



## EPISODE 5

GUEST: TYLER J. GRIFFIN

*"I Will Prepare the Way before You"*

### 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:

Why does the Lord lead us into unfamiliar wildernesses? Tyler Griffin examines God's nourishing and strengthening power and how revelation and strength come gradually.

##### Part 2:

Dr. Tyler Griffin emphasizes the privilege and power of discipleship as well as the power of the Book of Mormon as an inexhaustible source of strength, knowledge, and hope.

# Timecodes:

## Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Tyler Griffin
- 00:18 Review of last week’s episode
- 00:43 Preview of 1 Nephi 18-22
- 02:16 Bio of Dr. Tyler Griffin
- 03:20 The Lord is with us
- 07:03 Marriages occur and blessings follow
- 08:08 Marriage provides strength
- 10:26 The group continues to travel
- 11:30 The Liahona
- 14:55 Trusting the Lord
- 17:15 Miracles and challenges
- 20:48 Reminders of discipleship
- 22:11 Nephi takes ownership of the broken bow
- 25:42 Trusting God and taking steps
- 28:21 God works with wooden bows and a single arrow
- 32:33 Finding God amidst affliction
- 36:13 God requires action
- 39:17 Transactional relationships vs covenantal relationships
- 41:42 Two reactions to one set of trials
- 44:31 Staying positive in trials
- 47:50 Shouldering heavy burdens
- 49:32 President Emily Freeman and building a relationship with Christ
- 51:33 Moroni began to look forward
- 53:53 Nahum and Joseph Smith
- 58:50 Ship building and the Lord has more in store
- 1:00:25 Taking steps without knowing the entire path
- 1:06:05 The Lord reveals in steps
- 1:09:57 End of Part 1–Dr. Tyler Griffin

## Part 2

- 00:00 Part II–Dr. Tyler Griffin
- 00:07 Jacob and Joseph are born
- 03:33 Getting closer to God and softening hearts
- 07:45 God never asks us to do addicting things
- 08:43 Planting seeds and growing connections
- 12:20 Becoming like Jesus and studying Isaiah
- 17:13 God reestablishes the covenant

- 20:39 Comfort and the covenant
- 24:02 God cannot forget us
- 30:37 Hebrew poetry
- 33:14 Gathering matters
- 36:46 Power in our own wrestles
- 40:17 Righteous isn't flawless
- 43:20 Righteousness is repenting
- 44:17 Dr. Griffin shares his belief about friends in the community
- 45:29 Dr. Griffin shares his testimony of Jesus and the Book of Mormon
- 49:25 End of Part II– Dr. Tyler Griffin

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## Biographical Information:



Tyler was born and raised in Providence, Utah in the beautiful Cache Valley. After serving a mission in Brazil Curitiba, he returned home and married an Angel named Kiplin Crook. They have 10 children (5 boys and 5 girls). They love spending time in the mountains, playing board games, doing house projects, and being together. Tyler began his career by teaching seminary for 6 years in Brigham City, Utah. He spent the next seven years teaching at the Logan LDS Institute adjacent to Utah State University. One of his assignments there was working in the Seminary Preservice program (teaching and training potential seminary teachers). He also piloted and managed the launch of the online seminary program. He has taught here at BYU since August, 2010. He is a co-founder of BYU Virtual Scriptures Group which develops digital learning resources to enhance scriptural immersion and understanding. His bachelors degree was in Electrical Engineering and his masters and doctorate degrees are both in Instructional Technology. He authored *When Heaven Feels Distant*, co-authored *Come Unto Me: Illuminating the Savior's Life, Mission, Parables, and Miracles*, and co-edited *Millions Shall Know Brother Joseph Again*.

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## Broken Bows & Family Woes

GUEST: TYLER J. GRIFFIN



- Hank Smith: 00:00:03 Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name's Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with my curious co-host, John Bytheway. John, welcome back. We're still in 1 Nephi, followHIM.
- John Bytheway: 00:00:15 Absolutely. And I'm still curious.
- Hank Smith: 00:00:18 Yeah. You are very curious. At least I didn't call you round. John, as we wrap up 1 Nephi, what are you thinking? What are you looking forward to today?
- John Bytheway: 00:00:29 Well, I love that here, the journey resumes because we have some storyline and we stop and take a break for some doctrine, and there's doctrine in the storyline too, but it's fun to see, "Okay, where are they and now they're going to resume the journey, and what's going to happen?" So I'm looking forward to that.
- Hank Smith: 00:00:43 Me too. John, we're joined by one of my favorite people on planet Earth. His name is Dr. Tyler Griffin. Tyler, what are we looking forward to today? We're in 1 Nephi 16 through the end, right, of 1 Nephi 22?
- Dr. Tyler Griffin: 00:00:58 Yeah. The thing I'm looking forward to is finding the Savior on every single page and finding us as he's offering to help us on our journey, as we allow Lehi and Ishmael's family's journey to become three-dimensional, come off the page. And as we journey with them, we may not be in a desert exactly like they are, but we're in a desert. We may not have a Liahona that looks like Lehi's, but we've got a Liahona. We may not have the struggles of a broken bow and all these other issues that they're going to face and having to build a ship. We're not down there in that same location, but boy oh boy, we're building all kinds of ships that we've never built before and we need help from the Savior and he's going to help us. And then get excited, we get our first introduction to those two chapters of Isaiah that Nephi introduces to us. It's just beautiful.

Hank Smith:	00:01:56	I'm excited today as you look at the ups and downs of this family's experience, you yourself experience ups and downs and you learn a lot about how to take on those issues. John, Tyler's new to our podcast, but he is not new to the church. He has done so much good, but introduce him for those who maybe don't know him.
John Bytheway:	00:02:16	I think you're right, Hank. I think a lot of the church has seen Tyler before and loved hearing him teach. Let me give you a little bit more information. Tyler was born and raised in Providence, Utah. He served his mission in Brazil. Let me see if I say this right, Curitiba?
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	00:02:31	Curitiba.
John Bytheway:	00:02:32	He returned from his mission and married an angel named Kiplin Crook. Tyler and Kiplin have 10 children, five boys and five girls. They love spending time in the mountains, playing board games, doing house projects, being together. Tyler was part of piloting and managing the online seminary program and he's been teaching at BYU since 2010. Tyler has a Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering and his Master's and Doctorate degrees are both in Instructional Technology. He wrote a book called When Heaven Feels Distant. He's co-authored, Come Unto Me: Illuminating the Savior's Life, Mission, Parables, and Miracles, and co-edited Millions Shall Know Brother Joseph Again. Tyler, I think a lot of people have probably seen you on Scripture Central videos as well.
Hank Smith:	00:03:17	Tyler, we are so glad that you are here.
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	00:03:19	Thank you.
Hank Smith:	00:03:20	Yeah, let's have some fun. I'm going to read a little bit from the Come, Follow Me manual and then we'll have a conversation here today. "As Lehi's family journeyed toward the promised land, the Lord made them this promise. 'I will prepare the way before you if it so be that you shall keep my commandments.' Clearly that promise did not mean the journey would be easy. Family members disagreed, bows broke, people struggled and died and they still had to build a ship from raw materials. However, when the family faced adversity or tasks that seemed impossible, Nephi recognized that the Lord was never far away. He knew that God doth nourish the faithful and strengthen them and provide means whereby they can accomplish the thing which he has commanded them. If you ever wonder why bad things happen to good people like Nephi and his family, you may find insights in these chapters but, perhaps, more

important, you'll see what good people do when bad things happen." What a great intro there.

- Dr. Tyler Griffin: 00:04:16 I love that closing thought that you shared there, Hank, from the manual. That idea of sometimes we look at these struggles and these challenges and think, "Man, I've been trying so hard to be good. Why is God letting these bad things happen to me?" And yet in hindsight, keeping in mind that Nephi is writing this record 30 to 40 years after they left Jerusalem, so he's giving us three plus decades of hindsight on these stories. I don't think he would call all of these struggles, low points or terrible experiences because I think from his perspective, looking back in time, he's seeing how much he and his family grew and how much they were able to develop their trust in God, their understanding of God's plan for them.
- 00:05:03 It's just beautiful to walk through these stories with them. We know the end so we're not concerned, but they didn't always know the end. It becomes a little more easy to apply to our life today. I love the fact that he opens up this, as John mentioned earlier, it's the journey resumes because we've been camped there at the Gulf of Aqaba on the Red Sea for a long time as they've made multiple journeys back to Jerusalem for different reasons, and now we're ready to progress towards the promised land. As we look at our own lives, sometimes the world puts all the focus on the end target, the end product.
- 00:05:44 In this case it would be the promised land, getting to the promised land, when in reality I think some of the most beautiful aspects of the gospel of Jesus Christ are not what God promises to us in the end, although they're astronomically big and we can't understand them, but I think some of his powerful tender mercies are to be experienced along the journey in the wilderness because quite frankly, he's God. He could have just instantaneously transported them over to the new world and they show up on a beach like, "Where are we? I don't know. Let's pitch our tents and start a new civilization." Getting to the location was important, but I think having opportunities to become more like the Savior and to deepen relationships with loved ones is a beautiful aspect that we shouldn't overlook here.
- Hank Smith: 00:06:38 Yeah. I've noticed in the scriptures oftentimes there is an end place the Lord wants someone to get to, but he needs them to be the right person for that place. So the journey often prepares them for the place and also to appreciate the place or to love the place that they get to when they're there. So you're right,

he could just move them there, but that wouldn't make them the person they need to be when they get there.

- Dr. Tyler Griffin: 00:07:03 Absolutely. I also love the fact that you have this little verse seven where he says, "It came to pass that I, Nephi, took one of the daughters of Ishmael to wife," and then he talks about his other family members getting married. And then the very next verse, his next part of this narrative flow is, "And also I, Nephi, had been blessed of the Lord exceedingly." I love that connection to marriage and family, which isn't always celebrated in our world and in our culture today, but entering into this covenant of marriage is a way to access these exceedingly beautiful blessings that the Lord offers us.
- Hank Smith: 00:07:41 That's fantastic. Tyler, I'm glad you bring that up because so often, especially as the world continues to decay, wonderful, beautiful marriages are hard to come by sometimes, and sometimes they're not modeled for our young people. They don't see them in their lives, so this would be a good chance for a teacher to just stop and testify of the blessing of a faithful, wonderful spouse if that's part of their experience, their situation.
- John Bytheway: 00:08:08 Hank and Tyler, you know that I was married a little later than most and I struggled to find somebody that I could pop the question to who would agree, and I thought, "What did Nephi do?" And I found this verse, "I, Nephi, took one of the daughters of Ishmael to wife," and I thought, "Oh, well, Mr. Go and do just went and did, and it's easier for you. You're large in stature." I mean, it didn't work out that way for me. The whole marriage and courtship of Nephi, we get in that verse, but there is another footnote, footnote 7A takes you to 1 Nephi 7. It's verse 19 where one of the daughters of Ishmael defended him when they wanted to go back. And I'm thinking, "Oh, I had a feeling about you two," so maybe we'll find out one day maybe that was her. I'm glad you bring that up because we all know what's coming when Nephi loses his father and how difficult that is for him, but I'm so glad he had this strength of a wife and that he would say that, "I have been blessed of the Lord exceedingly."
- Dr. Tyler Griffin: 00:09:05 I think the historical setting of when he's writing this because we know the command comes 30 years after they've left Jerusalem to rewrite the story, so he's telling us this not from his honeymoon that, "Oh, life is so good." This is after three plus decades of being married and going through all kinds of struggles with her at his side. It adds this covenant connection that's forever kind of a feeling. I love it. It's also important for us to remember that over half of the adult population of the

church today is single for one reason or another. It's important that we don't teach these principles in a way that creates this feeling of exclusion that you don't have access to certain blessings because you may not be married.

00:09:56 The reality is the God of the universe, he's infinitely powerful and infinitely loving and he has compensatory blessings, ways to help make up for his children who are on the covenant path doing everything they can to put him and his kingdom first, but they may not have the same opportunities and privileges as others. There're going to be compensatory blessings offered to them and that's beautiful and nothing will be withheld from them in the eternities.

Hank Smith: 00:10:26 Beautiful. Thanks, Tyler.

Dr. Tyler Griffin: 00:10:28 So we begin our journey. Let's break the camp, take down the tents and head south by southeast.

Hank Smith: 00:10:35 How long have they camped, Tyler? Do we know?

Dr. Tyler Griffin: 00:10:38 Well, it's about 250 miles if you do the Google Earth mapping from Jerusalem down to the tip of Aqaba and then go three more days journey into the wilderness, assuming with camels and other abilities that they're traveling 20, 25 miles a day, you add all that up, it's about 250 miles up to Jerusalem and then back. These are not quick journeys when they go back to get the plates and then back to get Ishmael and his family, so it's probably been a couple of months, multiple weeks, but maybe even multiple months that they've been camped here by that river. The command comes by night to Lehi to take the family and everybody's going to leave and begin on the journey. You can picture Lehi waking up thinking, "Okay, here we go into the unknown. I have no idea what we're going to do or where we're going to go really."

00:11:30 And verse 10 is so amazing because as he comes out of his tent there at the tent door to his great astonishment, he beheld upon the ground, a round ball of curious workmanship, and it had two spindles. It's fascinating. We don't ever get the name Liahona here anywhere in Nephi's account. We don't get the name until Alma 37. He calls it a compass or a ball or a director, and you've got those two pointers, and then he makes it clear that the writing changes from time to time. Verse 16 tells you that it leads them in the more fertile parts of the wilderness. I love this because as a kid I used to read this and think, "Man, I would give anything to have a Liahona," and it doesn't take too long to mature spiritually to realize, "Wait a minute, God's given

us all kinds of Liahonas that have writings that change from time to time that point us in the more fertile parts of the wilderness."

- 00:12:23 That's a beautiful reminder to all of us as we embark on another year of study in this Book of Mormon to start seeing the Book Mormon as one of the many personal Liahonas that God has provided for us to be able to guide us. It's significant that Lehi isn't getting direction for how to build a boat on the Liahona or for what to do leading into Nahom or any of these other parts down the road. It's the next step of the journey. I don't know about you guys, but sometimes I get frustrated with myself or with progress like, I've got this end goal in mind and I'm not getting there fast enough. This part of the story reminds me this is literally line upon line, one step in front of another. Just keep walking on the covenant path. Don't try to run faster than you have strength.
- Hank Smith: 00:13:13 From time to time, that reminds me of General Conference. You could expect the Liahona to change, every six months, here comes some new writing.
- John Bytheway: 00:13:20 The fact that there were two spindles has always been curious to me, speaking of curious workmanship, because it says there were two and then it says one pointed the way we should go. And then it's called a compass and I thought, "Well, maybe one of them pointed north because that's what compasses do, and maybe the other one said, 'Okay, that's north, so you're oriented. Go east, or go where this arrow says,' which is east." I've heard others another school of thought is two spindles maybe is the law of witnesses type of thing. There's two spindles pointing the way we should go because later on I think in Alma it talks about the two pointed the way they should go. I wondered if you guys had any thoughts on that.
- Dr. Tyler Griffin: 00:13:59 It's fascinating. I've always defaulted to the first option that you shared because it just makes sense that they call it a compass, and he's given you very specific directions. Like here he's going to say, traveled in a nearly south southeast direction. It seems like he's tuned into the latitude, longitude kinds of things that a compass would do, and then the other one. But if there are other options, that's awesome.
- John Bytheway: 00:14:22 I feel like up to this point they're traveling on known roads and that's another way that the Liahona, sometimes there's a path that's predictable or we know what we're supposed to do and then sometimes it says, "Okay, I want you to go that way," and that I've never gone that way. I don't know how to do that, and I

think that's a cool thing about the Liahona because now you're off of the beaten path. I want you to go through what they call the empty corridor. It's called empty for a reason.

Hank Smith: 00:14:54 For a reason.

John Bytheway: 00:14:55 I mean, I imagine Nephi going, "Are you sure you want me to go that way?" Which is another kind of metaphor for life. We may be asked to go places we've never gone, and there's a real trust element here with this.

Dr. Tyler Griffin: 00:15:10 The other thing that's amazing about this part of the story is if you look at it with Google Earth and you look at just the sheer distance that they're trying to cover in that desert, it turns out that it's pretty close to exactly double the distance from Nauvoo to Salt Lake. So it'd be like going from Nauvoo to Salt Lake and then back to Nauvoo so that everybody has in their mind a framework. So those early pioneers, they could make the trek of three months, four months, and yet these people, so if you were to double that, we're talking 6, 7, 8 months is what would be reasonable, but this is the empty corridor. This is rugged area. But later on, Alma teaching his son Helaman, gives that insight that it took them longer to make this journey. They had to travel in a circuitous route. They didn't take a direct route because they didn't give appropriate faith diligence and heed to the direction that God had given them through the Liahona.

00:16:06 They didn't trust the way they could have as a group, and I think he was speaking collectively rather than individually there, which to me is so interesting because some of the struggles that they face here, it makes me scratch my head and ask the question, I wonder if they would've experienced all the degree and the depth of the difficulty if they had, perhaps, given a little more diligent heed to what the Lord was telling them to do, and I don't know that anybody's going to be able to answer that question, but it's not a finger pointing at them exercise as much as it is a looking in the mirror exercise, learning from their story and then reflecting it on us and saying, "Life is hard. There are challenges," and how often do I bring some of those challenges upon myself because I haven't followed the promptings that the Lord told me what to do or what not to do and I just for whatever reason, didn't do it?

Hank Smith: 00:17:02 Well, I think he often probably looks at me and says, "Hank, I could give you problems, but you do a pretty impressive job of making your own. I'll just go ahead and be hands off here and let you deal with all the problems you yourself create."

Dr. Tyler Griffin:	00:17:15	The other cool part here is you say, "All right, we've got the Liahona, we've got the direction. I'm in this covenant connection with God. I'm on his errand, so life's going to be easy." It could be like somebody joining the church today or re-engaging with the church and their discipleship today thinking, "Okay, now my life's going to get easy." I don't know of a scripture character that engaged with the covenant path and then all of a sudden it became this smooth paved road with a guardrail on both sides and no struggles. It's high adventure.
Hank Smith:	00:17:48	Tyler, as you're saying that I think to Nephi, Lehi, Sariah, Sam, the daughters of Ishmael, some of them, this is an incredible miracle. I mean, this is an obvious sign from God that what they're doing, they're on the right journey, this is what God wanted them to do. And maybe you were going to bring this up later, but for Laman and Lemuel, they explain this miracle away. If you go to 16:38, they talk about how Nephi lies to them, "He tells us these things and he worketh many things by his cunning arts that he may deceive our eyes thinking, perhaps, that he can lead us away into some strange land."
	00:18:30	An obvious miracle is explained away, "Oh, Nephi made it. He made it because he just wants to kill us. He wants to take us far away and rule over us." I thought to myself, "How sad that is that a miracle is sitting right in front of me and I explain it away." Sometimes with the Book of Mormon, I've seen that happen. People have the miracle of the Book of Mormon in their hands and they explain it away, "Oh, Joseph Smith made this up."
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	00:18:57	Which by the way, if that premise is true, if Laman and Lemuel are right that Nephi really is just conniving, trying to take the leadership of the people, just a simple question, would you really take the people down into that empty quarter? Is that where you would go if you wanted that rather than somewhere else beachfront property to take over the leader?
Hank Smith:	00:19:18	Yeah. It just makes no sense, and yet they're convinced that it's not a miracle. So sadly, miracles don't convert, and they sometimes don't even convince even that they're a miraculous thing. When I study the Book of Mormon, to me it's an obvious miracle, plain as can be right in front of us, an obvious miracle. Many people, as you both know, explain it away. It's not miraculous. It can be easily explained, which it can't.
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	00:19:47	Which I think is beautiful that the Book of Mormon allows us this window into the inner workings of this family that isn't perfect. They've got their struggles, and the book doesn't just



talk about the good stuff, the pleasant stuff. It talks about all of it. It's all in here, and you see these ups and these downs and these wrestles and these relationship issues going on. It teaches us this reality that we can either choose to be reactionary in our relationships and treat our loved ones in transactional kinds of relationship ways where it's, "Look, I expect you to give me this if I do this in the relationship," versus those deep-rooted, covenantal connecting kinds of relationships where I'm going to love you, not because I'm trying to get something back from you or something out of you, I'm going to love you because you're in my family or because you're a child of God and I don't expect any repayment.

00:20:48 So instead of you're seeing Laman and Lemuel take these ups and these downs and reacting to the environment or to the situation, and if they're well-fed and everybody's alive and everything's good, we're happy, it's good, but if it's not perfect, then we're going to lash out and place some blame on somebody else and play a trump card of, "We're victims in this situation." And so it gives us these good and not so good examples to try to say, "What kind of a brother do I want to be? What kind of a father do I want to be? What kind of a disciple do I want to be?" Good reminders for us.

Hank Smith: 00:21:22 Yeah. And to watch out for that victim mentality that can be so corrosive to relationships.

John Bytheway: 00:21:29 I'm just looking at verse 37, "Hey, let's slay our father and also our brother Nephi," and sometimes I say to my classes, "Isn't it wonderful that the Book of Mormon begins with a family with problems. In fact, can we say a dysfunctional family, 'And let's slay our brother and let's kill dad too?' I think there were some real problems in that tent." And then what Hank just said about verse 38, "He'll work things by his cunning arts that he may deceive our eyes," and I think some people are just like, "Well, if I could see it," well, they saw an angel, "But well, I don't know how you did that, but you deceived..." Even if you show them, they'll still be like, "I don't believe it. I don't believe my own eyes."

00:22:11 I've made my own footnote here because after Samuel the Lamanite prophesied of a sign that's really hard to fake, that it's going to be light for a day and a night and a day. This isn't like making a Liahona in the back room, really hard to fake that sign. Well, Satan's spin machine starts and I'm looking at Helaman 16 and it says, "They will by the cunning and mysterious arts of the evil one," Same phrase, cunning arts, "worked some great mystery which we cannot understand," which I think if you

really want to find a way out of it, I guess, you can just say, "Well, you deceived our eyes. It must be your cunning arts or something like that."

- Dr. Tyler Griffin: 00:22:51 So the interesting thing about that, John, is the fact that those verses, you're referring to 37 and 38, those are coming at the very end of the chapter after we've covered a lot of ground and been through a couple of cycles of this up and then down and then up and then down. Nephi broke his bow in verse 18. It's always been fascinating to me that Nephi, the youngest of those four brothers, broke his exceedingly fine steel bow and the reaction is, "My brethren were angry with me because the loss of my bow for we did obtain no food," implication being the whole family, including these brothers, have been relying on Nephi to provide all the food for how long, how many days, how many weeks, how many months? I don't know. The other thing to notice here is if we're talking about being proactive as Elder Bednar would say, "Be an agent willing to act rather than sitting back as an object waiting to be acted upon."
- 00:23:48 I love the fact that you see those kinds of elements even in the wording in verse 18, the way Nephi reports it, "I did break my bow." I don't know about you two, but if I'm writing this, I want to do it and not make myself look bad. I mean, that's just human nature. So I would've written, "My bow did break." I would've put it in that passive voice, "Yeah, it was an unfortunate thing. My bow got broken, darn it." But Nephi takes ownership, "I did break my bow." He's not blaming anybody else, "That's on me. I broke it." I think that's beautiful.
- John Bytheway: 00:24:23 I'm going to show that to my students. I quote Elder Lynn Robbins who gave this talk called, Be a Hundred Percent Responsible. I quote at the beginning of each semester. I've never noticed that, Tyler, so cool, the passive voice there, "I broke my bow. I missed the deadline," instead of, "The deadline passed somehow, and I didn't know."
- Hank Smith: 00:24:45 I really like that.
- John Bytheway: 00:24:45 And maybe he fell, but I love that, "I broke it."
- Hank Smith: 00:24:48 Yeah, I broke it.
- Dr. Tyler Griffin: 00:24:51 He didn't tell us how if he pulled it too hard or if he slammed it against a tree stump because he was so frustrated with what his brothers had just said and, uh-oh, it just broke, we don't know, but he's taking ownership. That's the reality. It doesn't matter

how it happened. The fascinating thing is then everybody's complaining and murmuring. I've heard people make fun of Nephi. It hurts my heart a little bit to hear people say, "Well, of course, Nephi's writing this, so he's going to be the good guy," and everybody in the whole group is now murmuring against the Lord, including Lehi, the patriarch. They're all murmuring against the Lord but not Nephi, Mr. Goody two shoes. I've heard those statements before and the reason it bothers me is because it's okay for Nephi not to murmur. Why? Because Nephi has seen some things in vision, he knows some things.

00:25:42 Back in 1 Nephi chapters 11, 12, 13 and 14, he has that incredible vision on that mountain peak with the Spirit of the Lord and then the angel showing him some things. He has seen his posterity in the new world. He's seen Laman and Lemuel's posterity in the new world. He's seen Jesus come among them. He's seen some things. He knows they're going to get there, how exactly they're going to get there? He's not exactly sure, but he knows they are not going to die of hunger because he broke his bow. And I love that idea of if we can trust our prophets, seers and revelators, that they see things they may not know every step along the way, that's okay, but they know some things that we don't and if we can just trust that God has given enough vision that we can put our faith in Jesus Christ and follow the prophets that he has chosen and he has spoken to us through, there may be periods of intense difficulty where we feel like we're all going to die, but we're not all going to die.

00:26:47 God didn't send us down to this earth to condemn us and mock us as we struggle out in a wilderness. There is deep ability for people to connect with God, especially when that wilderness gets extra wild because I can no longer rely on myself. I love something that President Hollands' wife, Patricia Holland said, "If you can rely on anything other than God, then it's not complete faith." Your faith is really tested when everything else is taken away and all you have left is, "Dear God on high, help me. I don't know what to do," and I love that model here of Nephi then saying, "Well, murmuring isn't going to feed us, so the only thing I know is I'll go find some more stones for my sling and I'll make a new bow and a new arrow and then go ask Dad where I should go hunt." I love the simplicity of that process.

Hank Smith: 00:27:43 Tyler, here's a quote from C.S. Lewis that fits exactly what you said. He wrote, "You never know how much you really believe anything until it's truth or falsehood becomes a matter of life and death to you." Then he talks about a rope and he says, "You can believe a rope to be strong and sound if you're using it for a

daily household chore," and here's the rest of the quote.  
 "Suppose you had to hang by that rope over a cliff, wouldn't you then first discover how much you really trusted it?" You're right, as soon as it becomes a moment where, "This is the only thing I have," then we find out some things about ourselves and our faith.

Dr. Tyler Griffin: 00:28:21 I love that it's the idea of people. They face these crises at times and they come in a variety of formats and modalities, but instead of turning heavenward in frustration, what a beautiful model here on the page to exercise that faith as you're describing from this quote from C.S. Lewis, and in this story from Nephi, to be able to turn heavenward and say, "I don't have a clue what to do next. Lord, please guide me, and I'm going to try some things here and the efforts are going to be really lame." I mean, can you picture the wooden bow and the wooden arrow that he brings back to camp compared to his fine steel bow that he had broken? It probably looks really silly, really insignificant, but it's amazing the way God works with people who are willing to just move forward, just do the best you can with what you've got right now and trust that the Lord will help you.

John Bytheway: 00:29:15 And this is the same Nephi who had to get the plates of brass from Laban. It wasn't easy. It was like, "I know I'm supposed to do this. How come these things keep happening to make it hard? With that experience in the background, I broke my bow. I'll make another one." We all know the phrase, "Take the initiative." I love these footnotes here in verse 23, "It came to pass that I, Nephi, did make," footnote 23a topical guide initiative. I'm going to initiate some action. Let's see. Well, I'll make another one." And then also, "And I said unto my father," isn't his father murmuring right now? But what does Nephi do? Look at footnote 23B, "Honoring father and mother." I have a friend who's been an institute teacher for years who told a story about asking his father for a blessing. His dad says, "I can't do that right now."

00:30:06 He said, "I know, but I'm asking," and it was months later as Scott related that he got a phone call from his father and he said, "Son, I've just come out of the temple. I'm ready to give you that blessing now," and he with tears in his eyes said, "Nephi taught me how to honor my father," and I thought, "Wow, what a great lesson to draw from that, that he went to his father even in the middle of his murmur." Because Nephi could have said, "Okay, well people complain, I'm going to go get dinner." I can't believe this, but he still went to his father first.

Hank Smith:	00:30:39	I noticed, Tyler, that in verse 16, he tells us, there's so much to unpack here. I mean, every verse has something that we can learn. Verse 16, he says, "The Liahona didn't just lead us to difficulty. It also led us to the more fertile parts of the wilderness." I love the duality of this. Following the Lord led me to some of the best experiences of my life and some of the most difficult experiences of my life, and both are wonderful. I have a tendency to choose the more fertile parts of the wilderness over the difficulties of the wilderness.
	00:31:17	I mean, if I had it my way, it would all be the more fertile parts of the wilderness, but I like that he started with that, that, "Listen, I know I'm going to describe some difficult things that happened, but the guidance of the Lord led me to really great, really great things," and I think we can do that same thing. Here's some struggles I've had, but they've been on the background of a very blessed life from the commandments. John, I've heard you say before, "Keeping the commandments is easier than sinning because of the long-term. The consequences of sin are not a fertile wilderness."
John Bytheway:	00:31:50	It's an easier way to live because you don't have to deal with the consequences of not living it. But when you said that, Hank, you know what I thought of was Jesus's statement that I've come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. The fertile parts of the wilderness is the way to an abundant life. I'm going to mark that, Hank, thank you.
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	00:32:07	It reminds me of the very, very first verse of the Book of Mormon, how Nephi opens up the entire record, that middle phrase when he says, after doing the famous "I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore having been taught somewhat in all the learning of my father's." Then he says, "And having seen many afflictions in the course of my days, nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord."
	00:32:33	I think this is one of the many experiences there where I'm not sure Nephi would have felt as highly favored of the Lord or the last phrase of verse one, "Having a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God. Therefore, I proceed to make a record of the proceedings in my days," I don't know that Nephi would've known the extent of God's goodness if it hadn't been for some of these broken bow and Ishmael's death and attempts on his life, and struggles crossing the sea. I think it's in those deepest darkest experiences where we can really come to know more than anywhere else of God's goodness that he hasn't forsaken us, that we are part of a covenant connection with him.

John Bytheway:	00:33:22	We became acquainted with God in our extremities, but what I like about that is it's another journey. There's the Exodus journey, of course, that they're going to refer to here, and then there's our own exodus and the restoration of crossing the plains and all of these scriptural journeys may have been in their minds as they were on their own.
Hank Smith:	00:33:42	It was Francis Webster, part of the Martin Handcart Company, "The price we paid to become acquainted with God was a privilege to pay, and I am thankful that I was privileged to be in the Martin Handcart Company."
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	00:33:56	Beautiful. Here we go on this journey, we've got food. We've got hope again. So what's our response? Bottom of verse 32? "It came to pass that they did humble themselves before the Lord and did give thanks unto him," and that's wonderful, but it's this reactionary way to live life of, "When all is good, then I'll give thanks to God and wait," because it's just two verses later when all of a sudden Ishmael dies. Nahom and they're mourning exceedingly as they bury him. It's just fascinating as you watch them complaining and murmuring against their father in verse 36 and against Nephi, and almost as if they're blaming him for Ishmael's death and they're mourning and they're complaining about their poor wives having lost their father with no acknowledgement that Nephi lost his father-in-law that day too, his wife is in mourning as well. And John, you mentioned earlier this verse where they're saying, "Well, let's kill our father and our brother."
	00:34:56	I have to just pause here because I've heard a lot of people teach even in church settings that they judge Nephi harshly for writing this story this way, and they say, "Well, reality is we can relate a lot better to Laman and Lemuel," and I just have to say, tap the brakes, push pause. When's the last time when there was a death in the family you said, "We feel so bad about losing our father-in-law that the way we're going to console ourselves is let's kill our own dad and our brother then we'll somehow feel better."
Hank Smith:	00:35:24	They will feel better.
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	00:35:24	Honestly, I don't know that we can say, "Oh, I could relate to Laman and Lemuel better than Nephi." They're hardcore. This isn't just garden variety, struggle and wrestle. They're really having a hard time.
Hank Smith:	00:35:38	They're getting more evil as this journey goes on.

John Bytheway:	00:35:42	Couldn't Nephi at some point have said, "You guys are right. I'll take care of dad. He's a visionary man. Why don't you guys just go back?" Especially after he sees in vision, as you alluded to that Laman and Lemuel's posterity will one day kill his. Wouldn't you at that point say, "You guys are right, go back-"
Hank Smith:	00:35:58	Go back.
John Bytheway:	00:35:59	... "I'll take care of mom and dad," and here's this interesting thing that we sometimes have talked about, maybe Nephi was trying so hard to keep the family together.
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	00:36:09	Amen to that. Family matters.
Hank Smith:	00:36:13	Tyler, I've noticed throughout this whole story, they've hit these incredible difficulties. I like that you talked about initiative, "I'm going to act. I broke my bow. I'm going to make a new one." I like that he said, "I'm going to make an arrow." That's quite a bit of confidence, "I'm not going to make arrows. I only need one. I'll be fine."
John Bytheway:	00:36:33	Yeah, David had five stones, but Nephi was like, "No, I just need one. I got this."
Hank Smith:	00:36:38	I'll be okay with one. And then you have the daughters of Ishmael on the other side, which look at verse 35, "They did mourn exceedingly because of the loss of their father," That is okay. There's nothing wrong, I mean, there is a time to mourn and we should mourn. The Lord says, "Mourn for them that die," but they don't put any boundaries on that mourning, and pretty soon they add to it, "Let's talk about our afflictions in the wilderness and now let's get mad at Lehi."
	00:37:06	And then they start predicting the future, "Our father is dead. We have wandered much in the wilderness. We have suffered much affliction, hunger, thirst and fatigue, and after all these things, we must perish in the wilderness with hunger." Not only are they struggling with their present trials, they are bringing up every other trial they've ever had and now they're predicting the future. It seems they're, I don't want to say, a victim to their circumstances, but their initiative could be, "It's okay to mourn for this, but I'm not going to let that cloud every other good thing that's ever happened and or may happen." Does that make sense?
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	00:37:44	That's powerful because it's so applicable to us because how easy is it to get in a group of people where you start

commiserating about what's wrong with a family or a ward, or an elder's quorum or a mission companionship, whatever it may be, whatever setting. How easy it is to point out and then start piling on all the bad, and like you said, Hank, it then starts going well beyond the scope of what is appropriate mourning for a situation involving loss or struggle, and it literally swallows up this feeling of empowerment or agency to be a part of a solution because we're so focused on pointing out the struggles and the problems.

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| Hank Smith:        | 00:38:26 | And then we start predicting the future and how terrible it's going to be. That doesn't ever happen. They don't perish in the wilderness with hunger, so now they're suffering for trials that they're never going to experience.   |
| John Bytheway:     | 00:38:38 | What does that person say that, "He who worries about calamities suffers them twice over?" Because they worry about it and then if it happens, they've suffered it twice. But I think what you're saying leads perfectly to these contrasting reactions to the same circumstances coming up in 1 Nephi 17.  |
| Hank Smith:        | 00:38:56 | Same families, same father, same mother, same situation, but they are experiencing it totally differently and it makes us think, "No, no, this is bad. This is a bad situation." Well, maybe it's not as bad as you think because someone else experienced that exact same thing and it wasn't as bad to them, yet the circumstances are exactly the same. How do we as Latter-day Saints see that it might be us, we might be part of the problem in the way the lens we have on?  |
| Dr. Tyler Griffin: | 00:39:27 | That is such a beautiful concept. We already touched on it earlier. It's that concept that Ari Berman, the President of Yeshiva University shared at BYU in a forum that the difference between a covenantal relationship versus a transactional relationship. If we approach our connection with God in a transactional way like those on the side that you're describing, who they go through the same experiences and they walk out bitter, angry, frustrated, murmuring, it's because they're seeing God in a transactional way as if we say, "Look, God, I'll pay my tithing. I'll go to church. I'll read my scriptures. I'll say my prayers, but you better in exchange give me X, Y and Z and I want it on this day in this proportion and this is the how," and when it doesn't happen, then we get bitter and say, "Well, fine, then I'm not going to pay my tithing anymore. I'm not going to go to church anymore." |
|                    | 00:40:22 | That kind of a relationship, that transactional view of God is what you see happening here versus the contrast that you also  |



described where you say, "I trust that thou art the most powerful all-knowing being in all the universe, I trust that you love me. You have my best interest in mind. You know my future way better than I could ever hope to know it, and you know what I need now more than I could ever hope to know what I need. I'm just going to trust and I'm going to move forward in faith that regardless of what's happening, if I keep my focus," as President Nelson has said, "If I keep my focus fixed on Jesus Christ and I trust him completely, I give my life to him," then it really doesn't matter what happens, what external calamities or struggles occur.

00:41:15 They all become wilderness journeys to come to know God better, to know myself better, to know my loved ones better and to grow through them rather than just murmur through them and grumble through them or just go through them, because they will pass. It came to pass, everything in the Book of Mormon comes to pass including trials, but are we left better people because we passed through them is the real question?

Hank Smith: 00:41:42 So good. I don't like that you're telling me that the responsibility is on me. I want it to be on someone else. I want it to be on the Lord. I want it to be on my peers, my circumstances, that's more comfortable, but when it's on me, then that's actually very empowering. I have the power to change my circumstances or to see my trials as blessings. I found it fun to just put these two sets of verses side by side 17, 2 and 3. Nephi describes the wilderness, "So great were the blessings of the Lord upon us. We did live upon raw meat in the wilderness. Our women gave plenty of suck for their children. They were strong." Go down to verse three, "If it so be that the children of men, keep the commandments of God, he nourishes them, he strengthens them and he provides means for them just like he did for us."

00:42:36 Describing the exact same experience, go over to verses 20 and 21 and you've got Laman. Now you guys, you're going to have to put up with me here because I have four boys at home, so when I read scriptures, I have to do a lot of voices to keep everybody interested, so this is Laman. He says, "Thou art like unto our father." My kids laugh at that and I always say, "Well, he's a smoker."

00:42:58 "Thou art like unto our father, led away by the foolish imaginations of his heart, he's led us out of Jerusalem. We have wandered in the wilderness these many years. Our women have toiled being big with child. They have suffered in the wilderness," and then he says something not so romantic about his wife. "It would've been better that they had died before

they came out of Jerusalem than to have suffered these afflictions." Verse 21, "We have wandered and suffered in the wilderness. We could have enjoyed our possessions, we could have been happy." As a teacher you might just put those two sets of verses side by side and say, "What do we learn?" It's a very obvious striking difference that two people can have the exact same experience yet see them totally differently.

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| Dr. Tyler Griffin: | 00:43:50 | That is beautiful. I've never seen that beautiful juxtaposition between the two. I'm going to quote you on that one.   |
| John Bytheway:     | 00:43:57 | Here's Nephi in verse one saying, "We are hip deep in affliction. We did wade through affliction in the wilderness," but the very next verse, "and so great were the blessings of the Lord upon us that while we did live upon our raw meat," that's gross, "in the wilderness," and to see the way he's looking at that same thing is it's empowering to think it's how you're going to look at this. There's a way to look at this and to see blessings in it, so I've heard somebody say, "We have to learn to see the message in our misfortune," which I thought it's a nice alliterative way to say it.  |
| Hank Smith:        | 00:44:31 | Tyler, how do you do that? How do you try to see the positive in what can be a painful thing?  |
| Dr. Tyler Griffin: | 00:44:38 | I wish I had a really good answer for you, I don't. It's here a little, there a little, line upon line, and I have a hard time learning that lesson, and so the Lord allows me to keep retaking that course over and over and over again. Eventually I hope to be able to pass it so I can move on in the curriculum because I still wrestle with that. There's still times when I find myself murmuring and then I can hear President Holland's voice from his great talk, Murmur Not, in the background of... I can't remember the exact quote, but it's something along the lines of, "There's no problem that can't be made worse by murmuring about it."  |
| Hank Smith:        | 00:45:02 | Tyler, I'm so glad you brought that quote. I brought it as well for this lesson. It's from the Tongue of Angels, April 2007, Elder Holland, and I remember where I was when I laughed at the full paragraph here, Tyler. He says, "I have often thought that Nephi's being bound with cords and beaten by rods must have been more tolerable to him than listening to Laman and Lemuel's constant murmuring. Surely, he must have said at least once, 'Hit me one more time. I can still hear you.' Yes, life has its problems, and yes, there are negative things to face, but please accept one of Elder Holland's maxims for living, "No misfortune is so bad that whining about it won't make it worse." |

John Bytheway:	00:45:14	Sometimes I think it's maybe true to say that some on this journey were having a bad attitude, but scripturally speaking, they knew not the dealings of that God who had created them. It was more than just a bad attitude. It was a testimony issue. It was 1 Nephi 2:12, "They knew not the dealings of God who had created them," and that makes it more of a, "Oh, I need to learn the dealings of that God who has created me. I need to know what he's like. I need to know the end game here that," like 2 Nephi 5:26, "He doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world." When I know that God, I can see great blessings while we're living on our raw meat.
Hank Smith:	00:46:00	Raw meat, love it. I love it. My wife is like a man. It's awesome. "They became even like unto the men," it says in chapter 17 verse two, maybe you're right. Maybe this is his testimony, his experiences with God have made it where he's not actually choosing to see bad things as good. He sees good things. He genuinely doesn't say, "Oh, this is bad, but I'm going to make it seem good." He says, "No, this is actually good." Inside of him, something has happened where he sees wisdom in God in trials. This is easier said than done.
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	00:46:38	Which is what you see reflected all the time in our prophets and in the leaders of our church at a general level. You see this not an optimist to an extreme situation, but a realist who when they talk, they acknowledge there are struggles, there are wrestles, but God is at the helm. It's going to turn out. We know who wins. Stay the course, it's going to be okay. That steadiness, that quiet steadiness.
John Bytheway:	00:47:03	When Elder Dallin H. Oaks was first the president of BYU, he gave a talk and my jaw just dropped when I heard him talk about his childhood and he said, "My father passed away before he was ever able to repay his medical school debt," I think it was, and he said, "I went through a period when I was the dumbest boy in the room and I remember having other students throw rocks at me and call me stupid because I couldn't do math," and I was like, "What? It's Elder Oaks." All of us go through hard things. I love to share that with my students because it's not something you would've seen, you would've expected, but if you know the dealings of that God who has created you, boy, that's power for getting through these wildernesses that we've got.
Hank Smith:	00:47:50	Tyler, before we move on to the boat, can I just ask you a question? There's people listening who are struggling and they

think, "Guys, I would love to do that. I would love to have the attitude you're talking about. Is there something wrong with me that I'm not optimistic about this painful, terrible thing that I'm going through?" I'm sure both of you would agree, when you really get to know someone, you realize most people are facing really difficult personal, intimate problems that they really don't share. Before we go on, let's speak to those people who are maybe listening on their commute saying, "Why can't I do this? Why can't I have the Nephi attitude?"

- Dr. Tyler Griffin: 00:48:33 Great question. I think at the core, the answer is stop trying to be your own savior. Stop trying to fix it. I mean, you have to work. There are certain things you just have to do, but at the core, it's a mindset thing to literally plead with heaven to help us figure out how to better drop our burdens at the feet of the Savior and say, "Walk with me please. You've invited me to walk with thee in scripture. I want that. I want thee to be my God. I want to be thy son or thy daughter, but I'm not very good at it. Please be patient with me as I try to figure out how to rely more on thee as I work harder, but I'm going to stop trying to be my savior. I'm going to stop trying to fix all of my problems and make my life perfect," and recognize that this messy, muddy mortality is filled with opportunities to build those relationships and those connections with the Savior.
- 00:49:32 It's like President Freeman in General Conference. I loved her concept when she talked about the covenant path isn't just about steps. It's not just about things you have to do. It's about building a relationship with Christ. So my best response to your question, Hank, is stop focusing on the problems and put more time, energy, and effort and focus on that covenant connection with Christ. Really try to build a stronger relationship with God, with Jesus Christ and think about what you do with relationships in a human context. What do you do to build that relationship? What do you put into that?
- 00:50:14 Maybe we could do more of that in our connection with Christ, and I think that's where we're going to find the peace. That's where we're going to find the solutions and the hope and the magnification of my meager efforts, whether it's 16 smooth, transparent stones that aren't shining at all or, "I've never built a ship," or, "You want me to go in and tell those people to repent, they've already kicked me out." Meaning the Book of Mormon is just dripping with examples of people who had to do little efforts and rely on God to make those efforts shine.
- Hank Smith: 00:50:47 Yeah. I'm reminded of our episode on Job. Do you remember this, John?

John Bytheway:	00:50:52	Mm-hmm.
Hank Smith:	00:50:52	Where Job says, "Though he slay me," God, "I will trust him."
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	00:50:58	Amen.
John Bytheway:	00:50:59	And I was thinking about that as Tyler was talking because it was an issue of loyalty. He was loyal to Christ and his covenants. It wasn't transactional. It was a relationship where there's a loyalty. I'm looking right now at 17 verse 14 where the Lord said, "You shall know that I, the Lord, am God, and that I, the Lord, did deliver you." And he wants us to get to that point where, "I can't do this myself."
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	00:51:28	Newsflash, he never intended for you to do it yourself. That's not part of the plan.
John Bytheway:	00:51:33	This journey, we said this earlier, Hank, on another recording, "But you've got to go through the wilderness before you get to the promised land." I hope the people that you mentioned, Hank, will be patient with themselves and their wilderness because for some of us it takes us a while to get to that point. I think about Moroni. "You know what? I'm going to make an end of speaking concerning this people. I am Moroni. I am a son of Mormon. I'm going to finish this record," and he gets to this point where, "I'm done talking about the past and I'm going to look forward," but maybe it took him a while and it did. "I have no ore, my father's been killed in battle. I don't know," and it took him a minute to get to that point where, "Okay, I'm done talking about the past." Oh, I hope people can be patient if they're still in that, trying to figure it out mode with themselves.
Hank Smith:	00:52:23	And you both might remember that the church made what was called Mountains to Climb, if I remember. A great thing you could show your family this week or show your class. President Eyring in that talk says, "The particle of faith that you have, just that little bit of faith, most precious in which you should protect and use to whatever extent you can is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." He talks about a woman he visited with who, quote, "received the miracle of sufficient strength to endure unimaginable losses with just the simple capacity to repeat endlessly the words, 'I know that my Redeemer lives.'"
	00:53:05	He goes on later in the talk to say, "It is never too late to strengthen the foundation of faith. There is always time. With faith in the Savior, you can repent and plead for forgiveness. There is someone you can forgive. There is someone you can

thank. There is someone you can serve and lift. You can do it wherever you are and however alone and deserted you may feel. I cannot promise an end to your adversity in this life. I cannot assure you that your trials will seem to you to be only for a moment," and then this great thought that I've repeated in my mind a few times throughout my life, "If we have faith in Jesus Christ, the hardest as well as the easiest times in life can be a blessing." Again, Mountains to Climb, April 2012.

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| Dr. Tyler Griffin: | 00:53:52 | Love that talk.  |
| John Bytheway:     | 00:53:53 | Yeah. Before we leave the story of Ishmael, there's just a little verse that's subtle, but at 1 Nephi 16:34, "It came to pass that Ishmael died and was buried in the place which was called Nahom," and it doesn't say, "A place that like we named Shazer," or, "we called this river Laman." This is a place which was called Nahom, and I think it was Hugh Nibley that said, "Look in the old world for evidences, is there a place called Nahom? Is it where it ought to be and is it when it ought to be?" And what's the answer to that, guys? |
| Dr. Tyler Griffin: | 00:54:28 | The answer is remarkably yes on all of those counts.   |
| Hank Smith:        | 00:54:31 | John, our friend Dan Peterson, he said this about Nahom. He says, "The finding of Nahum strikes me as a tremendously significant discovery. To find it in the right location for the right time is a bullseye from the book." He says, "The idea that Joseph Smith was really well-versed on pre-Islamic Arabian geography seems to me to be so ludicrous as to be beyond belief." Doesn't that sound like Dan?  |
| Dr. Tyler Griffin: | 00:54:57 | That's Dan Peterson. I love it.  |
| John Bytheway:     | 00:54:59 | And one of the things that's coming up, how is there a land of Bountiful where there's freshwater and hardwood trees and dates, fruit on the Arabian Peninsula? And you mentioned Google Earth. It's fun to go nearly eastward from Nahom and go, "Oh, look at all that green right there. Where did that come from?"  |
| Hank Smith:        | 00:55:21 | Right place, right time.   |
| John Bytheway:     | 00:55:23 | Yeah.  |
| Dr. Tyler Griffin: | 00:55:23 | Right there on the oceanfront property.  |

Hank Smith:	00:55:26	I'm reminded of what John Hilton told us. Wow, Joseph Smith sure got lucky there. Those little moments, those are fun. However, that's not where the power of the Book of Mormon is, so I wouldn't overemphasize those as a teacher in my seminary class or in my gospel doctrine class, I wouldn't overemphasize this. Look, I can prove this to you. They're fun, they're interesting to talk about, but Tyler, what would you say? That's not where we spend our time.
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	00:55:51	I totally, totally agree with you. I mean, if Laman and Lemuel can see an angel and they heard the voice of the Lord there at the end of chapter 16:39, they've seen miracle after miracle after miracle, physical manifestations, proofs, if you will, and they're still struggling to believe. Our job isn't to convince people that the book is true. Our job is to help them dive in and discover their connection with Christ and be converted to the Lord through a study of the truthfulness of the gospel, which can only be brought to their soul, to their mind and their heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, not by the convincing arguments and archeological evidences that we can show. That's not going to get anyone through the temptations that are coming this week.
Hank Smith:	00:56:38	I'm a hundred percent on board, Tyler, thank you for that. We've made it through the wilderness. We're to Bountiful and you would think we made it. We could stay here forever, yet there's a lot more to come.
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	00:56:51	This is a beautiful reminder to us that if we're not careful, we will mistake these byways or these incredible locations like Bountiful. It's oceanfront property. It's got all the fruits we could want. Why not just set up our civilization here? Why keep going? It reminds me of the concept that C.S. Lewis also shared of, "If we're not careful, we'll start treating this earth as the end all be all," those aren't his words. I'm paraphrasing here. From an earthly perspective you could say, "Hey, it's Bountiful. This is the perfect place," but the reality is God has so much more in store to give this group. They don't even know the extent of the lands and the fruit and the flowers and all of the amazing things that they're going to get to experience in the promised land after having given up all of their gold, silver, precious things in their house and their land of inheritance in Jerusalem.
	00:57:49	It's like what they sacrificed is nothing compared to what he has in store for them and what he has in store for them is not Bountiful. It's just a staging area for that next phase which involves crossing the ocean. So I love the fact that he commands Nephi to get up into the mountain, which incidentally is

fascinating because it's the first time in the story where a command that is for the whole group has not come to Father Lehi. It comes to Nephi. I've wondered if the Lord is still stretching and working with Lehi in this moment. What a conversation that would've been that afternoon or evening whenever Nephi comes down off the mountain and says, "Hey dad, can we talk? I was up on the mountain and the Lord commanded me to build a ship." I don't know. I could be totally wrong, but I wonder if Lehi has this moment of, "I need to keep working on repenting," or maybe not. Maybe there's a totally different reason that's possible as well.

00:58:50 But the cool part here is the next command that comes to the whole group is going to come to Father Lehi again to get the whole group to go on the ship. So it's not like we've disowned Lehi and his prophetic ship has now sailed. That's not the case. It just feels like this temporary moment of, "Okay, Nephi, this one's for you," for whatever reason, I don't know. We're guessing at what some of those reasons might be. But he goes up in that command to build the ship. Again, it would've been very easy from a mortal perspective to say, "What are you talking about? I am not Nephi the ship builder. I wasn't raised near the sea coast. I don't know this industry. I don't know how to do this," and it would be so easy to complain about why are you asking me to do this impossible task?

00:59:34 And yet what do we see from Nephi? His first question is, "Well, where do I go to find ore to make some tools? I know I'm going to need tools." And again, I think Nephi's relying on that vision, he knows they're going to get to the promised land and now the Lord commands him to build a ship. He's like, "Okay. Well, this is the way it's going to happen." You can imagine his frustration there when he goes back and says to the group of brothers, "All right, we need to build a ship to cross these waters," and then to hear their response. For most of us, that would be very deflating, but Nephi goes with it and he spends the rest of chapter 17 trying to shore up their assurance level of faith that, "God is well able to help us build a ship. I know we've never done it before, but we're going to do it because we're not alone," and I love that.

01:00:25 This is one of my favorite parts of 1 Nephi because you think of the English word ship. How many of our words in our language end with ship, and how often God asks us to build either a relationship or scholarship, or friendship or companionships or fill in the blank. You can Google this. There are hundreds of English words that end in ship. And often we've never had a ton of experience in building those particular kinds of ships. We



watch as Nephi what he does here through 17 to shore up his brother's confidence and faith, and then 18 where they actually build the ship in verse one, two, and three, and what Nephi does to accomplish that. It's this beautiful template, this beautiful blueprint for us building our discipleship or our worship or whatever ship we're working on. I love this section of the story.

- Hank Smith: 01:01:25 A championship. I want to throw something out just in the beginning here that my brother-in-law taught me. His name's Derek Booth. He's a bishop out in Castle Rock, Colorado. He was called into a, what could we call it? Bishopric-ship. He had never been bishop before. We talked about this a little bit. Notice he said that Nephi doesn't know how to build a ship, but he does know how to work with metal. That's where he goes first. "I don't know how to do this. I'll start with what I know." It was a great example to me when he was called as bishop. He said, "I don't know how to be Bishop, but I'll start with what I know."
- 01:02:06 He had taught the early morning seminary for the stake for four or five years. He said, "Well, I'll start with that." So he showed up at seminary the Monday morning after being called as bishop and met with all the youth and just said hi, and chatted with them for a few minutes. I just loved that. "I don't know how to do this whole thing, but I do know some things. I'll start with what I know and I'm sure I can figure the rest out." I've never forgotten that when I start out a calling, well, I don't know how to do this whole calling, but I'll start with what I know.
- John Bytheway: 01:02:41 Of all their ships you could call it a bi-ship. You could just spell it wrong.
- Hank Smith: 01:02:45 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 01:02:47 Hank, that reminds me of, "We can't feed these 5,000 people," and what does Jesus say? "Well, bring what you have. I'll magnify what you have."
- Hank Smith: 01:02:55 Ether the stones.
- Dr. Tyler Griffin: 01:02:57 Yeah, exactly. I think the point with every single one of these stories is if the struggle comes when we put the focus on self, when we put the focus on me, what I'm doing, because then we see ourselves as the one who's actually doing it as opposed to being an instrument in the hands of the true healer or artist, or chef or the one who's really doing the work through us. It's

liberating to not feel so responsible for saving everybody and just saying, "Look, I'm going to begin with what I know and I'll do that, magnify those efforts and teach me along the way." And I don't think that Nephi walked down from the mountain that first day with a big stack of blueprints from building the hole all the way up to putting the finishing touches on the sails. I think he just walked down knowing where to go to find ore to start building some tools, and then he had to go up to the mount oft in chapter 18 frequently to get the next set of instructions.

John Bytheway:	01:04:07	Do you know what? I love what you said there, Tyler, was about leaving your Bountiful. I've never thought of that before, but we all understand what the Lord means when he says, "Leave Babylon," but leaving your Bountiful. Ooh, that's tough. And it was as Michael Wilcox who talks about the Lord sometimes calls us when the nets are full. That's when it's tough. I know people in my own world, they just bought a house and got called on a mission, and asking you to leave when the nets are full. Maybe they got comfortable here in Bountiful and, nope, you've got to leave your Bountifuls too. That's an interesting thought.
Hank Smith:	01:04:45	Tyler, unless John and I keep practicing oneupmanship, we're going to let you take ownership here of this story.
John Bytheway:	01:04:53	Of this podcast ship.
Hank Smith:	01:04:56	Yes.
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	01:04:57	You're making waves.
Hank Smith:	01:04:58	Yeah, so let's enhance our kinship and move forward.
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	01:05:04	You're leading me in your wake at this point.
Hank Smith:	01:05:08	So Tyler, continue on. What happens next?
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	01:05:11	I think there's some really powerful principles here in the actual process of building the ship in chapter 18:1-2 and 3, because 17 was all about getting his brothers engaged in helping him build it. Because quite frankly, I think Nephi realizes, "I can't do this alone. One man cannot build this ship even with the Lord's directions here." He gets the help in place and then chapter 18 opens with him saying, so notice how he starts. "It came to pass that they did worship," there you go again, "the Lord and did go forth with me and we did work timbers of curious workmanship." Remember the Liahona was described as a

curious ball of workmanship. Here, it's curious workmanship again. For fun you could look up Webster's 1828 dictionary and look up the word curious and see what it meant in 1828.

01:06:05 And then notice this next part, it's beautiful. "The Lord did show me from time to time, he didn't just tell me, he showed me from time to time," so it didn't come in a blast, it wasn't a big binder with all the blueprints, "after what manner I should work the timbers of the ship. Now, I, Nephi, did not work the timbers after the manner which was learned by men. Neither did I build the ship after the manner of men, but I did build it after the manner which the Lord had shown unto me. Wherefore, it was not after the manner of men." He uses that phrase after the manner so many times in that verse and the verse right before it, that he's making a very clear point in driving it home with whatever ship you're building. Those relationships, that discipleship the world will have plenty to tell you about how to do that.

01:06:53 You can Google any of those ships and the world will have all kinds of experts out there telling you what to do and how to do it and when to do it and where to do it. I love this that Nephi is ascending into the mount oft in verse three, "And I did pray oft unto the Lord, wherefore the Lord showed unto me great things." That pattern is so applicable and so doable for us today if we'll just trust the process of covenant discipleship. We keep going to church every week. We keep reading our scriptures every day. We keep saying our prayers. We keep fasting every month. We keep worshiping at the temple. We ascend the mountain often, and as President Nelson has said, we expect miracles. We're not just jumping through hoops in a transactional relationship saying, "Well, I did this. Now, you're going to give this to me."

01:07:44 We do this because we love God and we want to be on his errand and we want to know what his errand is. We know that he's going to show us from time to time what those next steps are, and sometimes he won't give us the next step and we'll have to kind of probe our way forward in absolute faith in the dark, but the promise is sure, the light will move. We'll see, it'll come. I just love that these three verses as a blueprint for discipleship and how to build that converting relationship with God.

Hank Smith: 01:08:18 He says, "I'm not going to do this the way others might do this. I'm going to do this the Lord's way. It's going to look different than something you might see typically or usually. It's a more excellent way."

John Bytheway:	01:08:33	Before we leave chapter 17. It's always fun to look at 1 Nephi 1:1, which we all know by heart where Nephi says, "Having been highly favored of the Lord," and I always ask my students, "What God has favorites?" Because there's something unsettling about that, but in 1 Nephi 17:35, we have this, oh, okay verse, "The Lord esteemeth all flesh in one. He that is righteous is favored of God." In the Book of Mormon, we're going to have Lamanites and Lemuelites, and Nephites and Jacobites, but we can choose to be favorites. If you want to be a favorite, that is a choice that you make. That's not an arbitrary thing.
Hank Smith:	01:09:10	I like that.
John Bytheway:	01:09:11	Does that work or is that false doctrine?
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	01:09:12	That's beautiful.
Hank Smith:	01:09:13	I think you're right on there. Tyler, have we completed the ship? We're ready to get... and I don't know if I'd trust a boat I built myself.
John Bytheway:	01:09:22	Oh man, I know.
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	01:09:24	Never having built a boat before, but again, Nephi's seen in vision. He knows they're not going to go down. He knows they're going to get there, and there's that quiet, steady confidence that comes with prophetic vision.
Hank Smith:	01:09:44	Coming up in part two of this episode.
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	01:09:47	This is one of those beautiful moments in Isaiah as this Hebrew poet where he doesn't just speak in Greek literal terms. He speaks in this Hebrew symbolism. He's painting a picture and you can almost picture him with stylus in hand, stroking his chin, saying, "Okay, what is the most dependent relationship I could think of?"



- Hank Smith: 00:07 Tyler, the ship is built and we add some new characters to our story. Jacob and Joseph, that 1 Nephi 18 verse 7.
- Dr. Tyler Griffin: 00:17 Yeah, some younger brothers and Jacob particularly is going to have a pretty critical role to play in our Book of Mormon down the road. One of our great scriptural doctrinaires ever. He's amazing. I think it's fascinating, this leap of faith as they all get on the ship, launch out into the deep. And if we're not careful, we'll put all the emphasis on Nephi being a disciple and putting emphasis on his ship. But it's really about our discipleship of being willing to launch into the deep, towards our promised land, that kind of getting in the boat with Christ. That analogy is beautiful of entering the covenant path or coming into the church. There's going to be some stormy seas ahead. There's going to be some struggle as we navigate this path forward and it doesn't take long. Verse 9, you're introduced to his brothers making themselves merry and dancing and singing with much rudeness and he tries to stop them.
- 01:17 And I don't know about you two, but I find it fascinating that in the early chapters of 1 Nephi, especially chapter two, three and four, Lehi is able to pretty much force Laman and Lemuel to do whatever Lehi wants them to do. He's able to compel them. Their frames did shake exceedingly because he had commanded them to go into the wilderness and they go, they're obedient, they do it. And now eight years later, they've done all of the things that they were commanded to do, but they did it for the wrong reasons in some cases. It didn't increase their discipleship, it didn't increase their conversion to the Lord, it didn't soften their hearts. So now as they're older and Lehi is weaker, now you get this shift of power where we're in this wrestle out in the ocean and the storm comes up. We're about to be swallowed up, and Father Lehi can no longer compel or force or command in such a way that it'll be obeyed by Laman and Lemuel.
- 02:23 It's fascinating to watch as he now is pushed to the side and Laman and Lemuel are just forcefully taking charge of the ship.

It's mutiny, so the Liahona stops working. They have no idea how to steer it. And again, it would be easy for Nephi to just murmur and complain, but he knows they're going to make it. It's going to be okay in the end, but it's sure miserable for him for these three days with his wrists and his hands and his ankles swollen. And you can imagine the way they're treating him. But I love how when he's first released from those bands, he describes the swelling of the wrists and the ankles and the soreness thereof in the bottom of verse 15 and then the very next word. "Nevertheless, I did look unto my God." So he didn't look at his problem, he didn't look at the people who had inflicted this abuse upon him. He looked to his solution, he looked heavenward, "And I did praise him all the day long." That's a beautiful pattern for us to look to the solution rather than to the problems.

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| Hank Smith:    | 03:33 | This seems to be a constant pattern in Nephi's life and I would love it to be a constant pattern in my own, which would be being able to not just survive trials, difficulties. Even those brought on by other people's agency, not only survive them, but turn them into experiences in which I get closer to God.   |
| John Bytheway: | 03:56 | Yeah, I heard someone say once a blessing is anything that moves us closer to God, but it puts the thing on us to say, "See if you can find a way that this can move you closer to God." I don't think God causes all of our tragedies in life, like you said, Hank. But I think he can always find a way to help you use it. I like what you said there. If you can find a way to help that move you closer to God in some way, then it could be a blessing to you, just to you. |
| Hank Smith:    | 04:28 | And isn't it interesting, Tyler and John that it's getting more and more difficult to soften the hearts of Laman and Lemuel? In the beginning of our story, it was just Lehi giving them a talk and their hearts were softened. And now look at 1 Nephi 18 verse 20. There was nothing, save their own destruction that could soften their hearts.  |
| John Bytheway: | 04:48 | And I think Tyler brought that up. First Lehi, this is Dad, you honor your father that's in the culture. But when it's your little brother and this birth order thing is so big for them, it appears. I mean for the rest of the Book of Mormon, this birth order thing comes up. Now all of a sudden it's Nephi that has to move the family and he's their younger brother.  |
| Hank Smith:    | 05:10 | I wonder why it is Tyler. How does a heart become hard? I don't think Laman and Lemuel started out this way. I don't think anybody thinks, "You know what? By the end of my life, I hope  |

I'm a hardened atheist individual." You can watch them though. Go through this gradual process of fear turns into hatred and hatred turns into evil.

- Dr. Tyler Griffin: 05:33 Yeah, it's fascinating because every single part of this story became this decision point. Where they could choose to either trust the Lord, move forward in faith, do the right thing for the right reason. Or give into those natural tendencies that we all experience to one degree or another. And it seems like just like the covenant path is a line upon line, so are the many strange and forbidden paths and roads that lead us away from that tree of life, away from that connection with God. It's often... the analogy comes full circle when you get over into Alma 31 and 32. I love the juxtaposition there because you end with Korihor's story where he gets trampled. And at the very end you get Mormon saying that and he finishes by saying that, "Thus we see that the devil will not support his children at the last day, but doth speedily drag them down to hell."
- 06:37 That word is so interesting drag because there comes this point in life, if you've given enough of your agency over to the devil, you're wrapped with enough of his flaxen cords. There comes a time when you're no longer walking towards hell, you now recognize what this is leading to and the devil is now dragging you. Your heels are kicked in and in contrast, right on that same page over in chapter 31 verse five, it says, "As the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just." I love the fact that in the gospel of Jesus Christ, people don't get dragged into heaven. They don't get dragged into the temple. They don't get dragged into a marriage or they don't get dragged to the sacrament meeting. The preaching of the word has this tendency to lead people towards heaven and Satan's efforts are to bind us so that he can drag us. And I think that's what we're seeing on the page in spades with Laman and Lemuel, is at this point they're kind of being dragged.
- John Bytheway: 07:40 But that's really cool. I just made a note. God leads, but Satan drags. I love it.
- Hank Smith: 07:45 The Lord never asks us to do anything that's really addictive. I've never been addicted to fasting or paying my tithing. Because the Lord says, "Yeah, you're going to choose this." But almost everything the adversary wants me to do is addictive because one day I'm going to figure it out and by then I'm wrapped up. My agency is almost taken away completely. The Lord works by agency, where the adversary works by addiction. So with that, Tyler, we are in the promised land. We're different people. Our experiences have changed everybody, some for the better,

		some for the worst, but the whole family makes it to the promised land.
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	08:27	Yeah, everybody has been stretched and some have passed those tests and others have struggled, but we're here. The whole family's here.
John Bytheway:	08:36	One wonders how many times they heard, "Are we there yet? How much further is it?"
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	08:43	I love that when they arrive in the promised land, this verse 24 is beautiful. "It came to pass that we did begin to till the earth and we began to plant seeds and we did put all our seeds into the earth." That's faith. You're in a new land. You brought seeds from the other part of the world. You don't even know if you're in the exact same climate or the same soil systems. They didn't hold back any of their seeds, they put them all into the earth and they did grow exceedingly. It's that principle of some people move around a lot physically and it gets pretty hard to put your roots deep. When you know you're going to be leaving in a matter of months or a few short years. And I love this idea with those relationships with those locations, put all your seeds into the earth, grow as much as you can everywhere you are today. Don't wait for the next place to then grow and develop these connections. Build as many as you can today. Don't wait for tomorrow.
John Bytheway:	09:45	Great application. Love it.
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	09:47	But even then, what a beautiful concept of planting seeds that will grow into fruit trees of which you may never partake, but there's something Christ-like about that. Thinking about those who will come after you in different settings in different ways. Instead of saying, "What's in it for me?" Saying, "Dear God on high, what can I do to make this life better and easier for people around me?"
John Bytheway:	10:14	Beautiful.
Hank Smith:	10:15	Tyler, I've noticed that once we hit the end of 18, the narrative kind of shifts to Nephi wants to do some teaching.
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	10:25	Yeah, it's fascinating. I love the narrative sections of the Book of Mormon where it's this story, "and it came to pass," "and it came to pass," "and it came to pass." And then you come to the non-story parts, "and it came to pass" goes away. There's no more story. So the Book of Mormon is very consistent in this.



For instance, you get to chapter 19, 20, 21, 22, and there are very few, "and it came to pass" because he's no longer telling a story. It's one of those beautiful consistencies within the book that we've already talked about earlier. We don't base our testimony on these kinds of things. For instance, when you come to the Book of Moroni, you're not going to find a single, "and it came to pass," not one because there's no storyline. It's one of those amazing internal consistencies. So here Nephi now has arrived in the promised land and the very first thing he does is he makes those plates of war. And he's making the large plates of Nephi, which are all of the details.

11:20 And it's not until they get to 2 Nephi chapter 5 that you find out that 30 years after they left Jerusalem, God commands him, "Go back and make a second copy." We don't need all that detail. The second copy is the one that obviously is going to go live. He's making this record and he's teaching his brothers and his family. How does he teach them? He's giving them directions about what's going to happen to the Savior in verse 9. "He'll be judged to be a thing of naught, they're going to scourge him and he suffereth it. They're going to smite him and he suffereth it and they're going to spit upon him and he suffereth it because of his loving kindness and his long-suffering towards the children of men." It's easy to lose some of the power of that verse, but if you put it in its context coming from Nephi to his brothers as he's talking about Jesus Christ. I love the connection that could not have been lost on Nephi as he's sharing these elements that he's seen in vision back in 1 Nephi 11.

12:20 It's as if Nephi's saying, "I want to be more like Jesus. So when you smite me, when you spit upon me, when you do bad things to me, I'm going to suffer it too. Not because I'm perfect like Jesus, but because I want to approximate him. I want to be more like him." And then he shifts into reading them scriptures, Zenos, Neum, Zenock in verse 10, he's relying on these prophets. And then he's reading them the Books of Moses, I love verse 29, that moment when he's reading to Laman and Lemuel and probably Sam and that look of, "Wait, you're not getting this are you?" An exodus isn't terribly difficult to understand. And I can picture Laman and Lemuel saying, "We're not seeing the connections here." And he says, "Let me make it obvious." He says "That I might more fully persuade them to believe in the Lord their Redeemer. I did read unto them that which was written by the prophet Isaiah."

13:14 "You're not getting it. You're not making the connection to Christ for Moses. So let me make it obvious and let's go to Isaiah." Fascinating place to take Laman and Lemuel to preach

the Lord their Redeemer. I guess the message is if it's good enough for Nephi to teach from Isaiah to Laman and Lemuel, then we should probably give Isaiah a lot more airtime in our own study.

- John Bytheway: 13:40 I'm so glad you brought that up, Tyler. This kind of, "Here's why I'm going to read from Isaiah. That I might more fully persuade them to believe in the Lord their Redeemer." Isaiah is going to talk about... Now, Isaiah never uses the word Christ. He uses the Messiah or the Holy One of Israel, but that's who he's going to talk about. And the Bible Dictionary is a treasure. Look up the meaning of names and Isaiah meet the "Yah," at the end of all those names of so many characters in this time period is Jehovah. And the Lord is Salvation is the meaning of Isaiah. And then all of a sudden you go, "Oh, well that's why Abinadi." When he asked them, "What are you teaching?" And they said, "The law of Moses," he would say, "Oh, you're not getting it. The Lord is Salvation. Let me read to you Isaiah."
- 14:27 One of the things that Isaiah said, and he alluded to this before, "Those that are upon the isles of the sea." And correct me if I'm wrong guys, but for anybody who left the holy land, they consider themselves on an isle of the sea. Is that right? But when they read Isaiah's promises to those on the isles of the sea, it sounds like, "Oh, that's us." And remember Hank, way back when we talked to... Was it Scott and Casey that talked to us about the audiences in the Book of Mormon? Look at what it says there in verse 24, "Hear ye the words of the prophet ye who are a remnant of the house of Israel, a branch who have been broken off." We have this chapter in our Old Testament, but here Nephi is talking to his family. "We have changed our area code, but we are still the covenant people and we still have a covenant obligation and a covenant promise. Well, I'm going to read this to you, you remnant." A remnant is a piece of the House of Israel and that's them.
- Hank Smith: 15:25 And Tyler, don't you love that this verse sits right before the Isaiah chapters? And Isaiah is going to come up quite a bit in this book so we can come back to this verse, why is this in here? That you might more fully believe in the Lord your Redeemer. Every time you run into Isaiah, don't think, "Oh, more Isaiah," think, this is in here for this one reason. To more fully persuade you and I to believe in the Lord our Redeemer. So if it's not doing it for you, then let's keep studying. Let's keep working at it till we can figure out what they saw in this that causes me and others to believe in the Savior.

Dr. Tyler Griffin:	16:10	Absolutely. And the other fascinating thing here is that Nephi chose to begin with Isaiah 48 and 49 rather than the first chapters of Isaiah. Now when we get to the big Isaiah block later on in 2 Nephi 12 through 24, that's Isaiah chapters 2 through 14. So we're going back to that beginning. He leads out with hope, with redemption, with restoration, with gathering. Because if you look at Isaiah's whole book, chapters 1 through 66, you can divide it up in all kinds of ways. But the simplest way is into two parts, 1 through 39 are all about what happens when a people say "No, we don't want you to be our God and we don't want to be your people. And we're going to go and find some other God to worship or to give our devotion to this scattering." And then the consequences that come from that and the judgments that come not because God hates them, but because there are natural effects, there are natural outcomes that come with certain decisions.
	17:13	And then chapters 40 through 66 are all about God reestablishing that covenant, gathering them in. And I love that he leads out with 48 and 49, which are from this hope-filled gathering section of Isaiah's prophecies. To remind these people that just because you've made a covenant with God in verse 1 and 2 of chapter 20; isn't enough. You can't just be in name only a member of the church, otherwise bad things will happen to you. And he gives the reasons why he lets those bad things happen. Verse 9, "Nevertheless for my name's sake, will I defer my anger and for my praise, will I refrain from thee that I cut thee not off." You've broken this covenant, you don't deserve good things, but I've worked with you long enough. And then verse 10, "Behold I have refined thee, I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction and for mine own sake yea..."
	18:18	And then he repeats it, "For mine own sake, will I do this, for I will not suffer my name to be polluted. I will not give my glory unto another." "I'm going to bring you back and I'm going to redeem you and reestablish this covenant with you for mine own sake. It's because of my love, my everlasting grace and kindness that I'm going to do this." I just love that. And then Isaiah uses this idea to talk to us in this kind of, "Let's sit down and reason together sort of a way." He says, "Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel my called, for I am he, I am the first. I am the last. Mine hand hath also laid the foundation of the earth. My right hand hath spanned the heavens. I call upon them and they stand up together."
	19:03	This idea of, "Look who else has this capacity? You can trust me." I love the hope that's here. And Nephi's clearly likening all of this to his own people and he's invited us to liken it to our

day too. To be able to see God's goodness and to come near in verse 16, to listen to him. And by the way, if we're not careful, we put on Isaiah blinders instead of Isaiah lenses when we read because we're like, "Yeah, it's Isaiah. It's hard to understand." If we just read this looking for Christ and me and what is he doing to help me find him and to come unto him. Isaiah is not as hard to understand. It's a lot easier to liken to the situations I find myself in today.

Hank Smith: 19:51 I can see that in verse 2 of chapter 20. "There are those who call themselves the holy city, but they don't rely on God". And I all of a sudden think of me, I'm a Latter-day Saint in name. Do I really live the life of a Latter-day Saint? Isaiah is calling someone like that out saying, "Who do you think you're trying to fool?" Tyler, I like what you said there that if you look at the structure of Isaiah, it really is destruction, darkness, scattering first. And the second half of the book you said is the gathering and the hope. Nephi is choosing to start quoting Isaiah with that second half, that hopeful half. Really like that.

Dr. Tyler Griffin: 20:39 Yeah, and you see it more clearly in chapter 49 of Isaiah, which is our Isaiah 21. In fact, just as a fun little exercise, somebody could on their own go back and read Isaiah chapter 40. Because that's the opening of this new section of hope and the very first concept mentioned there in chapter 40 is, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people." Now that's spoken to a group of people who have said, "We don't want to be your people and we don't want you to be our God." But he's going and re-establishing and bringing comfort where quite frankly they don't deserve it. And I don't know about you two, but there's never been a time when I've tried to repent. Where I've said to God, "Oh look, what a good boy I'm being, feeling bad about what I've done and repenting, so therefore you have to now forgive me and give me comfort and make everything right."

21:33 We don't deserve anything good when it comes right down to it, and yet he gives us that promise of comforting, re-establishment of that connection. And we get that opportunity very powerfully every Sunday when we go to church and pick up a little piece of bread that is so much more than bread. And a little cup that is so much more than water and we make that new covenant to say to him, yet again, "I want thee to be my God and I want to be thy people." We're manifesting it in a very tangible way, making a new covenant, which beautifully is portrayed throughout chapter 21 now, because this is all about the Messiah. Here is Nephi talking to his people who feel like they're on an isle of the sea because they've left the homeland, the motherland. There are so many beautiful things in here

about God making us a polished shaft in his quiver about the Lord, the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel that has all these things to give us. And then you come to this glorious triumphant, "Sing O ye heavens! Be joyful, O earth," the gospel.

- 22:40 When you go to church, you should not feel like you're being beat up. You shouldn't walk out feeling dejected. This should be the most glorious, wonderful, freeing experience ever. When you go to the temple, when you read your scriptures, it should cause these rejoicings. Why? Because he then points out here in the middle part of chapter 21 about his infinite atonement, the Atonement of Jesus Christ that makes all of this possible.
- Hank Smith: 23:11 Tyler, I noticed way back at the end of 1 Nephi 20, which is Isaiah 48. There's an interesting connection here that I haven't seen. Verse 21, Isaiah is talking about the children of Israel walking through the wilderness from the Exodus. But Nephi could easily liken this to himself. "He hath led them through the deserts." He's probably just seeing himself as you talked about through that-
- John Bytheway: 23:39 Empty corridor.
- Dr. Tyler Griffin: 23:40 Picking up on that desert theme for a minute, Hank, it's back to what we talked about before. Some people can go through that desert and feel like, "Man, God has forsaken me. He's so mean. We're trying so hard to be good and look at these bad things that are happening," and yet here's Isaiah. And you've got to believe, like you said, that Nephi is seeing very clearly their story in verse 14.
- Hank Smith: 24:02 Absolutely. "Behold Zion hath said," and Nephi or the daughters of Ishmael or even Lehi or Hank, John or Tyler, they have said, "The Lord has forsaken me. He's forgotten me." Where are you? I've tried so hard to be good, Joseph Smith, "God where art thou?" And then this beautiful statement, "He will show that he hath not," I have not forgotten you. And then he makes a fantastic analogy. Tyler, you might know about this better than all of us here having 10 children, "For can a woman forget her sucking child, her newborn child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" I don't know about you guys, but once those children started coming, I kind of took a back seat for a little while in my wife's eyes. The way she used to look at me with those starry eyes, they became even brighter when she looked down at those babies.
- Dr. Tyler Griffin: 25:10 This is one of those beautiful moments in Isaiah as this Hebrew poet where he doesn't just speak in Greek literal terms, he

speaks in this Hebrew symbolism. He's painting a picture and you can almost picture him with stylus in hand, stroking his chin, saying, "Okay, what is the most dependent relationship I could think of that would communicate what I'm trying to communicate?" And he's like, "Well, it's a sucking child, this brand new baby who depends so completely on mom for everything and can she forsake this baby? Can she forget this baby?" I love how he then brings us back to the Savior.

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| John Bytheway:     | 25:49 | That verse 16, "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." I don't know how anybody reading that can miss it. What is sign language for Jesus? And it's touching the palms of the hands like this one after the other. "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands," and it's such an interesting question my students have asked, "Why? I thought when you're resurrected, those wounds are all gone. I thought that your scars are gone." Things like that. The Savior, believe keeps those wounds. It could be because of the footnote there. Footnote 16A takes us to Zechariah 13:6 where that prophecy is at the second coming, they will ask, "What are those wounds in your hands?"       |
|                    | 26:41 | Section 45 is even a more complete answer in the Doctrine and Covenants, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends," and it's a beautiful image to think that the Savior carries with him a reminder in his hands of his love for us. These are some of my favorite verses in all of Isaiah. That phrase right there, and I always think of the sign language when I think of that.  |
| Dr. Tyler Griffin: | 27:05 | Beautiful.  |
| Hank Smith:        | 27:06 | John, I loved what you shared there. I've been thinking about this. These are two very simple symbols that we're going to see a lot. You're always looking at your hands. They're always in front of me. These two hands are always in front of me. So when I see the palms of my hands, I can think, "Oh yeah, how could I forget something that's in the palms of my hands?" And then the other one, it's quite common, even though it's absolutely beautiful, is a woman with a newborn. That's around all the time. I'm thinking of a woman in our ward, Kaylee. Kaylee Howder who I have watched care for her newborn lately. There she is just holding and rocking and sometimes standing up and walks out. |
|                    | 27:47 | When you look at moms, you can learn a lot about God at that point where we are so fussy and we need and need and need. And there he is, day in and day out. I think of my own wife   |

caring for... We had twin boys and caring for those twins. It exhausted her and me, but exhausted her to the nth degree. According to Isaiah, I can learn a lot about Jesus by watching that.

- Dr. Tyler Griffin: 28:19 And isn't that fascinating, Hank? As you describe your wife and we can all think of our own family situations. That when those little babies are born or when it's in the middle of the night and they're screaming yet again and you can't calm them down. There's never ever a sentiment of, "You better repay us big time for what we're going through or what we're paying out for you or what you're costing us." Love once again isn't about what you get from someone. The sacrifice that you make for another person actually increases your capacity to love that person. And the perfect example as you're describing here from Isaiah, the mother with this newborn baby. She went through so much pain and so much discomfort and so much difficulty just to give that little creature a new life. And then she has to keep going through pain and it never ends.
- 29:19 It just changes. It just adapts through time, these sacrifices. But a mother never says, "Now you repay me and what can I get out of you?" There's something beautifully Christ-like about that and now you see it here with the Savior, with the palms of his hands being marked. Those aren't signs of the world's cruelty alone. Those are signs of his love for us and of his sacrifice for us. Once again, I believe the greater the sacrifice, the greater your capacity to love. I think that's why Jesus loves you infinitely, is because he paid an infinite price to redeem your soul. Most of us would then turn to somebody and say, "Do you know what that cost me?" Not Jesus. It's not a shaking finger, a wagging fist. It's open arms. It's love, saying, "Your walls are continually before me. Can you just come into the safety of my embrace? I'll take care of you. I will not forsake you. You will not be alone if you come to me."
- Hank Smith: 30:25 I think about a mother, she gives her blood, literally gives her blood-
- Dr. Tyler Griffin: 30:30 Sheds her blood.
- Hank Smith: 30:31 ... to give this baby life and what a symbol of this Savior.
- Dr. Tyler Griffin: 30:37 Which I have to just say, isn't Isaiah amazing to be able to take these two totally separate things. And bring them together in this symbolic juxtaposition and teach lessons that are just going to keep, and we've only mentioned a few of them here. People who are listening are probably going to come up with dozens of

additional connections here as it should be. The Holy Ghost can teach these lessons again and again at deeper and deeper levels. I love Isaiah. I love how he helps me recognize the Savior in my life and what he's done for us. We then move on here to this next section. I love this concept where he embodies Jerusalem. He embodies that geography, that location, that place in this human character. That's what a Hebrew poet is going to do. He's going to be symbolic, so he makes her into a woman and then she feels desolate.

- 31:33 She feels like she's been destroyed. The wasters have come in and taken away her children and taken them captive and she's left desolate. Her household is no more, and she's sitting there mourning and then all of a sudden we see that in Isaiah's time period with Babylon coming to town, in Jesus's dispensation with Rome in 70 A.D. destroying the Kingdom of the Jews and carrying them away captive. And it often leaves Zion or the House of Israel feeling like, "Okay, well game over. It was a good run, but it's finished." And then all of a sudden you see all of these people returning being gathered in after this great scattering and verse 21 says, "Then shall thou say in thine heart, 'Who have begotten me these? Seeing I have lost my children and I'm desolate a captive and removing to and fro and who has brought up these, behold I was left alone. These, where have they been?'"
- 32:34 And all of a sudden then it starts describing the Gentiles, bringing them back. Carrying them on their shoulders and the number being so big, so many, that there's not room to take care of them. This great gathering effort as we watch with each passing General Conference, as our Prophet announces more and more temples. It's hard to even keep up with it and we're like, "Wait, where? How many? Why so many?" And as this great emphasis on the gathering keeps unfolding, our Prophets are seeing things that we may not see. That these Isaiah chapters, these prophecies are going to be fulfilled.
- 33:14 People are going to come into the fold of God in numbers that are just astronomically big that we've not seen before. The Lord is preparing the world for that. Even though it doesn't feel like that right now, it feels like it's going in the other direction and people like talking about how many people are leaving the church. That's not the message we get from reading Isaiah. There will be people who struggle along the way. We'll lose some battles along the way and some struggles, but this kingdom is going to roll forth. It's going to fill the whole earth eventually, and I love the hope that Chapter 21 gives to us in this effort, in our gathering effort. It matters.



Hank Smith:	33:57	That seems like the Lord, Tyler, is things look like they're heading in one direction and they end up going another. Coming to Jerusalem, things look like they're going to be great. Then they end up going the exact opposite to terrible and you think, "Oh, it's terrible." Then he turns it around and it's actually even better than you've thought. Kind of a similar thing happening here.
John Bytheway:	34:17	Losing the 116 pages. Well, translate that other part. It throws even greater views. So you thought this is a problem. Actually, I have something that's even going to be better.
Hank Smith:	34:28	Tyler, we have one chapter left in our lesson here and we want to give it a little bit of time. So what would you want our listeners to get out of the last chapter of 1 Nephi chapter 22?
Dr. Tyler Griffin:	34:39	Chapter 22 is beautiful because what you get is this concluding commentary from Nephi on what he just got through reading to you from those two chapters of Isaiah. So chapter 19 is where he is introducing it. He's kind of telling us why he's going to read Isaiah. Then he reads Isaiah and then he tells us what he hopes that we got out of his reading of Isaiah. If you had a struggle with understanding anything in chapter 20 or 21. Then strong recommendation is go to chapter 22 and see what Nephi, the prophet who's quoting Isaiah, what he tells us he got out of it. And what he hopes that our takeaways might be.
	35:17	He opens up the chapter by saying, "Now it came to pass that after I, Nephi, had read these things which were engraven upon the plates of brass. My brethren came unto me and said unto me: What meaneth these things which ye have read?" And our students and our children probably ask the same question of you. "Behold, are they to be understood according to things which are spiritual, which shall come to pass according to the spirit and not the flesh?"
	35:40	It's basically them saying, "Wait, are we supposed to understand this literally or symbolically?" And now Nephi jumps in and says, "Behold they were manifest unto the prophet by the voice of the Spirit; for by the Spirit are all things made known unto the prophets, which shall come upon the children of men according to the flesh." He's saying, "Look, this was given to Isaiah. It's not just a great writer, not just a great historian. This was given to Isaiah by God through the Holy Ghost." And then he clarifies verse three, "Wherefore the things of which I have read are things pertaining to things both temporal and spiritual." I love that. He's saying, "Don't pick a camp. It's both." So you've got to do your work on both sides

when you read Isaiah to find both the physical manifestations of how these prophecies have come to pass, as well as the spiritual likenings that we can apply. You get the scattering, the gathering, the Restoration, the latter days, the establishment of the new world. It's all in here in the rest of chapter 22.

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| Hank Smith:        | 36:46 | To me, Tyler chapter 22 is a place where I remember in my own Isaiah wrestling when I first started saying, "You know what? I really want to understand this." I don't want to just love a phrase, a three word phrase. I want to understand his argument where he is going. Chapter 22 is one that is kind of... I wouldn't say a beginner's Isaiah, but you can see what Nephi does. He says, "Okay, here's Isaiah. Now let me explain it a little bit." And all of a sudden you go, "Oh, I can see that," as I move forward. So I don't know, kind of a Nephi helping you read this in a way that will bring it out like you have for us Tyler.  |
| Dr. Tyler Griffin: | 37:29 | Yeah, it's beautiful to have his tutelage, his mentoring along the way. The invitation he gave you at the beginning also applies to not just Isaiah, but to everything Nephi himself wrote. It's, "Likened all scriptures unto us." Why? So that it might be for our profit and our learning today. The power is when we liken those stories, so our own journeys and our own wrestles and our own struggles in life. I love it.  |
| John Bytheway:     | 37:56 | A few recordings ago, our wonderful Lisa, she was trying to say scattering or gathering, and she said, "scattering." And it's become my favorite word now because it kind of tells us that there's going to be a scattering, but there's going to be a gathering. So a "scattering," they are two sides of the same concept. When the Lord scatters, he gathers. Or when people scatter themselves, the Lord gathers them. It's spiritual and it's temporal because you kind of get scatterbrained. First you lose your testimony, then you lose your real estate and then you get gathered to Christ in your heart and in your spirit and then you gather to stakes of Zion. What President Nelson has told us is we can be part of the greatest work ever gathering on both sides of the veil. I love that he said that too, but we can help people gather to Christ in their hearts and souls and minds and then gather to stakes of Zion. |
|                    | 38:52 | So I hear Nephi saying that we kind of got scattered not for the same reasons the Lord was preserving us, but the promise is there. We're all going to be gathered and the Gentiles will help in the gathering. I read verse 8 and I go, "That's like a good summary." "After our seed is scattered, the Lord God will proceed to do a marvelous work among the Gentiles, which shall be of great worth unto our seed. Wherefore, it is likened   |

unto their being nourished by the Gentiles and being carried in their arms and upon their shoulders." Isn't it nice when you have a prophet commenting on another prophet. Nephi's going, "This is what Isaiah meant about that shoulder thing."

39:32 "And it shall also be worth unto the Gentiles and not only unto the Gentiles, but unto all the House of Israel, unto the making known of the covenants of the Father of heaven unto Abraham saying: In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." And there we go again. Here's that Abrahamic covenant. Title page covenants, last page covenants, and here we are.

Hank Smith: 39:57 Yeah, as everybody reading, go into 22 and just walk through it slowly verse at a time and watch for that scattering and gathering. And it's same thing for us. Watch for that, "Oh, we make mistakes and God prepares a way for us to find our way back to him," a scattering and a gathering.

Dr. Tyler Griffin: 40:17 I love this hope that comes as you're talking and as you're sharing these ideas and as we're studying these chapters. I love how he uses the word the righteous. He doesn't ever say the perfected or the flawless. He calls them the righteous. Why? It's because they want to. Their desires are right. They're doing the right thing to the best of their ability. They're messing up, but they're repenting when they do. As you turn the page over to these final verses of chapter 22, I hope it's not lost on people. The hope that God gives to those who are just striving to be as good as they possibly can and realizing they're not perfect and they're not their own savior. So verse 17, "Wherefore, he will preserve the righteous by," not by their righteousness, not by their goodness, not by their actions, but, "by his power."

41:11 "Even if it so be that the fullness of his wrath must come," which it will. We read the Book of Revelation, we read the scriptures. We know there're calamities coming in the latter days. So bad things are coming, but the "Righteous shall be preserved even unto the destruction of their enemies by fire. Wherefore, the righteous need not fear." That's three times in that verse that you got the righteous, then you keep going down. You're going to get the righteous in verse 19. They shall not perish. You keep watching for it. 22, "The righteous need not fear for they are those who shall not be confounded, but it's the kingdom of the devil that needs to fear." And then verse 24, "The time cometh speedily that the righteous must be led up as calves of the stall and the Holy One of Israel must reign in dominion and might and power in great glory and he gathereth his children."

	42:01	It's beautiful. And then 26, "Because of the righteousness of his people, Satan has no power." And then he repeats more of the righteousness, "And the Holy One of Israel reigneth," in the bottom of verse 26. Let's just finish with verse 28. But behold, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people shall dwell safely in the Holy One of Israel if it so be that they will repent." I love that. He didn't say if it so be that they're perfect. It's just if they'll just repent, then they can dwell safely with the Holy One of Israel, and numbered among the sheep of his fold.
Hank Smith:	42:39	That's fantastic.
John Bytheway:	42:40	I feel like when you start reading this, Nephi, he's answering his brother's question. And then as we spoke Hank, audiences, all of a sudden he's talking to everybody, he's talking to us, he's talking to the Latter-days. And then he kind of brings it back at the end. So thanks for asking. Verse 30, "My brethren consider that the things which have been written upon the plates of brass are true. They testify..." Now it's for you. "A man must be obedient to the commandments of God and ye need not suppose that I and my father are the only ones who have testified about them. Be obedient to the commandments, endure to the end. You'll be saved at the last day and brings it back to them." So I like what Nephi did there. I feel like he's talking to us in the middle, the Latter-days.
Hank Smith:	43:20	Yeah, I really appreciate what you've both shared here. I had a great stake President Dale Monk, who one day, just as we were talking, he said, "After all this time reading the scriptures." He said, "I think I can define righteousness now." He said, "I think righteousness is repenting. The righteous are those who are repenting, and the unrighteous are those who are not repenting." I like that you said that Tyler, it's not the perfect, it's the righteous or the repenting person.
John Bytheway:	43:54	I love President Nelson's definition of Israel. It's not his, it's what it means. It says in the Bible Dictionary, "One who prevails with God" or "Let God prevail." And he pled with us to be the type of people who are willing to let God prevail. We're going to make mistakes, but we keep repenting showing we're willing to let God prevail in our lives.
Hank Smith:	44:17	Tyler, this has been a fantastic day. Really just fun to walk through these chapters with you, and I knew it would be having been friends with you for so long. Before we let you go, tell us why you've planted your roots, your life in the Book of Mormon.

- Dr. Tyler Griffin: 44:33 That's a beautiful question. And by the way, thank you very much for the privilege to come and spend this time with you talking about these incredible chapters. I've long admired what you two have been able to accomplish. It's mind-blowing how far the reach and the impact of many of my own family members, myself. I just have to say before I answer your specific question, I've heard people say things like, "Oh man, you guys have a lot of competitors out there in this market." And I always look at those people and I say, "Are you kidding me? There is no competition in this market. God is pouring down knowledge upon the heads of his Saints across a variety of channels, a variety of ways, and there's something out there for everybody." And I just love what you two have done. You have a way of doing it that just speaks to a lot of people. Many of my own family members and me included. So thank you and it's been a privilege to join you in this effort.
- 45:29 In answer to your specific question, there are literally a million ways I could answer that question and all of them would be valid. But I think the most important one is why do I love the Book of Mormon? What would I say to somebody who's contemplating, "Should I really jump in?" I have read a lot of books in my life. I have experienced a myriad of learning opportunities in different settings. But there's never been a set of words that have helped me feel more truly connected with the Savior Jesus Christ and with God the Father. And to feel the comforting, directing, guiding influence of the Holy Ghost more than within the 531 pages of the Book of Mormon. I almost wish that we could rename the book and reverse the title to call it Another testament of Jesus Christ, the Book of Mormon.
- 46:28 I have found him on every page. I have found myself on every page, and the amazing thing is, you two both know this better than I do. We've taught this and we've read this, and we studied this book our whole careers, our whole lives. And yet every time I begin a new semester or a new cycle of, in this case, Come, Follow Me. And it's now the Book of Mormon year. I am more excited now than I've ever been before to rediscover this book, to dive in and to find covenantal connections with the Savior. And to try a little harder to move his work forward more powerfully than any other time in my whole life.
- 47:13 And the book is that deep and that broad that we'll never get to the bottom of it. There will never be a day when I say, "Okay, moving on. We've exhausted that book." Because I am amazed every single time I... I can flop it open to a random page and stick my finger down. And I find new writings from time to time very similar to the Liahona, and it points the direction I should

go in the wilderness today. It's relevant for us today. My testimony and my invitation to all of us is don't just read the book, immerse in a serious study of the book to find your connection with the Savior. He's on every page.

- Hank Smith: 47:57 Tyler, thank you. What a treat it has been for us to have you with us on followHIM. We love it and we support you.
- John Bytheway: 48:05 I'm just so glad there's so many out there, faithful voices. We're on the same team for crying out loud and we need each other.
- Hank Smith: 48:14 Yeah, Elder Holland said, "The race is against sin, not against each other." That's what we're after, helping people. We're all on the same team trying to help people. Tyler, thank you for coming across to our channel. We're grateful.
- 48:28 We want to thank Dr. Tyler Griffin for being with us today. We want to thank our executive producer Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen, and we always remember our founder Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We get to start 2 Nephi on followHIM. Today's transcripts, show notes and additional references are available on our website, [followhim.co](http://followhim.co). 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.
- 49:04 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: 49:25 Whatever questions or problems you have, the answer is always found in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Turn to him. Follow him.

## ROBBED AT GUNPOINT



- Hank Smith: 00:02 Hello, my friends. Welcome to another FollowHIM Favorites. This year, John and I are telling a single story that goes along with this week's lesson. Unless we have multiple stories, then we might tell a bunch more. But John, this week we're in 1 Nephi 16 through 22. And you told me that you had a pretty awesome story for chapter 17 right there in the beginning. So what is this story you've been telling me about?
- John Bytheway: 00:23 It kind of goes along with the end of 1 Nephi 17:1. We're wading through afflictions, very next sentence, "And so great were the blessings of the Lord upon us." It's like, wait, did you just switch moods here or something? How do you do that? Years ago, I had a book called Chicken Soup for the Soul at Work. You know how many of those there are, right? Chicken Soup for the Left-Handed Aluminum Siding Installer's Soul, right? There's a million of them.
- 00:49 But this one was the soul at work. There was this guy named Jerry. He was always happy, always in a good mood, and people would be bugged by that. "What is with you? Why are you always?" And he said, "Well, I just, every morning, remind myself I have a choice. I can have a good day or a bad day, so I choose to have a good day. If somebody yells at me, I can take it personal or I can put it in perspective, so I put it in perspective." And, well, apparently he was a restaurant owner, and I didn't know this, but to leave the back door where the deliveries come open, if you own a restaurant, is a really bad idea. Some robbers had been watching the place, held them up at gunpoint, three of them.
- Hank Smith: 01:24 So they come in the back door?
- John Bytheway: 01:25 Yeah, came in the back door. He was shaking so nervously trying to open the safe, that one of the robbers thought he was trying to make a move and shot him. He's in the back of his restaurant. They shoot him, they run away, and he's thinking, there's nobody here, nobody's coming. And this one thought, I choose

to live. So he focuses on I choose to live. Somebody found him. He said the ambulance dudes were awesome. That we're going to get you out of this. He said, "But when they wheeled me into the ER, I saw the looks on the faces of the doctors and nurses. And I saw them looking and shaking their heads, and they were like, 'He's barely conscious this guy isn't going to make it.'" And he said, "It scared me. And they're running around," and he said a nurse was barking orders at everybody.

02:12 And finally she looked down at him and yelled at him, "Sir, are you allergic to anything?" And he said, "Yes." And he said the whole room stopped. They all stopped. And he said, "Bullets." And then they all cracked up. He looked at the doctor and he said, "Doctor, I am choosing to live, so operate on me as if I am going to live." Now, we all wish it were that easy. But I love that he knew I can choose the very best way to look at this right now, kind of like Nephi did there in 1 Nephi 17. Because Nephi can say, we're wading through afflictions and isn't this great? Pass the raw meat.

Hank Smith: 02:49 Right. Well, John, that's fantastic. You are free to choose, right? You are free to choose. And he sees we're hip deep, you've told me. We're wading through afflictions.

John Bytheway: 03:00 Wading through affliction.

Hank Smith: 03:01 So great were the blessings of the Lord upon us. John, I love it. I love it. Come join us on our full podcast. It's called FollowHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcasts. We're going to be with Dr. Tyler Griffin this week, and you're going to love what he does with these chapters. And then come back next week, we'll do another story on FollowHIM Favorites.