



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:

Are we capable of affecting lasting change in the lives of others? As Dr. Brian Mead examines Ammon's journeys, he uncovers the heart of missionary work and the power of conversion.

Part 2:

Dr. Brian Mead continues his discussion of God's plan of redemption and the power of service and faith in true conversion.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part I - Dr. Brian Mead
- 00:49 Themes in this week's lesson
- 02:15 Introduction of Dr. Mead
- 04:16 *Come, Follow Me* introduction
- 6:41 Mosiah 28:1-2 - Sons of Mosiah teach the Lamanites
- 08:01 Alma 17:2-3 - Mormon tells the reunion first
- 12:16 The angel was the beginning of testimonies
- 13:24 A recipe to prepare for teaching
- 15:12 Alma 17:4 - A 14-year mission ups and downs
- 18:51 "We aren't done with her yet"
- 20:42 Alma 17:11-15 - Two goals amidst wild ferocious people
- 25:55 Bruce R. McConkie's "The Three Pillars of Eternity"
- 27:56 The Plan of Redemption is about relationships
- 31:02 Consecrated families send missionaries
- 34:29 Alma 17:22-4 - Ammon and the king
- 26:19 Ammon and the flocks
- 38:31 Serve, win, and lead
- 41:51 Alma 17: 27 Ammon protects the flocks
- 44:06 Ammon or Jesus?
- 46:46 Affliction and opportunities
- 48:18 Dr. Mead shares a personal story about a change of personal plans
- 51:07 Alma 17:52 - Good examples "unto them in me"
- 55:23 Alma 18:1-10 - Overview
- 57:28 The power of service in spiritual work
- 1:00:20 Alma 18:12-13 - Ammon helps us reach our neighbors
- 1:02:58 Alma 18:20-24 - Wise yet harmless
- End of Part 1 - Dr. Brian Mead

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II—Dr. Brian Mead
- 00:08 Alma 18:32 - God in relation to His children
- 01:27 Alma 18:34 - What does God teach in the creation story?
- 05:32 Truth changes thoughts and behavior
- 07:47 Creation, Fall, and the Atonement and Children of God
- 09:20 A teaching moment at a wedding reception
- 13:10 The faith of the Queen
- 16:30 Listening to the Lord's servants
- 17:46 Alma 19:13-14 - Joy and falling to the ground
- 18:47 Alma 19:16-21 - Heroic Abish
- 21:02 Abish prepared to change a nation

- 23:26 Alma 19:31 The Queen and conversion to Jesus
- 26:27 Alma 19:37 Relationships before teaching
- 28:32 Alma 21 - The importance of good friends
- 31:33 Dr. Mead shares a story about friendship
- 33:24 Alma 21:4 - King Noah, Naaman, and the effect of their choices
- 36:17 Alma 20 - Ammon and Aaron: Different missions and different results
- 27:55 Alma 20:6-7 Ammon and King Lamoni
- 38:55 Alma 20:17-26 - The goodness of Ammon
- 41:39 Ammon's love of Lamoni changed the King's heart
- 42:32 Dr. Mead shares a personal story about his grandparents
- 45:28 A letter from a child to President Uchtdorf
- 46:31 Alma 22 Aaron teaches the Lamanites
- 48:07 Alma 22:10-14- Aaron teaches the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement of Jesus
- 50:10 Alma 22:15-18 Giving away sins and the joy of repentance
- 53:19 The Jesus's power to change lives
- 58:31 Dr. Mead shares his testimony of Jesus and the scriptures
- 1:04:25 End of Part II– Dr. Brian Mead

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Biographical Information:



Brian Mead was raised in the small town of Mt. Green, UT and graduated from Morgan High School. He attended school in Rexburg until receiving a mission call to the Italy, Milan Mission. After completing a bachelor's degree from BYU in neuroscience and minoring in English, Brian began working for Seminaries and Institutes of Religion. He taught both seminary and institute and was eventually transferred to the Church Office Building. While there, he was a member of the Training Services Division and primarily focused on several topics that are near and dear to his heart such as disabilities, mental and emotional health, suicide prevention, LGBTQ, poverty, and many others. His focus has always been on helping to build and strengthen the body of Christ and making all who walk the covenant path feel that they are seen, valued, needed, and belong (see 1 Corinthians 13). While working for Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, he completed a PhD in applied social psychology. He and his wife, Annie, are a BYU success story. They reside in Salem, UT with their four children.

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| Hank Smith: | 00:00:03 | Hello, everyone. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name's Hank Smith, I'm your host. I'm here with my instrumental co-host, John Bytheway. Welcome, John. The title of this week's lesson is, I Will Make an Instrument of thee Alma 17 through 22. John, when you think of Alma 17 through 22, what do you think of? |
| John Bytheway: | 00:00:25 | I have students, "Hey, is there a good book I could read before my mission?" I'm like, "Alma. Read Alma 17 through 22." What I love about it is there's stories, but there's so many principles that we can draw out and look at that could help and so many in our culture, if they haven't been on a mission, they know people who have and have heard stories and they're great ones in here. That's what I'm looking forward to. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:00:49 | Absolutely. Missionary work is a major theme. John, we're with Dr. Brian Mead today, fantastic friend of mine. We've been friends for over a decade. One of the most brilliant people I know. Brian, what are we looking forward to today? Where are you going to take us? |
| Dr. Brian Mead: | 00:01:06 | You know what? I love the story of Ammon. I mean, 12-year-old me thought the story of Ammon cutting off the arms of the people trying to protect the flocks of King Lamoni is the greatest story ever, and current me, I still love the story of Ammon and his brothers as they go on this Lamanite mission. However, I've grown to love how the lives of so many people are changed as they come to understand their identity as children of heavenly parents. We live in a culture where identity is talked so much about, and I love what President Nelson taught to the young adults a few years ago when he said, "I believe that if the Lord were speaking to you directly tonight, the first thing he would make sure you understand is your true identity." My dear friends, you are literally spirit children of God, and so today, I'm excited that we're going to see incredible things and incredible changes that happen in the lives of so many wonderful people as they come to realize that God is really there and that we're his children. |

Hank Smith:	00:01:58	These are huge transition moments for so many. It's wonderful to see how these lives interact, these crossroads where people come together and everything changes. John, Brian is new to our podcast. Can you introduce him to everybody who's listening?
John Bytheway:	00:02:15	Yes. I'm excited to introduce Dr. Brian Mead who was raised in Mountain Green, Utah. I drove through that place once and I thought, "Why do I live where I live? I could live here." He attended a school in Rexburg, received a mission call to Italy, Milan mission, after completing a bachelor's degree from BYU in neuroscience and minor in English. Hank, I hope my neuros are working today because this could be bad.
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:02:42	Do you know what you can tell? Religious ed was not my original plan.
John Bytheway:	00:02:47	He worked for seminaries and institutes and taught both seminary and institute and eventually was transferred to the church office building and he was a member of the training services division and focused on several topics that are near and dear to his heart, such as disabilities, mental, emotional health, suicide prevention, LGBTQ, poverty, and many others. His focus has always been on helping building and strengthening the body of Christ, making all those who walk the covenant path feel they're seen, valued, needed, and belong. While he was working for seminaries and institutes, he completed a PhD in applied social psychology and he and his wife Annie are a BYU success story. They live in Salem, Utah with their four children. We're thrilled to have you. Hank, how are your synapses, are they firing?
Hank Smith:	00:03:38	I hope so. Brian, welcome.
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:03:41	I really am grateful to be here. Thank you.
Hank Smith:	00:03:43	We're excited. I've said since 12 years ago since I met Brian, if I was ever on one of those game shows and I had to phone a friend and it could be about anything, a question about anything, it would be Brian Mead 100%. I've never known someone who knows so much about so much. It's pretty incredible, John, you'll find out today. He can rattle off facts. You ask about any moment in history, he knows about it. You ask about any current event, he knows about it. We're in for a treat today. I'm going to read a little bit from the Come Follow Me manual and then I'm excited to see where you take us in these chapters. The opening paragraph says, "Think of all the reasons people might give for not sharing the gospel. I don't

know enough or I'm not sure they would be interested, or maybe I'm afraid I'll be rejected.

00:04:33 Maybe you found yourself thinking similar things at times. The Nephites had an additional reason for not sharing the gospel with the Lamanites. They were described as a wild and hardened and ferocious people, a people who delighted in murdering the Nephites". I can see how that would be a hindrance. "But the Sons of Mosiah had an even stronger reason why they felt they must share the gospel with the Lamanites. They were desirous that salvation should be declared to every creature for they could not bear that any human soul should perish. This love that inspired Ammon and his brothers can also inspire you to share the gospel with your family, friends and acquaintances, even those who may not seem likely to accept it." Wonderful opener to the lesson this week. Brian, how do you want to start?

Dr. Brian Mead: 00:05:22 I think as we start, it may be helpful just to have a little flashback, a little reminder of who these Sons of Mosiah are and when they step into the Book of Mormon story, they're with Alma the Younger and they're not the phenomenal of righteous young men that they ultimately become. They're going about trying to destroy the church with Alma the Younger. They're trying to destroy everything that their fathers, Alma and King Mosiah, had tried to build among the Nephite people, and then they had that incredible moment where an angel of God comes and he rocks them to the core and we see that it changes them. I just want to step back and just share a couple of verses about these young men that we get from the end of the Book of Mosiah.

00:06:00 Mosiah 27, we get their names and it says, starting in verse 34 and four of them were the Sons of Mosiah and their names were Ammon and Aaron and Omner and Himni, and these are the names of the Sons of Mosiah, and they traveled throughout all the land of Zarahemla, and among all the people who were under the reign of King Mosiah zealously striving to repair all the injuries which they had done to the church, confessing all their sins and publishing all the things which they had seen and explaining the prophecies and the scriptures to all who desired to hear them, and thus they were instruments in the hands of God and bringing many to the knowledge of the truth, yay, even to the knowledge of the Redeemer. The Sons of Mosiah, I love what they try to do. They recognize the impact that they had among the Nephite people and they did everything they could to fix it.

- 00:06:41 As they finished that experience, it's not enough for them. As you go to chapter 28, it says, "Now it came to pass that after the Sons of Mosiah had done these things, they took a small number of them and returned to their father, the king, and desired of him that he would grant unto them that they might with these whom they had selected, go to the land of Nephi, that they may preach the things which they had heard and that they may impart the word of God to their brother in the Lamanites, that perhaps they may bring them to a knowledge of their Lord their God and convince them of the iniquities of their fathers. That perhaps they might cure them of the hatred towards the Nephites, that they might also be brought to rejoice in the Lord their God, that they might become friendly to one another and that there should be no more contentions in all the land which the Lord their God had given them."
- 00:07:25 In this part of the story, they go to their father and they say, "Do you know what? We want to go to the Lamanite people." As a father, I can absolutely understand King Mosiah looks at them and he says, "No." Hank, you introduced who these people are, or at least the way that the Nephites perceive the Lamanites and the lack of friendship and contention among them. King Mosiah doesn't want to let them go and you look in verse five and it came to pass that they did plead with their father many days that they might go up to the land of Nephi. It's finally after King Mosiah goes to God that he finally allows them to go and this is where they step out of the Book of Mormon story. The Book of Mormon continues with the story of Alma the Younger, we get the story of Amulek, and it's not until Alma 17 that the Sons of Mosiah stepped back into the storyline, and that's where I want to begin today in Alma 17.
- Hank Smith: 00:08:13 This is interesting how Mormon does this. Instead of telling the two stories at once, he says, "Let's cover an entire story, Alma, and then we'll go back and we'll cover another story that were happening at the same time."
- Dr. Brian Mead: 00:08:28 As we start in Alma chapter 17, it's at the end of the story. He doesn't begin with the beginning of their mission experience. As you look in chapter 17 and now it came to pass that as Alma, who's journeying from the land of Gideon southward away to the land of Manti. Behold, to his astonishment, he met the Sons of Mosiah journeying towards the land of Zarahemla. They're coming home at the end of their mission experience, and I love what happens between Alma the Younger and the Sons of Mosiah. In verse two it says, "Now the Sons of Mosiah were with Alma at the time the angel first appeared unto him, therefore, Alma did rejoice exceedingly to see his brethren."

The closest thing I can even compare this moment to is a couple of years ago, I was able to go back to my mission. You read that I served in Italy, it was awesome. I was able to go back and travel through during the temple open house, and during that temple open house I ran into missionaries that I hadn't seen for over 20 years.

00:09:19 As we saw each other, we hugged each other, we laughed together, we cried together, we told stories, we caught up on each other's lives. This is what's happening with Alma the Younger and the Sons of Mosiah at the beginning of chapter 17. I love what it says after this, not only do they have this incredible moment of rejoicing together, but in the verse it says, "And what added more to his joy, they were still his brethren in the Lord." Then we get this phrase, yea. It's one of these amplifier phrases that's going to expound on what was said right before and it tells us what had happened to them and they had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth. That we often, like you said in the introduction, that we tell these perspective missionaries or these missionaries that are going out, become like the Sons of Mosiah.

00:10:05 Do the things that'll help you to have a knowledge of truth. In my scriptures a couple of years ago, I can't even remember when I did this, I wrote in a cross-reference because it teaches us how these Sons of Mosiah became these incredible missionaries, had this strong knowledge of truth. I wrote in the margins of my scripture's Doctrine and Covenants Section 88 verse 118. It's in that wonderful verse that we're commanded to seek after three things. One of the things that we're commanded to seek after is to seek learning even by study and by faith, and we see it in the way the Sons of Mosiah prepared themselves. As we keep going in verse two, we see how they prepared themselves through study. It says, "For they were men of a sound understanding and they had searched the scriptures diligently that they might know the word of God." They've paid a price, they read the scriptures and they pondered on the scriptures and they sought to understand them so that they could know the word of God.

Hank Smith: 00:11:08 One of my favorite quotes, it's from Richard L. Evans who says, "It is good to be faithful. It is better to be faithful and competent." I think you get those two there, like you said in section 88 by study and by faith. It can't just be, "Oh, I'm just going to fast and pray," which is good. That's part of learning by faith, but you have to learn by study. There's something to be said of knowing the scriptures, knowing what is taught where.

John Bytheway:	00:11:38	These four could have said, "Oh, look, we have a testimony. We saw an angel knocked our buddy Alma over and we carried him to his parents." That wasn't the end of their testimony, that was the beginning. Then they started doing all of these things you're talking about, Hank, so that they could become competent. I love how also in verse three they taught with power and authority of God. How do you do that? Well, what we just read, they searched the scriptures diligently. They gave themselves to prayer and fasting. You might think, "Oh, if I saw an angel, I'd have a testimony." Well, some have seen angels and haven't changed that much. They saw it and it was the beginning of whoa, and they really started to study after that.
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:12:18	One of the most common questions I get asked is why do we grade for religion classes? I go back to that quote, Hank, that you shared from Elder Evans, and I go back to my students and I tell them of my own experience. Religious ed was not my original plan. I had other aspirations and good grades was really important, and I was a really good BYU student. I was trying to do everything that I should, and I also tell my students one of the reasons that I began reading general conference and actually studying general conference was in order to get a good grade in my teachings of the living prophet's class. It's the beginnings. We need to learn. We need to study the gospel of Jesus Christ by both study and by faith. We need to be willing to pay a price and we need to be willing to live and act on those things that we know to be righteous and true.
Hank Smith:	00:13:05	There was a time that I needed to put other things away that were good. What I listened to on the radio, on my way to work or what I was reading at night before I went to bed. There was a time that I had to put some of that away so I could study the gospel more.
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:13:24	The Sons of Mosiah, they do this. It's where we get the impact of what they do. Right at the end of verse three, therefore, they had the spirit of prophecy and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God.
Hank Smith:	00:13:37	That's a recipe, isn't it, to be prepared to teach?
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:13:43	I think it is, that it gives us the pattern that as we study the word of God, as we pay a price, as we search the scriptures, as we search sacred text, and I would include with that the words of modern prophets, seers and revelators. As we begin to act on those things, as we begin to pray to God and as we communicate with him and as we ask for clarity and as we ask for revelation from him, as we fast, as we put other things that

are really important, like you said, Hank, we put God first ahead of those things. That power comes into our lives through revelation and through understanding and we can become incredible tools in the hands of God.

- John Bytheway: 00:14:19 I'm still thinking about they were still his brethren in the Lord. I'm a bit older than you two and I've missed a few of mission reunions, but just this past April, I got to go to a 40-year mission reunion with my mission president there who's in his 90s. I saw elders and sisters I haven't seen for a long time and that phrase, they were still his brethren or his sisters in the Lord. I was on cloud nine coming home seeing how many of them. One of them, I saw this young man, he said, "My dad was Elder Sia, SIA, and he passed away." I didn't know he passed away. Elder Sia was one of my companions, but here's his son who's a student at BYU firm in the faith, and that phrase right there was what filled me with joy, that day.
- Dr. Brian Mead: 00:15:12 As we continue in the story of Alma the Younger as he has this experience, I just want to go into verse four because it shares with us how long they've been on this mission. This is not a mission that's gone a couple of weeks or a couple of months or even a couple of years. Look at the beginning of verse four, which it is interesting. I mean, have they even spoken to their father in these 14 years? There's a lot of questions that I have, but let me just start to read verse four and it says, "And they had been teaching the word of God for the space of 14 years among the Lamanites."
- 00:15:41 I think over the years as I've read this verse, I've really focused on kind of the second half. I focused on the miracles that have happened where it says, "Having had much success in bringing many to the knowledge of the truth, yay by the power of their words. Many were brought before the altar of God to call upon his name and confess their sins before him." It seems as we move into these coming chapters that their mission experience goes so quickly, but the reality is this is a 14-year experience.
- Hank Smith: 00:16:06 I've told some people who have served missions, 14 years makes your mission look like one transfer.
- Dr. Brian Mead: 00:16:13 I couldn't even imagine. I'm a terrible journal writer, but I wrote my mission journal every single day. My MTC teacher said that I should do that. Right now, with my kids, we try to sit and we read it, I got to a point in my journals where there was a four-month period I didn't teach a single discussion, nobody listened to us. Elder Paul V. Johnson a General Authority 70 who was also sustained as the General Sunday School president this last

conference said about this experience. He said, "Making important changes is typically difficult. Sometimes the direction is clear but the execution can be very challenging. Think of the Sons of Mosiah. They had a clear purpose that salvation should be declared to every creature and that perhaps they might save some few souls.

00:16:59 It is easy to focus only on the miraculous success and forget how challenging things were. They tried everything. They were at it for 14 years and their experiences included suffering every privation, teaching in the streets, temples and synagogues, and being cast out mock, spit upon and stone-bound and cast into prison, but they persevered, kept their focus and received the Lord's power to accomplish their mission." I love what Elder Johnson taught. Obviously, the Lord is able to bring about amazing changes in a short period of time. How often what I've often found is that meaningful changes happen over a long period of time in my life. Annie and I often reflect on our children. I think for any of us that have children, we love these children. I tell my children all the time, being a parent is one of the most incredible things that I've ever done. I tell them it's been incredibly wonderful.

00:17:47 It's been incredibly amazing. It's been incredibly fulfilling, and at the same time, it's been incredibly hard, incredibly sad at times and incredibly difficult. We're so proud of what they're doing in their lives, and yet there are times that we look at these children and we worry. It seems the response of what our Heavenly Father is continually telling us right now is just give them time. Give them time. I look at our son who's 20 years old, again, I am so proud of him. He's doing so many great things. I worry at times, and it's just that idea, let the Lord operate in his life. It's one of those things I think we've all realized that God is really good at playing the long game. Sometimes with my children, I wish that things would happen immediately within their lives. The story of Ammon is a great reminder. 14 years, it took 14 years to have these miracles happen in the lives of the Lamanites. I need to be willing to allow time to operate within the lives of my children and others.

Hank Smith: 00:18:51 Brian, what you just said reminded me of a story that I haven't thought of in so long. John, I don't think even you have heard me tell this story. I gave a talk once out in Spanish Fork about the Provo Tabernacle becoming the Provo City Center Temple. A man came up to me afterwards and he told me this story. I didn't write his name down, but I did write the story down because it touched me. He said he had one of these blowups with his teenage daughter. They were butting heads and they

had had an argument and he had left and he went to the construction site of that temple of the Provo City Center Temple.

00:19:27 There was a little viewing spot that you could sit in. I don't know if either of you remember that, but you could sit on a couple of benches and you could look at the construction. No one was there. It was late at night, he's sitting on this bench staring at that construction and he said, "A worker came by, construction worker. The worker said to the man, it's amazing, isn't it? This father said, yeah, it's incredible what you guys are doing. Unbelievable. This construction worker, like an angel said to this man, well, don't judge her too quickly. We're not done with her yet." He said he went home and apologized to his daughter and just what you said, Brian, give it some time. We're all a work in progress.

Dr. Brian Mead: 00:20:12 It's one of the beauties of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that God is not finished with us and that he allows us to grow and to repent and to change. He doesn't give up on us when we haven't figured it out when we're 20 years old or 30 years old or 40 years old. That's a beautiful story. Thank you for sharing that, Hank. I don't think these Sons of Mosiah had any clue at the beginning of their mission of how long they'd be gone or how hard their mission was actually going to be. We see some of that in the text.

00:20:42 Mormon shares some of that with us as we start in verse 11 in chapter 17, "And the Lord said unto them also, go forth among the Lamanites, thy brethren, and establish my word. Yet ye shall be patient and long suffering and afflictions that ye may show forth good examples unto them and me, and I will make an instrument of thee in my hands unto the salvation of many souls, and it came to pass that the hearts of the Sons of Mosiah and also those that were with them took courage to go forth unto the Lamanites to declare unto them the word of God."

00:21:13 Now, these Lamanites are not an easy people, or at least there haven't been friendly relationships. We see that in verse 14 as Mormon begins to describe them where it says, "And assuredly it was great for they had undertaken to preach the word of God to a wild and hardened and a ferocious people, a people who delighted in murdering the Nephites and robbing and plundering them and their hearts were set upon riches or upon gold and silver and precious stones. Yet they sought to obtain these things by murdering and plundering that they might not labor for them with their own hands."

- 00:21:45 Then in verse 15, "Thus they were a very indolent or lazy people, many of whom did worship idols and the curse of God had fallen upon them because of the traditions of their fathers. Notwithstanding the promises of the Lord were extended unto them on conditions of repentance. "As Mormon explains what this mission experience is going to be, he then shares in verse 16 what these Sons of Mosiah and those who are with them are trying to accomplish or hoping to bring about in the lives of these people. In verse 16, we see therefore this was the cause for which the Sons of Mosiah had undertaken the work. Then we get two phrases that begin with that perhaps, two things that they're trying to bring about.
- 00:22:23 The first one is that perhaps, they might bring them unto repentance, and the second that perhaps, they might bring them to know of the plan of redemption. I began in my little tease at the beginning of this podcast saying that it's beautiful to see what happens as we come to know our identity as children of heavenly parents. I think it's important that we understand and that we recognize the two things that the Sons of Mosiah were trying to bring about in the lives of the Lamanites were things that connect us to God in a very personal way. I think each of us have taught hundreds of youth throughout the church over the years. As I talk of repentance, I ask the question, tell me what repentance is. You recognize they often give us the answers is, well, repentance means that we need to feel bad about what we've done. We need to try to fix it, we need to apologize, we need to change behavior.
- 00:23:13 The reality though, at the core, those things aren't repentance. They're part of the process of repentance. What repentance is, at its core, it's about a relationship with God and it's about seeing us in our relationship with him as our father. I want to share how the Bible dictionary defines repentance for us. It begins by saying the Greek word of which this is the translation denotes a change of mind. You'll notice it doesn't focus on a change of behavior. We all recognize that changing behavior is a critical part of repentance, but repentance at the beginning, it starts with changing our mind or our thoughts or the way that we see a few really important people. It says the Greek word of which this is the translation denotes a change of mind.
- 00:24:01 It implies a fresh view about God, about oneself and about the world. Repentance is when we change the way that we see God, and instead of seeing him as maybe a second or a third priority in our life, he becomes our first priority and we want to connect with him and we seek to draw unto him because we see ourselves as his children. Then we're willing to be obedient to

the things that he asks us to do, not because we necessarily love those things or those things are easy for us to do, but because we know and we trust and we love God.

00:24:53 That's the first thing that these Sons of Mosiah are trying to bring about in the lives of these Lamanites. They want them to see God and they want them to see themselves as children of him. Second, they want them to understand God's plan. All of us recognize that we can call God's plan a number of different things. We often call it a plan of salvation. We call it a plan of happiness. I think it's fascinating in these chapters. It always refers to it as the plan of redemption. Both Ammon and Aaron and the other Sons of Mosiah focus on what Elder McConkie called the Three Pillars of the Plan of Salvation. They focus on teaching the importance of the creation, the Fall and the atonement of Jesus Christ. As we go deeper into these chapters, we're going to see the power that comes as we realize that there is a God, and of the incredible and beautiful truths we learn about God through the creation, the Fall and the atonement of Jesus Christ.

John Bytheway: 00:25:55 Brian, when I was a missionary, I want to say June '82 Ensign. It was pretty exciting when the Ensign came on a mission, and there was an article called Christ and the Creation. It was the first time I'd ever read Elder McConkie called it The three Pillars of Eternity, the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement. I remember at the time thinking, "Huh." Then I started to see how Aaron in one verse mentions them coming up. Ammon, it's separate by few verses where he gets into the plan of redemption. That was an aha moment for me about what do you teach people like the Lamanites who don't know anything about God? The Creation, the Fall and the Atonement is here, here's how we got here and here's who made us, and that's who God is, and here's the problem, death and sickness and everything, and then the Atonement, the plan of redemption. They used to have a seminary video with a bridge and three pillars that were labeled Creation, Fall, Atonement.

Dr. Brian Mead: 00:26:58 That's one of the things that I really want to focus on is, Ammon, and we're going to see Aaron, they both begin with this idea that there is a God, but there are so many different beliefs about who God really is. It's through the story of creation, it's through the story of fall, and it's through the atonement of Jesus Christ that we really find out who God is and who Jesus Christ is.

John Bytheway: 00:27:21 It's always fun to say, get out your phones and find the word plan in the King James Bible. It's nowhere. It doesn't appear one

time, which is crazy. There's so many hints of it. As in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. Clearly, there's a plan but it doesn't use that actual word, and then we look it up in the Book of Mormon and we see plan of redemption, I think 15 times. Then like you just did, I point, look at the references. Who's using that phrase? It's Alma and the Sons of Mosiah almost exclusively.

- Dr. Brian Mead: 00:27:56 This plan of redemption really is a plan of relationships. When I ask individuals to draw the plan of salvation, they draw what we've drawn probably hundreds of times in our lifetime. They draw the diagram and they draw circles, lines and arrows that ultimately culminate with a sun or a moon or stars. I'm not saying that that's a bad way of representing the plan of salvation. I actually think it's helpful, and then I mentioned to them one of the most important things I think we can recognize within this plan that at its core, it's a plan of relationships. I ask them to go back and I ask them to think about that pre-earth life before we came to this earth.
- 00:28:35 There's obviously many things that we don't know, but the few truths that we do know of that pre-earth life, they center on relationships. As we learn in the family proclamation, we are children of heavenly parents. A loving Heavenly Father proposed a plan, a loving older brother stepped in to be a Savior, to be a Redeemer within this plan. Then I go to the Celestial Kingdom and I ask, "Why do we draw it as a sun?" They say things, "Well, it's bright and it's glorious and it's amazing." Which it rightfully is. It is. I ask, "What makes the Celestial Kingdom so wondrous? What makes it so amazing? What makes it so bright and what makes it so glorious?" When you think about it, they all center on relationships.
- 00:29:14 That as we go to the Celestial Kingdom, we're back in the presence of Heavenly Father. We return to God's presence. Within the Celestial Kingdom, we've developed a personal intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. He's become our Savior, he's become our Redeemer. The Celestial Kingdom is so amazing because of the relationships that we have with family that can endure for eternity. As we begin talking about these important ideas of repentance and as we talk about this beautiful plan of redemption that Ammon and Aaron and others teach to these wonderful people, I think it's important that we remember that each of these things center on our relationship to God and to others.
- John Bytheway: 00:29:53 Thank you, Brian. Looking at verse 16, sometimes when the scriptures say something, I'd like to ask myself, notice what it

doesn't say. They had undertaken the work that perhaps they might bring unto them repentance, that perhaps they might bring them to know of the commandments. That is not what it says. What it says is that they might bring them to know of the plan of redemption. Last week, we read Alma 12:32 where it says, "Therefore God gave unto them commandments after having made known unto them the plan of redemption." It gives us the sequence. I love what you said about, okay, why? You can hear the word redeemer in redemption. You don't hear as easily in salvation unless you think Salvador. Isn't that the word for Savior in Spanish? Try to put Christ in the center of the plan because he's the Redeemer that makes the plan of redemption work or the Savior that makes the plan of salvation work. I love that, that's what they said, we need to teach them the plan of redemption. Then we'll have a place for the commandments once they understand this relationship to the Redeemer.

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| Hank Smith: | 00:31:02 | When I think about our missionaries going out to teach this plan of redemption and how Mosiah must have felt to send his boys to this wild and hardened and ferocious people, I think of the sacrifice of so many Latter-day Saint parents, mothers and fathers, all across the church who though there's probably not a mission like this. I don't think you look up your, as you get your mission call and you think, "Oh, the description of the city is wild and hard and ferocious." Sending your daughter or your son across the world, I want my children to go to Southern Idaho, the nicest people who are going to take good care of them. I think of a family in my ward, Dave and Cheryl Southam, who when their son Sam got his mission call, he opened it up that said Georgia, and they were so excited he's going to Georgia and then he said- |
| John Bytheway: | 00:32:05 | Not that Georgia. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:32:07 | Yeah, I've never heard of Tbilisi, Georgia, and Armenia, and Azerbaijan. All of a sudden, they realized he is not going to Atlanta, Georgia. He is going basically to the mission closest to the Middle East that you can get to and his, Sam's sweet mother, Cheryl, "Oh, wow." I think there's a quiet secret pain, a worry that never leaves a missionary parent. John, you could speak to that. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:32:41 | It backs you up against the wall of faith, yeah, I've got one out right now as you know, and I'll have two out next month. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:32:51 | As my son gets closer and closer to serving a mission, it makes me whoo. |

Dr. Brian Mead:	00:32:58	In my church calling, we just set apart a missionary a couple of months ago, and this mom is just weeping and she said, "They just do not prepare you as a parent of how hard this will be." She says, "I literally feel my heart is being ripped out." It's been amazing. Her child has had an incredible experience on their mission up to this point. The sister in my stake is so grateful for her child's experience, and yet it's hard.
Hank Smith:	00:33:24	I thought being the missionary was the hard part, but I think being the parent is right there. Right there next to it.
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:33:33	I agree.
John Bytheway:	00:33:34	It's awesome to have him call home and what happened, and, oh, man.
Hank Smith:	00:33:40	What Mosiah would've done for FaceTime.
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:33:42	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	00:33:43	Yeah.
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:33:44	Do you know what? Thank you, Hank. That story is an incredible example of just how consecrated families are when it comes to the gathering of Israel, that they're willing to put their children on planes to all over the world and allow them to go and serve. We often, as we mentioned, focus on the sacrifice of the missionaries. You look in the story, we get at the beginning of the story, this incredible sacrifice of a father, the King Mosiah. It's only when God tells him this is a good thing, he's willing to let them go. I love hearing these stories of these parents that allow these children to go and to serve. I want to pick up with the story of the Sons of Mosiah. As they begin this mission experience, they gathered there together. They have this one final moment where Ammon blesses them and then they go their separate directions.
	00:34:29	The story now focuses on Ammon, who like I said at the very beginning, is one of my greatest heroes in the Book of Mormon. We know the story that as he goes his way, he wanders into the kingdom of King Lamoni. He's taken prisoner, he's tied up, he's brought before the king. I want to pick up in verse 22, "The king asked him a question and the king inquired of Ammon if it was his desire to dwell in the land among the Lamanites or among his people." It would be really interesting to be able to ask Lamoni what he thinks of Ammon at this time, who he thinks he is. Does he know that he's a missionary coming to preach the

gospel to him? Does he know that he should be next in line to be king of the Nephite people? We just don't know.

00:35:08 Then in verse 23, "And Ammon said unto him, yea, I desire to dwell among this people for a time. Yea, and perhaps until the day I die." I don't think Ammon wants to make this mission story about him. We're going to talk in a moment how I really believe that Ammon wants to glorify God and show forth the power of God, and yet we see little glimpses throughout the story, the impact of Ammon's goodness that he has during this mission experience and with Lamoni. He says it in the very next verse, it came to pass at King Lamoni was much pleased with Ammon. Again, we don't know exactly why he was pleased with him. We don't know if he discovered that he's a Nephite prince. We don't know if he's impressed with him because of who he is or what he says or that he just desires to serve.

00:35:52 It does say, again, and it came to pass that King Lamoni was much pleased with Ammon, and did cause that his bands should be loosed and he would that Ammon should take one of his daughters to wife. Then it goes on, Ammon looks at him, and in verse 25, "But Ammon said unto him, nay, but I will be thy servant. Therefore, Ammon became a servant to King Lamoni, and it came to pass that he was set among the servants to watch the flocks of Lamoni according to the custom of the Lamanites." We now move into my favorite primary story when I was little of Ammon and this incredible experience he has as he tries to protect the flocks of King Lamoni, and I want us to read verses 25 through 39. I just want us to see the storyline.

John Bytheway: 00:36:32 "Ammon said unto him, nay, but I will be thy servant. Therefore, Ammon became a servant to King Lamoni, and it came to pass that he was set among other servants to watch the flocks of Lamoni, according to the custom of the Lamanites. After he had been in the service of the king three days, as he was with the Lamanite servants going forth with their flocks to the place of water, which was called the Water of Sebus, and all the Lamanites drive their flocks hither that they may have water. Therefore, as Ammon and the servants of the king were driving forth their flocks to this place of water, behold a certain number of the Lamanites who had been with their flocks to water, stood and scattered the flocks of Ammon and the servants of the king, and they scattered them insomuch that they fled many ways.

00:37:14 Now, the servants of the king began to murmur saying, now the king will slay us as he has our brethren because their flocks were scattered by the wickedness of those men. They began to weep exceedingly saying, behold, our flocks are scattered

already. Now they wept because of the fear of being slain. Now, when Ammon saw this, his heart was swollen within him for joy, for said he, I will show forth my power unto these my fellow servants, or the power which is in me in restoring these flocks unto the king that I may win the hearts of these my fellow servants that I may lead them to believe in my words."

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| Dr. Brian Mead: | 00:37:49 | King Lamoni has given an assignment that obviously is not the greatest assignment to have as a servant of the king. We're going to see in just a moment that many individuals have gone and tried to fulfill this assignment, and every time the flock of the king have been scattered, what is the king's response to these individuals? |
| John Bytheway: | 00:38:08 | Not good. |
| Dr. Brian Mead: | 00:38:09 | He kills them. It doesn't sound like Lamoni is planning on Ammon being around for a long period of time. In this moment, Ammon goes back to the promises that he's been given and his father's been given, and he looks at the fear of those around him. I love that he recognizes that this is an opportunity. This is a moment for him to show forth the power of God. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:38:31 | He's not laughing at their misfortune. He's going, here's an opportunity to fulfill that promise my father gave me. One of the things I've got in my scriptures really tiny is a number one next to the word win and a number two next to the word lead. I think that could be a sequence. I may win the hearts of these, my fellow servants, that I may lead them to believe in my words. Many years ago, I was at Austin P State College. It's Austin P University now in Clarksville, Tennessee. When I was there, I was the session director for an EFY there. At the beginning of the week, I told, there were about 450 just classy Southern hospitality, Tennessee teenagers, and I told them the story of Ammon. I asked them, "At the end of the week, do you think that these people will remember your name?" |
| | 00:39:24 | They all said, "Probably not." I said, "Do you think they'll remember that we were members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints?" They were like, "Yeah, they might." I told them, "Colleges don't like these camps. They have extra dorm space, fixed costs in the summer. They fill them with computer camp and volleyball camp and math camp and all these different camps, and they don't like it. It's hard and sometimes there's vandalism." I told them the story and said, "If we can win their hearts, then maybe we can lead them to believe in our words. When you go through the cafeteria, when you get your towel from the dorm person on Wednesday, look at them in the |

eye and say, thank you." I'm embarrassed now because they had such Southern manners. They didn't need my help at all. They were so good.

00:40:07 Right after that talk, I'm in the cafeteria surrounded by what we used to call Miammaids. That was kind of the story of my life back then. The cafeteria servers, "Would you like meatloaf or the chicken or the fish?" This girl next to me says, "What's your name?" The server said, "Keisha." She said, "Keisha, I love your braids." Keisha just kind of looked at her like, "Thank you." Plop some food down. When we move over, "What's your name?" The next lady, she said, "Barbara." This little girl, "Thanks for helping us, Barbara." Five days of that, three meals a day, and at the end of the week, I came into Keisha and Barbara, that was their name, and I said, "Keisha, Barbara, y'all going to miss us?" I said y'all because I called them you guys once and they laughed at me.

00:40:55 They said, "We're not guys." I said, "Oh, sorry." All y'all going to miss us? You'll watch this when you see my movie in heaven. She said, "Oh, we love y'all. We don't want the students to come back. We love y'all." We gave away seven copies of the Book of Mormon in the cafeteria. I wondered, if we try to give those copies of the Book of Mormon away on day one, do we have the same result? I love this idea of I will win their hearts. Stephen Covey said, "We have to warm them before we warn them." I thought that that was a cool idea. To a certain extent, people need to be converted to the messenger before they're converted to the message. I have personal experience with that idea of being a sequence. Maybe if we can win their hearts, then maybe we can lead them to believe in our words.

Dr. Brian Mead: 00:41:51 That's one of the great lessons for me throughout this chapter is like I said at the beginning, I don't think Ammon wants us to focus on him, I think he wants us to focus on God. Yet throughout all of this, the goodness of Ammon and just his heart and who he is has an incredible impact on these people. John, thank you for sharing that. Ammon, he invokes courage in the hearts of these individuals. He tells them to go and gather the flocks together. They go and gather them together. He says, "Protect the flocks."

00:42:18 Then Ammon steps forth, and I want to pick up the story again in verse 36 where it says, "But Ammon stood forth and began to cast stones at them with his sling, yea, with his mighty power, he did sling stones amongst them, and thus he slew a certain number of them insomuch that they began to be astonished at his power. Nevertheless, they were angry because of the slain

of their brethren, and they were determined that he should fall. Therefore, seeing that they could not hit him with their stones, they came forth with their clubs to slay him."

00:42:44 Then in verse 37, "But behold, every man that lifted his club to smite Ammon, he smote off their arms with his sword, where he did withstand their blows by smiting their arms with the edge of his sword insomuch that they began to be astonished and began to flee before him, yea, and they were not few in number and he caused them to flee by the strength of his arm." When I was young and in primary, I loved the story of Ammon. In many ways the story of Ammon chopping off the arms took on kind of a mythological stature. I don't think Ammon wants us to focus on him so much as he wants us to focus on God and his incredible mercy and power.

00:43:23 A little bit later on, you'll remember in Alma chapter 26, this is the moment where Ammon is with his brother and they're talking about the experience, and as Ammon is describing it, one of his brothers begins to chastise him for bragging. I just want to share these verses in Alma 26 verses 11 through 12, it says, "But Ammon said unto him, I do not boast in my own strength, nor in my own wisdom, but behold, my joy is full, yea, my heart is brim with joy and I will rejoice in my God. Yea, I know that I am nothing. As to my strength, I am weak. Therefore, I will not boast of myself, but I will boast of my God for in his strength I can do all things. Yea, behold, many mighty miracles we have wrought in this land for which we will praise his name forever."

00:44:06 It's not about Ammon, but it's about the goodness of God. Brother Chad Webb is the administrators of seminaries and institutes. He was also sustained as a counselor in the General Sunday School presidency. This last conference, he gave a talk talking to religious educators about the greatest things that we can do in order to help our students. He said, "I've come to understand and believe that the single most important way in which we can help increase faith in the rising generation is to more fully place Jesus Christ at the center of our teachings and learning by helping our students come to know him, to learn from him, and to consciously strive to become like him. Every day, we must talk of Christ, rejoice in Christ and preach of Christ." Brother Webb then goes on and gives several ways that we can do that, and he adds this, "Another way to help students recognize Jesus's attributes is to focus not just on scripture events, but what those events teach us about the Savior."

- 00:45:02 For instance, why do we teach the story of Ammon cutting off the arms of the men who scattered King Lamoni's sheep? Is it to talk about the greatness of Ammon, or is this story actually about the greatness of God? What does this story teach about the Lord and the way he blesses those who put their trust in him? Ammon's own account concludes with his enthusiastic testimony. I do not boast of my own strength. I know that I am nothing. Therefore, I will boast of my God for in his strength, I can do all things. One of my favorite things to do in this moment as I talk of Ammon is to sit and reflect and say, if Ammon were in front of us, if we were able to have a fireside or if we were able to sit down with Ammon, what do you think he would really want us to know about God from his experience?
- John Bytheway: 00:45:43 Way back there in verse 29, I love when Ammon said, "I will show forth my power." Then there's this pause maybe on the plates "or the power that is in me", that acknowledgement of God right there. That's one of the things we sometimes joke about. Is it possible to erase plates? Do you have to melt the whole plate down and start over? He corrects himself there that it's the power of God that's in me. I had a student write a paper who suggested Ammon was a type of Christ who was willing to lay down his life for the sheep. In verse 33 when Ammon said, "Encircle the flocks roundabout that they flee not." My student, she wrote in her paper that this is like President Hinckley saying, "Give them a friend, give them a responsibility to keep them nourished by the good word." She concluded by saying Verse 39, "And he returned the flocks to the pasture of the king whose sheep they are." I'm, "Okay, you passed the class. That was awesome."
- Hank Smith: 00:46:46 That's fantastic. Brian, that is such a great question. I go back to verse 11, same chapter, where the Lord said, "Go forth among the Lamanites, my brethren. Be patient in longsuffering and afflictions. You may show forth good examples unto them in me." I think often, when we read that verse and we think, oh, they're going to be good examples, and that's true. The good example needed to come from being patient in longsuffering and affliction. Perhaps Ammon sees this difficult moment joyfully because this is my chance to be a good example in affliction, in great difficulty.
- 00:47:29 That's not the first thought when great affliction comes is how am I going to be a great example right now? It is good to remember that how we behave in affliction is usually when eyes are on us, and my friends Audrey and Jake have their little girl up in the hospital in Salt Lake. She's two years old and has leukemia. All eyes are on them at this moment. They are exactly

what you would hope they would be. They are patient in long suffering and afflictions, and that example is making a profound difference for those who are seeing it. I wonder if Ammon would say that about God, that he gave me an opportunity. I don't know if I could call it that, but an opportunity to be a good example in affliction.

Dr. Brian Mead: 00:48:18 I think one thing that comes to my mind connected to that is we're able to do that as we also recognize that God is a God of promises and that he keeps his promises. One of the stories that comes back to my mind is that God is a God of promises and that we can trust those. You read through my biography, obviously, I wasn't planning on becoming a religious educator. That was not the long-term plan.

Hank Smith: 00:48:45 What was the bachelor's degree again?

Dr. Brian Mead: 00:48:47 Neuroscience.

Hank Smith: 00:48:48 Neuroscience.

Dr. Brian Mead: 00:48:49 The original plan was medical school, and it was a goal that I always had, and we were working towards that goal. I don't even know if you know this story, Hank. The week of our one-year wedding anniversary, I woke up in the morning. I've always been a runner. I hopped out of bed to go running. I went head first into the wall. We were living in Wymount. Annie pops up, she laughs a little bit because I've fallen into the wall. She wants to know why. I don't tell her, it's because I can't feel my feet. Day two, I can't feel up to my knees. Day three, I can't feel up to my waist. The week of our one-year wedding anniversary, I'm diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, and it was one of those things that it rocked us. I mean, it just rocked us to our core.

00:49:24 Like I said, we had a lot of goals as far as academic goals. We had a lot of hopes and dreams in our future, and we didn't know what was going to happen or we didn't know what to expect. That day that I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, I called my dad for a blessing. My dad was out of town on a work trip. He immediately started to rearrange his schedule to get home so that he could give me a blessing, and I felt that I needed one then, and so I called my mission president, who was a professor on BYU's campus at that time. I went to go see him in his office. I told him everything going on with us and asked for a blessing, and he asked if Annie and I could come up to his house later that night. He wanted us first to be together as a couple. Second, he wanted to begin fasting. It was during that blessing that there were promises given to us from God.

	00:50:09	Obviously, they didn't take away the fear and they didn't give a perfect answer of what we needed to do in our life, but there were promises given to God that everything would be okay, and I'm grateful that I'm married to Annie because, I mean the fear didn't leave immediately. It's still there. Admittedly, it's still there at times. At times when I express fear or at times that I'm thinking of making a decision that may act counter to some of those promptings of faith that we're feeling, she'll go back to her journal account of that blessing given to us from God. She reminds me, "Brian, God has promised us." Then we'll sit and we'll talk through those blessings and then she'll tell us that we need to act in faith according to those promises. I think Ammon would want us to know of the beautiful truths that all of us have shared. One of those is that God is a God of promise and we can place faith and trust in him even when it seems that we're up against impossible odds, just like Ammon was in this moment.
John Bytheway:	00:51:07	Hank, maybe that's what those two last words mean. I've been sitting here trying to think, show forth good examples unto them and then in me. What does that mean in how I'm involved in this? Maybe that's a perfect example, what you just shared, Brian. Not just good examples of you but good examples unto them in me. I wonder what that means.
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:51:27	That's a great insight, John.
Hank Smith:	00:51:28	Speaking of afflictions, I don't know how old I was when someone told me that whenever Mormon uses the word arms in his books that he writes Mosiah, Alma, that he's talking about weapons. I thought, "Don't tell me that." They said, "It may be that Ammon is smiting off the weapons of the Lamanites." I thought, "I don't want to know that. I want it to be a big bag of arms." Either of you, I mean either of you, John, what do you think? You think it's a big bag of biceps?
John Bytheway:	00:52:01	I've heard that, I've seen it both ways. One of the things that I read in one of the FARMS, remember FARMS when they used to call it FARMS, the Neal A. Maxwell Institute, was that there are Egyptian murals with chariots full of hands that were cut off. Because sometimes generals would exaggerate their battlefield conquests, so they'd have to prove it to the king by literally taking arms off of victims so that they could prove no, really look, see, we did this. Either way, it's gruesome to imagine.
Hank Smith:	00:52:35	I get it, the story is not about the arms, whether they're weapons or actual arms.
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:52:41	I mean eight-year-old me would not like you at this moment.

Hank Smith:	00:52:43	I know.
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:52:45	It is a really good point. I think it's important that we recognize that we've read it one way and thought of it that way throughout our entire lives and there is a possible other explanation to it.
Hank Smith:	00:52:56	Be open to that.
John Bytheway:	00:52:57	One of the things that I noticed here is that in verse 29, Ammon said, "I'll show forth my power. Oh, wait, I mean the power that is in me." At the end of verse 37, it says, "He caused them to flee by the strength of his arm." Now, that's his arm, probably is not by the strength of his weapon. That's probably his arm. I made a fun little footnote right there to Doctrine and Covenants section 35 verse 13 and 14, and this is what it says, verse 13, section 35, "Wherefore I call upon the weak things of the world, those who are unlearned and despised to thrash the nations by the power of my Spirit and their arm shall be my arm and I will be their shield and their buckler and I will gird up their loins and they shall fight manfully for me and their enemies shall be under their feet, and I will let fall the sword in their behalf, and by the fire of mine indignation will I preserve them."
Hank Smith:	00:53:59	Wow.
John Bytheway:	00:54:00	I love this idea to share with missionaries that this is the Lord's work and you're doing it by the strength. Your arm becomes his arm. You are looked upon as the weak unlearned things of the world, but you can go out with the arm of the Lord, which is kind of a empowering thought out a section 35 there.
Hank Smith:	00:54:20	I love it.
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:54:21	Beautiful. Thank you.
Hank Smith:	00:54:23	Brian, we're not modeling good teaching here if we're going to spend all of our time in the first chapter, so let's keep going.
John Bytheway:	00:54:29	and talking about gruesome swords and arms.
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:54:33	What they really are or not. Well, I want to pick up the story in chapter 18, because it's in chapter 18, let me just share a few things setting up the story so that we understand the context of this chapter. It says in verse one, "And it came to pass that King Lamoni caused a servant should stand forth and testify to all things which they had seen concerning the matter. When they

had all testified to the things which they had seen and had learned to the faithfulness of Ammon in preserving the flocks and also the great power in contending against those who sought to slay him, he was astonished exceedingly and said, surely this is more than a man." This is that moment as King Lamoni begins to hear the story, and as he begins to see the arms, so the evidences of what Ammon had done, it shocks him and he has this moment where he begins to wonder, "Well, who is this? Who is this person that's shown up to our kingdom?"

00:55:21 Then he says, "Behold is not this the great spirit which does send his great punishments upon this people because of their murders." What does King Lamoni believe about God in this moment? We're just starting to see some of these things. He does believe in the existence of somebody. He refers to him as a great spirit and he does wonder if Ammon is that great spirit and he becomes concerned because Lamoni has killed many of these Lamanites servants who have not protected his flocks. In verse five, he worries about it because we see one of the beliefs he does have about God at this point is now this was the tradition of Lamoni which he had received from his father that there was a great spirit, notwithstanding they believed in a great spirit.

00:56:05 They suppose that whatsoever they did was right. Nevertheless, Lamoni began to fear exceedingly with fear lest he had done wrong in slaying his servants. Lamoni at this point did believe in a spirit, did believe in a great spirit, but he also believed in a great spirit that was almost a God of relativism that he existed, but whatever Lamoni did was okay. For the very first time he begins to question. Lamoni then looks around and Ammon is not there. He asked the servants in verse eight it says, "And it came to pass that King Lamoni inquired of his servants saying, where is this man that has such great power?" I love the answer of verse nine, Ammon is not in the courtyard. He's not waiting to be praised by the king for what he's done. Ammon is, well, let me just read, "And they said unto him, behold he's feeding thy horses."

00:56:51 Now, the king had commanded his servants previous to the time of the watering of their flocks that they should prepare his horses and chariots and conduct him forth to the land of Nephi, for there had been a great feast appointed at the land of Nephi by the father of Lamoni who is king over the land. Again, I don't think Ammon is sharing this story because it's about him. I think it's about the goodness of God, and yet like we've already talked about, Lamoni is touched and Lamoni becomes receptive because of the goodness of Ammon. As you look in verse 10, it

says, "Now, when King Lamoni heard that Ammon was preparing his horses and his chariot, he was more astonished because of the faithfulness of Ammon saying, Surely there has not been any servant among all my servants that has been so faithful as this man, for even he doth remember all my commandments to execute them."

00:57:38 I love something President Henry B. Eyring said years ago reflecting on this, he's reading through the story, or President Eyring is telling the story of Ammon, and he comes to this part of the story and then he asks a question, President Eyring said, "Isn't that odd?" President Eyring goes on and says, "He was called to teach the Doctrine of Salvation, but he was in the stables. Don't you think he should have been praying and fasting and polishing his teaching plan? No, he was in the stables. Never, never underestimate the spiritual value of doing temporal things well for those whom you serve." Then President Eyring adds this, "Be their servants and you will love them and they will feel your love, and more important, they will feel God's love." To remember that statement that we've said, they don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Ammon, again, is an incredible example of that with King Lamoni.

00:58:31 He shows up in the kingdom, Lamoni doesn't know who he is. What are you doing here? I want to be your servant. He goes and he cares for the flocks. Then in this moment where he could have been relishing or glorying in what he had accomplished, he chooses to be obedient to the commandment of the king and to go and take care of the horses. All of us can think of examples of people in our lives that have had an incredible impact on us, not because of necessarily what they led out with in their teachings, but because of how they loved us and how they cared for us.

Hank Smith: 00:59:04 Brian, I did my PhD work in high-trust schools and the impact on student achievement, and what you're talking about here brought one thing to mind, and that is the difference. John, maybe we've talked about this before. The difference between moral authority and formal authority. Formal authority, I do what you say because I have to because you're the boss, you're the parent, the law. I do what you say because I have to, or if I don't do it, there's going to be some serious problems for me. That's formal authority. Moral authority is I do what you ask because I want to. I want to follow you.

00:59:43 What I found in that PhD work is the highest-trust schools, those leaders used moral authority. There's of course, times you have to use formal authority. If your child is standing in the

road, two or three years old, you don't say, "Do you want to come out of the road?" No, you go out there and pick them up, but do we use our formal authority too often? I do what you say because I have to, where Ammon seems to say the real influence is in moral authority. I'm going to win your heart.

John Bytheway: 01:00:20 You guys both know S. Michael Wilcox. We've had him on here before. He wrote an article in the March 1995 Ensign Magazine. The article was called, Ammon Helped Me Reach My Neighbors. Got the article, not only is Ammon the king servant and friend, he's the greatest servant he has ever had. What if our less active neighbors felt we were the most faithful home or visiting teachers or ministers they had ever had? What if our other neighbors considered us to be the most true and faithful of friends? I thought, good point, when I see verse 10.

Hank Smith: 01:01:05 Brian, do you remember Russ Bullock? Russ Bullock, he taught me how to be a seminary teacher. He took me out of my junior and senior years of college and said, "You have some gifts, but I really need to help you out, kid." I'll tell you, I would do anything for Russ Bullock. He was so good to me, has so much moral authority in my life. If he asked me to run through a wall, I would do it. I think it was, I knew he loved me.

Dr. Brian Mead: 01:01:35 I think of people in my life that sometimes they've had to have difficult conversations with me, but I'm willing to listen to them because I know they love me and I know they care for me. I think that Ammon is this incredible example of that. As we pick up in verse 12, it says, "And it came to pass that when Ammon had made ready the horses and chariots for the king and his servants, he went in unto the king and he saw that the countenance of the king was changed, therefore he was about to return out of his presence.

01:02:15 As Ammon walks into the presence of the king and he sees that something is on the mind of the king, Ammon is about to leave, and one of the servants reaches out to him, and he calls him Rabbanah," which we see in verse 13, "which is being interpreted powerful or great king, considering their kings to be powerful and thus he said unto him, Rabbanah, the king desires thee to stay. Ammon turns to the king and he asks, what will thou that I should do for thee, O king? The king answered him not for the space of an hour." Ammon is standing in the presence of the king. I can try to imagine this awkward moment. I do like awkward moments. Ammon is just standing there waiting for the king to say something, and it's finally after an hour, inspiration begins to come to Ammon, and Ammon is able to discern the thoughts of the king.

	01:02:58	The king finally has arrived at a point that he's really willing to listen to who Ammon is and the message that Ammon really wants to share with him. As you go to verse 20, it says, "And the king said, how knowest thou the thoughts of my heart, thou mayest speak boldly and tell me concerning these things, and also, tell me by what power ye slew and smote off the arms of my brethren that scattered my flocks." We get this great little line in verse 22, it says, "Now, Ammon being wise, yet harmless. He said unto Lamoni, wilt thou hearken unto my words, if I tell thee by what power I do these things, and this is the thing that I desire of thee. The king answered him and said, yea, I will believe all thy words, and thus he was caught in his guile." I don't think that's a negative thing that it's saying, but it's the king, his heart has been touched. He's arrived at a point that he's willing to listen to Ammon.
	01:03:49	Then in verse 24, this is where Ammon truly begins to teach of God. We see in verse 24, "And Ammon began to speak unto him with boldness and said unto him, believest thou there is a God? Lamoni responds and answered and said unto him, I do not know what that meaneth. Then Ammon said, believest thou there is a great spirit? and he said unto him, yea." Ammon is going to begin building on what the king already knows and understands. We talked about, well, what does Lamoni really believe about God up to this point? He believes that there's a great spirit, but he doesn't really know him. I want us to go to verse 32, and I want us to look and see some of these beautiful truths that Ammon begins to teach about God.
Hank Smith:	01:04:48	I have to say back in verse 22, Ammon was wise, yet harmless. Those Lamanites that scattered the flocks, they were unwise and armless.
Dr. Brian Mead:	01:04:57	All right.



John Bytheway:	00:00:01	Welcome to part two with Dr. Brian Mead. Alma chapter 17 through 22.
Hank Smith:	00:00:08	Now verse 32, and Ammon said, "Yea and he looketh down upon all the children of men; and he knows all the thoughts and intents of the heart for by his hand were they all created from the beginning."
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:00:22	In this verse, Ammon begins to teach Lamoni some incredibly important truths about who God is in relation to us. I think it's really interesting that he doesn't say yea and he looketh down upon all of men, but he begins to teach Lamoni an incredibly important truth. Those men are his children. He continues on in verse 32, like you said, that not only are we children of God, but God knows all of the thoughts and intents of our heart. He wants King Lamoni to understand the omniscience of God, that God is our father and he knows all things and we are created by the hand of God. He then goes on and he begins to teach these beautiful truths of the plan of redemption. He begins teaching of the creation and the fall and the atonement because of the beautiful truths that they teach about who God is. After Ammon teaches them these truths in verse 32, King Lamoni said, "I believe all these things which thou hast spoken." And then asked this question, "Art thou sent from God?"
	00:01:27	He begins to realize that Ammon is not the great spirit. Ammon wants him to understand that he's a servant of God. Then in verse 34, "Ammon said unto him, I am a man, and man in the beginning was created after the image of God and I am called by his Holy Spirit to teach these things unto this people and they may be brought to a knowledge of that which is just and true." As I talk about the importance of creation, as Latter-day Saints, we celebrate stories of creation. As you think about it, we're given some really in-depth beautiful accounts of creation. We learn about creation in the Book of Genesis. We learn about the creation in the Book of Moses. We learn about creation in the Book of Abraham. As Latter-day Saints, we have the beautiful account of creation as taught in the Endowment. As we look at

those stories, or as I help my students go into the teachings of what Ammon is trying to teach King Lamoni, I often ask this question, what do you think Ammon really wants us to learn about God in the story of creation? Or what do you think God wants us to learn about himself in these stories of creation? We see them frequently and often. I don't think God wants us to learn how he created, or I don't think he wants us to learn about the timing of his creation. Instead, in these creation accounts and sacred texts, I think God wants us to learn and recognize the who of creation and the why of creation. That helps us to begin to understand who God truly is. The who of creation is God is the creator. Why did he create? We remember that beautiful verse given in Moses 1:39, "For behold, this is my work and my glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."

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| Hank Smith: | 00:02:55 | Brian, I love that you said that. Frequently when I talk to young people, they'll say, and you could speak more to this Brian, they'll say, "I'm in my biology class and I'm learning about the creation of the Earth and I'm really struggling with what I'm being told about evolution, and then I go read the scriptures, I'm seeing a problem there." I point out what you just pointed out, that science might be able to tell us what you said there, the how, the timing, things like that. That's not the intent of the scriptures. The intent of the scriptures is the who and the why. You can almost combine those together. I'm sure you went through that in your neuroscience degree. |
| Dr. Brian Mead: | 00:03:38 | I think that's the point of what God wants us to recognize and understand as we step into these sacred texts, as we look at these incredible teachings. God isn't saying don't study the creation in geology. We need to recognize that these creation accounts and scriptures are more about who God is. I want my students to understand some of the most important things that we learn about God in these accounts is that God is all knowing, that God is somebody who knows all things. A second thing that I want them to understand is the power of God, that God is all powerful. And then finally, that God is our loving Father. It's important that we learn and recognize all three of these things and the importance of them operating together. What if we knew that God was all knowing and that he was all powerful, but what if we didn't know that he was a loving father? What type of God is that? That is all knowing, he's all powerful, but he's not a loving father? |
| Hank Smith: | 00:04:36 | That's scary. |

Dr. Brian Mead:	00:04:38	Yeah, it's scary. Or what about if we know that God is our father, he's a loving father and we know that he's all powerful, but he's not all knowing. What type of God is that?
Hank Smith:	00:04:50	Very limited, even more scary.
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:04:53	It's limited and scary. It's not the type of God that we can place faith and trust in. You see, we see within this mortal experience that God, our loving father, is going to ask us to do difficult things. God is going to ask us to walk a covenant path, but if we know that God is our loving father and that he wants us to return to him and to experience things throughout mortality in his plan that helps us to become like him. And if we know that he's all knowledgeable, that he knows all things from the beginning and the end. And if we know that he has all power to bring to pass our immortality and eternal life, this is the God that Ammon wants King Lamoni to place his faith and trust in.
John Bytheway:	00:05:32	What I love about this is the king changed in Ammon's presence. You read verse five where King Lamoni thought, whatever we do is right; but now someone with him who has the spirit of the Lord, now he begins to fear that he had done wrong. I hear these stories all the time, I'm sure you have of, "Oh, my friends don't swear around me and they stop other people from swearing around me." It's interesting that being in Ammon's presence had that kind of impact on the king where suddenly now I fear I've done wrong in slaying the servants. And you know what it reminded me of? Acts chapter 17 where Paul is on Mars' Hill and starts to tell them what God is really like, that we are his offspring, how important that is to start where what kind of being is God. I'm looking back and forth going, there's some interesting parallels here from Ammon teaching about God and Paul teaching on Mars' Hill and trying to tell them what God is really like. And he's not like the Greek gods capricious and mean, but he's our father.
	00:06:45	In Acts 17:26, here's Paul explaining God to the Athenians, "Hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth. Hath determined the times before appointed, the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us." And the JST says, "If they are willing to find him for he is not far from every one of us." It's beautiful teaching that Paul's giving that sounds like what Ammon's doing. Hank, you mentioned those wonderful adjectives, wise yet harmless. My son, Andrew, was once, "Hey look dad, this is what it says in Matthew 10. Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be therefore wise as

serpents and harmless as doves. And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake." And I was like, "Whoa, what a parallel." Same thing for Ammon. Be wise and harmless and you'll stand before kings.

- Hank Smith: 00:07:47 Brian, as you read that, isn't it interesting that he has the chance to teach? What does he teach? Creation, Fall, Atonement. The Lord has a chance to teach us in the temple. What does he teach us? Creation, Fall, Atonement. Isn't the same thing in the articles of faith? We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in his son, Jesus Christ and in the Holy Ghost. We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, the fall. We believe that through the atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved. Here, Joseph Smith has an opportunity to teach. What does he teach? Creation, Fall, Atonement. I bet I know what's coming next, Article of Faith 4, repentance and baptism. I have a feeling that's coming up next.
- Dr. Brian Mead: 00:08:30 It is. Each of these things that you explained, Hank, Creation, Fall and Atonement, go back to that idea of identity and who we are. As Latter-day Saints, the most important truth that we seek or try to help people to understand is that identity. Go back to your primary experience. We learn a lot of songs when we go into primary, we learn about popcorn popping on the apricot tree, but what's one of the other songs that we first learn?
- Hank Smith: 00:08:53 Yeah, I am a child of God.
- Dr. Brian Mead: 00:08:56 Every week the young women stand up and what do they begin saying? I'm a beloved daughter of heavenly parents. It's a statement of identity. But the young men should stand up and say, I am a beloved son of God. It is all about identity. That is we understand Creation, Fall, and Atonement of Jesus Christ. We understand our identity as a child of a loving Heavenly Father. A number of years ago I was invited to a wedding reception of two of my students that I taught at Springville High with you, Hank. They had grown up, they had gone on missions; they had come home from missions and they decided to get married to each other and they invited us to their wedding reception. Annie couldn't make it that night, so I went to the wedding reception with my daughters. Their wedding reception was on one of their family farms. It was awesome.
- 00:09:39 We went, we talked to the bride and groom. Of course we ate treats and then Andalyn turned to me and said, "Why don't you take your girls around and show them the farm?" We're walking around the farm and we're looking at all of these animals together, me recognizing the importance of creation, looking at

these baby animals and everything else that was there on the farm. I looked at my three daughters and I said something like, "Isn't it awesome that this baby cow is going to grow up to be a horse?" And all three of them looked at me. They immediately knew that what I said was completely false and my youngest at that time, one of the phrases that she always said was something like, "Dad, that's ridiculous." So this little three-year-old wheels on me, and as a three-year-old, she gets it. She said, "Dad, that's ridiculous."

00:10:18 We kept walking, we kept looking at things. I said something like, "Isn't it awesome that this little duck is going to grow up to be a chicken?" And again, she immediately knows as a three-year-old, little ducks don't grow up to be chickens. They grow up to be big ducks. Me being the religion teacher, I looked at this girl and I said, "Okay, if little cows grow up to be big cows and little ducks grow up to be big ducks, what do little children of God grow up to become?" And it was this great little moment of creation. She understood creation even though she hadn't thought in these terms, and she looked at me and she said, "They grow up to be big children of God." You see, that's the beauty of knowing that we are literal creations of God. We are his children. We make choices of agency that come through our own faults as we exercise agency maybe in ways that take us contrary to God. And we have a Savior whose atonement allows us to return and to become better and to repent of those choices.

00:11:19 You can see this pattern is the same pattern of teaching the idea there is a God and then teaching of the Creation, the Fall, and Atonement, is the exact same thing that Aaron's going to do in chapter 22 as he teaches King Lamoni's father. We'll get into this chapter in a moment, but I want to share the chapter heading so that we can see this pattern. The chapter heading for Alma 22 states, "Aaron teaches Lamoni's father about the creation, the fall of Adam and the plan of redemption through Christ." And as the king of all of the Lamanites begins to understand this pattern, there is a God and we learn of him and his nature through the creation of the fall and the atonement of Jesus Christ; his heart changes like the heart of his son.

John Bytheway: 00:12:00 Verse 39 of Alma 18, "He expounded unto them the plan of redemption." And so often in the Book Mormon, it's followed by this phrase, "Which was prepared from the foundation of the world." This was the plan that a Redeemer would come from the beginning. I mention this because there are some schools of thought that, well, we're all supposed to be living in paradise, but Adam and Eve messed up. And no, actually the plan of

redemption, the Atonement was prepared in the pre-mortal existence. This was always the plan. So it's fun if you look for it, how often you will see right after something about the Atonement, it'll be followed by, "Which was prepared from the foundation of the world."

- Dr. Brian Mead: 00:12:44 I love what Sister Harkness, how she described faith. She said, "Well, faith is not a perfect knowledge." And then she quotes Neal A. Maxwell, "It brings a deep trust in God whose knowledge is perfect." And it's in this chapter that we begin to see men and women who don't fully understand what is happening or they don't have a clarity of what's going on and yet they have a great trust and faith in God who does. I want to share some of the incredible examples of faith that we see from a couple of women here in chapter 19. The first one is the queen, King Lamoni's wife. It says, "And it came to pass it after two days and two nights they were about to take Lamoni's body and lay it in a sepulcher, which they had made for the purpose of burying their dead. Now the Queen having heard of the fame of Ammon, therefore, she sent and desired that he should come in unto her."
- 00:13:36 It's an interesting question to think, where's the queen been in all of this? We may naturally assume that she's maybe there when Ammon shows up, but we have no record of her really up to this point. All she knows is that her husband is unresponsive. He's been that way for two days and two nights. Some are saying that it's time to bury the king and she reaches out to the servant of the Lord. She reaches out to Ammon. And then in verse three it says, "And it came to pass that Ammon did as he was commanded and went in unto the queen and desired to know what she would that he should do. And she said unto him, the servants of my husband have made it known unto me that thou art the prophet of a Holy God and that thou has power to do many mighty works in his name."
- 00:14:17 We don't know where she's been in the storyline up to this point, but she has heard of Ammon. And in this moment that she doesn't know what to do, she reaches out to one of the Lord's servants or who she places faith and trust, is one of the Lord's servants. And asks him to come in to visit with her and she tells him, "Therefore, if this is the case I would that you should go in and see my husband for he's been laid upon his bed for the space of two days and two nights." And we mentioned earlier that Ammon is really good in understanding the importance of timing. We don't know what's gone on over these past two days. We don't know exactly what Ammon's been doing, but he has wanted to visit with the queen and he

waits for her to act in faith and to reach out to him. And as we look in verse six, everything that's going on with Lamoni, he knows that the dark veil of unbelief is being cast away from his mind.

00:15:05 He knows that the light is descending upon his mind. Ammon said unto the queen, "He is not dead, but he sleepeth in God and on the morrow he shall rise again; therefore bury him not." And Ammon said unto her, "Believest thou this?" We don't know where she's been in this entire story, but in this moment as she stands with Ammon, she chooses to exercise faith and she said unto him, "I have no witness save thy word and the word of our servants. Nevertheless, I believe that it shall be according as thou hast said." And Ammon said unto her, "Blessed art thou because of thy exceeding faith. I say unto thee, woman, there has not been such great faith among all the people of the Nephites." And the queen goes and she stands vigil by the bed of the king, fully expecting him to wake up in the morning.

Hank Smith: 00:15:52 Brian, I love that you've pointed out the faith of the queen here. This might be something that people skip over as they teach these lessons; but if you stop, you really see her saying, "Look, here's what everyone else is saying, but I want to talk to you." If we use Ammon as a prophetic figure, seeing that, "I want to hear from you." What a great model for today, right? Here's what everyone else is saying. Here's what they're saying over here on this social media platform. Here's what they're saying over here on this social media platform. I want to hear what you have to say for yourself. And then she trusts that prophetic figure no matter what others are saying.

Dr. Brian Mead: 00:16:31 I think it's a powerful thing, being willing to listen to the Lord's servants. I had an experience a number of years ago when Elder Holland came and he spoke at BYU. And immediately after Elder Holland spoke, I was leaving the Marriott Center going back to my office, it was right when I first came to BYU. My phone rings with somebody and they said, "What did Elder Holland just say at BYU?" I said, "Well, what do you mean?" He said, "I heard Elder Holland said some pretty inflammatory things at BYU." I said, "Will you just go and listen to Elder Holland? Don't listen to what everybody else is saying. Will you go and listen to what Elder Holland is saying and then call me back?" It took a couple of days for that to become available so that he could listen to the words of Elder Holland. After a couple of days, he called me back and he said, "It's not like what everybody else was saying." His heart was softened as he actually listened to the words of the Lord's servant.

John Bytheway:	00:17:21	Brian, you are written on the top of my page 257 now. I love that. Examples of people who don't know what's going on, that have great faith in God. We have all been there. We might currently be there. What is going on? But I'm not going to abandon my faith in God. That's a great way to frame this chapter. Thank you.
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:17:45	Let me share one other example of somebody I love who exercises incredible faith in God, and she's introduced for the very first time in verse 16. As the queen stands vigil at the bed of the king, the king wakes up in the morning just as Ammon predicted he would, and he stands and he begins to teach at the glory of God. He's come to know who God is and he begins to rejoice and he's filled with joy. It's in that moment of joy that the king once again drops to the earth. The Queen in her moment of joy, as she realizes and as she begins to exercise faith in who God is, she drops to the earth. We get this beautiful moment where Ammon in verse 14 drops to his knees and begins to pour out his heart and thanks to God, but Ammon is on this mission for 14 years.
	00:18:32	We don't know how far into the experience or how far in those 14 years that he is, that his heart is filled with joy, he also drops to the earth. And then in verse 15, a number of servants, they begin to exercise faith and they drop to the earth. And then in verse 16, we're introduced to another hero that I have here in this chapter of the Book of Mormon. It's somebody who only gets a couple of verses, and yet I love the way that she exercises faith. And let me begin reading in verse 16, it says, "And it came to pass that they did call on the name of the Lord, with their might, even until they had fallen to the earth," talking about the servants. "Save it were one of the Lamanitish women whose name was Abish, she having been converted unto the Lord for many years on account of a remarkable vision of her father."
	00:19:17	I really like something that Brant Gardner said a number of years ago. He said this, and I'll quote him, he says, "The preservation of her name is even more remarkable. Not only because she was a woman, but she was a servant. Both factors would virtually guarantee her anonymity." Now, as we look at her and as we look at her story, I wish that we knew more about her. We do know that she's converted unto the Lord for many years on account of a remarkable vision of her father. And for many years I'd read that and I thought, well, maybe it was like the experience of Lehi and Nephi; that Lehi had seen a vision and his son Nephi believed the vision and we can read it that way. But a couple of years ago, somebody shared, well, maybe it was Abish having a vision about her father.

00:19:59 Maybe her father had passed away and she has seen her father. Kind of like the experience that Joseph Smith had with Alvin. Do you remember Joseph Smith's older brother Alvin? He died before baptism. I don't know if you can recall the experience the Smith family had at Alvin's funeral, that the preacher of that funeral said that Alvin would be in hell because he wasn't baptized? And I love how God gives Joseph Smith in Doctrine and Covenants section 137, a vision of eternity, that Joseph Smith sees Alvin, he sees him in the celestial kingdom. Joseph Smith is surprised to see him there because he did die without baptism and it's a vision of hope. We don't know exactly what Abish's vision was of her father, whether it was her father having a vision or whether it was her having a vision of her father. But she's an incredible woman of faith who's been required to keep her faith a secret for so many years.

00:20:50 She's living among the Lamanite people. She's afraid to share what she believes, but in this moment where she sees the power of God being manifest among the Lamanite people, she acts in faith. As you look in verse 17, it says, "Thus having been converted to the Lord and never having made it known, therefore, when she saw all the servants of Lamoni had fallen to the earth and also her mistress, the queen, and the king and Ammon lay prostrate upon the earth, she knew that it was the power of God. And supposing this opportunity by making known unto the people what had happened among them, that by beholding this scene, it would cause them to believe in the power of God. Therefore, she ran forth from house to house, making it known unto the people." For the very first time in her life, she's able to go house to house, and imagine her running and rejoicing and calling to the people, calling them saying, "Come to the home of the king."

00:21:41 "See what's happening. Come see the power of God," as she's trying to help these people around her know who God is. As Abish begins going house to house and calling these people to assemble, we see in verse 18, "And they began to assemble themselves unto the house of the king. And there came a multitude and to their astonishment, they beheld the king and the queen and their servants prostrate upon the earth, and they all lay there as though they were dead. And they also saw Ammon and behold, he was a Nephite." And we see in verse 19 that the people begin to murmur. They don't know exactly what's going on. Abish wants them to see the power of God; but as they show up, they see the king on the ground, they see the queen on the ground, they see the servants on the ground and they see a Nephite.

- 00:22:18 So they begin talking about what is happening. Some of them say this is the consequence of the king killing those servants when his sheep had been scattered at the waters of Sebus. Others come and they see Ammon. Verse 22, "Now one of them whose brother had been slain with the sword of Ammon, being exceedingly angry with Ammon, drew his sword and went forth that he might let it fall upon Ammon to slay him. And as he lifted the sword to smite him, behold, he fell dead." It's another example of the promise that Mosiah was given, that as his sons would go among the Lamanite people that God would save and protect them. This adds to the astonishment of everything that's going on. Not only is the king on the ground, the queen on the ground, Ammon on the ground, the servants upon the ground; but somebody who comes and tries to kill Ammon falls to the ground dead. And many of the people are filled with fear and don't know what's happening.
- 00:23:10 It's in that moment that Abish comes and hoping that these people are converted unto God; and seeing all the confusion, she begins to be filled with fear and concern. It's in this moment that Abish reaches out to the queen and raises her from the ground. And let me start reading the beautiful words of the queen as she exercises even greater faith in verse 29, it says, "And it came to pass that she went and took the queen by the hand, that perhaps she might raise her from the ground. And as soon as she touched her hand, she arose and stood upon her feet and cried with a loud voice saying, oh, blessed Jesus, who has saved me from an awful hell. Oh, blessed God, have mercy upon this people." "And when she had said this, she clasped her hands being filled with joy speaking many words which were not understood."
- 00:23:55 "And when she had done this, she took the King Lamoni, by his hand and behold he arose and he stood upon his feet." And in verse 31, we see this beautiful moment, "And he immediately seeing the contention among his people, went forth and began to rebuke them and to teach them the words which he had heard from the mouth of Ammon. And as many as heard his words were converted unto the Lord." We have this beautiful moment where the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have this beautiful moment when faith in the true and living God begins to be taught and to be spread among the Lamoni people.
- John Bytheway: 00:24:28 Back there in verse 16, it says, "Abish, she having been converted unto the Lord for many years on a count of remarkable vision of her father," and we talked about what that might be. The very next phrase, "Thus having been converted to

the Lord." And then what we finished reading in Alma 19:31, "And were converted unto the Lord." One of the things I did a search once and noticed was that nobody's ever a convert to the church in the Book of Mormon, the object of conversion is to the Lord.

00:24:57 That's what we're converted to and it's very consistent. I found 10 references of converted unto the Lord and then I think it's in Third Nephi, and Elder D. Todd Christofferson mentioned this once in a talk he gave called 'Why the church?' They were converted unto the Lord and united with the Church of Christ. Object of our conversion is to Christ and then we unite with the church. Converted, changed, we're trying to use the power of Christ, the power of his atonement to become like Christ. We're not trying to become like the church, we're trying to be converted to the Lord. I thought it's fun to see. Three times we saw that mentioned in what you just read.

Hank Smith: 00:25:35 This is really significant. This is not the first time they've sent missionaries to the Lamanites. When I first read the Book of Mormon, I thought, oh, they should have done this a long time ago.

John Bytheway: 00:25:44 They've tried and given up. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:25:46 Yeah, I think Jacob said they had tried. Enos says they had tried. There's a couple of other people that said we had tried to go among the Lamanites to teach them or reclaim them. It has never worked, but now it has. This is a significant chapter that you might be tempted to skip as you're teaching Sunday School or teaching your family. But what you've shown us here is that the Lord had prepared this woman, Abish, and this was going to begin what you might call the 'Redemption of the Lamanites.'

Dr. Brian Mead: 00:26:24 I think that's significant and I agree. I think sometimes it's easy to skip over this chapter and yet as you look in it, it's incredible examples of faith including with Abish.

John Bytheway: 00:26:37 I like that Abish didn't go to the king to wake him up. She went to the queen, of a woman to woman thing. It calls her a servant, 'the woman's servant,' in verse 28. So there was already a relationship there. It's significant that we remember the name of Abish, shows the Lord can help with missionary work. I like to look at verse 16, even until they had all fallen to the earth, save it were one of the Lamanite-ish women, what's different about her?

- 00:27:04 She was converted unto the Lord. So here's this member missionary now, and as you said, running forth from house to house. Every missionary wishes they had an Abish in their stake who's running from house to house, making appointments. And I'm guilty of this too. It's supposed to be this way that the members do the finding and the missionaries do the teaching. The Lord knew I'm not going to have her pass out because she is already converted, but she's going to become an instrument too.
- Dr. Brian Mead: 00:27:32 Beautiful. We see how the spreading of faith in God is now progressing among the Lamanite people. I want to jump into chapter 20. We see in verse one, "And it came to pass that when they had established a church." And John, I think it's significant to what you taught of sequence of order. First they develop faith in God, they develop faith in Jesus Christ, and then they begin to establish a church whose purpose is to help lead us unto God and unto Christ. In verse one, "And it came to pass that when they had established a church in that land, that King Lamoni desired that Ammon should go with him to the land of Nephi, that he might show him unto his father. And the voice of the Lord came into Ammon saying, thou shalt not go up to the land of Nephi. For behold, the king will seek thy life, but thou shalt go to the land of Middoni. For behold, thy brother Aaron, and also Muloki, and Ammah are in prison."
- 00:28:21 And we get this incredible moment that as Ammon and King Lamoni begin traveling to release his brothers, they run into King Lamoni's father, they begin to have this incredible exchange. If you don't mind, I want to jump to chapter 21 just to share a brief thought of why Aaron is in prison and of the challenging experience that he had; because his mission experience is very, very different than his brother's.
- 00:28:44 As we jump in to see the reasons that Aaron's in prison, one of the most important phrases that I share with my kids all the time is, "It's important who you hang out with," or, "Who you hang out with really matters." And we really see this with Aaron's experience here among the people that he goes and he teaches. As you look in verse one of chapter 21, it says, "Now when Ammon and his brother had separated themselves in the borders of the land of the Lamanites, behold Aaron took his journey toward the land which was called by the Lamanites, Jerusalem. Calling it after the land of their father's nativity. And it was away joining the borders of Mormon."
- 00:29:18 And then we look to see the people that have settled there in this land of Jerusalem. It says, "Now the Lamanites and the

Amalekites and the people of Amulon had built a great city, which was called Jerusalem." We see as Aaron shows up and as he begins teaching or trying to teach the people there, it's not just Lamanites. There are other people that are there. Amulon is one of the priests of King Noah, this is where his posterity have settled. The Amalekites, they're the followers of Amalekai, who seeks to overthrow the government of the Nephites.

Hank Smith: 00:29:50 That's Alma chapter two and three, right Brian?

Dr. Brian Mead: 00:29:53 It is. And so as Aaron shows up to these people, it's not just Lamanites that are waiting for him, but it's these people as well, who we see in verse three, and this is why I tell my children all of the time, who you hang out with really matters. In verse three, we see now the Lamanites of themselves were sufficiently hardened. We've already had this conversation. The Sons of Mosiah are going to teach a people that are hardened, but then it goes on and says, "But the Amalekites and the Amulonites were still harder. Therefore, they did cause the Lamanites that they should harden their hearts, that they should wax strong in wickedness and their abominations." As Aaron shows up to these people, immediately he has these experiences that they don't listen, that they immediately begin to reject him and ultimately they take him and others and they bind them up and they throw them into prison.

00:30:47 There are many stories that I don't remember or many conference talks that I don't remember over the years, but I do remember a talk that President Monson gave clear back in 1998 that stuck with me; and I think it gives a great insight into what's going on with these people in the city of Jerusalem. President Monson taught, "Friends help to determine your future. You will tend to be like them and to be found where they choose to go. Remember the path we follow in this life leads to the path we will follow in the next." Then President Monson shares the results of a survey that was done in the church. He says, "In a survey made in selected wards and stakes at the church, we learned the most significant fact. Those people whose friends married in the temple, usually married in the temple; while those persons whose friends did not marry in the temple, usually did not marry in the temple."

00:31:33 "This same fact pertained also to full-time missionary service. The influence of one's friends appeared to be a higher dominant factor, even equal into parental urging, classroom instruction or proximity to a temple." The friends you choose will either help or hinder your success. That's why we repeat continually to our kids who you hang out with really matters. We try to teach our

kids that it doesn't matter if you have a large group of friends or a small group of friends, just have good friends. As I look back over the course of my life, I was blessed by incredible friends who helped me to make really good choices. I remember back when I was about 15 years old, I was a sophomore in high school and that year was really significant for me and some of the people that I hung out with.

00:32:21 And I'm grateful that I had good friends in my life at that time that helped me to make good choices. I remember one time it was time for seminary. The seminary building was one way and I was going the other way with a group of guys, and a girl that was in my seminary class walked past me and she looked at me and she said, "Where are you going?" And I kind of laughed and grabbed me by the arm and literally walked me over to seminary. She started to do that every single day.

00:32:47 I can remember another time, again, pivotal years for me, 15 years old; my friends and I thought that we were cool, that we were invited to a party of some of the older kids in the high school. And I remember walking into this house with one of my good friends, person that opened the door said, "Hey, the party's downstairs." We walked down into the basement, we're standing on the bottom step. We're seeing everything that's going on, and my friend looks at me and says something like, "Huh, I'm tired. You ready to go?" And we literally turned around and walked out of the basement. We see that here in this portion of the Book of Mormon that Aaron, unfortunately, he goes to a people that are harder because of the people they've associated with.

John Bytheway: 00:33:24 There's a guy named Jim Rohn. He's kind of like Stephen Covey, a business philosopher, and I've heard him say once that you are the average of the five people you spend the most time with. The fascinating thought, I'm still chewing on that. And he even quoted research, "I can predict your bank account." All sorts of things, just because of the associations that you have. I just wanted to note that you read verse four, "Many of the Amalekites and the Amulonites were after the order of the Nehors." There he is again, comes and goes in Alma chapter one; but that influence, speaking of bad friends, that influence. Alma 16, the Ammonihah wiped out in one day, but now there he is again. Wow.

Hank Smith: 00:34:08 What a great lesson there out of Alma 21, that these Lamanites, because they're around or they hang around with these former Nephites, they've had a significant effect on them. You could cross-reference that, couldn't you, to Mosiah 17, where King

Noah is about to let Abinadi go? He is like, the, "I should not do this." That's a significant moment in Noah's life. Can you imagine if Noah says, "You know what, I'm going to repent, turn it around," and Noah and Abinadi go on missions, right? But no, it never happens because the priests, his friends, lifted up their voices against him and began to accuse him saying, "He has reviled the king." Therefore, the king was stirred up in anger against him, Abinadi. It matters. It truly matters who you spend your time with, whether you're an adult or a youth.

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| Dr. Brian Mead: | 00:35:04 | It is. Those that you associate with impact who you become. Let me just go back to how President Monson finished this beautiful quote, "The friends you choose will either help or hinder your success." And I truly believe that. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:35:18 | Yeah, think of the story of Naaman. Naaman is about to go home. He's like, "I came all this way to hear this prophet and he's told me to wash in the Jordan River. There's much cleaner rivers where I came from, I'm going to go home." And his friend stops him, says, "Maybe you ought to do it." That changes everything. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:35:40 | I'm thinking of Elder Gary Stevenson's story about this study abroad in Japan and being up there on the roof and somebody gets out marijuana and, "Oh, no, it's okay. We'll just pass it." And somebody else, "I'm leaving," and grab somebody and goes with it. Oh, to this day people thank John, was the guy's name, who I actually met, who grabbed a friend and took them off there. But it's such a cool story. Elder Robert D. Hales, best definition of a friend I have ever heard, "A friend is someone who makes it easier to live the gospel of Jesus Christ." |
| Dr. Brian Mead: | 00:36:14 | Oh, it's beautiful. Thank you. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:36:17 | Let's jump back into chapter 20. I have heard people say contrast the mission approaches of Ammon and Aaron. Ammon says, "I will be thy servant. I could live here till I die." Aaron goes in and first had to preach and they throw him in the slammer. But the verses that you start with, you've got to take that into account, that they were more hardened people. So I don't like that necessarily because I think, yeah, but Aaron went to a different mission. He's among these, "Oh, if Aaron, if he had more faith or if he used different words." It says, "Hey, look, these guys were so hardened. In fact, they were after the order of the Nehors." |
| Dr. Brian Mead: | 00:36:56 | My mission president, he goes to one of those mission president trainings that they have for the mission leaders in an |

area, and he comes back, I'm his assistant at that time, and I, "Hey, what happened?" And he starts laughing. Elder Scott was the Member of the Quorum of the Twelve that came and ran this mission president's seminar, mini seminar. And he said, "Elder Scott recommended that we don't let you missionaries in Europe write your friends in South America." It's that idea, very different mission experiences. You're just among a different people. And Italians are incredible, they're some of the most charitable loving and giving people. Not quite the same as my brother's experiences in Mexico.

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| Hank Smith: | 00:37:33 | But it is interesting on that once Ammon and Aaron seem to have a talk, Aaron changes his approach. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:37:40 | And says, "Oh, we'll be your servants." Let's see if it works here. Yeah, it's true. |
| Dr. Brian Mead: | 00:37:44 | You're going to notice when I get to these teachings of Aaron, we're not going to hit him super deep because he literally takes the mission plan of Ammon, and he teaches the king the exact same thing. I want to pick back up with Ammon and King Lamoni as they're traveling to go and release Aaron and the others from prison. And you know, as they're traveling along the way in verse seven and he said, or King Lamoni said unto Ammon, "Come, I will go with thee to the land of Middoni, and there I will plead with the king that he will cast thy brethren out of prison." And in verse eight, it says, "And it came to pass that as Ammon and Lamoni were journeying thither, they met the father of Lamoni, who was king over all the land." |
| | 00:38:20 | Lamoni and his father begin to have this interaction. The king of the Lamanites looks at Lamoni, he says, "Why did you miss the feast?" Lamoni begins to try to explain to him some of the incredible things that have been happening to him and in his kingdom. I was unconscious, I literally could not make it. As he begins to explain that, the king of the Lamanites, King Lamoni's father, looks and he sees Ammon and we see in verse 10, and he said, "Whither art thou going with this Nephite, who is one of the children of a liar?" And it's in this moment, Ammon steps into the story and he begins to converse with the king. I want to jump down to verse 17, it says, "But Ammon stood forth and said unto him: Behold, thou shalt not slay thy son; nevertheless, it were better that he should fall than thee. For behold, he has repented of his sins. But if thou shouldst fall at this time, in thine anger, thy soul should not be saved." |
| | 00:39:11 | "And again, it is expedient that thou shouldst forbear; for if thou shouldst slay thy son, he being an innocent man, his blood |

would cry from the ground to the Lord his God, for vengeance to come upon me; and perhaps thou wouldst lose thy soul." And when Ammon had said these words unto him, he answered him saying, "I know that if I should slay my son that I should shed innocent blood, for it is thou who has sought to destroy him." The king pulls out his sword, Ammon pulls out his sword in defense, and they begin to fight. We see in verse 20, "And he stretched forth his hand to slay Ammon, but Ammon withstood his blows and also smote his arm that he could not use it." Again, Ammon goes back to those tactics, whether it's the sword or whether it's the actual arm, but the king could no longer fight.

00:40:00 And in this moment when the king realizes that Ammon has all of the power, Ammon can do anything in this moment, the king begins to plead unto him. And I think it's interesting in verse 23, what the king of the Lamanites offers to Ammon in this moment, it says, "Now the king, fearing that he should lose his life said, if that will spare me, I will grant unto thee whatsoever thou will ask, even to half of the kingdom."

00:40:25 I've often thought about if I were Ammon, what would I choose in that moment? He could take half of the kingdom of the Lamanites. But again, it's in this moment that the goodness of Ammon shines forth. In verse 24, it says, "Now when Ammon saw that he had wrought upon the old king according to his desire, he said unto him: if thou will grant that my brethren be cast out of prison, and also that Lamoni may retain his kingdom, and that ye be not displeased with him; but grant that he may do according to his own desires in whatsoever thing he thinketh, then I will spare thee. Otherwise I will smite thee to the earth."

00:40:58 "Now when Ammon had said these words, the king began to rejoice because of his life." And I love what it says here in verse 26, again, it reflects the goodness of Ammon and the impact that a good loving, wonderful human being can have on another. It says, "And when he saw that Ammon had no desire to destroy him, and when he saw the great love which he had for his son, Lamoni, he was astonished exceedingly and said: because this is all that thou hast desired, that I would release thy brethren, and suffer that my son, Lamoni, should retain his kingdom, behold, I will grant unto you that my son may retain his kingdom from this time and forever. I will govern him no more."

00:41:39 It's that wonderful idea of what really changes Lamoni's father, is Ammon's love for Lamoni. I don't think that Ammon wants to

be the focus of the story. I really don't. In every moment when Ammon is able to reflect on and talk about the greatness of their experience, he always turns to the goodness and wonderment of God. But it is the goodness of Ammon that often changes hearts. And in this moment, the king of the Lamanites allows Ammon to go and free his brothers from prison. And then he asks him to come and teach him because of the goodness of Ammon.

Hank Smith: 00:42:11 All three of us are almost products of President Hinckley. And I remember him saying, "Our kindness may be the most persuasive argument for that which we believe." I remember that moment. I wrote it down. "Our kindness may be the most persuasive argument for that which we believe."

Dr. Brian Mead: 00:42:32 I'm going to get the details wrong or there may be something that I forget. Personally, my family's been impacted by the kindness of a believer. My grandpa wasn't a member of the church when he married my grandma. Actually, my grandpa was pretty resistive to the church. My grandma tells stories of how the missionaries or how the home teachers would come over to the house and my grandpa would chase them away because he didn't want to become a Latter-day Saint. But it was a bishop that was called, that I can't even remember his name, but I can remember my grandma before she passed away talking about this incredible bishop who loved my grandfather. Loved him unconditionally, who really began to make significant changes in the life of my grandpa. My grandma told me one day that this bishop came over to the house and looked at my grandpa and said, "Hey, we need to talk about..."

00:43:15 My dad wasn't baptized at this point. He and his older brother weren't baptized. And the bishop said, "Hey, I want to talk to you about baptizing your boys." And my grandma can remember my grandpa and this bishop walking up and down the block for a significant amount of time. And finally my grandpa came into the home and said, "Okay, the boys can be baptized." But it was this bishop that also came to my grandpa and he said, "Look, I know you don't love the church, but you love your boys. So are you willing to serve as a scout leader in the church? And all you need to do is you need to take your sons and their friends camping and fishing and hunting and those other things." And my grandpa was willing to do that. It was over the course of time of this incredible bishop loving my grandfather that brought my grandpa into the church, as well as the love of my grandma.

	00:43:56	But sometimes I look at it, as Latter-day Saints, as we talk about this idea of being great member missionaries. And sometimes we don't know exactly what we can do. And there have been moments that I've felt similarly. I didn't know exactly what I could do, but I've realized that I can love people. I can be a good neighbor. I can be a loving neighbor. I can serve my neighbors, not with the thought in mind that I'm going to help convert them to the gospel of Jesus Christ; but in those moments that they may not be receptive to the gospel of Jesus Christ, I can treat them like Christ would. And over the years our family's been able to see some beautiful experiences where people have come into the church. It all started with just a friendship relationship.
Hank Smith:	00:44:34	You don't see Ammon saying, "Well, I better be nice because I'm trying to get him to be converted to the church." It's just who he is.
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:44:44	It is. It just exudes from him.
John Bytheway:	00:44:46	It's like what King Benjamin said, you will not have mind to injure one another. He is not saying don't have a mind to injure one another. He's saying, when you're born again, you will not have mind to injure one another. When you're changed by the Atonement, all these things will come naturally. It's not a formula, it's who you are.
Hank Smith:	00:45:06	Interesting. Brian, I've never seen that, verse 19, where Lamoni's father said, "It is you. You are trying to destroy him." Isn't that interesting that missionaries are often seen that way? You are trying to hurt my child. You're trying to steal them away. You're trying to make them a Mormon. You're the problem. And then he's like, "Wait, maybe not."
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:45:28	Yeah. So when I worked out of the church office building, I had some pretty incredible experiences. One day I went to the mailbox and there was a letter from the office of the first presidency and I looked, but it was my 4-year-old daughter, my youngest daughter's name. She was four years old at the time. From President Uchtdorf. I want those types of letters to come to my family, not some of these others.
Hank Smith:	00:45:48	Wow. She had just written to him?
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:45:50	I was in his office. We were just talking in between things. He gave a general conference talk where he talked about three sisters. He said, "Sad, Mad and Glad." And he shares this story

of these three sisters. And I'd mentioned to President Uchtdorf at that time that my four-year-old had taught his talk for family home evening, as a little four-year-old, and colored a picture. And he said, "I want that picture." I said, "Okay." So I brought it in. It was still hanging on our fridge and I just gave Elder Uchtdorf's administrative assistant. I thought that was kind of the end of it. And then that's why the letter came in.

Hank Smith:	00:46:21	How often were you chatting with apostles in between meetings?
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:46:26	Often enough that I had some incredible experiences, but not often-
John Bytheway:	00:46:29	Boy, I bet.
Hank Smith:	00:46:30	That sounds kind of fun.
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:46:31	When Ammon has this moment where he overpowers the king, what is the king willing to give up in order for Ammon to spare his life in that moment?
Hank Smith:	00:46:39	Half of the kingdom? That's verse 23.
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:46:42	Half of the kingdom. I love now going to chapter 22, this is the moment that Ammon doesn't go and teach the king of the Lamanites, but his brother Aaron does. And as he walks in, we begin to see a similar experience that played out within the life of King Lamoni. It's fascinating and beautiful for me to see what the king is now willing to give up; not in order for his life to be spared, but in order to come to know God. You see, as Aaron goes and he begins to teach the king of the Lamanite people, he really does take the lesson plan of Ammon. I want you to look in verse seven.
	00:47:17	As Aaron begins teaching the king of the Lamanites in chapter 22, "And Aaron answered him and said unto him; believest thou there is a God?" Remember Ammon asked the exact same question to King Lamoni. He begins with this idea of God. And the king of the Lamanites said, "I know that the Amalekites say there is a God, and I have granted unto them that they should build sanctuaries, that they may assemble themselves together to worship him. And if thou sayest there is a God, behold I will believe." And then in verse eight, "And now when Aaron heard this, his heart began to rejoice; and he said: behold, assuredly as thou livest, O king, there is a God. And the king said, is God that Great Spirit?" Again, it's almost the exact same interchange or

exchange that happens between King Lamoni and Ammon, that Aaron now has with Lamoni's father.

00:48:07 And in verse 10, and Aaron said, "Yea, he is the Great Spirit." And he begins to then step into the important pillars of the plan of salvation; because like we previously discussed, they help us to know the nature of who God is. Verse 10, as Aaron begins to teach the king that God is the Creator of all things, both in heaven and earth. In verse 11, "And he said, Yea, I believe that the Great Spirit created all things and I desire that thou should tell me concerning all things, and I will believe thy words."

00:48:38 Aaron, as he begins to teach the king all things, he begins to build off that truth, that there is a God and that he is our Creator, that he is our Father. Then notice in verse 12, what does he begin to teach? After he is taught the creation, he then begins to teach the...

Hank Smith: 00:48:53 The Fall?

Dr. Brian Mead: 00:48:54 The Fall. Then you go into verse 13, and Aaron did expound unto him the scriptures from the creation of Adam, laying the fall before him and their carnal state. And after he teaches the doctrine of the creation and the fall; in verse 13, he then begins to teach of the...

Hank Smith: 00:49:11 The Atonement. The plan of redemption.

Dr. Brian Mead: 00:49:14 Yep. And in verse 14, "And since man had fallen he could not merit anything of himself, but the sufferings and the death of Christ atone for their sins, through faith and repentance and so forth. And that he breaketh the bands of death and the grave shall have no victory, and that the sting of death shall be swallowed up in the hopes of glory. And Aaron did expound all these things unto the king." And then we get this beautiful moment as the king begins to understand who God is and more importantly who he is in relation to the king, that he is God's son. I love what the king is willing to offer up in verse 15, it says, "And it came to pass it that after Aaron had expounded these things unto him, the king said: what shall I do that I may have this eternal life of which thou hast spoken?" As a reminder, he's willing to give up half of the kingdom in order to save his life, in that moment when Ammon overpowers him.

00:50:10 But as you look at the end of verse 15, look at what he's willing to give up in order to have eternal life. He says, "Behold, said he, I will give up all that I possess. Yea, I will forsake my

kingdom, that I may receive this great joy." Then he continues and he says, "Not only am I willing to give up my kingdom, to come to know God, in order to receive the incredible blessings that my Heavenly Father has for me." In verse 18, he begins to exercise faith and to plead his heart out to God. And he says in his prayer, "Oh God, Aaron hath told me that there is a God, and if there is a God and if thou art God, will thou make myself known unto me?" And then this beautiful line, "And I will give away all my sins to know thee."

00:50:59 As we go back to what we taught earlier in the podcast of what repentance truly is, repentance is coming to see who God truly is and who we are as his children. And that we're willing to bring our life back in alignment with God in order to know him and to follow him. This is what this king is willing to do in this moment, this king in his desire to know God and to connect with God is willing to give away everything he has in his life that is stopping or inhibiting him from knowing God. I think in our own lives that often as we read that verse, and as we think of sins, obviously we think of the 10 Commandments and we think of the thou shalt nots, and it's vital that we do that. But the invitation that I would give us is to think about what are some of those things in our lives that are stopping us from having a relationship with our Heavenly Father?

00:51:51 What are those things that are stopping us from giving time to him? What are those things that are maybe getting in the way of, stopping us from spending time in his house or in spending time on our knees with him? We should think of those big commandments that are given to us and rightfully so. My invitation that I have is are there any other things in life that are stopping us from knowing God and following him? And are we willing to act in faith like the king and to give away those things so that we can know God, our loving Heavenly Father?

Hank Smith: 00:52:24 What a great cross-reference there, Alma 20:23, I'll give you half my kingdom. I can't give you the whole thing, right? He has some serious love, it sounds like, for his material things; his land, his power. The power of God, once he's taught, I'll give up everything. I'll give up all that I possess. Doesn't that seem like a theme for Mormon, who's writing the story? To say the sword is powerful, but the word is even more powerful? Like you said, Brian, if we can put ourselves or those we're teaching in this position where they feel the spirit of who they are by being taught the plan of redemption, we come to the point where we're willing to say, "I'll give up this or that or this so I can experience what you're talking about."

Dr. Brian Mead:	00:53:19	Over the course of my career as a Religious Educator, I think even as a parent, the things that I've taught my kids; how many times have I taught lessons about chastity? Or how many times have I taught lessons about appropriate entertainment? Or how many times have I taught lessons about?-
Hank Smith:	00:53:33	Honesty, yeah.
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:53:35	... The way that we treat other people? Honesty or those other things. And I'm not saying those lessons aren't important, but when I think for myself, in my own personal life, what causes me to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, what causes me to be true to covenant, it's because of my relationship with God. This past semester in one of my classes, we were talking of some of these hard things, and one of my students raised their hand in a moment of courage and said, "How can you stay faithful? How can you stay faithful when it's so hard at times?"
	00:54:08	I took a moment and I thought about it and I said, "I stay faithful because I love God and I know God loves me. And I'm willing to stay faithful in hard times and when he asks hard things of me, not because I necessarily love those hard things. Or not necessarily because I see why he's asking me to do those things, but I continue to walk the covenant path because of God and I love my Heavenly Father."
	00:54:33	One of the beautiful lessons that we learn in all of these chapters, again, I love the story of Ammon chopping off the arms. I loved that part of the story, I still do. But the power in these chapters come to me now as I see how people's lives change as they truly come to know God, that he's a very personal loving father, that he's our Creator, that he created this plan because of his love for us. That as we exercise agency that may lead us away from him, that he still loves us and provides a way through the atonement of Jesus Christ for us to return to him. That his greatest work is to bring about our immortality and eternal life. That's the type of loving Heavenly Father that I can place faith and trust in throughout my life.
Hank Smith:	00:55:13	That is wonderful. Brian, don't you think one of the major takeaways from this lesson needs to be, teach the plan of salvation, teach those three pillars, Creation, Fall, Atonement? And tying back to the beginning of our lesson, in order to teach those, you have to know them. They search the scriptures diligently for what? Three things probably. Creation, Fall, Atonement. And out of those three, Latter-day Saints, I would say most don't understand the Fall. Frequently speak of the Atonement and we go to the temple and we learn about

Creation, but the Fall, that middle pillar is crucial, right? It's a critical point for the other two. Both Lamoni and his father, they're in act two. They now understand where they are in the plan. They automatically look for act three. Where's my happy ending? Where can I get out of this? That's the Atonement. Creation, Fall, Atonement. I bet if I went to my children and ask them, Creation, Fall, Atonement; I think the Fall would be the one they don't understand. I don't know if I teach that as a parent in an understandable way.

- John Bytheway: 00:56:28 What was the President Benson's statement? "Just as a man does not really desire food until he's hungry, so he does not desire the salvation of Christ until he knows why he needs Christ." And no one knows why he needs Christ until he understands the doctrine of the fall and its effect upon all mankind and no book in the world explains the fall as well as the Book Mormon. Alma 22:18. Is it wrong to have a top 10? This is one of my favorite verses. Hank, you've probably spoken at more standards nights than I have; but I have always used this because first of all, what Brian taught us so beautifully is our identity. I want to know God, this is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God. Here's King Lamoni's father praying, "Will thou make thyself known unto me?" Like that verse in John, this is life eternal, that I might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.
- 00:57:26 And then that phrase and notice King Lamoni's Father didn't say, "And how bad can I be and still know thee?" That's a mindset that we get even with the new For the Strength of Youth: A Guide to Making Choices, is it's not minimums of behavior, it's a doctrines of discipleship. It's not how good do I have to be to know thee? Oh, King Lamoni's father here is, "What do I do? I will give away all my sins to know thee." You guys think it's possible to be born again before you've even been baptized? Because he sounds like he's willing to give it all away. The only thing we can really give to God is something he would never take. God doesn't need half the kingdom, but here, King Lamoni's father says, "I'll give away all my sins." I love what you've done, Brian. It will help me because I'll understand who I am, my identity. Beautiful.
- Hank Smith: 00:58:22 True doctrine understood changes, attitudes and behavior. That's exactly what happens here. Brian, let's say I'm a young parent and I'm listening to the podcast, or I'm a grandparent and I'm folding laundry, or I'm out mowing the lawn, or I'm on a bike ride. I need some practical takeaways. What do I do? I've loved what you've taught me. Now what do I do? Therefore, what?

Dr. Brian Mead:	00:58:50	That great question from President Packer. Therefore, what?
Hank Smith:	00:58:54	Yeah.
Dr. Brian Mead:	00:58:55	What are the most significant thoughts that come to mind? As a parent or as a grandparent, there are so many things that we have to do for our children and grandchildren. There are so many things that we want them to know, and there are so many things that we want them to understand, but I think one of the most important things that will help them to continually remember is their identity as a child of a very loving Heavenly Father. Every night as a parent, one of the things that I try to do is to go into my kids bedrooms and to sit with them and to try to talk with them, but one of the questions that I always ask is, "Have you said your prayers to your Heavenly Father at night? Have you talked to God?" That's one of the most significant things that can happen is that we help to remind them of their identity of a very loving Heavenly Father.
	00:59:37	Another thought that's important is that we remember the importance of learning by both study and faith. These Sons of Mosiah are incredible missionaries and we look to them as an example. It's that idea of doing small and simple things consistently throughout my life that have had the greatest impact on my discipleship. It's remembering the small and simple things of these simple acts of daily prayer. It's these simple acts of reading scriptures. I know sometimes in the busyness of the day, I get down on my knees at night and I feel like I haven't had time to do many of these things. But it's trying to do these small and simple things consistently that lead to this incredible power in teaching the word of God.
	01:00:19	One last thought that I would add to that is remember the length of this mission. These Sons of Mosiah are gone for 14 years and I think as a parent or as a grandparent, we worry, we naturally worry, and I think it's part of our role as parents to worry; but be patient in God's timing, that God provides incredible things. As you look at the story, as you look at the conversion of these people, over the course of time, God has prepared incredible people to step into the Lamanites lives to bring this about.
	01:00:50	The Sons of Mosiah went through an incredible change. And what does God do? He not only inspires them or creates this desire to teach the Nephites, they have this desire to go to the Lamanites, and so they begin this mission experience. So we've talked about this incredible woman named Abish, who the Lord has prepared years before that in this moment, she's prepared

to help testify of the power of God that's happening. Be patient. Be willing to trust in God's timing. Be willing to trust that God is preparing other people in order to help you in this parenting and grand-parenting role, and then trust in the timing of God.

Hank Smith:	01:01:28	That's wonderful.
John Bytheway:	01:01:28	He's got the long view.
Hank Smith:	01:01:30	Yeah. Joseph Smith said, "The Lord has made ample provision for people's redemption." He's not worried. John, we both know there are parents and grandparents and sisters and brothers who are so concerned. How is this child, friend, companion, even parent, how are they going to make it? It's never going to happen. Everyone said that about the Lamanites. Why are you even trying? It is never going to happen. Yet it does. So like Brian said, we trust, we're patient. It's a long game. Brian, thank you for spending your time with us today.
Dr. Brian Mead:	01:02:13	Any time. Well, let's space it out a little bit, but let me know what I can do.
Hank Smith:	01:02:19	We've been richly blessed, and this is Brian's first time on our podcast. We'd love to let him know where you're listening from, so if you have access to YouTube, come onto YouTube and tell Dr. Mead, "Hey, I'm listening from this place." It doesn't have to be some faraway grand place. It can be, where's it, Brian? Mountain Green, Utah.
Dr. Brian Mead:	01:02:42	It'll be nice to know if there's somebody more than just my parents listening to this.
Hank Smith:	01:02:46	In Mountain Green.
Dr. Brian Mead:	01:02:47	In Mountain Green.
Hank Smith:	01:02:48	That's awesome. With that, we'd like to thank Dr. Brian Mead for being with us today. It has been a blessing for both John and I, and I know for everyone listening. We want to thank our executive producer, Shannon Sorensen; our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen; and every episode we honor our founder, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We have more of the Book of Alma coming up on followHIM.
	01:03:14	Before you skip to the next episode, I have some important information. This episode's transcript and show notes are available on our website, FollowHim.co. That's FollowHim.co.

On our website, you'll also find our two free books, Finding Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, and Finding Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Both books are full of short and powerful quotes and insights from all our episodes from the Old and New Testaments. The digital copies of these books are absolutely free. You can watch the podcast on YouTube. Also, our Facebook and Instagram accounts have videos and extras you won't find anywhere else.

01:03:48 If you'd like to know how you can help us, if you could subscribe to, rate, review, and comment on the podcast; that will make us easier to find. Of course, none of this could happen without our incredible production crew: David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra and Annabelle Sorensen.

President Russell M. Nelson: 01:04:09 Whatever questions or problems you have, the answer is always found in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Turn to him, follow him.

LEVEL UP!



- Hank Smith: 00:02 Hello everyone. Welcome to followHIM Favorites. John and I are sharing a single story to go with each week's lesson. John, we're in Alma 17 through 22, the missionary chapters of Ammon and Aaron, and I know you have a great story for this.
- John Bytheway: 00:17 Yeah, I call it the three attitudes, and you may have heard me talk about them before. Sometimes when we hear rules, commandments, guidelines, the first attitude, this is not what we want, is, "How far can I go? How bad can I be?" The next attitude is a little bit better. It's kind of, "Well, how good do I have to be?" The grunt is important. "How good do I have to be? If there's a line separating what's good and bad, show me where the line is. I want to know exactly where the line is. I want to live life right next to it." The third attitude, here comes the story. I'm in Arkadelphia, Arkansas.
- Hank Smith: 00:54 Arkadelphia.
- John Bytheway: 00:56 Arkadelphia. Sounds like Arkansas and Philadelphia got in a collision and, hey, we're Arkadelphia. It was a small college. I was at a youth conference. I was brand new, a long time ago. Hank, this was probably 30 something years ago.
- Hank Smith: 01:08 Okay.
- John Bytheway: 01:09 I was new at this sort of thing, and I got asked to give a talk at a youth conference. And I came into this auditorium, a couple of boys came running down, sat in the front. They were all looking white shirt and tie. And I thought, "Well, if I meet these guys, maybe they'll be nice. Hey, what's your name?" My memory is it was Aaron and Eric. "Aaron, how old are you, Aaron?" "15." "How many members of the church in your school?" Because I'm from Salt Lake City, right? He said, "Four." I said, "Are they all here?" "No, there's two of them we don't see very often."

01:37 "Oh, how about you? What's your name?" "Eric." "How many members of the church in your school?" "Three." "Are they all here at the youth conference?" "Yeah. The other two are my sisters." And I was like, "So you represent the church to the whole school, right?" "Yeah." I said, "Is that hard?" "Yeah, sometimes. They watch us pretty close."

01:57 I said, "What time do you go to seminary?", because I was curious. He said, "5:00." I went, "In the morning?" And he said, "Well, it starts at 6:00, but we have to drive." And I thought, "Oh my goodness."

Hank Smith: 02:11 Wow.

John Bytheway: 02:11 And I said, "Well"... yeah, I know because they pick up other kids, and there's some saint out there who picks them up and drives them. I thought this was a good question, Hank. I said, "Well, why do you go?" Now, here's the body language for that's a dumb question right? Hank, you've seen it. It's like something hits you on the head, like, "What?" He said, "Because I want to." He said, "I love it. Seminary is the best part of my day." And then he said, "Jesus was amazing, huh, Brother Bytheway? I want to be like that. I want to think like He did." And I was like, "Listen kid, why don't you teach the class? Here's my scriptures. I'll sit and learn from you," right?

02:52 -And I was just so amazed. His attitude wasn't a question, "How bad can I be or how good do I have to be?" It was a statement. It was, "I want to be valiant. Is it high class? Is it above average? Is it better than normal? Show me what that is. I want to be valiant." And you know who reminds me of that, Hank? King Lamoni's father. Sometimes we call him the Old King. Alma 22:18.

03:15 This is a Lamanite, not a member investigator. What do we call them? A Lamanite friend saying a prayer, and it's poetry, it is poetry. "Oh, God. Aaron hath told me that there is a God; and if there is a God, and if thou art God, wilt thou make thyself known unto me?" And listen to this. "I will give away all my sins to know thee." He doesn't say, "How bad can I be and still know thee?" He doesn't say, "How good do I have to be to know thee" with the grunt? He says, "I will give away all my sins to know thee," and I think that is beautiful. This guy seems to have been born again in his heart before he's even baptized as a member. That verse inspires me. It's one of my top 10 in the whole Book of Mormon, Alma 22:18.

Hank Smith:	<u>04:05</u>	"Show me what to do, I'll do it. That's how badly I want it. Whatever you ask, I'm in." I like what he said there, "I want to do it." "Jesus was amazing, wasn't He, Brother Bytheway?"
John Bytheway:	<u>04:16</u>	Yeah. "Seminary is the the best part of my day." Yeah. "I go because I want to."
Hank Smith:	<u>04:21</u>	I bet Aaron and Eric are still out there doing great things.
John Bytheway:	<u>04:24</u>	Oh, yeah. They've got to be like 45, 50 years old now, but I bet they are, yeah.
Hank Smith:	<u>04:30</u>	They might remember this. Well, we hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcast. We're with Dr. Brian Mead this week, and you're just going to love his attitude as he walks us through how to do this type of missionary work, how to teach. And then come back next week, we'll do another followHIM Favorites.