



"I Speak to You as If Ye Were Present"

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:

Join Dr. Sheldon Martin as he examines how Moroni found peace and hope through the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is found in the Book of Mormon. This record would be essential to bringing Christ to the world in the latter days.

Part 2:

Dr. Sheldon Martin continues to explore how Jesus Christ is a god of miracles and the Book of Mormon is a gift to us today.

Timecodes:

Part 1:

- 00:00 Part I - Dr. Sheldon Martin
- 02:20 Bio of Dr. Sheldon Martin
- 04:52 *Come, Follow Me Manual* Mormon 7-9
- 06:46 Jesus is a god of miracles
- 08:23 Mormon 7:10
- 12:28 Jesus teaches repentance, faith, and baptism
- 15:54 Different audiences of the Book of Mormon
- 18:27 Mormon 8:1-5 - Fear and loneliness
- 21:55 The loneliness epidemic
- 24:44 *Moroni's Guide to Surviving Turbulent Times* by John Bytheway
- 27:39 Small and simple things
- 33:21 Mormon 8 - "Acquainted with grief"
- 37:27 Mormon 8:10-35 - I am a disciple of Jesus Christ
- 42:20 What does Moroni say to us?
- 46:20 Pride, fine apparel, and ignoring the sick and afflicted
- 47:19 Dr. Martin shares a story about making a team roster
- 51:32 Do we care about things or people?
- 54:42 End of Part 1 - Dr. Sheldon Martin

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II - Dr. Sheldon Martin
- 01:15 President Faust on selfishness and greed
- 02:27 Creation as an object lesson
- 07:42 Hilary Weeks on how people feel when they are with her
- 10:03 Elder Bednar on balance
- 13:10 "Her name is Sylvie"
- 17:42 A miracle in India
- 23:06 God is involved in both macro and micro levels
- 26:10 Mormon 9:12 - The 3 Pillars of Eternity
- 28:15 Miracles in everyday life
- 31:22 3 Nephi 9:25-31 - Are prophets perfect?
- 35:36 Dr. Martin testifies of the power of Jesus in the Book of Mormon
- 42:36 End of Part 2 - Dr. Sheldon Martin

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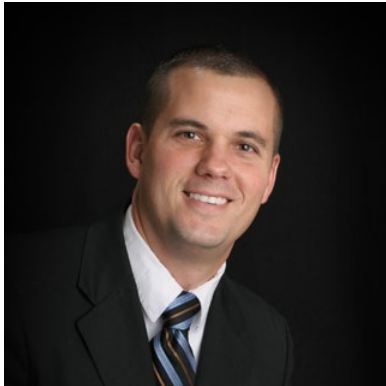
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Biographical Information:



Dr. Sheldon Martin is married to Nicole, they are the parents of five children. Sheldon received his doctorate from Arizona State University, is a licensed clinical mental health counselor, and worked in Church Education for 15 years. He currently works for the Church to understand the member audience's experience.

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Mormon 7-9 Part 1



GUEST: G. SHELDON MARTIN

- Hank Smith: 00:04 Hello everyone. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name's Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with my endlessly happy co-host, John Bytheway. And we're here with our incredible guest, Dr. Sheldon Martin.
- 00:17 John, we are in Mormon seven, eight, and nine. We're about to say goodbye to our good friend Mormon and be introduced to his son Moroni. What are you thinking going into this?
- John Bytheway: 00:29 Oh, this is a pass the baton moment that it sounds like was completely unexpected and I marvel that Moroni is like, "Is this my book now?" when you think of the actual people involved, it's quite a moment, isn't it? Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:47 Yeah. It's stunning. I think when you pick up in chapter eight, you're expecting to hear, "Okay, what is Mormon going to say next?"
- John Bytheway: 00:53 And all of a sudden, yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:55 Yeah. It's not him. John, like I said, we have an incredible guest today. His name is Dr. Sheldon Martin. Sheldon, as you've looked at these three chapters, what are you thinking?
- Dr. Sheldon Martin: 01:07 One thing that stuck out to me is when Moroni says, "I speak to you as if you're present." I think about when I was professionally trained as a therapist. You're taught, "Don't ever tell someone, 'I know how you feel, but to create empathy it's good to recognize when there is a certain feeling that you have felt.'" Here's some of the phrases in these chapters that stuck out to me where my experiences are different, but I have felt some of these things like, "I even remain alone. I have not friends nor wither to go, my father was also killed or the experience of loss. How long will the Lord will suffer?" And I'm thinking of, I have felt many of those emotions and then we have these other great phrases where you have the remedy almost paired in as well, "He knoweth their prayers. I will show

unto you a God of miracles." I have not experienced some of the challenges that Mormon and Moroni are facing in their world, but I have felt some of those feelings and I still believe in a God of miracles.

- Hank Smith: 02:16 That is awesome. I have not friends nor wither to go. That could be my autobiography, I think for the first 18 years of my life. John, Sheldon hasn't joined us before, so can you give him the background check that you did?
- John Bytheway: 02:31 Yes. In fact, I love his bio. His bio begins like this, Dr. Sheldon Martin is married to Nicole. Huh? That's a good bio.
- Hank Smith: 02:39 That is a good bio.
- John Bytheway: 02:40 They're the parents of five children. Sheldon received his doctorate from Arizona State University, he's a licensed clinical mental health counselor, worked in church education for 15 years and I've been hearing you two share stories from your time together in those years. Currently works for the church in a capacity where his job is to understand the member audience's experience. We're just thrilled to have him. You have to tell me Sheldon, I think we met when you were how old again?
- Dr. Sheldon Martin: 03:09 I was 14 and I went to a youth conference, so I'll clarify. John wanted me to say that he was probably then 17, but just maybe those pages don't quite line up, but in the ballpark.
- John Bytheway: 03:23 Somewhere around 17.
- Dr. Sheldon Martin: 03:25 And I had never been to a youth conference and I went and there was this really funny, quirky guy in the front talking and I felt something in my heart and I was like, "Oh, I don't know what to do," and I love baseball and I'm a baseball player when I was that age, so I knew when you thought you saw someone famous, you went up and asked them for an autograph. So that's what I did. I went up and I said, "Brother Bytheway, will you sign my scriptures?" And you lovingly taught me why that probably wasn't the best approach and asked me about my favorite scripture and taught me and I love what you and Hank have done for years. I love it.
- Hank Smith: 04:02 You are so kind. Hopefully you told him, "I'll see you on the podcast in a couple of decades," right? Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 04:08 We didn't even know what a podcast was at that time-

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 04:11 I think this was pre-AOL, World Wide Web. So.

Hank Smith: 04:18 John, Sheldon and I had a couple of years teaching together at the great Springville High, "Go, Red Devils." It was really kind of odd to teach the gospel to a bunch of Devils that came over every day and-

John Bytheway: 04:30 Then you went to Arizona State and what are they called?

Hank Smith: 04:32 Yeah, all Devils. That's right. Oh, and we just had so much fun. Sheldon is good to the core and fun so we are in for a treat. All of our listeners out there, he comes highly recommended by me. John, you are just going to love learning from Sheldon. I have for years. He is fantastic. Sheldon, I'm going to read from the [Come, Follow Me manual](#), Mormon 7-9 and then this is John and I's favorite part. We're going to turn the reins over to you and let you guide us through this and occasionally we might throw in a comment.

05:07 "Moroni knew what it felt like to be alone in a wicked world, especially after his father died in battle and the Nephites were destroyed. I even remain alone," he wrote, "I have not friends nor whither to go." Things may have seemed hopeless, but Moroni found hope in Jesus Christ and his testimony that the eternal purposes of the Lord shall roll on and Moroni knew that a key part of those eternal purposes would be the Book of Mormon, the record he was now diligently completing, the record that would one day bring many people to the knowledge of Christ. Moroni's faith in these promises made it possible for him to declare to the future readers of this book, 'I speak unto you as if you were present and I know that you shall have my words.' Now we do have his words and the Lord's work is rolling forth in part because Mormon and Moroni stayed true to their mission even when they were alone."

05:58 Beautiful. All right, with that Sheldon, where do you want to start? Do we want to jump right in or do we need a little background? What do you want to do?

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 06:06 Well, a little bit of background. The way I learn, I like to put the shell out there and then fill in some of the details. It's always important how are these scriptures relevant to me? Go from what is the story to how does this impact my story? We're starting in a place where we're describing a world that is really complex and pretty difficult. There is a lot of destruction, there's war, there is a lot of strife. It looks very different in our world, but that is similar.

Hank Smith:	06:43	Chaos abounding. Chaos everywhere.
Dr. Sheldon Martin:	06:46	Yes, and if it was left there it would feel scary. Moroni talks us through a little bit what he is feeling and then ends with this hope that we have the Book of Mormon. God is a God of miracles. I speak to you as if you were present. You will find hope in Jesus Christ. You are his disciple. I mean some of these teachings are so relevant to us today. We live in a complex world. We have experienced some of the similar emotions, but the good news is we have the Book of Mormon, we have the hope because of Jesus Christ and we're able to find peace even in a world that's pretty tough. That's where I'd love to start and walk through some of that story at a high level.
Hank Smith:	07:34	Absolutely. We want to go where you want to take us and it's sad to say goodbye to our narrator.
Dr. Sheldon Martin:	07:40	I've often wondered about this transition as well because as we know, Moroni will end the Book of Mormon a couple different times. He keeps not knowing if he's going to have more material or, "This is the last one I promise guys," and then there's a few more and I can't imagine what it's like as he's trying to prepare and organize his father's book to look at right before it says "Behold I, Moroni, do finish the record of my father." If you go back, you're going to end with, "Here is the dying words of the great organizer of the Book of Mormon in Mormon 7:10".
	08:20	Well, Hank, why don't you read this then? Mormon 7:10
Hank Smith:	08:23	"And ye will also know that you are a remnant of the seed of Jacob; therefore, you are numbered among the people of the first covenant; and if it so be that you will believe in Christ, and are baptized, first with water, then with fire and with the Holy Ghost, following the example of our Savior according to that which he hath commanded us, it shall be well with you in the day of judgment. Amen".
Dr. Sheldon Martin:	08:45	I've always been fascinated. There've been a few moments in my life, whether it's speaking at someone's funeral or at a graduation event and here's this culminating moment. There's so many things that could be discussed what makes the list. I'm so impressed of this whole book Mormon is ending with, believe in Christ, be baptized, follow him. That is going to be the best advice and it is the advice that stands the test of time regardless of situation or circumstance. That is the advice.

09:27 When I taught at BYU for a time Hank, I taught the eternal family class and I would often introduce this semester by asking students a question. I would say, "This semester, do you want to talk about the ideal family?" Instantly, there's a little bit of some squirming. "Can I give you an operational definition of what I mean?" I'd say, "Every individual or family, regardless of situation or circumstance should turn to and rely upon the teachings and atonement of Jesus Christ. That is the best option regardless of what's happening in life".

10:04 Instantly it was like, "Okay, all right, we can talk about that." I feel this a little bit with Mormon of everything we have stated and said and summarized. Here's one of the take-home moments. Believe in him, be baptized, keep following him. There's something to that message that we can't say it enough.

Hank Smith: 10:29 I know John is going to love this verse. I know John well. He is going to love that at the very end it comes back to the first principles.

John Bytheway: 10:38 Yeah, first principles. We've joked about this Sheldon like, "Boy, there's so many principles of the gospel, so many doctrines. If only somebody would tell us what are the first principles and ordinances of the gospel? If only somebody would just tell us that".

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 10:54 Well write it down, put it in a letter.

John Bytheway: 10:55 Yeah or something. Maybe Brother Wentworth, [John Wentworth](#) could know about it or something. I love how they keep coming back to the doctrine of Christ.

Hank Smith: 11:05 I've always thought when as a father and I don't have something to teach, it's family night and maybe I haven't prepared and this is where you go to, faith. Tell me stories about faith, talk about faith, talk about repentance, talk about baptismal covenants, talk about experiences you've had with the Holy Ghost. You'll be safe there. They can be repeated over and over.

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 11:28 Because it is repeated so often there could be a temptation to set it aside because of repetition, but I think that it would be well if we did the opposite. If that is continually the target in the forefront, everything else fits and attaches and I think of a tree. We've talked about primary questions and secondary questions. People have given wonderful talks on that. There's this idea of what's the trunk of the tree, what are the branches, what are the leaves? A lot of the challenges I faced in life, as soon as I

focus on a leaf only and I don't see how it connects back to the branch and back to the trunk and that trunk continually is the doctrine of Christ. Have faith in him, repent, change, repentance is a positive thing. Grow, improve, renew through ordinances, baptism and others, the sacrament, receive the Holy Ghost, have it purify you. Keep enduring.

12:28 It feels like it does not matter what we teach. That still is the message. It's Mormon's message here and these writings, it's going to be his son's message when he ends the book for the final time just is going to keep coming up.

Hank Smith: 12:41 It was Jesus's first message when he arrived. I know both of you as teachers, you frequently get students who have really good questions but unanswerable, things that are just not in the scriptures and I usually say something like, "I love questions. I love questions." I once asked Jesus if the pearly gates swing or if they roll and he said, "What a great question. I need you to repent so that moment where you get to the pearly gates is a good moment." We do have these wonderful questions but I think the Lord usually responds with, "Wonderful. One day you're going to have all your questions answered, but today could we work on faith, repentance and soon as you have those mastered, I'll give you more," knowing full well we're never going to get them completely mastered.

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 13:32 When we talk about faith and we look at the different scriptural definitions to believe in something, it's true but it is not seen. What's interesting about that is most knowledge that you come to, there's an element where it becomes a choice, where it becomes, I've studied it out, there's an element of there's still not perfect clarity and I think that comes with almost any decision. It is fascinating when we talk about faith that sometimes we think that the options are, I can have faith in Jesus Christ or I can go another road and perfectly know all the other things as if that is the dichotomy set up. That's not accurate, but this idea of I'm going to have faith in Jesus Christ because, "Looking through a glass darkly," as Paul says, is part of being a human is part of my experience as a child of God. There's not another option and so I'm going to look through that glass darkly with faith. Faith in Jesus Christ, hope in his resurrection. It gets me through a lot of difficult questions that I don't know the answer to.

Hank Smith: 14:48 Yeah, you will in all your questions end up back here, you might come out with a better grasp of what they might mean, a deeper understanding of them, but really I've noticed in my

questions, and John I bet you'd say the same thing, usually you come back with, "I trust him, I trust the Lord".

- John Bytheway: 15:05 I love how Alma talks to Corianton and if I can summarize his last verse almost, "Okay, you marvel about this, you worry about this and you think this is unjust. Let these things trouble you no more only let your sins trouble you with that trouble, which will bring you down to repentance." There's answers to all those and you'll get them one day, but don't focus on the wrong thing. Like you said, let's come unto Christ and repent and then maybe you'll get some answers to those questions. As we all know, Corianton shows up again and it sounds like he's doing great, but I love that his father gets him back to what first principles.
- Hank Smith: 15:44 Personally, I feel like I've almost mastered repentance. I'm about ready to move on.
- John Bytheway: 15:50 That close.
- Hank Smith: 15:51 Yeah, I'm this close.
- John Bytheway: 15:54 Hank, do you remember when Scott Woodward came on? It doesn't seem that long ago, but remember when we were talking about the title page and we talked about different audiences and how it was like different speakers in a surround sound system. I'm looking at Mormon 7 going, "I'm going to speak to the remnant of this people." "Do you know who you are," verse two "Do you know what you need to do," verse three and four, "And here's the doctrine of Christ", but he's talking to the remnant, the three audiences, this people, children of Lehi and then to the Jews and to the Gentiles. When Moroni takes over, it sounds like he's talking to us. It sounds like he's using us as a sounding board. He just starts telling us, "This is what's going on".
- Hank Smith: 16:38 John, I really like that you're pointing that out. Chapter seven, almost is, "Dear Lamanites," he's been fighting these people a long time. I'm fascinated that he doesn't start with, "I would speak unto the remnant of the Lamanites." He doesn't say, "Let me tell you how terrible your ancestors were. Let's just walk through this because they killed everyone I know." He doesn't do that. You are of the house of Israel. You have to repent to be saved. Lay down your weapons of war. You're right John, this audience, if we pay attention, we can feel a little bit more because we know who the audience is. There's more insight there.

John Bytheway:	17:17	That is a very affirming message. Did you know you are house of Israel? When Jesus came, how often He kept saying, "You are my sheep." Giving them that affirming... It wasn't a scolding message. It was a very affirming message and I like what you said, Hank. He's not scolding them. He's saying, "Do you know who you are and here's what you need to do. Here's the doctrine of Christ." That audience being addressed in Mormon seven I think it's fascinating.
Dr. Sheldon Martin:	17:43	Which I think really enhances as we move to when Moroni starts the authorship now that he has these moments of, "I'm speaking to you as if you were present." There's these moments of, "I'm speaking to the future readers of this book that is to whom I speak." That is a really interesting transition and insight there.
Hank Smith:	18:06	And there's almost a fourth wall there where all of a sudden the author looks at you, like, "I am not part of this story," and he kind of reaches out of the book, says, "No, now I'm talking to you".
John Bytheway:	18:18	It's fascinating and it really does sound like Moroni's talking to a modern reader.
Hank Smith:	18:24	Versus Mormon who wasn't.
John Bytheway:	18:26	Right.
Hank Smith:	18:27	Sheldon, walk us into chapter eight. Moroni takes over the record.
Dr. Sheldon Martin:	18:31	Great, so I have been fascinated as he takes over the record, he's alone. He is going to continually point out, "I'm trying to write to you as if you're present." My circumstances in my life are different, but I can resonate with what Moroni starts to describe on some of these emotions. Look at some of these verses as he describes what his situation is feeling and maybe your listeners can start to hear this and although our experience is different to say, "Wait, I've felt that." One that sticks out to me maybe starting even in verse two. John, could you read two and three? This is Mormon 8:2-3 and Moroni is now the author.
John Bytheway:	19:13	Okay, verse two, "And now it came to pass that after the great and tremendous battle at Cumorah, behold the Nephites who had escaped into the country southward were hunted by the Lamanites until they were all destroyed and my father also was killed by them and I even remain alone to write the sad tale of

the destruction of my people, but behold, they are gone and I fulfill the commandment of my father and whether they slay me, I know not".

- Dr. Sheldon Martin: 19:40 I don't point this out to try to be ultra dramatic or anything like that. I start to almost envision a junior high student. It's a new school. They're going over to the lunch table. They know no one. They're intimidated. I sit down and that feeling of there is no one around. I must be the only one who has ever felt like this. There's something to connecting with Moroni. This must have been a lonely experience. There's no one. He uses that phrase, "But behold they are gone and whether they slay me, I know not." I don't know what's coming. I am alone. Maybe we could use the word he didn't use scared, but I think I would be scared in this moment.
- 20:32 It's a way to introduce the story in a way that we go through and to almost watch as Moroni continually thinks he's going to end the book and then restarts and as he's writing, how does he work through some of those feelings? Here are a few others that jump out at me. Look at verse five. Hank, do you want to read verse five? Here's again me trying to connect with what is Moroni experiencing here?
- Hank Smith: 20:55 Absolutely. This is Mormon 8:5, "Behold, my father hath made this record and he hath written the intent thereof and behold I would write it also if I had room upon the plates, but I have not and or I have none for I'm alone. My father hath been slain in battle and all my kinsfolk. I have not friends nor whither to go and how long the Lord will suffer that I may live. I know not".
- Dr. Sheldon Martin: 21:18 Again, not to be overly dramatic, but I have underlined, I have not friends nor whither to go. There aren't people near me. I don't know where to go. I don't know how long this experience is going to go on. I imagine many listening in your audience they might even be in a moment right now in life where there's some similar questions of I don't know how much longer I can do this. I feel alone. I don't have friends near me. This is a difficult moment. I start to connect with Moroni. These are real people.
- Hank Smith: 21:55 Sheldon, I just want to stop for a second and focus on being lonely as someone reads this chapter and goes, "I'm not being hunted by Lamanites or anything like that, but I do feel lonely," and I think we're living in what many have called an epidemic of loneliness. You would know more about this than I would. Have you seen the surgeon general?

John Bytheway: 22:19 It's like we're connected by social media more than we've ever been before and we're lonelier at the same time.

Hank Smith: 22:26 Yeah. I mean this was a report called [Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community](#). Sheldon just as a mental health counselor, what are the effects of loneliness? What have you seen?

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 22:44 Well, it is interesting that when we talk about loneliness, there is this paradox that's occurring that we have in the history of the world no greater time with the ability to connect because of technology and at the same time, the lowest level of actual feelings of connection. One thing that I would point out is it doesn't mean that all technology or all social media is negative or bad, but there is a real need to connect with other people. It's healthy for us, it's good for us. This idea of loving and sharing and inviting others and meeting together and gathering together.

23:33 I look at the experiences of young people and others in the church. There's benefit from gathering together that sure outweighs even what the activity is that you show up for. Right? There is a benefit in being there together, connecting. It's gotten to the point where I think we have to be intentional about it. I don't think connection just happens accidentally. That moment of looking and talking and trying to understand and listen and hearing someone, it is becoming a little bit of a lost art, but it's spiritual. We're designed to be connected. We should really find ways to connect in meaningful ways to each other.

Hank Smith: 24:24 John, you could probably speak to this. You wrote the book on Moroni, [Moroni's Guide to Surviving Turbulent Times](#). I bet Moroni's read this, John. He's probably in the spirit world going, "This is my favorite. Have you guys read Moroni's Guide to Surviving Turbulent Times? This Bytheway, guy, he's doing okay." Sometimes John, we see people and we think, "Oh, they're probably doing fine. They're probably doing great." How do we help our listeners who feel alone? What do we do?

John Bytheway: 24:51 I think gathering and I love that the word is gathering because it has so many levels of meaning in our faith. There's a reason that the church did meet together oft to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls, which Moroni is going to write later on. Through Covid, do you remember when we went back to church for the first time? Looking around at everybody and smiling and oh my goodness, it's good, so good to be back

together. There's a feeling of support I guess of we're in this together. As you look around the room and we're all hungering to come back to the sacrament table in a more formal way.

- Hank Smith: 25:32 When my boys say, "I don't want to go to this activity. We're not doing something fun, we're not doing anything." You're telling me it's not about the activity. It's about being there.
- Dr. Sheldon Martin: 25:42 I think there is a lot of truth in that. I remember way back when we would do duty to God. We had this leader for my boys and he was incredible and he would say, "We're doing triple D. Triple D is the activity." "What is Triple D?" "Duty to God. Dodgeball. And donuts." They loved it. This was a leader who understood they need to come together. They had meaningful things. He made it fun, but the real point was that they were getting together and that they were learning and laughing. We just see this all over the place that often the most influential moments are in the gaps of the unscheduled time.
- 26:31 Some of my favorite moments in church have been from passing from sacrament to now we're going to Sunday school and you run into someone, you're talking with them, "Hey, how are things going?" When we started this podcast, Hank, you and I have been friends for a long time and being able to connect again and "Hey, how is your family?" There is something about that. I don't know if it comes through the Holy Ghost all the time, but I think many times it does that there's a feeling of connection that is really important to us as God's children.
- Hank Smith: 27:06 All of us could look for ways to reach out just to say, "I wonder if they're okay. I'm going to go stop by." John, wasn't it President Monson who took his vacation days?
- John Bytheway: 27:16 I don't know how that guy had 36 hours in a day and he didn't sleep. He was amazing.
- Hank Smith: 27:24 He'd go visit the widows of his ward.
- John Bytheway: 27:26 It's never been easier now that we can text somebody and just, "Thinking about you today. How are you guys doing over there?" Maybe that's not ideal, but it's possible. Tell Siri to send a quick text message to someone and see how they're doing.
- Hank Smith: 27:39 Small and simple things.
- John Bytheway: 27:41 When I was a bishop on my phone on LDS Tools, I had everybody's birthday and at the end of the day I'd look and see,

"Let's say I got four today," or, "I've got five today," or, "I've got none today," but I would call and sing Happy Birthday. Usually I said, "You want the long version or the short version?" And having heard me sing, they always said, "The short version," so I'd say, "This is your birthday song. It isn't very long." That's all I'd say, and then I'd just say, "We just love you. We're so glad you're in our ward and hope you always know we're thinking of you. I hope you're having a party over there." After a while, people were, "We were waiting. We were wondering when you were going to call." Hank and Sheldon, it was such an easy little thing and I was amazed.

28:20 I had one of our ward members who passed away in her hundredth year. I had missed her and so I sang it on the machine and I have a message that I still have, "Oh, Bishop. That's the first time I've ever had a bishop call and sing happy birthday, so that was really great." I thought, this is so easy. Look at the impact and I was kind of sad when I was released, all the birthdays went away. Nobody got older ever since I got released. That connection is important as easy sometimes as a little phone call.

Hank Smith: 28:55 I don't know if there's the answer in here, but is it comforting to a degree that I can read this and go, "He felt this too. He felt alone. I'm not broken. I can make it through just like Moroni did"?

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 29:08 It can be really comforting, really comforting to recognize that I'm not the only one. Obviously, there's other things that he says in here that are very powerful. Anytime we feel lonely, we sometimes can feel like, "How come everyone else feels connected?" Some of the world in which we live today can exacerbate that a little bit. You hop on social media and, "Man, everyone's life is great and how come I'm so lonely?" To recognize that that is something that prophets feel lonely. President Monson talked about it after his sweet wife passed away. This is something we experience in mortality that's difficult. Not that misery loves company, but it can be comforting that I'm not the only one who has felt this before.

30:01 Along with all the other emotions. I imagine Moroni must be scared. I talk to a lot of young adults these days that are a little scared about things like, "Oh man, interest rates are high. I don't know if we're going to be able to buy a house," worried about their future. Before we even get to the remedy it's nice to look and to say, "You mean Moroni was also uncertain about his future?" Yes. He literally uses, what was the phrase? "I know not", I literally do not know what's on the horizon. There can be

some comfort in that to know that we're walking that road with other people who've had those same emotions and experiences.

- Hank Smith: 30:40 I love that. John, I mentioned [your book](#) earlier, Moroni's Guide to Surviving Turbulent Times. I like what you call Moroni. I'm going to read. This is the first page.
- 30:51 "One memorable evening after participating in a fireside in Tremonton, Utah, I strapped myself into my little Hyundai and set out for the drive home. As I proceeded southbound along the Wasatch front, I marveled at the number of temples I passed along the way. I thought about each one I might see if I continued down I-15, naming them in my mind. Brigham city, Ogden, Bountiful, Salt Lake, Jordan River, Ochre Mountain, Draper, Timpanogos, Provo."
- John Bytheway: 31:15 Now there's even more. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 31:17 Yeah. Saratoga Springs, Orem. "When I was a missionary in the early 1980s, part of the standard equipment was a flip chart containing visual aids, quotations and pictures. One of the illustrations showed all the temples then in existence. There were 16 all on one page. I could name them from memory, I couldn't possibly name them all today. On April 6th, 1930, at the 100-year anniversary of the organization of the church, Elder B.H. Roberts told the Saints gathered in General Conference, "Seven temples have been erected in various parts of the land of Zion for a continuance of this holy work and more will yet be built. Think what that work may be when there are a hundred temples instead of seven." That was 20 years ago.
- John Bytheway: 32:02 That's a few years back.
- Hank Smith: 32:05 Yeah, it must've been hard to fathom back then, but here we are still some years away from the church's second hundred years and there are more than, and you say 150. What are we at?
- John Bytheway: 32:14 335.
- Hank Smith: 32:16 But the thought that wouldn't leave me, and this is the part I wanted to get to John, "as I drove that evening, was not about the buildings, it was about the man, the icon standing atop nearly all of our temples, that solitary figure, the Angel Moroni, there he was, all alone looking out over the valleys like a watchman on the tower that he was. It occurred to me that

being alone was something with which Moroni was painfully familiar. My mind began to race, "This may be a family church," I thought, "but it was restored through an unmarried teenager who was visited and tutored by an angel who spent at least the last 20 years of his life as a single adult, alone and wandering for his own safety".

32:56 How much different would the Book of Mormon be without Moroni's work? I had the thought, this is what you call Moroni, John, that I love. Moroni's best work was done while he was a single adult and then you call him later the ultimate single adult. What a great connection, John. I hadn't thought of that. You know, drive by a temple. There he is all alone. I wonder if he says, "That was pretty much my life"?

John Bytheway: 33:21 Yeah, I love that we're reading these opening verses of Mormon eight because there's not really any doctrine here, and remember when Nephi said, "Do not occupy these plates with things which are not of worth," but what worth is this for anybody who has ever felt this way before? It's a little bit of same boat therapy to see, "Wow, look what he went through." A lot of us have lost people in our lives, untimely. Most of us have never been in a situation where they're killed in battle and we have to take over. And we don't know what Moroni's last moments with his father would've been, but they had such a connection. We know because in the chapters named after Moroni, he's going to say, "Oh, here's a talk my dad gave that was so beautiful. Oh, here's a letter I received from my dad," and we know that was a tender relationship. I love that Moroni isn't saying, "This isn't fair, this isn't right. How could this happen?" But he's going right back to, "My faith in Christ is going to get me through this."

34:22 Like Isaiah said of Jesus, "A man of sorrow and acquainted with grief." Prophets have hard lives. Hank, I've heard you say that before. You start thinking about it. You go, "Yeah, they really have".

Hank Smith: 34:34 You read the scriptures. The assumption should be if you follow Jesus, hard things are going to happen, right?

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 34:40 On that note of hard things are going to happen and what John just said with acquainted with grief, there was a time in my life when there was something pretty difficult going on. At that stage I had studied the grief cycle multiple times and I was so familiar with it. I was almost like, "What stage am I at?" But it was really, really hard and I remember I think it was a little vulnerable and maybe any of your listeners have felt this. I do

remember getting to a stage and feeling like, "Is this the plan? Is this it?" In my moment of almost shouting out, "I should be working through this," the words, not the scripture but the words and then I connected the scripture, "I'm acquainted with grief." I understand grief and as I said it, it was this connection that we worship a God who is acquainted with grief.

35:36 He didn't have so much faith that He went around the garden of Gethsemane. He went through it. That is something that has just stuck with me. Joseph had these moments in the great Section 121, "Oh God, where art thou, where is the pavilion that is covering thy hiding place?" Not saying that we have to always be feeling this is a gospel of joy and we should have joy, but the joy is that Jesus Christ can pull us out of those darkest moments because He went below them all and He did not shrink. That's the joy is I don't have to keep going down because He descended below them all. To me, there's something there about Moroni, the greatest single adult that there was someone we cannot ever go lower in our grief than the God that we worship, where He went.

John Bytheway: 36:41 I'm thinking of Alma 7:11-12 that teaches us that is that He will know according to the flesh how to succor his people because he has been through it. When I was writing that book, I was telling somebody in my ward that he was alone and he didn't have any wife or family and the guy in my ward challenged me on it and I was like, "Look, He said He was alone," and then I looked it up. In fact, He said He was alone twice and when I said the words twice I thought, "Could that be a chiasmus?" I marked it and I sent it to John Welch and he said, "Way to go John," because it is, it's, "My father, my father. I even remain alone. I am alone. I would write. I would write and hide up the record. My father has made the record." It's the record is the pivot on there? So I submitted it to the Don Perrys and everybody because I thought, "Look, he said it twice. That's a chiasmus".

Hank Smith: 37:42 Did you put that in the book?

John Bytheway: 37:44 I didn't. I didn't discover it until after I wrote the book.

Hank Smith: 37:47 Sheldon, what do you want to do next?

Dr. Sheldon Martin: What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? The [youth theme](#) this year is I'm a disciple of Christ. I thought when I was a little kid, disciple and apostle just interchangeable words and I just like this idea of therefore when I'm alone, follow Jesus. That's step one. There's an outgrowth of that I feel alone, but there's

this great principle of yes, but in a lonely world I can still be a disciple of Jesus Christ and that is going to be my best option. It's going to strengthen me regardless of situation or circumstance. So I look at verse 10. When I was younger and trying to figure out terms and often in the New Testament it is at times interchangeable, but I read the word disciple and apostle as if they were the same word as I realized that the word disciple comes from the word discipline and really it just means follower.

38:43 I am a follower of Jesus. I look at this moment of Moroni alone and verse 10 seems even in a world that's lonely or a world that is difficult in Mormon 8:10 it starts by saying, "And there are none that do know the true God, save it be, the disciples of Jesus." But my earlier definition it would've been, "Oh apostle, it comes like with a calling." I love that I've actually expanded my understanding to realize I come to know God by being a follower of Jesus. How do I come to know him? I want to be his disciple, which means I follow him. I actually love that it's then the follow-up question of, well what does that mean to follow Jesus? I've got to really ponder what does that mean in my daily life? What are the decisions I'm making? What does it mean to follow Jesus Christ? That is a great truth regardless of what situation we are in life, to really think about that, am I doing everything I can to follow him?

Hank Smith: 39:57 Sheldon, I love the question. In my own life I got to know the Savior in the beginning from the stories and then as I became a teacher and I really got into the scriptures, you start to see that the Savior has a personality. I'll have someone tell me a story and I'll say, "That sounds like him. Seems like something He would do." That's come over time. I feel like I just don't know about him, but I'm getting to know him.

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 40:26 I love that. I wonder if that connects to [President Nelson's](#) invitation of how we say the atonement of Jesus Christ, not just, "Oh, the atonement." He's a being. He's alive. He lives, He has a personality. He loves. For me to then say, "I want to be a lifelong follower and disciple of Jesus Christ." That's different than, "I'm going to study some things. We're going to read some stories. I want to learn from him. I want his encouragement. I want his correction. I want to follow him." It has become really motivating to me in my life to focus on what does that mean to follow him. This verse is a great reminder of that. None that do know the true God, save it be, the disciples of Jesus. I really come to know the true God by following his Son and following Jesus.

John Bytheway: 41:27 What I love about what you're saying is what other options are there? They're just not good. You think about, "Will ye also go away?" in John six and Peter's response, "Where would we go?" Seriously, where would you go? Who else could you possibly follow? For me, this is a no-brainer. I'm an imperfect follower, but I don't know who else to follow who has shown how much he loves us and has done the things He did and said the things He said and like you said, Hank, that you've come to know what are the other alternatives out there?

Hank Smith: 42:03 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 42:04 Where else would we go?

Hank Smith: 42:07 Sheldon, let's keep going. What's the rest of chapter eight?

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 42:10 We've gone from this very personal experience from Moroni, "I'm alone and here's what I'm feeling about. I'm going to keep following. I'm a disciple of Christ," and then he starts to open up and move towards speaking to us in our day. It's from him to, "Let me speak to you as if you were present and I'm going to speak to you." I'm curious, as you have studied this, what are some of the things that jump out to you as he now tries to speak to us?

John Bytheway: 42:35 There's a book I read by a great author, [Marilynne Todd Linford](#). I read this book called We Are Sisters. She said the coolest thing about Moroni. When he's talking, "Look, I'm alone. I have no ore, I don't know where to go. It doesn't matter how long I'm going to live," and boy does his tone change. Everybody who reads this chapter is going to notice how he suddenly looks to us and she said something that I thought was so good about verses 13 and 14. Verse 13, "Behold," I'm going to use my tone of voice to try to help make the point that I like that she made. "Behold, I make an end of speaking concerning this people. I am the son of Mormon. My father was a descendant of Nephi. I am the same who hideth up this record unto the Lord." She said, "Notice how he consciously stops rehearsing his situation. He remembers who he is and his heritage and he defines himself by his work."

43:34 I loved that pivot point. Okay, I'm done talking about the past. I am Moroni. I am a son of Mormon. I'm going to finish this record. Anybody who reads it will notice it first, where do I go? What do I do? And boy, by verse 35, "I speak unto you as if you are present and yet you are not, but Jesus Christ has shown you unto me and I know your doing," and it's wow. I love the Bible is just that the Bible has a different tone of voice. What's so

interesting about the Book of Mormon is that sometimes they just start talking right to us like, "I saw you," or, "One day you and I will stand face to face," and you don't get that from Peter or Paul or Matthew or Luke, but boy, these guys look at him. I saw you. I know what you're doing. You think he's going to say, "You guys are so great. You're the best. Let's write unofficial church musicals about how awesome..." No, he says, "You walk in the pride of your hearts," and he really lets us have it there. It's fascinating.

- Hank Smith: 44:35 Yeah. I notice he gives us an antecedent here about the record in verse 14, "I'm going to hide up this record unto the Lord." The record is of great worth and now he's going to call it, "It." I have my children. We went through this and we marked all the times he says, "It, the record." He has one in verse 14, "Who shall bring it to light, him will the Lord bless." Then you go down to 16, there's a bunch, "It shall be brought out of darkness unto light. It shall be brought out of the earth," that's verse 16. "It will shine forth out of darkness. It shall be done by the power of God." And then you come over to 26 and he says, "None can stay it. It shall come in a day when it shall be said, 'Miracles are done away.' It shall come even as one should speak from the dead. It shall come in a day when the blood of the saints crying unto the Lord."
- 45:29 28, "It shall come in a day when the power of God is denied." Verse 29, "It shall come in a day when there are fires and tempests and vapors of smoke." 31, "It shall come in a day when there's great pollutions upon the face of the earth" getting worse and worse here. Verse 32, "It shall come in a day when there shall be churches built up that shall say, 'Come unto me and for your money you'll be forgiven of your sins.'" And then you're right John, he turns to the reader and says, "We need to talk." I think you're right. He says, "Jesus Christ has shown you unto me and I know your doing," and we're waiting for...
- John Bytheway: 46:06 You're the best. You're so awesome.
- Hank Smith: 46:10 You are the righteous generation.
- John Bytheway: 46:12 We have never made a youth conference T-shirt that says, "We walk in the pride of our hearts." Yeah, we never do that for youth conference.
- Hank Smith: 46:20 Sheldon, I want to talk to you about these next few verses as a mental health professional and as a scriptorian, he says, "You walk in the pride of your hearts." I'm sure he is talking about

someone else. He says, "There are none, save a few only." Okay. He did see us. He did see the three of us, "A few only who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts." It's about very fine apparel. It's about envying, malice, persecutions, iniquities. Your churches have become polluted because you're so prideful. You love money, your stuff, your fine apparel, the adorning of your churches more than you love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, and then the name-calling starts. "You pollutions, you hypocrites. You sell yourselves with that which will canker. Why have you polluted God's church?" This is kind of a gut check. Do you not value endless happiness? Why do you adorn yourselves with stuff yet you don't care about people? Sheldon, what's happened to us as a people?

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 47:19

I have adjusted my position that when I would read things like this in the past and think, "Oh man, I'm no good." I view it as very merciful. Here's the story. I have an older brother, he's fantastic at sports when we were younger, so terrible older brother to have, right? I mean he was always breaking school records and everything, so I get to the seventh grade and I try out for the basketball team. I knew I was going to make it and I got cut. This is how embarrassing this is. I was on year round school and I was at home, so I was off track when it came out that I found out that I was cut, I called and I said, "Am I on the list?" "No, you're not, Sheldon," hang up. I was so prideful that I literally thought, "I'm going to call back and get a different secretary. I think she's been given some bad information," not realizing it's the same lady who answered the phone "Sheldon you called 30 seconds ago, no, you're still not on the list".

48:12

Okay, so I get cut in the seventh grade. I get cut in the eighth grade. Ninth grade I tell my parents, "I want to try out for basketball again," and I literally at this point I think they're like, "Are you sure? Do you want to wrestle? Please? I don't know if we can do another year of-

Hank Smith: 48:27

I don't think they cut the track team, right?

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 48:30

That's right. I did happen to make the team when I was in the ninth grade. The coach, he was aware of the situation. Practice starts and all a sudden I am pressing really, really hard. I want to prove that I deserve to be there and I'm playing terrible. He pulls me aside and he said this to me, it's become great spiritual advice even though that was not his intent. He said, "Sheldon, you are on the team, now just get better." I had always taken feedback from the Lord of like, "Oh, I'm off the team. I'm on the team, off the team. I'm on the team." As soon as I read this, coming back to your question, also Hank with mental health, it

actually is true kindness and good that we are honest with ourselves that we not just work to overshadow challenges or that we try to cover up.

49:29 There's this real honesty to read this chapter and to say, "Is it I? Am I like this?" And, "No, the Lord still loves me. He's still encouraging me. I'm not off the team. I'm on the team. I just have to get better." I read this like, "Man, am I prideful?" It opens up a door to be a little bit better to say, "Yeah, we live in a tough world. I need to be real honest with myself," and that is true compassion. If I need to adjust something and I'm just pretending that it's a problem that doesn't exist, that's not healthy in any way, and to be real honest and say, "These don't have to be separate things, that the Lord can speak to me as if I were present and the words can be a little tough and that's okay".

Hank Smith: 50:16 Yeah. Whenever I'm teaching this, I will say something like, "Now listen, he's in a bit of a bad mood. He's been alone for a while, but let's take what he says." And he says we are pretty materialistic. I got to read you this story. I bet both of you remember this. This is way back in 2002, [James E. Faust](#). It's kind of a funny story. He said, "Elder ElRay L. Christiansen told me about one of his distant Scandinavian relatives who joined the church. He was very well-to-do and sold his lands and stock in Denmark to come to Utah. For a while he did well as far as the church and activities were concerned, and he prospered financially. However, he became so caught up in his possessions that he forgot about his purpose in coming to America. The bishop visited him and implored him to become active as he used to be. The years passed and some of his brethren visited him and said, 'Now, Lars, the Lord was good to you when you were in Denmark. He has been good to you since you have come here. We think now since you're growing a little older that it would be well for you to come spend some of your time in the interest of the church. After all, you can't take these things with you when you go.' Jolted by this remark, the man replied, 'Well, then I will not go'".

51:32 Sheldon, in your experience, why do we become materialistic? I can see me in this. I can see that sometimes I care more about stuff than people. Sometimes I don't notice when people are hungry and needy and sick and afflicted and I am so busy. I notice on campus at BYU where I work in between classes, most students have their headphones in going where they need to go, and it's hard to notice when you're locked in like that. I just want to glean from you here, how do you see this and maybe how can we get a little better?

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 52:07 We can all see the temptation and starting to believe that things actually will be fulfilling completely and make me happy. That's a real temptation. I'm not talking about meeting basic needs, but there's a real, "Oh, if I had this, then..." I call it the horizon principle. You can get on the ocean on a speedboat and no matter how fast you travel towards that horizon, it just keeps moving. The faster I go, it just moves faster. There's something about us that then I'll feel fulfilled. As you look at research that's never a variable, not that material things are negative per se, but they do not bring the reward that sometimes we think that they're going to bring.

52:52 If we use the horizon principle, again, there is something to settling, not settling in a negative way like I'm settling for something, but I know pausing and experiencing the things around me. [President Eyring](#) has mentioned before, "Pray for the list of things to do is just, it's always longer than what we can do," so pray for the right thing. What's the thing? What should I do next?

John Bytheway: 53:22 That was so helpful to me when I was a bishop.

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 53:25 That's right, and I think the more that we do that, then we hop off this race. I mean, it just feels, "I'll be happy then I'm in my final peril. Oh, then man, the pride of my hearts. How come the envyings, the strife, the, oh, they're not like me, therefore they're the enemy." We just get caught in these cycles that if we could pause a little bit and say, "What is the next thing you need me to do?" And all these other elements I'm worried about, they're not going to bring me the reward that I keep convincing myself that is going to bring me.

Hank Smith: 53:59 I think the Savior called it the deceitfulness of riches. It's going to do it for me. It's going to fill the emptiness in my life. You work your whole life and find out it didn't do it.

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 54:11 Then I'm not going to go, right?

Hank Smith: 54:12 Well then, I will not go.



Mormon 7-9 Part 2



GUEST: G. SHELDON MARTIN

- John Bytheway: 00:07 That "then I will not go" reminds me of another beautiful story from the mythical town of Mayberry where Barney Fife gets his paycheck and says, "Well look at all these deductions and this tax." And he says, "Well, you know what they say. You can't take it with you." Barney Fife says, "Well take it with me. They keep poking at me like this. I'll be lucky if I get to go myself."

- Hank Smith: 00:33 That show is better when I hear you talk about it than when I actually watch it.

- John Bytheway: 00:38 Hank, you're talking about verse 30. I really like this. You adorn yourselves with that which hath no life, whatever that is, and suffer the hungry, the needy, and the naked, if I could add three words, which have life to pass by you, you're treating things like people and people like things, and maybe that's what Moroni is seeing there.

- Hank Smith: 01:01 Sometimes we take better care of our phone than we do the people in our life. We spend time protecting it and getting it all, making sure it's safe at all times. Do we even do that for people? This is from that same talk from President Faust.

- 01:16 He said, "During my professional career I helped the heirs of a noble couple settle their estate. The estate was not large, but it was the fruit of many years of hard work and sacrifice. Their children were all decent God-fearing people had been taught to live the saving principles of the savior, but when it came to dividing up the property, a dispute developed about who should get what. Even though there was nothing of great value to fight about, feelings of selfishness and greed caused a rift among some of the family members." Listen to this, "that never healed and then continued into the next generation. How tragic that the legacy, the hard work and the sacrifice of these parents turned out to be so destructive of family unity and love among their children. I learned from this," President Faust says, "that selfishness and greed bring bitterness and contention. On the

other hand, sacrifice and giving bring peace and contentment." It really is. What'd you say, John? You treat-

- John Bytheway: 02:22 Things like people and people like things.
- Dr. Sheldon Martin: 02:27 You're not valuing the right thing. I've often thought of the creation as like this amazing object lesson. This world is beautiful and complicated and so wonderful. Yet the Lord states, "This is my work and my glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." The earth is a thing. It's not the work. If we get that order wrong, again, like John said, it's not even that things are bad, but when we treat people like things and then things like we should be treating people like the real work of this and when it gets backwards it just leads to a lot of angst that could be solved by switching the order of those.
- Hank Smith: 03:11 I love that.
- John Bytheway: 03:12 I was thinking about Nephi's statement. "We lived after the manner of happiness." It wasn't. "And we pursued the destination of happiness." That's your horizon because you'll never get there. But it was a way of living of happiness that you can have that right now unless you go after the deceitfulness of riches and go for that horizon type of a thing.
- Hank Smith: 03:33 Yeah, there's quite a bit of envy in here too in Mormon eight. You love money, your substance, your fine apparel, the adorning of your churches, everyone's going for more and more. Do you both remember this from [Elder Holland](#)? April 2012. "Envy is a mistake that keeps on giving."
- John Bytheway: 03:50 Just keeps on giving.
- Hank Smith: 03:52 "Obviously we suffer a little when some misfortune befalls us, but envy requires us to suffer all good fortune that befalls everyone we know. What a bright prospect that is. Downing another quart of pickle juice every time anyone around you has a happy moment. Coveting, pouting, tearing others down does not elevate your standing." Sheldon, I think you were very honest there. This can be a real temptation. That stuff, that stuff is going to make me happy. That happens when I go to Costco. I start looking around going, we need that. We need that too. I think we need that and we went in for milk and we come out with a hundred thousand dollars of debt. So any last thoughts on that, Sheldon?

- Dr. Sheldon Martin: 04:37 This is a lesson in my experience that has to be relearned throughout life. Without pausing and not being proactive about it, it creeps back in. I think it is one of those, maybe the reason Moroni is mentioning it, it can be very prevalent. We see it in church history. This happens or things and dividing up of property. We see it in the Old Testament. This seems to be at the heart of a lot of self-infliction that we put upon ourselves where we put things in front of people and forget that the real work here is people building others. You mentioned Hank, that we tear down others. The first clinical psychologist that I worked for and he was my mentor, Dr. Randy High, an amazing person and he taught me this phrase. He said, "I try to help people learn this lesson and it sounds really harsh when I first say it. People don't care about you. They care if you care about them."
- 05:42 And I've had to rethink that and then he used an example. He said, "Think of your typical teenager in biology and someone comes and he's trying to impress the girl next to him and it's like, 'Hey, did you see me score that touchdown?' It's so off-putting. I'm trying to convince and there's this envy and this strife. He said, "Now compare that to the person that walks in and sits down and says, 'Hey, nice shirt.'" And he said, "What person do you think is going to have the better reaction?" He would teach people these little techniques to help them see if you put people first and be interested about them, you're going to get a lot further than trying to convince them that they should really care about you because you're really cool.
- 06:24 It is this idea of we do that because of pride, because of envy. Do they really know who I am? And it's a good life lesson. Be interested in other people. You'll feel more connected. I'll often talk with teenagers and young adults especially who will say, "I get in these social situations and I don't know what to say. I want to feel valued in the conversation." And they get really nervous. And I'll often give them the advice. Well, instead of trying to rehearse what you're going to say, why don't you find out why everyone else there is really interesting?
- 07:02 Instead of trying to convince everyone, "Wow, I am cool. I should be here too." Find out why they are cool. If you notice people who are good at this, that really genuinely are interested in those around them and there isn't envy and there isn't strife and there isn't pride, they're the greatest people to be around. It has this reverse effect where all of a sudden you're like, man, that person's great. What do you know about them? They're just so great because they're realizing, oh wait, they were just finding out about me. That's what I felt so neat that they cared.

The antidote to that envy and pride is people we really are interested in other people.

- Hank Smith: 07:42 John, you know Hilary Weeks, she taught me something that I've never forgotten. She said, "I used to be nervous in social settings until I had a switch. I stopped thinking what people thought about me and I started thinking, what do people think about themselves when they're with me?"
- John Bytheway: 08:01 Awesome.
- Hank Smith: 08:02 Changed everything.
- John Bytheway: 08:03 I guess the important thing here is what does Hilary Weeks think about me? No, I'm just kidding.
- Hank Smith: 08:09 Well, we'll have to ask her. Hilary, if you're out there, John wants to know.
- John Bytheway: 08:12 I've heard it said in bumper sticker brevity. To be interesting, be interested.
- Hank Smith: 08:19 I love that Sheldon. The antidote is people. Don't say, well, I'm going to like stuff less. It's I'm going to fill that with relationships, connection. I got a quote [Elder Oaks](#), do you remember this? He said, "Some of our most important choices concern family activity. Many breadwinners worry that their occupations leave too little time for their families. There is no easy formula for that contest of priorities. However, I have never known someone who looked back on their working life and said, I just didn't spend enough time with my job."
- John Bytheway: 08:55 I wish I'd spent more time at the office.
- Hank Smith: 08:57 Yeah.
- Dr. Sheldon Martin: 08:58 Ooh, that one's going to hit close to home.
- Hank Smith: 08:59 Do you guys remember this part of this talk that this dad wanted to take his kids on really huge vacations, memorable historic sites, and then at the end of the summer he asked his teenage son, which of all these amazing activities he enjoyed the most, the father learned from this reply. "The thing I liked best this summer" the boy replied, "was the night you and I laid on the lawn and looked at the stars and talked." You adorn yourselves with that which hath no life and maybe your children are passing by you and you notice them not.

- 09:35 Do you guys remember this part? The [number](#) of those who report that their whole family usually eats dinner together has declined 33%. This was back in 2007. He talks about how meal times can be a strong bulwark against future problems for children and then he gave this great line. "There is inspired wisdom in this advice to parents. What your children really want for dinner is you." So Sheldon, I love that tangent. It's people.
- Dr. Sheldon Martin: 10:03 Yeah, it really is. It's a lesson that we just have to keep relearning. [Elder Bednar](#) had this wonderful example of balance and he said, "I don't like when we talk about balance, like we're on a tightrope and everything's just right and now I'm balanced." Talks about the street performer that has the plates that are spinning on all the sticks.
- John Bytheway: 10:25 Yes.
- Dr. Sheldon Martin: 10:26 And which plate do you focus on? Well, the one that's wobbly. We all have these ebbs and flows where we're going to have to spend time at work. Or man, this big thing came up or there's this tragedy. Our time is not ever going to be equally balanced. There is something about if people is the real goal of all this, of what I'm actually trying to accomplish, I think it helps.
- Hank Smith: 10:50 Recently my good friend, Jeff Lewis, he's in my ward, he works for UDOT, so shout out to my friend Jeff Lewis at UDOT. He asked me to coach flag football for our sons. And I said, "Jeff, I'm so busy." And he said, "I'm busy too, but let's do this." And it has been so fun. I mean what I think are important meetings and I'm thinking about the lineup for the defense coming up for these 12 year olds. I'm so glad I did. In fact, another dad who is there came up to me and he knows that I'm pretty busy. We're all pretty busy and he said, "I just don't know how you had time for this." And I thought about it and I said, "I didn't. I didn't have time for this. I had to make it." And it has been so fun. Sheldon, as you looked into our last chapter, chapter nine, what do you want us to see?
- Dr. Sheldon Martin: 11:43 In chapter nine, there's another one of these moments I feel Moroni is taking a pause and saying, "Don't miss this." We know that there's a caution of trying to broadcast, oh, this is miraculous or here's a miracle because it's sacred or over attributing something and I understand all those disclaimers. And there is something so beautiful and powerful about Moroni saying, but do not miss, miracles have not ceased, and we worship a God of miracles. As I reflect on my life, a pillar that I've been able to hold onto, although I wasn't seeking after it, I

wasn't looking for a sign. If I shared it, maybe someone else could be critical, but I knew what I was experiencing. I've had experiences like you have that the only thing I can attribute it to is something divine was happening in my life that I cannot explain and it was miraculous.

Hank Smith: 12:52

Then those moments, they take your breath away. They really do. This is it. I'm in it. Like you said, Sheldon, it's probably not a constant state. I still drive my car to work and I still have to deal with life, but there are moments where you know this is from heaven.

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 13:10

I was on my mission in Paris, France, millions of people, few missionaries, so the likelihood of crossing paths with someone is not common. But my companion and I sit down on a train. The first thing this man says, "Hey, I know you, I'm a member of that church." "Really." Go to his apartment. He thought that we wouldn't believe him, so he's searching through his boxes to find his baptismal certificate and we're telling him like, "Johnny, we believe you. This doesn't happen a lot to us. We're just going to take your word for it." Partially through the conversation, his wife comes in, we didn't even know he is married. She says, "Oh hey." And just sits in and we just are talking about Jesus Christ. We're talking about the Book of Mormon and it is overwhelming and she says, "Can you come back tomorrow?"

14:00

Johnny says, "I'll be at work, but you Elders please feel free to come." So my companion and I are on the way home and we were like high five, and we wanted to invite her to be baptized and consider it. We would get home and realize we don't know her name. It never came up. I know we could have gone and just said, "What's your name? Oh, that's right, now will you consider being baptized?" But I didn't want to do that. I knew she had never said it. I remember kneeling down, almost apologizing. "Heavenly father, I'm sorry, I know I should have asked her name."

14:34

John, Hank, I'm trying not to embellish in any way. This clear thought came into my mind. Her name is Sylvie. And Sylvie is a French name but it's not a really common French... So my companion and I go back the next day. I'm still a little nervous and she says, "Well, I'd like to learn English as well." And so maybe the Lord is teaching me a lesson. My companion says, "Let's start something simple like hello, my name is..." I still remember this moment when she says "Hello, my name is Sylvie."

15:18 I know she did not tell me her name. I know I didn't see it on the wall. I have no other explanation other than God knows his children. It's a miracle. Moroni is trying to warn us. We're going to get so smart in these last days or we're going to start discounting. There are going to be things that are still miraculous. Starting in verse seven. In verse seven, he's starting this warning, so I'm in Mormon 9:7.

15:49 "Again, I speak unto you who deny the revelations of God and say that they are done away. That there are no revelations nor prophecies, nor gifts nor healing, nor speaking with tongues and the interpretation of tongues. Behold I say unto you, he that denieth these things knoweth not the gospel of Christ. Yea he has not read the scriptures. If so, he does not understand them. For, do we not read that God is the same yesterday, today and forever? And in him there is no variableness, neither shadow of changing. And now if ye have imagined up unto yourselves a God who doth vary and in whom there is a shadow of changing, then have ye imagined up unto yourselves a God who is not a God of miracles. Behold, I will show unto you a God of miracles."

16:49 I am drawn back to, I don't know how much room Moroni thinks he's going to have left in the Book of Mormon. He's mentioned that a couple of times. He wants us to know, "I am going to show you a God of miracles and he is still a God of miracles." That is really important to hold onto, not seeking a sign, but there are a few moments in my life that I could look to and say, I don't have an explanation other than I believe that God was working in the details of this situation. That brings me comfort when there's times I wonder where he is, which still can happen and that's part of mortality, but there have definitely been times I know he was in the details.

Hank Smith: 17:42 John, Sheldon, I'm going to share a story from [Marilyn W. Berrett](#). This is a BYU devotional. Right towards the end she shared a story that I'd never forgotten and Sheldon it's a lot like you say. What else could this possibly be? She said in August of 2001, I had the opportunity of traveling to India as part of BYU's dancers company. We performed and taught in many major cities and she said, "The people of India are well-read. I saw great charity and spiritual qualities in the people most of whom are Hindu." She had a great time and back then she used the word Mormons. There are not a lot of Mormons in India. But while we were there we met a small number of Latter-day Saint missionaries, humanitarian service missionaries and convert members. It's not economically or socially easy to convert from Hinduism to Mormonism. Not only are the theologies extremely

different, but a person loses social status and is often cut off from their family by simply becoming a Christian.

- 18:46 She said, I'm not an expert about the complex social systems of India, but I have witnessed a variety of circumstances wherein the separation of those different castes was manifested. She talks about how one of her performances, this idea of the Untouchables, this different caste came up. She tells this story about one of the performances in which someone taught her about the Untouchables. She talked about how the Untouchables are the members of a group considered below even the lowest social caste, Varna. That's the caste she's going to talk about the woman whose story I'm about to share. Her name is Annapurna came from the highest Varna. She said, "I remember when I met Annapurna we were on a motorized rickshaw taxi ride." She describes how terrifying it is. The drivers careen wildly through the streets.
- 19:35 She said, "Annapurna and her husband, the new branch president and their eleven-month baby had met us at the airport. They helped arrange our transportation." She said, "I rode in a rickshaw with one of the dancers and Annapurna. Her husband and baby went into a small car with other members of the group. Annapurna was a lovely hostess and her English was very good. And as we bounced along we exchanged the usual courteous greetings shared by people who have just met. Then I became very curious. I asked her to share her conversion story and how she made such a dramatic change from Hindu to Latter-day Saint. The spirit that engulfed us that late afternoon during our rickshaw ride was tangible."
- 20:14 She tells this story of coming from this Hindu family, many generations of Brahmin priests, her brothers were expected to follow this tradition and become Brahmin priests themselves. She says, "I'm not an expert, but Annapurna tried to explain what was going to be her part of this religion." And then she said, "I always felt like there were so many steps that had to be taken in order to reach God. They were so complicated and took so long that I wished for a better way, an easier way. I yearned to access enlightenment or what I know now as a loving father in heaven, more directly and immediately, but I didn't know how and I never shared my thoughts with anyone."
- 20:55 She goes on and says she was 17 Annapurna when her wonderful grandmother, the light of her life died. She said the grief was overwhelming. I desperately wanted to see my darima again, and I was struggling with accepting that she was gone. Imagining her essence going into another form wasn't

comforting to me. I kept feeling like my grandmother was near. I wanted to believe I could talk to her as I had known her, my darima. She was pouring out her feelings for comfort or hope and she was befriended by a member of the church. She found out that Latter-day Saints pray every day often several times a day to a loving father in heaven, but she doesn't know how she's going to tell her family.

21:38 Now, this is the point where she says in the talk. Now the story gets really interesting. Annapurna's sister, whom I mentioned earlier, had attended school in another city. They had been separated for years, but like Annapurna, she had been devastated by their grandmother's death. Annapurna decides she needs to talk with her sister to tell her that she's going to join the church. So they set up a time to meet and she said they sat down for lunch and Annapurna said to her sister, "I have to tell you something very important and I hope you will not hate me." Her sister responded, "Well, I have to tell you something and it may mean that we will never see each other again." They decided to say it at the same time. Each confessed at the same time. I have been baptized into the Mormon church.

22:28 Wow. This is what Sister Berrett says. In a country where less than 3% of the entire population is Christian and less than 5% of those Christians are Latter-day Saints. The odds of two sisters meeting two different members of the church in two different cities in the same month are extremely low, but that is just how it happened. She quotes [President Kimball](#), "There is a knowledge that our father in heaven wants each of us to have and that is a personal knowledge that he hears and answers our prayers." Sheldon, you're right on. "I will show unto you a God of miracles."

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 23:06 Recognizing that God is a God of miracles. There's a couple of things that stick out to me. One, there's the macro levels. You look at some things that are just miraculous. I really do look at the speed at which we're building temples around the world. Then there's the micro miracles, the moments when I can't explain it. Maxwell used to say that coincidences are the ways that God micromanages his universe. I love that concept and that strengthens me because I want to connect this back to Moroni. Because when you're feeling alone or other things, it's like, wait, where's the God of miracles? I need him to show up now. Some of the miracles I think that I have experienced in my life is looking back and recognize moments when he's growing me, but I really wanted him to do something else.

- 24:10 I recognize your listeners, they've probably experienced some miracles pretty recently. Or they are witnessing some macro miracles and you're going to have some who are wanting that God to show up. And to show up right away. Moroni's words are as applicable. "Behold, I will show unto you a God of miracles." Just keep being that follower of Jesus Christ. If you feel alone keep moving forward. So if you go to verse 12, I think with this concept he's a God of miracles. He has to be because all of humanity needs a miracle.
- 24:54 "Behold, he created Adam and by Adam came the fall of man. And because of the fall of man came Jesus Christ." That's the ultimate miracle that's going to really help us, even the Father and the Son because of Jesus Christ came the redemption of man. I love this idea of he shows up in miraculous ways as we look at the whole world. Shows up in miraculous ways when I look at my own life. But ultimately shows up in that in death there is no sting. The ultimate miracle is he was crucified, he died and he rose again. For that, that is the miracle that's going to give us all that opportunity to experience the ultimate miracle.
- Hank Smith: 25:47 I think of the parents and grandparents listening and they think, well, how can I help my children show your children a God of miracles? Tell them what he's done. Share those things like Sheldon did with his story from his mission. That testimony of I know this was divine, I was there.
- John Bytheway: 26:10 I love verse 12. I can hear [Bruce R. McConkie](#) speaking of the three pillars of eternity. The Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement, right there in verse 12. These three pivotal events in the whole plan of salvation. And I was thinking when I brought my fiancée home when Kim was my fiancée. My dad thought, "Oh God is a god of miracles right now." So I think that's how he gained a testimony of it right now. This idea of God being a God of miracles. Recently we watched this movie, our family called [Escape from Germany](#). Just right about the beginning of World War Two, late thirties actually when the Nazis were about to invade Poland. When I was watching it you guys, I kept thinking why have I never heard this story. And I guess that at the time when they were getting the missionaries out, I believe that, and forgive me if I get the details wrong, but that President Joseph Fielding Smith was like, "Don't talk about it."
- 27:13 Because, it was still a current event and now it's coming out. What happened? They got direction from the church, get the missionaries out, the Nazis will be invading Poland in about

three days. And the mission president says, "Send somebody over to the U.S consulate." They go over to the embassy and the guy comes out and says, "We don't have any information about that." He says to this Elder, this young Elder, "We have the finest intelligence service in the world." And the Elder says, "With all due respect, sir, I think we have access to better intelligence than the United States government." I will leave you to go watch what happens.

- Hank Smith: 27:55 That's great.
- John Bytheway: 27:57 It was jaw dropping. That's just another instance of God watching over people.
- Hank Smith: 28:02 Yeah. John, that was T.C. Christensen, right?
- John Bytheway: 28:05 Yeah, T.C. Christensen. It just called Escape from Germany.
- Hank Smith: 28:08 Shout out to T.C.
- John Bytheway: 28:11 I've watched it about five times. It's jaw dropping. God is a God of miracles.
- Hank Smith: 28:15 And Sheldon, this is from the [March 2019 New Era](#), I believe really well-written finding miracles in everyday life. The size, timing and results of a miracle are not measures of our faith. Let's say two families each receive news that one of their children has cancer. Both families pray for the loved one to recover quickly. Both families exercise faith in the healing power of Jesus Christ. The child of the first family makes a full recovery, defying the doctor's predictions that she only has months to live. The child of the second family suffers through treatment and after treatment passes away, but the entire family is overwhelmed with peace and comfort rather than despair. The first family was not necessarily more faithful than the second. Both families received miracles in their own way and both miracles are a part of a pattern of continual reassurance that God has a plan for each of his children. So Sheldon as we read this chapter, I'm sure we don't want anyone walking away saying, what's wrong with me, this God of miracles? Where is he in my life?
- Dr. Sheldon Martin: 29:17 Yeah, it can be a real temptation to look at that. I would say a couple of things. One would be there's a caution here from Moroni not to seek after a sign or not to. It's not this, hey, I'm going to believe if, and then where is the miracle? So instead of seeking after the miracle, but maybe a better verb might be to

observe them when they happen. You're right. It does not mean that we're more or less faithful at times when it happens. I think of the Old Testament with Job, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." I think of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. But if not, I'm still going to believe.

29:58 And we've had those moments where we want something to happen and it's not. It's healthy to be able to say we don't have an explanation for why some things happen and others don't. But when something shows up to have eyes tuned to see and ears tuned to hear, they do show up and God is still a God of miracles. That idea of observing them when they happen but not seeking after and then I will believe could be a good way to speak of miracles.

Hank Smith: 30:32 Thanks, Sheldon. That's right on. I would add another caution, John, do you remember this from Third Nephi one. All these miracles are taking place, all these signs and wonders, and there began to be lying sent forth among the people by Satan to harden their hearts. That the intent they might not believe in those signs which they had seen. And there will be an effort to explain away some experience that you've had. Third Nephi two verse one, "The people began to forget signs and wonders and began to be less and less astonished at a wonder from heaven."

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 31:09 That's a category of people I never want to be a part of. I don't ever want to be less and less astonished by the amazing miraculous things that God is doing.

John Bytheway: 31:22 Getting ahead of ourselves a little bit, but when Moroni starts saying, oh you guys, you've got to read this talk my dad gave or, you have to read this letter my dad sent me. Moroni 9:25, "My son, be faithful in Christ. May not the things which I've written grieve thee to weigh thee down to death." This whole chapter is pretty bad. He's reporting on how bad things are, and they're really bad. "But may Christ lift thee up, may his sufferings and death and the showing his body unto our fathers and his mercy and long-suffering in the hope of his glory and of eternal life rest in your mind forever." And it's a great reminder of what are we allowing to rest in our minds?

Hank Smith: 32:05 That's wonderful. Sheldon, one last verse. Right at the very end. Mormon 9:31, Moroni seems to have a bit of a moment of, "Hey, this isn't perfect. Condemn me not because of my imperfection, neither my father because of his imperfection and anyone else who has written. But give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest to you our imperfections so that you can be

more wise than we have been." There's a common question of what's the expectation of a prophet? We had Sheri Dew on a couple of weeks ago and she said, "Are prophets perfect? No, but look who they're following. Look who's shaping them." What comes to mind when you read a verse like that? "Condemn me not because of my imperfections."

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 32:48

Recently there was a publication that was published on the church's website in the Gospel library app. It's under the category topics in questions in this section of seeking answers to your questions. And one of the articles is titled, Be patient with yourself and with others. One of the subheadings is be patient with church leaders. And there's a quote from [Elder Uchtdorf](#), "Be patient with church leaders. The church leaders called to direct this work are honest but imperfect people. Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf observed that there have been times when members or leaders in the church have simply made mistakes. This was true in the past and is still true now. A church leader might say something that compounds your frustration or sense of isolation. They may not show the compassion or understanding you need. Showing patience with leaders does not mean we tolerate illegal or abusive behavior, but we should extend support, love, and patience to the vast majority of church leaders as they simply and imperfectly labor for Zion."

34:00

That is a wonderful summation of we're all imperfect, we're trying and be patient with each other, but I love Moroni's message. Don't condemn the work because there's some imperfect people who get involved at times. That is really still great advice from Moroni.

John Bytheway: 34:21

When people are really focused on the servants of the Lord, the better question is who is the Lord of those servants? The question isn't was Peter perfect? The question was Peter being taught and led and corrected by Christ. And he was. Reminds me of section 67. You know how Peter sank when he took his eyes off Christ, right? Matthew 14. Church history. Your eyes have been upon Joseph and his imperfections you have known, and his language you have known, but look at the revelations. There is no imperfection in them. It's a great section.

Hank Smith: 34:57

That's section 67 verse 5. And you have sought in your heart's knowledge that you might express beyond his language. He's like, you're looking at the wrong things. You're staring at these imperfections and you are condemning because of imperfections. Thanks. That was really helpful. Sheldon, before we let you escape, I think our audience would love to hear, let's say they're home and they've been studying these chapters with

us and listening intently. What would you have them take away from what we've been discussing today? I think they'd love to know your thoughts about the entire book. How do you feel about this book?

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 35:36

Well, thanks for inviting me and thanks for asking that. About this section I would like to circle back to where we started. Whatever the experience you're having is unique, but there are others who have had experiences that you can draw strength from. I think Moroni is one of those, and Mormon, they're some of those people. The other thing that I would think is a great take home is we do worship a God of miracles. He's the same yesterday, today and forever and he's not done yet. We are the work with all of our roughness to us, but we are his work. I was a freshman in college. I went there to play baseball. I'm from Palmdale, California. I was not prepared well for college. I got good grades in high school, but I think I got A's in a few classes because I showed up and didn't start a fight.

36:40

I was not quite prepared for college. I'd wake up, I'd go to class, I'd go to baseball practice, I'd go lift. I'd go to the library until it closed, and then just kept circling. No one had ever been to college before my brother and I. I was lost. I had a Book of Mormon class. And our professor said, "The first question on your exam is going to be, did you read the first half of the Book of Mormon? True or false? It's worth half the points and don't lie. I was getting towards the end of the semester, and I was at a breaking point. I was at a moment where I didn't know if I was ever going to be able to do this. I didn't know what I was going to do. And the day before I left off with Alma 26:26, I still remember I was studying chemistry.

37:28

I closed my book, I pushed it aside. I think I was a little teary-eyed I was in this cubicle and I opened up and the verse that I had read, I'm sure I'd read before, but it never landed this way, was Alma 26:27, and it said this, "Now when our hearts were depressed and we were about to turn back, behold the Lord comforted us and said, go amongst thy brethren the Lamanites and bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success." I love literature, I love Shakespeare. I love all kinds of great writings. A book had never spoken to me like that. Like the Liahona, the words had changed this time. I love the Book of Mormon. I believe it was brought forth by the power of God through the Prophet Joseph Smith. I do. I believe it. I believe it with my whole soul. I know the stories about him and how. I believe it 100%. No book has ever guided my personal life in moments of need like the Book of Mormon, and I love it.

Hank Smith: 38:44 Sheldon, that's wonderful. I feel bad for that little freshman sitting in that cubicle.

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 38:49 I was so naive when Shad and I went, I sat down with the counselor. She goes, "So what classes do you want to take?" And I was like, "Dentist." I was a freshman. I was a freshman.

John Bytheway: 39:01 That's a class? Dentist?

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 39:03 Yes. Dentist classes. And she was like, "You mean chemistry?" And I was like, "Not really." I was thinking, the only reason I thought that I was like, I know my dentist has Fridays off and drives a BMW. I think it's the profession for me. I was completely naive. My dad went in the military and brothers went in the military. No one had ever been to college. Dentist. I thought it was like a trade school. I thought first semester you kind of used the model and then second semester you start working on teeth. How hard can it be? Upper class is how to put them out

John Bytheway: 39:38 Next semester. Here's your Beamer.

Hank Smith: 39:40 Oh, that is fantastic. And look where you are. Now Sheldon, that is a perfect story for God is a God of miracles.

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 39:49 Yes, he is.

Hank Smith: 39:51 Oh, Sheldon, thank you for being with us. Thank you for spending your time with us. We've loved it.

Dr. Sheldon Martin: 39:56 Thank you. You bless my family's life. You bless my children. Listen, I know millions of people do, but just thank you everywhere you go for many decades and building people. So thanks.

Hank Smith: 40:10 That's very kind of you. We're just as grateful in return for you and for all those who listen. So with that, we want to thank Dr. Sheldon Martin for being with us today. What a treat. We want to thank our executive producer. She's a miracle to us, right John? Shannon Sorensen. Our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen, and we always remember our founder, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We are jumping into the book of Ether on FollowHIM.

40:41 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.

41:16

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President Russell M. Nelson: 41:36

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

THE BISHOP DID WHAT?!



- Hank Smith: 00:02 Hello everyone. Welcome to FollowHIM Favorites. This is where John and I are sharing a single story to go with each week's lesson. John, we're in Mormon seven, eight, and nine this week. There's this point where Moroni, who's now writing because Mormon, his father, has passed away. He's writing to us and he says something that's a little harsh. He says, "You love money, you love your substance, your clothes more than you love the poor, more than you love the needy, the sick, and the afflicted." And then he says, "You adorn yourselves with that which hath no life. Yet you let the hungry, the needy, the naked, the sick, and the afflicted to pass by you and you don't even notice."
- 00:45 I have a story for you, John. I want to hear what you think. Now I need to give a couple of disclaimers as we go, so watch out for those. A couple of years ago, I won't give the man's name, he was a bishop for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and he decided to do something really different for sacrament meeting. Now, I need to say, John, that since that time, the church has said, please don't do things like this. So I don't want anyone out there to go, oh, I want to try that. No, no, don't do that. He wasn't breaking any rules on purpose. The bishop decided to get up early, go to a makeup artist and look like a real homeless person before church. Then he sat right outside the front doors of the church as his ward was coming in. I don't want anyone out there to think, oh, I'm going to do this. But he did learn quite a bit, and I think the ward learned quite a bit.
- 01:38 He said, "As my ward was coming in, many went out of their way to purposely ignore me." He said, "Some gave me an apple, crackers, or a \$20 bill." He said, "I was most impressed with the children. They definitely were eager to want to reach out and help in some way." He was told by several members of his ward to leave the property. "I had one person who went out of his way to tell me this was not a place to ask for charity and that I was not welcome."
- 02:10 Now John, the second counselor in the ward was in on this. He told him, "I'm going to be this person." So after the meeting

starts, the bishop who's the homeless man, he walked to the front of the chapel, sat close to the front and listened, and the counselor, the second counselor is the one giving the talk. He started kind of whispering or talking to the second counselor from the row that he's at, which is kind of out of the ordinary. And he said, "Can I say something?" The second counselor not realizing that this might give it away, John, he said, "Brothers and sisters, this homeless man would like to say a few words." There were some odd looks, some silence, and the bishop walked to the stand. He said he wanted to thank the people for all the kindness they showed. He had some money that he had received and he would like to give a portion of it back as a token of appreciation. He asked, "Where's the bishop? I would like to give the money to him." But no one spoke and the homeless man started to take off his wig and glasses to show that he was in fact, the bishop.

03:20 This is what he said, "It had a shock value, I did not anticipate." He said, "I did not have any idea the ward members would gasp as they did." He said, "Some attendees started crying. Others said nothing. Many came forward to apologize for their indifference to the bishop. Announcing they would do things to atone for their actions." He said, "I felt horrible that they felt so horrible." But he said the experiment was more potent than a sermon he could have given.

03:56 This was the interesting part, this is what he said, "There was an unexpected lesson for me. We don't have to give money or food." And John, I know that's kind of discouraged to give money.

John Bytheway: 04:07 Yeah, the principle is commodities over cash, right?

Hank Smith: 04:12 Yeah. There's organizations you can give your money to and really help. He said, "We don't always have to give money or food, but if we really believe what we say that we believe, shouldn't we smile, make eye contact and allow them to have a little bit of human dignity?"

04:29 Now, again, John, please nobody go do that. It's not something the church would have you do. And he wasn't breaking any rules, it wasn't a rule until then. I just like the lesson. Do we walk by with our AirPods in? Do we walk by people who need us and we don't even notice?

John Bytheway: 04:46 That's one of those real stories that causes you to introspect with a what would I do?

Hank Smith:

04:52

We hope you'll join us on our full podcast, it's called FollowHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcasts. We're with Dr. Sheldon Martin this week. He has some wonderful insights from his background that you're going to love, and then come back here next week, we'll do another FollowHIM Favorites.