time for leveling up, this is the time.



Hank Smith:	16:08	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	16:08	I'm glad what you're both saying, John, how it might look different for different families. I would hate for anybody to feel like, "Oh, I'm doing it wrong." If you're doing anything, that's awesome, but figure out how, I like what you said, to level up. "Maybe I can take this a notch higher, a little bit better." And what a great year to try that in this Come, Follow Me year of Book of Mormon.
Dr. John Hilton III:	16:30	That's how I feel. I just feel a sense of excitement as we're starting out 2024. Maybe two other ideas that I'll throw out there real quick and maybe we'll develop them a little bit more throughout the day. One is to write things down. I think keeping a record of what we're learning, I feel like it sends a signal to God that we care about what we're studying, whether that's typing notes on my computer or little annotations in the Gospel Library app or writing something in the margin of the scriptures. Some kind of keeping a record, a scripture journal can be really valuable. And I also think it's helpful to use different study techniques. You guys are both masters of this, and maybe as we work our way through the text today, some of that will naturally come up. But I think if we just take different approaches to our scripture study, that can help keep it alive, fun and energetic, and also help us find new insights.
Hank Smith:	17:18	This will be different for every person, every individual, every family, because we have many people who are going to study the Book of Mormon absolutely alone this year. Maybe you're a young single adult or a single in the church and it's just you in the book this year. It can still be a powerful moment even if it's not with a big group, but add a way to finish. So often, reading the scriptures can be like a New Year's resolution that loses its oomph sometime in January or in February. So maybe add a way, an end goal or a chart or something that you fill out along the way to make sure you get all the way to the end of the row. We want to give Moroni his due time.
Dr. John Hilton III:	17:55	It's a great reminder that whether we're studying individually or as a family, this is a book that has a message for us.
	18:01	Okay, well let's dive into 1 Nephi chapter 1, verse 1. My guess is that we all have the first few words memorized. "I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents." Even in just those first two words, that probably takes us to a different place than we've been in for much of the past two years. We've been studying the Old Testament and New Testament. In many of those books, the author is anonymous. You don't hear, "I, Matthew,

having been a publican. I give you a record." We don't start out that way. We don't hear, "I, Ezra, who am writing the Book of 1 Kings," we don't hear any of this. So the Book of Mormon takes us to a new world where Nephi is telling us, "I'm a real person." And later on we'll find out that Nephi is probably about 50 years old when he's writing 1 Nephi.

18:49 When I was younger, I could imagine this was his daily journal, but that's not the case. He's now 50 years old looking back at his life telling us about it. Even already, just in the first couple of words, there's little nuggets and details.

Hank Smith: 19:02 John, that's just a crucial thing to keep in mind because you're going to write differently than if you're doing a day-by-day journal versus looking back. Those are two different records. If we see this happening, we can say what does he know is going to happen over the next 40 years, 30 years, and how does that play into the way he writes? Just a crucial point. I'm sure we'll bring it up later, but I think you brought up something that is critical to understanding the book.

John Bytheway: 19:28 The three of us sitting here have taught the Bible. We love it. We just got done with the New Testament. The year before that, the Old Testament. There's a different tone of voice. I like to tell my students it has a personality and it's kind of a "I saw you" type of thing and "I'm talking to you." Like you said, John, this is Nephi. This is first person. And later on we'll start hearing Mormon abridging and then finally he introduces himself with that verse that Hank referenced at the Sorensen family. When Mormon says, "Hi, I'm Mormon. I'm the voice you've been listening to this whole time and I'm a disciple of Christ." This book was written with us in mind and they talk to us so directly. It's a different way to read it and to hear it than what we're used to in the Old and the New Testament.

Dr. John Hilton III: 20:14 Yeah, I love it. I'm going to jump down towards the end of verse 1, and I'll read the end of verse 1 through verse 3 and see if you notice the pattern that I found. "Having had great knowledge of the goodness and mysteries of God, therefore, I make a record of my proceedings in my day. Yea, I make a record in the language of my Father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians. And I know that the record which I make is true and I make it with my own hand."

20:42 You guys picking up what Nephi cares about? If you want something to look for as you go through the Book of Mormon, records would be a great theme to look up. One time my wife was in a class called Keys to Successful Scripture study and her

professor was talking about the emphasis of records in the Book of Mormon, so she decided to go through and she created a little mark, like a little gold plate. She would just write in every time there was a reference to records. I remember when we got married, I was looking at her scriptures just seeing all these little rectangles everywhere throughout her scriptures. Just in the first three verses, you can tell Nephi cares about records.

21:21

In fact, just think about these chapters, 1 Nephi chapters 1 through 5. In a little bit, Lehi is going to be given a book. And then the whole storyline of 1 Nephi 3 and 4 is going back to get sacred records. And then as soon as Nephi and his brothers return with the brass plates, the first things they do is they search those records. Up front, foregrounded for us is the importance of records. And to me that's going back to what we talked about at the very beginning, another motivation to seriously be studying the Book of Mormon.

Hank Smith:

21:52

John, as you're talking about records, I notice how Nephi starts. He says, "I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, and we talked about how this is written long after the fact. I thought of all the different ways he could start his record, "I, Nephi, king of my people," he could definitely start that way. "I, Nephi, builder of temples." He's done that. ""I, Nephi, slayer of Laban. He could start with so many things that are focused on "I, Nephi, me." Instead, it's "I, Nephi, I have good parents." I love how Nephi acknowledges that it wasn't just him that got him where he is. "I, Nephi, have had people help me get to where I am." That's how I'm going to start. I love that. When I think about my own journal, how often do I talk about me versus how often do I talk about those who have helped me?

Dr. John Hilton III:

22:42

Oh, that's a great nugget. I love that. I've never thought of it that way. That's a great insight. I think there's one thing for us to consider upfront. Nephi is writing a record. So when we think about the big picture theme of records in the Book of Mormon, we can either think of reading or writing. We'll talk more about reading throughout our time together today. I just want to take a moment on writing because I used to be a great journaler, and in the past year I have become weaker and weaker in my journaling to the point where I'm afraid to go back to my journal because I'll have to confess how long it's been since I've written.

23:17

I don't know if any of you have any tips for keeping a record. Recently, I remembered the quote from President Eyring, his talk O Remember, Remember where he says that he would write down something like a tender mercy every day. So I thought to myself, "Okay, I'm going to do this. I'm going to start

writing a tender mercy every day." Literally this morning as I was trying to write my tender mercy, I went to my phone four different times to open the Notes app and then I'd be like, "Oh, look, a new email. Oh look, I wonder if I should see this or that." It took me almost an hour of continually forgetting and remembering, "Oh yeah, I really want to do this." So what are some of your tips for keeping that record?

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| Hank Smith:          | 23:57 | Well, first of all, I'll try to stop texting you early in the morning. I know that you're doing your journaling. I'll try to avoid that. You know what? I try to use the tools that I have in front of me because obviously sitting down with a journal is not something that happens naturally for me. I'll use my phone quite a bit. Say we're at a significant moment with our family, it's a birthday party or we've just had a great scripture study. I'll grab my phone and I'll hit video and I'll say, "Okay, what day is it?" And I'll have someone give us the date. My kids get tired of this. It's 2024. It's January '24. "Okay, what just happened?" And then I hope that one day as I build up dozens and dozens of these videos that I can compile them and create our own little video record. I know it's not written, but it's still record keeping. |
| Dr. John Hilton III: | 24:44 | I love that. How about you, John? Any tips?   |
| John Bytheway:       | 24:47 | Well, I appreciate hearing both of you say that because I'm kind of a slacker myself. The thing you said about I have the tool right in front of me because I just have put things in Notes, but I love the idea of making a video with the family. It's so fun to watch the kids grow and "Look at you then and look at you now." And I forget, I have a video camera in my... I thought it was a phone. All these years I thought that thing was a phone, and I rarely use it as a phone, you know?   |
| Hank Smith:          | 25:12 | Yeah. "No one call me. Don't call me. That's not what I use my phone for."  |
| John Bytheway:       | 25:15 | Text me.  |
| Hank Smith:          | 25:16 | That's right.   |
| Dr. John Hilton III: | 25:17 | Like we were talking about this year, 2024 might be a great time to level up in our serious study of records. We can search them like Lehi and his family are going to do in 1 Nephi 5 instead of just read them. Maybe there's a way that we can level up in our keeping of records as well. I think that's part of the lesson we can learn from Nephi up front, is he's telling us about this record that he's creating and it's blessed our lives. And who   |

knows what lives will be blessed by the records we keep, whether that's writing things down, making those videos, finding ways to share what we've learned with those of future generations.

Hank Smith:	25:55	Now in our first 25 minutes, Johns, we have overwhelmed our listeners with "Do this, do this, and do this." We don't want anybody to turn off the podcast right now thinking, "I can't do all that. They're just going to give me another 25 things to do." I think you would both agree, something, do something in this direction.
Dr. John Hilton III:	26:12	Absolutely, but don't be overwhelmed. Don't make it hard. This is a joyful...This is fun.
John Bytheway:	26:18	Right.
Hank Smith:	26:19	Make it fun. Make it fun. Do what's fun. Do what comes natural to you.
Dr. John Hilton III:	26:23	As we go onto verse 4, "And it came to pass in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah." Now right there, my guess is that many of us, we've just brushed by this verse before, but maybe some of us now can remember back a year or two ago when we were studying 2 Kings and Jeremiah. You could even go back and listen to the last episode for 2 Kings or from Jeremiah where we learn about Zedekiah. He's a real person. It's fun to see this Book of Mormon connection. In fact, there's a book and we'll link to it in the show notes. It's called Glimpses of Lehi's Jerusalem. It's a scholarly book that tells us a lot of the background in history of 600 B.C. So if you're kind of interested in that digging deeper, consider that Zedekiah. Later we'll see the name Jeremiah. These are real individuals. And Nephi and Lehi are working in the same space that they are in.
Hank Smith:	27:21	If anybody's wondering, show notes are available, <a href="http://followhim.co">followhim.co</a> .
Dr. John Hilton III:	27:28	In verse 5, this is one of my favorite verses as we get started. "Wherefore it came to pass that my father, Lehi, as he went forth, prayed unto the Lord, yea, even with all his heart in behalf of his people."
	27:42	One of my favorite lessons from the Book of Mormon is what we can learn from how prophets pray. One time I heard a general authority at a stake conference say, "We would learn a

lot if we read the Book of Mormon specifically looking for what it is prophets do as they pray."

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| Dr. John Hilton III: | 28:00 | I created a spreadsheet, and we can throw the spreadsheet on in the show notes as well. There's about 130 times in the Book of Mormon where prophets pray. What do you think? What are some lessons that you guys gleaned from how Lehi is praying in verse five? What do you notice?  |
| John Bytheway:       | 28:17 | Well, I love that it doesn't start out saying, "Lehi was a prophet." It starts out saying, "Many prophets came." And we all think, okay, Jeremiah, perhaps Obadiah, and Lehi listened to a prophet. And then, as you mentioned, he went and prayed, and I love what he prayed with in behalf of his people. And when I look at the story of Enos, he prayed for his own soul and then it expanded. He prayed for his brethren and then even prayed for his enemies, and then he prayed for the records, which you talked about, and I've loved that idea. The prophet Joseph Smith said, "A man filled with the love of God is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race." And here's Lehi praying with all his heart in behalf of his people. I think that's interesting. |
| Hank Smith:          | 29:07 | I love that. That phrase, "With all his heart." That's a fascinating phrase. John, this is something that I hope we do this entire year is look at phrases. I think there's power in stopping in these verses and looking at phrases. "Prayed with all his heart." Joseph Smith said the same thing about the first vision. He said, "I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God." To me, the epitome of prayer is wrapped up in that one sentence, and it seems to be saying that here in the Book of Mormon. "I kneeled down and offered up the desires of my heart to God." That is so different than a rote prayer where I say the same things over and over. What are the desires of my heart? "Even with all his heart in behalf of his people." We talked about leveling up. That levels up my prayers.                |
| Dr. John Hilton III: | 29:58 | What you said about phrases, this is one of many awesome study techniques that we can use. Elder Neal A. Maxwell called these one-Liners. Short powerful phrases like if you were into cross-stitching, you would cross-stitch it or put it on the fridge with a magnet. It's very fun to go through the Book of Mormon, slowing down and highlighting powerful phrases. One other one in verse five is this phrase, "As he went forth." Normally we kneel to pray if we can, and if we're in a personal or family setting, but here it sounds to me like Lehi's on his commute. He's like Hank Smith driving to work and listening to his podcast,  |

but Lehi didn't have podcasts, so he's praying with all his heart on behalf of his people as he went forth.

30:46 And I know for me in my life, sometimes it's good even to turn off the podcast, although I would never turn off the FollowHIM Podcast, of course, but to even turn off the podcast and just sometimes pray as I'm driving. Talk to the Lord. It's interesting we've picked out these three phrases, "as he went forth," "with all his heart," "in behalf of his brethren." So, that's a great study technique that I would definitely recommend is finding those short, powerful one-liners.

Hank Smith: 31:13 I've often called that mining for gold. You're going through and you're looking for these nuggets of gold or these veins of gold amid the rock. The rock can be the storyline, but let's find those little veins of gold and use those. Those are valuable like gold. Those can be spiritually and emotionally valuable to us.

Dr. John Hilton III: 31:32 I love it. Another technique that I found to be really helpful is to focus on Jesus Christ, to look for what are these verses teaching me about the Savior? Our colleague, Dr. Josh Sears, who's been on the podcast before, said something to me once that really stood out to me. He said, "What if, instead of having scripture study, we had Christ study?" Just as a reminder that the whole focus of the scriptures is on Jesus Christ. And we can see this if we keep reading forward. Lehi has a vision in verse six, goes home in verse seven, and then in verse eight he says, "Being thus overcome with the Spirit, he was carried away in a vision even that he saw the heavens open and he thought he saw God sitting upon his throne." Verse nine, "It came to pass he saw One descending out of the midst of heaven, and he beheld that his luster was above that of the sun at noonday, and he saw 12 others following him."

32:29 So it seems like Lehi's seeing a vision of Jesus Christ and the 12 Apostles, and the One in verse 11, which the way I interpret where it says, "the first came," I assume that's the One, Jesus came and gave Lehi a book. So right upfront, before we've gotten 10 verses into the Book of Mormon, we are seeing Jesus Christ. And I think that's another scripture study technique that I found to be really helpful is specifically to look for the Savior. In fact, probably lots of us have taken an invitation. President Nelson has given this invitation. President Hinckley gave it, to go through the Book of Mormon and putting in maybe a little check mark every time there's a reference to Heavenly Father.

33:13 As I took this invitation, I actually found something that to me was really interesting, which is if you put a little check mark next

to every title of the Savior, you find about 4,000 or so. But what about the pronouns when it says, "He," and it's referring to the Savior? So then I started putting a check mark by all of the pronouns, and then there's more than 7,000 references to the Savior. On average, more than once per verse. If we go to this month's Liahona, January 2024 Liahona, there's an article that talks about this, looking for references to Jesus Christ in pronouns. And I think just as a reminder that Jesus Christ really is at the center of the Book of Mormon. We're not seriously studying the Book of Mormon to get closer to Nephi. Although that's wonderful, it's to bring us closer to Jesus Christ, and so centering our study on him I think is another really valuable study approach.

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| John Bytheway:       | 34:15 | In Elder Holland's book, Christ and the New Covenant, I tell my students, "Did you know the Book of Mormon is called the New Covenant in the Doctrine of Covenants?" Because they might not know this book is Elder Holland's commentary on the Book of Mormon, but it's not called Elder Holland's Commentary on the Book of Mormon. It's called Christ and the New Covenant, and they might not have recognized it. But in Christ and the New Covenant, let's see, I'm on page 36. It says, "The first chapter of the first book of Nephi begins with Lehi's vision of One descending out of the midst of heaven. And he beheld that his luster was above that of the sun at noonday. In this vision, the premortal Christ, accompanied by 12 others, brought forth a book in which Lehi was bidden to read. This book spoke of many great, marvelous things including the plain declaration of the coming of a Messiah, and also the redemption of the world." And Elder Holland says, "Thus, in the first verses of the first chapter of the first book, in the Book of Mormon, the central and undeviating theme is struck." |
| Dr. John Hilton III: | 35:11 | Beautiful.  |
| Hank Smith:          | 35:14 | The central and undeviating theme of the book. That's exactly what you said, John Hilton. This is the point right here. We're not reading to know Nephi, even though that's great, or Mormon or Jacob. We're reading to get to know Christ.   |
| Dr. John Hilton III: | 35:27 | Wow, I love that. While you mentioned Elder Holland, there's another little insight. This is from an article that Elder Holland wrote years ago, but he zoomed back and looked at the big picture. So if we think about First Nephi chapter one, it's a story about a person who has a really sincere prayer, has a vision, receives a book, shares this message with others, and then is persecuted for it. And then we're like, "Oh, wow, this is Lehi and it's also Joseph Smith."   |



Hank Smith:	35:56	Joseph Smith. Yeah. There's a pattern here.
John Bytheway:	35:59	You mentioned the patterns, and I've always thought, does this sound familiar? He saw a vision and he gave him a book?
Hank Smith:	36:05	Yeah. Isn't it Isaiah who is invited into the throne room of God and then is given an assignment, "Go teach?"
Dr. John Hilton III:	36:13	I think there's something interesting. In verses 13 and 14, Lehi reads the book and he says, "Wo, wo unto Jerusalem. It will be destroyed. Its inhabitants thereof, many will perish by the sword and be carried away captive into Babylon." So this sounds pretty terrible. And then you wonder why in verse 14, after Lehi reads and sees these things, he says, "Great and marvelous are thy works, oh Lord God almighty." Verse 15, "After this manner of language was my father praising of his God. His whole soul did rejoice." So it seems like he's gotten some really bad news, but he's rejoicing. What do you guys make of that?
John Bytheway:	36:52	Yeah, I look at the whole verse and it says, "Because thou art merciful, thou will not suffer those who come unto thee that they shall perish." So trouble is coming, so come unto Christ and then you won't perish. That's what I'm seeing there, and that would make you go, "Oh, great and marvelous are thy works because you're going to be merciful to those of us who are listening to the prophets," it sounds like.
Hank Smith:	37:16	Hearkening back to verse 12, he starts to read this book and he's filled with the Spirit of the Lord. Isn't that what we've been talking about just today? Read this book. Be filled with the Spirit of the Lord. A power will come into your life the moment you begin a serious study of the book. So even though the message is difficult, it's still coming from the Spirit. It's still maybe clothed in the joy of the Spirit. Even though the message is a difficult one to hear, it's maybe rejoicing from the source of the message.
Dr. John Hilton III:	37:53	Beautiful. And I love this idea that you mentioned, John. Trouble is coming, so come unto Christ and things are going to work out. When trouble comes to Lehi, he goes out to preach as we come to the end of chapter one. When the Jews heard these things, they were angry with him. They try to take Lehi's life, but the last sentence of this chapter says, "I, Nephi, will show unto you that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen because of their faith to make them mighty, even unto the power of deliverance." We were talking earlier about finding those power phrases, these nuggets of gold. "The tender mercies of the Lord" has to be one of those phrases.

Hank Smith:	38:35	What came to mind, and I bet it came to both of your minds, was 2005, Elder Bednar, a brand new apostle - we all looked at him and said, "How old is that guy? He looks really young" - stood up in the April conference and gave the talk, The Tender Mercies of the Lord. I don't know about the both of you, but this talk had serious impact on my life. It was a paradigm- changing talk where I had always known that the Lord gave these personalized blessings, but Elder Bednar articulated it in a way that gave it definition. I had this vague idea in my head, and now all of a sudden I knew. Do both of you remember that talk?
Dr. John Hilton III:	39:17	Absolutely. He talked about the tender mercy that he received because the hymn, which had been prepared far in advance, that he would be speaking in conference six months earlier, was his favorite hymn.
Hank Smith:	39:29	And he said, some people might think it was a coincidence that they had chosen his favorite hymn to sing just before his first talk in general conference, but to him, he said, it was a personalized blessing.
John Bytheway:	39:41	Somebody said once that coincidences are God's way of remaining anonymous. Sometimes we have those tender mercies. That phrase just came into the vocabulary of the church ever after that talk. We talked about, "Oh, that was a tender mercy." We did all the time. And Hank, I know you compiled some of these. You gave a talk called He Knows You.
Hank Smith:	40:03	That's a great talk.
John Bytheway:	40:05	Yeah. And over and over people that experienced that kind of attention, and I've had it happen to me and I think, did the Lord just do that? Nah. It's fun to hear that he can individualize and personalize his mercy sometimes, and the little things like that that are little things, but they send a huge message.
Hank Smith:	40:25	I think we could do an entire year of podcasts on the tender mercies of the Lord, these individualized blessings. Talking to my friend Elaine Dalton about the white rose President Monson gave her when she was called to be young women's president. Al Caraway told me about how when she joined the church, she lost some relationships, but on the day she got endowed, the very day she got endowed, her dad called her asking to have that relationship back. Elder Bednar says, "Often the Lord's timing in his tender mercies enables us to discern and recognize them."

	41:01	I think what I saw most in preparing that was that the Lord is very active in our lives. He does not take a passive role in people's lives. He is doing his work, and his angels, I assume, are doing his work. And if we're careful and we're taking part in that work, we'll see more and more of those tender mercies. To tie back to what we talked about earlier, if we write them down, if we write them down, record them, I think it's a message to the Lord that I appreciate this, I find it to be valuable, and I want to record it for my children and grandchildren. And I found when I write them down, more of them occur. I would encourage everybody to, when you see a personalized blessing, first go listen to that Elder Bednar talk, and then, two, keep a tender mercy journal when you see the hand of the Lord in your life. And I think as you write them down, you'll see them increase.
John Bytheway:	42:00	I think it was President Eyring who was... And I don't remember the exact words, but the idea was a journal isn't for your trips and your trophies. A journal is to document the hand of the Lord in your life. Exactly what you're saying, to document those tender mercies. And then I kind of hear the line from count your blessings. It will surprise you what the Lord has done if you start writing those down.
Hank Smith:	42:24	What a great insight. Man, we're only through one chapter here. I'm just feeling excited. We didn't even cover every verse.
Dr. John Hilton III:	42:33	There's so much to cover that we can't do it all. But that's why I think having our own serious personal study of the Book of Mormon will just help us find those nuggets that are for each of us.
	42:44	In Chapter 2, Lehi and his family, they leave Jerusalem, they gather all their stuff, and they head out of town. Sometimes when I'm teaching this, I'll ask my students, how far do Lehi and his family travel? Most of the time, people will say they go three days into the wilderness. Now, just to be clear, this is the wrong answer, but the reason why people are saying that, it's based on verse 6, "And it came to pass when he traveled three days in the wilderness, he pitched his tent in a valley by the side of a river of water." We'll come back to the three days and why that's wrong in just a second, but on that little, "by the side of a river of water," there's a story that Elder Holland told more than 30 years ago. You guys might've remembered this from an old seminary training.
	43:29	I'm just going to quote from Elder Holland. He said, "I can still remember the scriptural awakening that came to me when a skillful and well-prepared seminary teacher reading that much

read, and to us students, absolutely boring material from Nephi. I can remember when he asked me in class, why in 1 Nephi Chapter 2:6, the Book of Mormon records that Lehi pitched his tent in a valley by the side of a river of water. Well, it was still early in the year being only the first day or two of class. And as always, the teacher was still very much on trial. Being the smart aleck student I almost always was, I made some clever response about it being smarter to pitch a tent by the side of a river than in it. I knew I was a hit because the girls giggled." So already we're learning that Elder Holland has long had a penchant for powerful one-liners.

44:18 So he keeps going. "The teacher didn't giggle, he smiled, and he said, with a smile still on his face, "You're not answering the question, Jeff, because you're not reading the text. It doesn't say Lehi pitched his tent by the river or in the river. It says he pitched it by a river of water. Why did he say river of water, Jeff? What other kinds of rivers are there?" And Elder Holland goes on to point out that in modern English, we would never say the phrase "river of water" because all rivers are rivers of water. But in an ancient Semitic context where Nephi is coming from, there would be rivers of water and rivers of sand. And this is one of those dozens and dozens of little details that I wouldn't base my testimony at the Book of Mormon on, but it shows that this is not Joseph Smith writing. He wouldn't have written that phrase "river of water". This is someone from a completely different background who's writing in a way that's familiar to him.

45:19 But I want to go back to this idea of how long did they travel into the wilderness? Because I think this is a really important point. If we think three days, we see that in one way, but go back and take a look at verse 5, "He came down by the borders near the shore of the Red Sea." And you can get on Google Maps right now and figure this out, but from Jerusalem to the Red Sea is about 200 miles, so they're already traveling a long way. And then from there, the Red Sea, they go three days into the wilderness. So I don't know if they're going 20 miles a day or 25 miles a day, but this is roughly a two week journey from Jerusalem to where they make camp.

46:03 For me, that's really valuable because it's going to help us see why Laman and Lemuel are complaining, "Oh, we don't want to go back to Jerusalem." It's not just a three day journey. This is like walking from Provo to St. George is basically what they're doing and then to have to go back. This helps me empathize more with Laman and Lemuel, why they're complaining.

	46:22	In fact, this is just a quick side note. Our family lived in Jerusalem for a year when I taught at BYU Jerusalem Center, and one day we were going to drive down to the Red Sea to go snorkeling. So as we're driving and it's barren desert down there, and I was pointing it out to my kids saying, "Oh, think about Laman and Lemuel. They're complaining." And then we got to a checkpoint and there had been a flash flood. We had to go back to Jerusalem and go a different direction to the Red Sea. I was so ticked off, I'm like, "We just wasted 45 minutes driving down here. Oh, this is the worst." And then I realized, "Wow, I am totally Laman and Lemuel." My 45 minutes of drive, I was mad about, and I can see why they were murmuring about a two week having to go back. So it's really a four week journey, plus the time it takes to get those plates.
Hank Smith:	47:11	You just forgot something and we have to go all the way back?
John Bytheway:	47:15	John, what's cool about that flash flood, too, is some of those rivers of sand or rivers of river beds suddenly became rivers of water for an hour or two.
Hank Smith:	47:25	Yep.
John Bytheway:	47:26	And so there were rivers of sand and river beds. So a river of water is a specific kind.
Dr. John Hilton III:	47:33	Let's jump down to 1 Nephi Chapter 2:9. And these are some of Lehi's messages to his sons Laman and Lemuel. When my father saw that the waters of the river emptied into the fountain of the Red Sea, he spake unto Laman saying, "Oh, that thou might be like this river continually running into the fountain of all righteousness." And he spake unto Laman, "Oh, that thou might be like unto this valley, firm, steadfast and immovable, in keeping the commandments of the Lord."
	48:04	There's lots of little nuggets that we could unpack from here. One that I want to point out is that Lehi is a really righteous person. You can sense how dedicated he is to the Lord. He obviously loves his children and these hopes that he's expressing in verses 9 and 10, at least as far as we have in the text, they are not realized in this life. We don't see Laman and Lemuel becoming firm, steadfast, and immovable. So I think sometimes as parents that can be a hard message, but to know that it is very possible that the deep hopes we have for our children may not be realized. But I love that there's a long-term perspective.

	48:46	These words, firm, steadfast and immovable, they actually appear later in the Book of Mormon. They only appear one more time in the Book of Mormon together in a sequence, and it's in 3 Nephi where it's talking about the time when the church broke up amongst the Nephites right before the Saviors coming. And it says in 3 Nephi Chapter 6:14, "The church was broken up in all the land, save it were among a few of the Lamanites who were converted to the true faith. They were firm, steadfast, and immovable."
	49:22	And I wonder if Father Lehi is there in Heaven and he's watching that and some tears are coming down his cheeks as he realized that maybe things didn't turn out how he had hoped for Lemuel. But with the eternal perspective, here his descendants are realizing those hopes he had for Lemuel. To me, it's a reminder to keep the big picture. Things may not work out the way we want them to in the short run, but in the eternal scheme of things, as we're faithful, we can have confidence that Jesus Christ will wipe away all the tears from our eyes and that all things will be made right.
John Bytheway:	49:57	Wow, that is awesome, John. That is so good that they're Lamanites who are firm, steadfast, and immovable. That's not in the footnotes, but you just made me a new one. That's so good.
Hank Smith:	50:11	You both are so spiritual. I thought when he says, "Oh, be like this river," I thought Sam might've leaned over to Nephi and said, "Yeah, shallow and filthy." But I like what you're saying here. How many of our listeners and members of the church want so badly for their children to embrace the gospel, embrace the commandments, and their children do the very opposite? So often we might speak of, "Oh, I'm so blessed. I've got this child doing this and this child doing that, and how blessed am I?" When we don't know that there are people listening saying, "Why can't I be blessed like that?" In my own life, I've changed my language to, "I'm so thankful. I'm so grateful." I know it's a small vocabulary change, but I think we can be a little more gentle because that is a very intimate and painful part of many people's lives.
John Bytheway:	51:08	And here's Lehi and Sariah with quite an assortment among their own children, so you can't take all the credit. You can't take all the blame either. They came with their own agency and everything, and I just love that about the Book of Mormon, that it starts with a family that has a bunch of ups and downs and some really difficult situations.

Hank Smith:	51:29	<p>10 years ago, President Eyring gave a talk called To My Grandchildren, and he told this story. He says, "Years ago a friend of mine spoke of his grandmother. She had lived a full life, always faithful to the Lord and to his church. Yet one of her grandsons chose a life of crime. He was finally sentenced to prison. My friend recalled that his grandmother, as she drove along the highway to visit her grandson in prison, had tears in her eyes as she prayed with anguish. I've tried to live a good life. Why do I have this tragedy of a grandson who seems to have destroyed his life? The answer came to her mind in these words, I gave him to you because I knew you could and would love him no matter what he did."</p>
	52:17	<p>President Eyring goes on, "There's a wonderful lesson for us all. The way for the loving parents and grandparents and all of God's servants will not be easy in a decaying world. We cannot force God's children to choose the way to happiness. God cannot do that because of the agency He has given us. Heavenly Father and his beloved son love all of God's children no matter what they choose to do or what they become. The Savior paid the price of all sins, no matter how heinous. Even though there must be justice, the opportunity for mercy is extended. To me, I know there are plenty of people listening who would love to have Nephis. More Nephis, right? More Nephi-like children, but our children are agents unto themselves and they may make choices that break our hearts. I came from a family with some siblings who chose to leave entirely, leave the gospel, leave the church. In my experience, they may have left the church, but they're not lost to the Lord.</p>
Dr. John Hilton III:	53:24	<p>One thing I think we can see in this is if we were to jump over into 2 Nephi when Lehi in chapter one is talking to Laman and Lemuel and you can sense how much anguish he feels over them, but in the same passage, he talks about how he's been encircled about in the arms of the Savior's love. I feel like no matter what circumstances are around us, we can't control, like you said, the choices that others make, but we can still feel encircled about in the arms of our Savior.</p>
John Bytheway:	53:53	<p>Years ago, LDS Living said these are the 10 most repeated scriptures in general conference. I don't know if it's still true, but number one was Moses 1:39. I love to point out that the Lord didn't say, "This is your job and your glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of your children." He said, "This is my work. This is my glory." And then I love that in 2 Nephi, He says, "I am able to do my work." Give God the long view, and they're his children too, and he's got a long game going here,</p>

and hopefully it gives you some hope. He's mighty to save and it's His work and His glory. Do your best, but it's his job to save.

Hank Smith: 54:32

Both of you, such powerful insights. I remember Joseph Smith saying something to the effect of the great Jehovah knows every individual and has made ample provision for their redemption. What a hopeful thought.

54:47

Coming up in Part 2 of this episode.

Dr. John Hilton III: 54:51

In fact, this happened to me just two days ago. I was visiting with a young adult. She's a super faithful person and she's trying to decide if she should go on a mission. She's been praying about it for a few months and she's just not really getting an answer.





John Bytheway:	00:02	Welcome to part two with Dr. John Hilton III, on 1 Nephi 1 through 5.
Hank Smith:	00:07	Okay, Dr. Hilton. What do we have next?
Dr. John Hilton III:	00:09	Let's just jump down to one of the shortest verses in the Book of Mormon. 1 Nephi Chapter 2, Verse 15, and my father dwelt in a tent. I'm sure that both of you have had the experience when you're teaching seminary and a student gets to give the devotional, they go up, they read this verse, and it's like ha ha ha... and they go sit down.
Hank Smith:	00:25	So funny.
Dr. John Hilton III:	00:27	But this is actually a great verse going back to what we talked about earlier with the serious study of the Book of Mormon, one technique that I really like to do is to search for how often words or phrases are repeated.
	00:41	If you do that with the word, tent, we find out that over the course of his writings, Nephi will refer to his father's tent more than 20 times. This is actually an important detail. It seems like Lehi is pretty wealthy, because he has so much treasure that Laban is going to lust after it. And that's just the stuff that they left behind. Lehi has got a lot, and now he's gone from that, to living in a tent. I don't have the nicest house, but I would be really bitterly disappointed if I had to move out of my house into a tent. That would be so hard. And I think it's interesting that Nephi and Lehi are going to have incredible revelations while they're living in a tent. This was a step down for them, and to me it's kind of this, and it came to pass, my father dwelt in a tent, symbolizes that even in the difficulties of our lives, even when we're metaphorically dwelling in a tent, we can still have great revelations and great joy like Lehi and his family did.

Hank Smith:	01:44	That's excellent. I think of how many of our pioneer ancestors left homes in Europe and ended up in a tent in Ephraim, Utah, right? The dugout somewhere.
Dr. John Hilton III:	01:56	As we keep going in 2 Nephi Chapter 2, there's a couple of really beautiful passages. In Verse 16, Nephi says, "Being exceedingly young, nevertheless being large in stature, also having great desires to know the mysteries of God, wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord, and He did visit me and soften my heart." I think I heard this from you actually, John Bytheway, that the idea that the Lord comes to soften Nephi's heart, suggests that there was a little bit of hardness there. That doesn't mean we need to put Nephi down, but it does humanize Nephi. He's a teenager and he's trying to figure things out, so he prays. And the Lord gives him a promise in Verse 20. "Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper and be led to a land of promise." And this phrase is repeated in different ways throughout the Book of Mormon. And I think it's interesting that to me, this appears to be a collective promise.
	02:54	Nephi inasmuch as much as you and your descendants keep the commandments, you'll prosper in the land. That doesn't mean that if you personally, you and me individually keep the commandments, that everything will work out for us the way we want when we want. Like, what we've just been discussing. Everyone's going to have hardships, and Nephi has some bitter hardships. But in the long view, as we keep the commandments, things will work out. That's the message as we come to an end of Chapter 2. So as we flip the page and we go to Chapter 3, we're coming up on one of our most famous passages of scripture. Lehi tells Nephi, "I need to send everyone back for the brass plates. Your brothers are murmuring." And Nephi says, "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men save He shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the things which he commanded them."
Hank Smith:	03:47	Speaking of scriptures mentioned in general conference, as Goodly John just shared with us, I went to the scripture citation index. This is scriptures.byu.edu, and you can click on a verse. It's a wonderful tool. And you can look at how many times a certain verse or set of verses was referenced in general conference. I'm looking at 1 Nephi 3 here. 1 Nephi 3, 1 through 5, referenced once. 1 Nephi 3, 1 through 7 referenced once. And you keep going down and you've got referenced four times, two times, two times, one time. And then you get to 1 Nephi 3:7, and it's got 111 references to it, in general conference.

John Bytheway:	04:26	Wow.
Hank Smith:	04:26	Yeah. I mean this one has stood out all the way back to teachings of the prophet Joseph Smith, Joseph F. Smith, Lorenzo Snow, Spencer W. Kimball, Marion G. Romney, all the way up to 2023, Henry B. Eyring. That's the most recent, so this one has gone the distance.
John Bytheway:	04:43	Do you know what I love about this? It sounds like we're quoting Lehi, starting in about Verse 2. Nephi says, "My father said, behold, I've dreamed a dream." And he says, "Thy brothers murmur, saying it is a hard thing which I have required of them." And then Nephi says, "I said unto my father, I will go and do the things which..." And I do this to my class to see if they catch it. "I will go and do the things which Lehi hath commanded, for I know..." And they go, "Wait, wait, wait. No, which the Lord hath commanded." Lemuel said, "You are asking me, Father Lehi." And Nephi says, "Oh, did God ask? Oh, okay. Well, then I can do it." And then a hard thing becomes just the thing which the Lord commanded, because God asked me. I'm thinking of Peter saying, "Lord, bid me come unto thee on the water." If you ask me to do it, then I can do it. I'd like to liken those two things here. If God is asking me to do this, then I can do it.
Hank Smith:	05:33	That's a great nugget, John. I love that. It seems like Nephi frequently hearkens back to the story of Moses. And that seems like a, "He will prepare a way." Whether it be a way to go over the walls of Jerusalem or a way through the Red Sea. He will prepare a way. Nephi, of course, we've already said, writing decades after the fact, very well knows that the way is not perfect. It's not this opened up, and it's "I know exactly what to do at the exact moment." This takes a lot of effort and crisscrossing, and trying to find that way. But he won't quit, because he knows the way is there.
Dr. John Hilton III:	06:10	I love that. We've been doing a lot of zooming in at specific phrases, which is awesome. Let's zoom out and just think about Chapter 3 from a bigger picture perspective. Now, Nephi and his brothers, they make a two-week journey back to get the plates. They go to Laban's house, they draw lots. Laban gets the short straw, tries to get the plates. He's kicked out, so they're frustrated. "Okay, let's go home." "No, no." Nephi says, "I've got a great idea." And I can see Nephi, he's thinking, he's inspired. "Let's grab all of mom's silverware, we'll bring it to Laban." And then again, the plan fails. If we were to stop maybe around Verse 28, Laman and Lemuel are smiting Nephi and Sam with a

rod. Now for us as readers, it's so easy to keep reading on to 29. "Oh good, the angel's going to come." Pause on 28 for a while.

07:05 Think of how does Nephi feel. He's like, "Wait. I said, I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded." And sure we tried the casting lots, maybe that wasn't the smartest idea. But I felt really good about this idea of buying the plates. And now, like right... Ouch, oh, 'Hit him again.' I'm getting beat right now and there's no hope." I feel like it's so helpful for us to sometimes just sit in the middle of a scripture story. We want to rush to the end and we know what's going to happen. But sit with Nephi for a little bit as he's being beat with a stick after doing everything he thought was right. It's a reminder again, as we've been discussing a little bit today, that just because doing the right thing doesn't mean that everything will turn out exactly the way I want.

07:51 In my own life right now, there's a big project that I'm working on. And I've had some thoughts of how we can move it forward, and just yesterday I realized that is not going to work. And I'm in the middle of it. I'm in Verse 28 right now. Things are not working out, I'm looking, thinking, "Okay, there is no way that this is going to happen." And hopefully I'll be back next year and I can tell you things worked out. But who knows? Maybe they won't work out in this life. We don't have that promise. So it's a reminder that when we're stuck in the middle, there was a time when Nephi was stuck in the middle.

Hank Smith: 08:26 I remember John Hilton, you teaching me, it could have been here on the podcast or just one of our conversations, to not skip over the Saturday of the Resurrection. Wasn't that you?

Dr. John Hilton III: 08:36 Yeah, I think that was on our Easter episode.

Hank Smith: 08:38 We jumped from Friday to Sunday, so fast. But we forget that long Saturday.

Dr. John Hilton III: 08:44 Fortunately, the angel does come, and encourages Nephi, rebukes Laman and Lemuel. And so they decide to give it one more shot. And that takes us to, I mean, it's hard to have favorites, but this has got to be one of the greatest verses that we're seeing today, in 1st Nephi Chapter 4, Verses 6 and 7. Laman, Lemuel, Sam, they stay behind. Nephi goes forward. In Verse 6, he says, "I was led by the spirit, not knowing beforehand, the things which I should do. Nevertheless, I went forth. And there's actually a contrast. If we go back to 1st Nephi 3, 7, Nephi says, "I will go and do, for I know..." Because Nephi knew he was going to do. But here it's the opposite. "I did not

know beforehand the things which I should do. Nevertheless, I went forth." Sometimes you go because you know. But sometimes you go and then you know.

09:48 And I think actually if we were to start looking across scriptural patterns, we would find that it's more often it's go than no. Noah starts to build the ark, then it rains. Moses leads the children out of Israel, then the Red Sea parts. In fact, this happened to me just two days ago. I was visiting with a young adult. She's a super faithful person and she's trying to decide if she should go on a mission. She's been praying about it for a few months and she's not really getting an answer. I am so sympathetic when in a big decision, I want God to tell me what to do, and then I'm going to do it. But often God says, "You make the decision. You move forward." And then as Elder Scott said years ago, "I'll confirm that it's right, or if you've made the wrong choice, I'll send you some warnings." But God is trusting us to move forward. And that's exactly what Nephi's doing here in verses 6 and 7.

Hank Smith: 10:41 So much like the brother of Jared. Bring me an idea. I can make it work, but you got to bring me an idea.

John Bytheway: 10:48 There's a few phrases that come to mind. I love this one. You can't say to your fireplace, give me heat, then I'll give you wood. President Marion, G. Romney said once, "God can only guide our footsteps when we move our feet." Another one that leaps to mind for me is the 10 lepers. "Go show yourself to the priest." "Well, we can't, we're not healed yet." They could have responded that way. Jesus says, "Go show yourself to the priest." and it says, "As they went, they were cleansed." It came as they started to go. I love this verse. I love it for young adults like you've talked about. Not knowing beforehand. And how often all of us, "Just tell me what to do Heavenly Father, and I'll do it. And sometimes he says, "No. Commit to a course of action, then I'll guide you."

Dr. John Hilton III: 11:33 Thinking about this young woman who's deciding whether she should go on a mission. The answer in this case is probably, you decide. You start your papers, or don't start your papers. But make a choice, move forward. And then trust that just like with Nephi, as he went forth, the path opened up. And the path will open up for you in the big decisions that you're making in your life. Since we've been talking about this idea of doing and knowing, as we come to 1 Nephi Chapter 5, Nephi and his brothers have come back. Think about this from the perspective of Sariah. They've been gone for more than a month. Two weeks to get the plates, I don't know, maybe a week, figuring

everything out. Now two weeks coming back. So she's rightly worried about her children. And when they return in 1 Nephi 5:8, Sariah speaks, saying, "Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath commanded my husband to flee into the wilderness." So what does that tell us about Sariah on the day she left?

Hank Smith:	12:32	She didn't know.
Dr. John Hilton III:	12:33	She didn't know. It's been maybe two months or more since they left, and she has been acting on faith this whole time. Sariah is a wonderful example of someone who acted. She did, and then she knew. And even I think if we were to go to the end of the Book of Mormon, Moroni's Promise. Read these things, ask God. It's an invitation to do, and then you'll know. Sariah is an incredible example of that in action.
John Bytheway:	13:06	I like how we watch different members of the family in their spiritual progress. First, it's Lehi, has a vision, he knows. And then Nephi wonders, "I got to pray about this," and the Lord softened his heart as we talked about. And then he just tells Sam, and Sam believes him. And we've got that spiritual gift of believing on their words. Then Sam knows and believes. I like that Sariah didn't say, "Oh, I've had a burning in the bosom." For her, it was a more evidence-based thing. And maybe she did, maybe she had other feelings. But here she says, "Now I know. I have evidence, I have fruits, I have results right here in front of me." I like to watch the family progressively get on board.
Hank Smith:	13:48	What I'm hearing from both of you is to not be paralyzed, and wait. Move, get moving, get doing, and move on faith sometimes.
Dr. John Hilton III:	13:57	I think it's John Bytheway's quote, Nephi says, "I will go and do, not sit and stew." Is that right?
John Bytheway:	14:02	That's right.
Hank Smith:	14:05	John, can't we apply this in so many ways in life? "Oh, I'll wait to go to the temple until I feel like it." Well, then you might not ever go. Go. Right? Get moving. I think Brigham Young said, "If you don't feel like praying, pray until you feel like praying." Get moving and give the Lord a chance to do some directing.
John Bytheway:	14:25	God cannot steer a parked car, is another way to say it.
Dr. John Hilton III:	14:29	And maybe we can think about another application of this principle as it has to do with being parents or teachers. If you

think about it, a child who grows up in the church, ostensibly is going to hear hundreds of hours of lessons. And most of the times these lessons are, "I'm going to try to help my child or student know something so that they'll do something later on." And maybe I could flip that as a parent. I could think, "How can I help my children do things that will help them know, that will help them get it for themselves?" John B, the other day we were in a conversation with someone else who was talking about how chicks hatch. And if you will open up the egg for the chicken, it will die. The chick has to get itself out of the egg. It reminds me of this quote from Elder David A. Bednar.

15:20 He said, "We put way too much importance on what we say. We think that by telling people, that somehow that will connect and get inside. My observation is that the role of a parent, or teacher we might say, includes talking and telling. But it extends beyond that, to inviting a child or student to act in accordance with truth. And only when the child acts in accordance with the truth, can the child really get it for themselves. It's only in the process of communicating, loving and working with the child that you help them act in accordance with the truth, that it moves from their head to their heart." It made me think maybe once a month, instead of having a family home evening lesson where I'm preaching to my kids, maybe we go out and do service on that occasion. And it's as we're doing the things, that the knowing will come to my children's hearts.

Hank Smith: 16:18 There's a great American psychologist, not a member of the church. Her name is Marsha Linehan. She developed dialectical behavior therapy. She said something so similar. She said, "You don't think yourself into new ways of acting. You can only act yourself into new ways of thinking." So the actions change, the thoughts, the beliefs.

John Bytheway: 16:39 A big part of the new children and youth program is to let the youth lead, to let them act and do. Instead of just telling them about leadership, but to get them to lead and do. And then you begin to know. I like what you said there, John.

Dr. John Hilton III: 16:54 Let's get back to the storyline in 1 Nephi, Chapter 4. Now we're kind of coming to an uncomfortable part of the storyline where Nephi is going to slay Laban. And sometimes we might be tempted to skip over that part. Hank, have you ever done that when you're teaching the kids? You're like, "All right. Well, let's just flip the page guys."

Hank Smith: 17:12 What I find fascinating, John's, is that he doesn't have to tell us this story. He's the only source. He could say something to the

effect of, "I went into Jerusalem, and by a miracle I was able to obtain the plates." He doesn't have to tell us this story. But he chooses to, and there's something to think about there. It's interesting, those of us who've grown up in the church, we grow up with this story. It doesn't seem as shocking to us as someone who's maybe introduced to the book for the first time. If we can see it with new eyes and think, "Okay, this actually can be a stumbling block in the book, and maybe the Lord put a stumbling block in the beginning on purpose." Do you want to keep going? We've hit a little bump in the road. What do you think?

John Bytheway: 17:59

It's such a good question, and I know from experience, yeah, investigators get to that and go, "Whoa." And then I know that Hugh Nibley mentioned once, "What did David do with Goliath once he slew him?" Dr. Paul Hoskisson on one of those roundtable discussions, those are all on YouTube, he talks about the fact that Laban said, "Thou art a robber and I will slay thee," he called that a false accusation in the law of Moses, which was a capital offense. That in a way, Nephi having threatened to kill him, he attempted murder a couple of times. Nephi was fulfilling the law of Moses by slaying Laban, because of his false accusation. And I don't know enough about the ancient law, but I thought that's an interesting way to look at it. It is true that when Nephi goes over in his head, he's having this, "How can I do this?" He remembers that Laban had tried to slay them twice, and would not obey the commandments of the Lord. Accused them of being robbers. That softens it a little bit for me.

Hank Smith: 18:58

Me too, John. He's protecting his family. "I will slay thee,"? He could easily hunt us down out there in the wilderness. He could easily follow us. I've got to protect my brothers and our entire family. But again, this is difficult. And it's okay to say this is difficult. It's okay to not be okay with this. When things like this happen in the scriptures or in the history of the church, something that I'm uncomfortable with, I often stop, and I pause, and I say, "Well, everything else about Nephi's life tells me he's a good person. This is something I struggle with, but I trust him. I trust him that he really is getting this commandment from the Lord. And he's sincere about it. I'll leave it between Nephi and the Lord. I'm not going to insert myself into this equation and start judging Nephi or God for this commandment. Instead, I'm going to look at the big picture and say, Nephi is a trustworthy person. Everything else in his life tells me he's a trustworthy person. So I'm going to leave this specific difficulty between him and the Lord."



Dr. John Hilton III:	20:09	It is interesting to see that Nephi really doesn't want to do this. And in some ways that also is a little bit of evidence. I can also picture Nephi's large-in-stature, adrenaline-filled teenage boy being like, "Yeah, great. You said you were going to kill me. I'm going to kill you." That actually might feel more coherent with what we think of. But Nephi doesn't want to do this. It's only the Lord's specific prompting saying, "It's better that one person die than an entire nation dwindle in unbelief." And this takes us back to where we began. The importance of records. Nephi, you've got to get these records. You need them. Your descendants need them. Nephi is able to get the brass plates. Now, I don't know, you guys are both really good at impersonation, so I don't know if you have any insight into how Nephi was able to impersonate the voice of Laban. I think that I would've been out of luck on that one. Was this a miracle? Any insights you can share?
John Bytheway:	21:03	This is one of those where I really hope we get to see the video one day. I want to see Laman and Lemuel running away, and then I want to see Nephi go, "Just kidding. It's me. It's me, you guys." I just want to see the video of what that looks like.
Hank Smith:	21:17	That's a really good impersonation that your own family thinks it's someone else.
John Bytheway:	21:20	Yeah. First to do impersonations in the Book of Mormon, is Nephi call to them in the voice of Laban, which is... He must've sounded like him, imitated him or something.
Hank Smith:	21:30	One thing that I find interesting, is like you told us earlier, Nephi is writing this long after the fact. And yet he's talking about details here. To me, this night is something not only that had significant impact on him, but also he's thought about that. It's kept it in his memory for a long time. He said, "This was a life-changing moment for me."
Dr. John Hilton III:	21:54	As we come to the end of Chapter 4, I think it's worth just pausing for a moment on Zoram, and thinking about his faith also. How does Zoram feel when all of a sudden the guy he thought was Laban, isn't, and he's trying to run away? In Verse 34, Nephi says, "Surely the Lord hath commanded us to do this thing. Shall we not be diligent in keeping the commandments of the Lord?" And then Zoram takes courage and he says, "I'll go with you." That's another one where I'd love to see the full movie to feel what Zoram's feeling in our heart. Sometimes we just get this little compressed version of the story, and we know that there's so much more. But I love to think about Zoram and the faith it took for him to say, "Okay, let's move forward."

Hank Smith:	22:39	Yeah. I've wondered about Zoram, John, that if he knows, if he's heard those same prophets, Lehi and Jeremiah, perhaps he knows that Jerusalem is going to fall, and this is an opportunity. Maybe the Lord prepared his mind for this moment where he thought, "This is the right thing to do. To go."
Dr. John Hilton III:	23:00	As we come into Chapter 5, Nephi and His family, this is one of those times where Find My Friends would've really come in handy for Lehi and Sariah. They could have been tracking-
John Bytheway:	23:08	"Why don't they text us and tell us where they are?" Yeah.
Dr. John Hilton III:	23:12	I know. "What's going on? Hey, look, Nephi just changed his status." We don't have any of those details. But Lehi and Sariah, they're so filled with joy, once Nephi and his brothers make it back. And there's an interesting detail in Verse 9. They did rejoice exceedingly and did offer sacrifice and burnt offerings unto the Lord, and they gave thanks unto the God of Israel.
John Bytheway:	23:36	I've often wondered, what, do they bring food with them or was it scarce? Because I've imagined they're traveling, trying to travel light. And that really sounds like a sacrifice of something that they could have eaten, the burnt offering. I've wondered too if this could have been, they call it a sin offering, I think, a repentance offering. Even if you know the Lord had asked you to do something that he asked Nephi to do, and even though it seems like Laban had it coming by his threats and everything, that would affect you for the rest of your life. Maybe that offering was an appeal to the Lord to help him through that as well. We'll ask him one day.
Hank Smith:	24:12	This commandment for Nephi to slay Laban. How rare is it that the Lord would give someone a commandment that really contradicts other commandments? Because someone might read this story and think to themselves, "Well, the church says to do this, but I'm going to do this, because I feel like the Spirit has told me that." Don't you think this should be the rare exception, and not the norm in someone's life?
Dr. John Hilton III:	24:38	Absolutely. And notice that it's multiple times the Spirit's prompting him. And Nephi's even kind of pushing back. Now, Nephi's in a tough spot where he's got to make a snap decision right now. But I feel like if I'm in a position where I'm feeling the Lord prompt me to do something that's breaking a commandment, I'm going to definitely check in with other people. It actually reminds me of a little story one of my students told me. You know the scripture study technique where you open up your scriptures and read the first verse that

you find when you have a problem? This man was on his mission, and he's struggling with his companion, and he's like, "Okay, Lord, help me to know what to do," and he opens up to 1 Nephi Chapter 4, Verse 12. "The Lord said unto me, 'slay him'". You know what I mean?

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|                      | 25:20 | So, double check with the mission president before you act on that. That is actually a great key. With revelation, sometimes we can be deceived. If I'm getting a prompting to break a commandment, maybe that is a situation like Nephi's. But like you said, that's a rare exception. So I'm going to counsel with some trusted friends, I'm going to talk to my bishop maybe before I act on an impression like that.   |
| Hank Smith:          | 25:48 | Excellent.   |
| John Bytheway:       | 25:49 | I like that the angel didn't say, "This is best. This is the best possible outcome." It wasn't the best outcome. The best outcome would've been Laban saying, "Okay, I'll keep the commandments. Here's the plates." But he wasn't going to do it. So the angel says, it's better, it's not best, but, "It's better that one man should perish than a nation dwindle and perish in unbelief." This isn't the best outcome, but it's better than the alternative. A whole nation dwindling in unbelief. That's carefully worded there in 1 Nephi 4:13. And I also think there's a strange parallel that Jesus, one man, perishes, so that all of us can be saved. Kind of a reverse type or something. I don't know what you would call that. |
| Dr. John Hilton III: | 26:34 | I remember reading that verse once, that "It's better that one man should perish than a nation dwindle in unbelief," And my wife goes, "Don't the Nephites dwindle in unbelief?" They actually do. So got the worst of both worlds.  |
| John Bytheway:       | 26:46 | Yeah. It would've been quicker, I guess.   |
| Dr. John Hilton III: | 26:49 | Well, let's come to the end of Chapter 5. In Verses 20 through 22, I think we see a little summation of some of the principles we've talked about today. Nephi says, "Thus far, I and my father had kept the commandments wherewith the Lord had commanded us. We had obtained the records which the Lord had commanded us and searched them, and found that they were desirable even of great worth, so that we could preserve the commandments of the Lord unto our children. Wherefore, it was wisdom in the Lord that we should carry them with us as we journeyed in the wilderness towards the land of promise."   |

	27:30	And I see so many echoes of that for us in our own lives today. We are in the wilderness, metaphorically speaking, we are journeying towards the land of promise, the celestial kingdom. And what is it? It's wisdom in the Lord that we carry those scriptures, these sacred records with us, that we search them. More than anything else, I hope that as we wrap up this episode, that we think about this, do-know, know-do model, and that we'll level up like we talked about at the beginning. That we'll find some ways to do something with our scripture study, to search them, to have our own experiences seriously studying the Book of Mormon. This year can be the year where we feel the power of the Book of Mormon and it's testimony of Jesus Christ like we never have felt before.
Hank Smith:	28:21	I love it.
John Bytheway:	28:22	John, I love that. Maybe 2024, we're going to go from casual reader to serious student, like President Benson said. And then promise after promise after promise, is assured to us by President Benson, if we will seriously study the Book of Mormon. What a great opportunity this year is going to be.
Dr. John Hilton III:	28:40	As you talked about last week with your episode with Scott and Casey, that President Nelson has given a similar promise, that if we read the Book of Mormon every day, we'll make better decisions every day. These promises are real.
Hank Smith:	28:52	John, when you read Chapter 5, Verse 22, it is wisdom in the Lord that we should carry them with us. I thought, How rare is it? How incredible is it? What a miracle it would be to Joseph Smith or Brigham Young, that I can carry the entire standard works, and not only that, the standard works and all the church magazines and manuals, I can carry 100 years worth of general conference on my phone, in my pocket. It is wisdom in the Lord that I could carry this with me. And yet sometimes it's not the app I use the most.
Dr. John Hilton III:	29:27	And as Nephi's talking about carrying them with us, he's lugging these heavy plates. It's just right there with us.
Hank Smith:	29:34	Yeah. Too bad they couldn't. If they're at the Red Sea, "Hey, I need those plates. Could you text them to me? I'll have them on my phone." Just incredible. Sometimes miracles become so common they're no longer miraculous, but this is an incredible time, when it comes to records.

Dr. John Hilton III:	29:49	And on that note, there's never been a time in the history of the world where more people have access to the Book of Mormon than have access to it right now.
John Bytheway:	29:58	Beautiful.
Hank Smith:	29:59	John, before we let you go, you've been studying and teaching from the Book of Mormon for two and a half decades. You have a doctorate degree. I know you have a master's degree from Harvard. I mean, if you're as a highly educated individual who has been teaching from this book, year after year after year. Tell me about how you feel about the Book of Mormon, in your decades of teaching and your education.
Dr. John Hilton III:	30:27	I've come to love it more. I love the Book of Mormon. Even as a young boy, I would read the war Chapters. Those were my favorite Chapters, so exciting. As a young EFY student, there was an EFY teacher who taught us about likening the scriptures to our lives. I think about in the war chapters, how could I build my defenses against the powers of Satan? As I've gotten older, the ways that I've studied the Book of Mormon definitely change from time to time. There's certain intricacies now that I pick up. I see how central Jesus Christ is. Recently I went through the Book of Mormon, focusing on the words specifically that Jesus Christ says, to hear his distinctive voice, and notice new patterns and themes that I hadn't seen before. In other words, the Book of Mormon does not get old. It is a book that is full of the teachings of Jesus Christ, and I love that.
	31:21	Whether I was a little kid afraid of getting beat up by bullies and I could find comfort from the scriptures then, that today in my own life when, like I mentioned earlier, this project that I have is kind of falling apart, I'm finding comfort right now as I'm reading 1 Nephi Chapter 3. And I know that the Book of Mormon is the word of God. And I want to testify that the Book of Mormon speaks of Jesus Christ. He is the central figure and the Book of Mormon, and I know that in my life I have come closer to Jesus Christ because of a serious study of the Book of Mormon.
Hank Smith:	31:56	Thank you, Dr. Hilton. What a joy. John, I'm even more excited now. Here we have two weeks of Book of Mormon study under our belt, and I'm feeling like my excitement is growing.
John Bytheway:	32:10	Yeah, me too. And it's so fun to get new insights. And I think the scriptures are so deep and thick that there will always be more new insights every time you go through it, and the Holy Ghost will help you find those as you said, John. Thank you.

Hank Smith:	32:24	Absolutely wonderful. We want to thank Dr. John Hilton III for being with us today. What a treat. John, thanks for your time and your effort, your energy, and your study.
Dr. John Hilton III:	32:33	Thank you. So great to be here.
John Bytheway:	32:34	Yes. And I hope people will check out your Voices of the Book of Mormon. That sounds really fascinating. And your The Book of Mormon, a Master Class. Thank you for using your knowledge and your gifts to bless all of us. Thank you.
Hank Smith:	32:46	We here at FollowHIM are absolute supporters of John Hilton III. We want to thank our executive producer, Shannon Sorensen, we want to thank our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen, and we always remember our founder, Steve Sorensen. Join us next week. We're going to study more of these incredible chapters of the Book of Mormon on FollowHIM. Today's transcripts, show notes, and additional references, are available on our website, <a href="http://followhim.co">followhim.co</a> . That's <a href="http://followhim.co">followhim.co</a> . You can watch the podcast on YouTube with additional videos on our Facebook and Instagram accounts. All of this is absolutely free, and we'd love for you to share it with your family and friends. We'd like to reach more of those who are searching for help with their Come, Follow Me study. If you could subscribe to, rate, review, and comment on the podcast, that will make us easier to find. Of course, none of this could happen without our incredible production crew, David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra and Annabelle Sorensen.
President Russell M. Nelson:	33:48	Whatever questions or problems you have, the answer is always found in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Turn to him. Follow him.

## THE MIRACLE JERSEY!



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| Hank Smith:    | 00:02 | Hello, my friends. Welcome to FollowHIM Favorites. This year we are doing stories to go with each week's lesson. I'm Hank Smith. I'm here with John Bytheway.   |
|                | 00:12 | John, this week we're looking at 1 Nephi 1 through 5. There's a verse at the very end of Chapter 1 that says, "I, Nephi, will show unto you that the tender mercies of the Lord are upon all those whom He hath chosen because of their faith to make them mighty."   |
| John Bytheway: | 00:29 | Hank, this is a wonderful idea, and I think people might remember that Elder David A. Bednar gave a talk about tender mercies once and since then has become our vocabulary, the church, to talk about, "Wow, that was a tender mercy," something that happened that was unexpected and so helpful, you know? |
| Hank Smith:    | 00:46 | Yep. It was 2004, so almost 20 years ago, Elder Bednar was a brand new apostle giving his very first full talk in General Conference.   |
|                | 00:56 | Six months earlier when he had been called as an apostle, he had been ready to bear his testimony on the Sunday afternoon session, right, John? Can you imagine getting that call on Friday?  |
| John Bytheway: | 01:06 | No, yeah.   |
| Hank Smith:    | 01:06 | "Hey, Bytheway, you're going to be an apostle for the rest of your life. Two, you need to speak to the whole church in two days."   |
| John Bytheway: | 01:12 | Wow.  |
| Hank Smith:    | 01:13 | He said it was just about his turn to stand up and speak for the very first time in General Conference when President Monson announced the rest hymn.   |

	01:22	Now, Elder Bednar said if he could have chosen any hymn to be sung before his first talk in General Conference or his first testimony in General Conference, he would've chosen his favorite hymn, Hymn Number 6, Redeemer of Israel.
	01:37	He said, "But the hymns are chosen long in advance, right? You can't run up to the organist in General Conference and say, 'Hey, can we change it up?'" He said, "So imagine how I felt when President Monson announced that the choir and congregation would stand and sing Hymn Number 6, Redeemer of Israel.
	01:57	And I remember Elder Bednar said, "Some may count this experience as a nice coincidence." He said, "But the tender mercies of the Lord are real." He was sending Elder Bednar a personalized message.
	02:10	I've collected story after story after story. I just love these stories, these personalized blessings. You can see the Lord, as it were.
	02:17	I thought I might tell you one, and it's about my friend Parker B. Strong. Elder Strong got his mission call to Africa. He was very excited and he said when he got there, it was pretty incredible. It's like camping. Boil your own water and wash your own clothes, right? And he said for the first couple of weeks it was just really adventurous and fun.
	02:37	But then it kind of hit him that this is going to be a long time. This is not a short thing. Apparently, when you get on the bus in this specific place where he was serving, it's very common for people to hand you their stuff to hold while you're on the bus. So if I come onto the bus and I have a lot, I just kind of hand it out to people and they hold it for me while I go on this bus ride. He said he got handed a goat, a live goat, and it's just kind of staring at, can you imagine, breathing on you, you're like, "Where am I? Like what am I doing? I'm from Utah."
	03:15	As a good missionary does, he went to the Lord and said, "I'm really struggling here. Can you help me out?" And he did what you would think a missionary would do, and that is he just got to work. President Hinckley, right? "Forget yourself and go to work."
John Bytheway:	03:27	Go to work.
Hank Smith:	03:28	So he went to work.



	03:30	Well, at one point, a couple of weeks later, I think, he's teaching a lesson. I think it was in a park somewhere, and he said, "My companion was doing the teaching," I think, because Parker's still working on the language, when a kid walks by in a Utah Jazz jersey. It's a junior Jazz jersey, and Parker said, "That's my team." He said it was just something from home, a wow moment like, "Oh, thank you. I just needed to see something from home."
	04:02	Apparently, as the kid is walking away, Parker sees something else on the jersey so he said, "Hey, come back. Come back." And so the kid came back and Parker said he turned the jersey inside out and there, in a 10-year-old's handwriting, is Parker B. Strong. It was his jersey, John, that he had had as a junior Jazz player when he's in fourth or fifth grade. And then when he was done with that, he had donated the jersey and it had ended up in front of him as a missionary-
John Bytheway:	04:35	Incredible.
Hank Smith:	04:36	... in Africa.
John Bytheway:	04:38	What are the chances?
Hank Smith:	04:40	Right? As Elder Bednar said in his talk, "Some might count this as a coincidence, but I testify with Elder Bednar that the tender mercies of the Lord are real." Don't you love it, John?
John Bytheway:	04:52	Yeah. It's like the Lord's saying, "I know exactly where you are, Parker, and I put this kid in your path." That is pretty cool.
	04:59	So when the Deseret Industries says our donations bless many nations-
Hank Smith:	05:04	They really do.
John Bytheway:	05:05	... they'll send those things all over the world, and this one goes to his area. Amazing.
Hank Smith:	05:10	Absolutely amazing, absolutely incredible.
	05:13	And John, this is just one of how many stories that we have heard, we have experienced, and you can see the Lord is at work in our lives.
John Bytheway:	05:21	And that's what Nephi was going to show us.

Hank Smith:	05:23	Yeah, the tender mercies of the Lord are real.
	05:27	If you have a tender mercy story, go to our website, <a href="http://followhim.co">followhim.co</a> , and type it up for us and send it to us. We'd love to hear from you.
	05:35	Then join us next week for FollowHIM Favorites. We'll share another story that goes with that week's lesson.