



EPISODE 18

GUEST: DR. KENNETH L. ALFORD

"My Law to Govern My Church"

Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

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

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

Podcast Episode Descriptions

Part 1:

How are healthy boundaries Christlike? Dr. Kenneth Alford explains "The Law" and shares the importance of bishops and the value of Christlike marriage.

Part 2:

Dr. Kenneth Alford continues to examine the introduction of the Law of Consecration, dealing with false revelations and prophets, and the importance of General Conferences.

Timecodes:

Part 1 -

- 00:00 - Part 1 - Dr. Ken Alford
- 01:12 Dr. Alford's Church History trips
- 03:11 Dr. Alford's bio
- 05:34 *Come, Follow Me Manual*
- 07:08 Context matters
- 10:11 The Lord telegraphs a revelation
- 14:53 Two Church Centers
- 16:33 The gift of turning ideas into money
- 19:09 Mary Elizabeth Rollins is a Saint in deed
- 25:22 Edward and Lydia Partridge change the world
- 28:47 Text or hug your bishop and his wife
- 31:02 Peter parallel and the miracles of callings
- 34:32 Edward is like Nathanael
- 38:10 The Law: Five Questions
- 43:55 Grant Underwood's "The Law of the Church"
- 47:46 How to teach principles
- 50:45 Even John can struggle with a class
- 51:15 D&C 42:14 - Elder Bednar's "Insights From Apostles"
- 54:14 D&C 42:13 -17 - Observe the covenants and articles
- 58:02 Wives and husbands, love, and widowerhood
- 1:06:49 D&C 42:22-23 - Boundaries are Christlike
- 1:10:45 End of Part 1 - Dr. Kenneth Alford

Part 2 -

- 00:00 - Part 2 - Dr. Ken Alford
- 00:08 The Law of Consecration
- 03:54 D&C 42:32 - Consecration vs. accountability
- 05:37 Dr. Alford shares a personal story about a fire
- 13:14 Can you embark in part?
- 14:03 Grief and loss
- 17:43 President Nelson on mourning
- 20:13 Audrey Sorensen and enduring grief
- 24:00 Pride is making a comeback
- 26:46 What does the Army teach about being idle
- 33:13 Consecration begins and ends with taking care of the poor
- 35:03 Vista moments
- 37:52 D&C 43 and D&C 28 - Hiram Page and a prophetess
- 42:28 Reject the prophet = reject the Lord

- 44:36 Being a Saint is lifting others
- 47:12 Be confident in your message
- 49:46 Refusing to be gathered
- 51:03 D&C 43:34 - Listen and obey
- 54:18 D&C 44 - Four purposes holding conferences of the Church
- 57:45 Endowed with the power to thwart the forces of evil
- 59:04 Dr. Alford shares his testimony of Jesus Christ and the Restoration
- 1:04:15 Steve Sorensen and Newel K. Whitney share a gift
- 1:07:10 End of Part 2 - Dr. Ken Alford

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Biographical Information:



KENNETH L. ALFORD is a professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University and a retired Colonel in the U.S. Army. Prior to teaching at BYU, he taught computer science and information systems engineering at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York and served as a department chair and professor of strategic leadership and organizational behavior at the National Defense University in Washington, DC. Ken served in numerous assignments during almost 30 years on active duty in the Army—including the Pentagon, supporting Pershing nuclear missile units in West Germany, and managing over \$5 billion in government information technology contracts. He has earned the rank of full professor twice—but neither time in his Ph.D. discipline (computer science). He has published and presented on a wide variety of subjects—authoring or editing thirteen books and over 200 articles. His current research focuses on Latter-day Saint Church history, including the Hyrum Smith Papers, and

Latter-day Saint military service in times of conflict. Ken and his late wife, Sherilee, have four wonderful children and twenty amazing grandchildren.

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My Law to Govern My Church PART 1



GUEST: DR. KENNETH L. ALFORD

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|---------------------|----------|--|
| Hank Smith: | 00:00:00 | Coming up in this episode on FollowHIM. |
| Dr. Kenneth Alford: | 00:00:03 | What's one of the primary responsibilities that the Holy Ghost does? The next phrase tells us, the Holy Ghost is there to bear record of the Father and the Son. If anyone's having any testimony challenges, they happen. The Holy Ghost knows the answer. The Holy Ghost knows everything. And the Holy Ghost can bear testimony to you again, even if it's happened earlier in your life or if it's never happened in your life. The Holy Ghost knows the answer to that question. We just have to ask with a sincere heart or using the language from this section, I would say a prayer of faith. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:00:44 | Hello everyone. Welcome to another episode of FollowHIM. My name's Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with my co-host John Bytheway. John section 41 verse one God says, I delight to bless you with the greatest of all blessings. And I thought he was going to say your co-host, the greatest of all blessings, your co-host, John Bytheway. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:01:06 | You need to get out more. But thank you. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:01:10 | I'm sure when Sara hears this, she'll go, wait what? |
| John Bytheway: | 00:01:11 | After Sara. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:01:12 | Right? Yeah. John, we are joined today by our good friend, Dr. Ken Alford. So excited to have you here Ken, thanks for being here. |
| Dr. Kenneth Alford: | 00:01:21 | Thanks. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:01:21 | John, last week we were with Dr. Christopher Jones and we received a huge call to go to the Ohio. You've done church history tours, you've studied church history. As you think about the move from New York to Ohio, what comes to mind? |

John Bytheway: 00:01:38 Thanks for asking it that way. It's one of my favorite things to think of about these sections because the church had kind of been three families, and now they have this huge amount of converts in Ohio and it's move to Ohio. And then the question might have been people have brought a lot of their other traditions with them and what do we do? How do we do church? This middle section here is the Lord's answer to that big question.

Hank Smith: 00:02:05 Yeah, I was struck last week. They that have farms that cannot be sold. Leave them. Go ahead. Right? Wait what? Ken, as you've been preparing for sections 41 through 44, what do you see as your highlights?

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:02:20 The crown jewel in this set of sections is section 42. All of these sections are fun and there's some really interesting things from church history associated with them. But the crown jewel has got to be section 42. It's the section that the Lord himself identifies as the law. This is my law. If you want to live the life I live, here's how you do it. These are the laws. All sections are wonderful in the Doctrine & Covenants, but as one of my teachers once said, some of them are more wonderful than others. This is one of the more wonderful ones.

Hank Smith: 00:02:56 You do. There are certain ones that stand out among the others.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:03:00 You can kind of tell because the really good ones get nicknames.

Hank Smith: 00:03:03 That's true.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:03:04 Yeah. Like the preface, the articles and covenants, the law, the vision, the word of wisdom. The olive leaf. Yeah..

Hank Smith: 00:03:11 That's true. John, you must be one of the great ones because I've given you so many nicknames right? You could be a section of the Doctrine & Covenants one day. John, you know how people love to talk to us about our guests. Where do you find these people? They have such interesting backgrounds. Well, if you want to hear an interesting background, you find out how Ken Alford got to where he is. John, can you tell our listeners about him? He was with us four years ago, but maybe there were some who didn't hear that episode.

John Bytheway: 00:03:41 He's giving us another chance. I'm so glad he came back. He's a professor of church history and doctrine of BYU and a retired colonel in the US armies. Guess who was on time today to the recording?

Hank Smith: 00:03:55 Not me.

John Bytheway: 00:03:56 The guy from the Army, right. And he taught computer science and information systems engineering at the military academy at West Point and then served as a department chair professor of strategic leadership and organizational behavior at the National Defense University in Washington DC. He served in numerous assignments almost 30 years on active duty, including the Pentagon, supporting Pershing nuclear missile units in West Germany, and managing over 5 billion in government information technology contracts. Current research focuses on Latter-day Saint church history. That's why he is here, including the Hyrum Smith Papers and [Latter-day Saint Military Service in times of conflict](#), Ken and his late wife, Sherilee, have four wonderful children and 20 amazing grandchildren. Is that number still accurate?

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:04:48 My children tell me it will be fixed.

Hank Smith: 00:04:52 Don't expect any more, but you will get a new product line one day, right? Great grandchildren.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:04:59 Yeah, the current ones are really, really good. But the next ones I understand will be great.

Hank Smith: 00:05:03 That's what I've heard. That's what I've heard. Every product line is a better version. Ken, so grateful that you're here. Between the last time that you joined us and now you lost your sweetheart, Sherilee and we just want to offer our condolences to you.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:05:20 Thanks. Yeah, I'll mention her during this episode. It's taught me a whole different side of life that I hadn't seen before. There are lessons to be learned everywhere, but boy, some of them come at a real cost.

Hank Smith: 00:05:34 I'm hopeful that she gets to hear this episode. I want to start in the [Come, Follow Me manual](#). The title of the lesson is called My Law to Govern My Church. Just as Ken had said, the law. Section 42, this is how the manual starts. "The church grew rapidly in 1830 and 1831, particularly with a rush of new members in Kirtland, Ohio. This growth was exciting and encouraging to the saints, but it also presented challenges. How do you unify a quickly expanding group of believers? Specifically, what do you do when they bring doctrines and practices from previous faiths? For example, when Joseph Smith arrived in Kirtland in early February of 1831, he found new

members sharing common property in a genuine attempt to imitate the New Testament Christians. That's in the book of Acts. The Lord made some important corrections and clarifications on this and other topics. He did this largely through a revelation recorded in Doctrine & Covenants 42, that he called my law to govern my church. In this revelation, we learn truths that are fundamental in establishing the Lord's church in the latter days. And we learn that we have a lot more to learn if thou shalt ask, the Lord promised, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation. Knowledge upon knowledge." I love that idea. We are growing. It's amazing. Oh no, we're growing. What do we do?

John Bytheway: 00:07:01

It's a wonderful problem.

Hank Smith: 00:07:02

Yeah. Ken, how do you want to start this? Do we need some background?

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:07:08

I think a little bit of context would be helpful because boy, you've got to feel for Joseph because when the church is organized, you know, on April 6th, 1830, that Tuesday there's two church jobs. First elder and second elder. It's a couple of families. If you look at the eight witnesses, it's the Whitmers and the Smiths, and then their in-laws. The church is very small. And then the Lord calls Oliver Cowdery to go on the mission to the Lamanites, which is really an interesting name for the mission because who don't they baptize right? They don't baptize any Lamanites. But Parley P. Pratt being from the Kirtland area, he gets that group of four missionaries. It's Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, Ziba Peterson, and Peter Whitmer Jr. They traveled to Kirtland. Boy. The rest is just history as they say. When they connect up with Sidney Rigdon and his congregation, all of a sudden the population nucleus of the church is no longer where the prophet's living.

00:08:14

And it happens almost overnight in a sense. I mean, from their perspective, the way transportation and communication works, that had to be really an amazing shock to the Saints New York to realize that, oh, the bulk of the church is now in Ohio. So the Lord in section 37 tells Joseph in verse one, he says, look, this is so important, Joseph, that the main thing Joseph calls the Joseph Smith translation the main branch of my calling at that time. And the Lord says, Joseph, what I'm about to tell you, this is so important. I'm going to stop you translating the Joseph Smith translation, and I've got to tell you that had to really get Joseph's attention because he's under command to do that translation of the Bible and knows how important that is. The Lord says, I'm doing this for your sake and the sake of the

church. So that happens in section 37, in section 38. The Lord does a really interesting thing. This is a brand new church. Even the prophet has not been a member of the church for one year. Things are so different at that time. I can imagine people often ask Joseph, Hey, what about, and he's like, Hey...

John Bytheway: 00:09:22

I just got here myself.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:09:24

Yeah, I just arrived. We're all in this together. Let's ask the Lord. But in section 38, as would've been as discussed last week, the Lord walks them through and says, I'm going to pull back the curtain this time and I'm going to share with you some of my reasons. That's something that doesn't always happen. Often the Lord lets us know why things happen, but sometimes it's just the command is there and we are to obey. But in section 38, the Lord very lovingly takes this group of new saints by the hand and says, here's all the things that are going to happen if you'll follow this direction. And he reiterates in verse 32, he says, look, it's a commandment for you to go to the Ohio. This just isn't a suggestion. This is a commandment. And then he says, there I will give unto you my law.

00:10:11

This is one of the few times in scriptures where the Lord telegraphs a future revelation. We just don't see that a lot. And then he says, and there, at the Ohio in Kirtland, there you shall be endowed with power from on high. Wow, what a cool promise from the Lord. Section 38 is received in January. It's January 2nd, 1831. Not great weather. Joseph leaves in less than a month. The Lord says, go. Joseph says, yes sir. And he picks up, packs up and heads to Kirtland. And he does it in the winter. He arrives in a sleigh because there's snow on the ground when he reaches Kirtland. That perspective is just so important. And then what happens is the other church members, the faithful members of the church follow and they come after him. And there are some great stories, that you can find in Saints and, and other books about, Lucy Mack Smith's experience on the Great Lakes and Ice sheets and just some amazing stories that this is just such an exciting time of church history. I will just say this is one of my favorite periods in church history. It's, there's just so much going on and everything's so new and they're, the people are so willing to learn and what would the Lord have us do? And it's just an exciting period. But they have received this promise to be endowed with power.

Hank Smith: 00:11:41

Ken, I think there's a tendency, at least there was in me originally before I really looked at this, to think this isn't a big move. Nauvoo to Salt Lake. Now there's the big move. Come on guys, this is not a big deal. Must not have been a big deal to

them because it's nothing compared to what the church is going to be called to do later. Yet as I read, this is a big deal. Lucy Mack, doesn't she describe it as like the children of Israel leaving Egypt and Ken, you know more about the history of the United States than John and I times 10. What's it like to just walk away from your farm

- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:12:22 At this time, there's kind of two groups of people. There's the people that have been on the same land since their ancestors came over in the colonies and they're still farming that. And then there's another group that they are willing to move. I mean if you look at the Smith family, they go from Massachusetts and Vermont into New York and, but moving at this time, we hear moving, I moved a lot in almost 30 years in the Army, but none of my moves compared to any of their moves because I had an automobile, I had planes, you know, we had moving trucks. They had none of the above. Plus these are basically subsistence farmers. They don't have big bank accounts that they can bankroll this John mentioned earlier, they have to walk away. The Lord says, look, if you, you know, if you can't sell it, then they basically don't. Walk away.
- 00:13:12 So they're able, whatever they can put in a wagon, that's what they take. There's no GPS at this time. Just even navigating that travel would've been for those of the listeners that remember pre GPS days. I remember driving cross country, there were some white knuckle moments when you hit some interchanges, that you weren't sure which way to go. And you'd guess. And then a couple miles later you'd figure out, whoops, that that was not the right one. So moving is a much, much different experience. And then when they move, Kirtland is no prize. They're not moving to a city. Kirtland's, it's a village at best.
- Hank Smith: 00:13:52 Not somewhere waiting for you. Right. When you moved, you probably knew what house you were going to move into.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:13:57 Well, and there were houses I could rent or buy and move into. You move to Kirtland, as we'll see in section 41 Joseph's first question is, okay Lord, I'm here, where do I live? I think the moral of this story is that the Lord asked them to do it and they just said, yes Lord. Spoiler alert, looking ahead to future episodes. They do it over and over and over.
- John Bytheway: 00:14:24 Yeah.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:14:25 So many of them stay faithful. This is an interesting breed of folks. Yay for what they left us as a legacy. And now the experienced members of the church, when they arrive in

Kirtland, they're the newbies, they're the new folks. They don't know Ohio. I think that's, it's a bigger challenge doing that than I think we often give them credit for.

- John Bytheway: 00:14:44 Do you think that they knew the Lord was going to suddenly say, well actually Jackson County is Zion. Oh.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:14:53 Well we laugh about that. I think when the initial saints got there, no. But when we teach church history at BYU, we give different names to different periods of church history, and from 1831 to 1838 is called the two church centers. They're only there weeks or months depending on how you want to count it. Before the Lord says, Hey, this is where the New Jerusalem is. I told you I was going to let you know. And now Joseph, you get to split the church you're going to run two church centers. Take that level of difficulty in moving to Ohio and oh, let's add Missouri. Oh, and by the way, the Missourians aren't going to like you a lot, so we'll add that on top of it.
- John Bytheway: 00:15:30 And you'll have people that are upset with you if you're not there, Joseph.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:15:35 You'll have people upset if you are there or aren't there.
- Hank Smith: 00:15:37 Yeah. Yeah. The more I think about this, the more miraculous it is that this whole movement survived. I think it would have trouble surviving just in New York just doing its thing. It's going to, Hmm, is it going to make it this? How does it make it, if you're just a young farmer starting a religion, how in the world do you keep this going? What you said Ken is right. Unless it's the Lord doing it and this isn't going to be the largest of their moves, not even close.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:16:07 No. And even when many of them get to Utah, what happens? Salt Lake's not even their final destination. Brigham says, keep going.
- Hank Smith: 00:16:13 Can you just mention that there's new converts? This is so interesting. The established church members who are really just a couple of months established are moving into the city of the new converts. This is so backwards from what we're used to. You've got these new converts who are saying welcome.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:16:33 Well it had to be an interesting dynamic. And the thing is, it continues the entire time the church is in Kirtland. And in fact, later in the period as the temple's getting built and it's dedicated, some of the saints kind of get it wrong. They turn to

speculation and they realize they can charge a lot for city lots. And it's one of the things that causes contention and difficulty and even apostasy later in Kirtland. But that's, that's many years in their future as Kirtland turns into kind of a boom town. But it's so interesting to watch the early growth of the church. There's just a wonderful couple Newel and Ann Whitney. Newel has the gift of turning ideas into money. He's just got that gift. The Lord tells Joseph earlier in the Doctrine & Covenants, he says in temporal affairs thou has not strength. But the Lord puts people like Newel K. Whitney into his life and Newel K. Whitney has just got the gift.

Hank Smith: 00:17:31

I love what you said there, turning ideas into money.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:17:34

Oh, he just does my favorite. Newel K. Whitney money maker is everybody's clearing. So Ohio is virgin forest. These are massive trees. You can't even put your arms around these trees. They're so huge. What you have to do is you have to clear that forest before you can even start farming and you have to rip out all the stumps and it's very difficult work. And say then once you got the trees down, what do you do with them? Well, Newel K. Whitney hears and he's just got to laugh all the way to the bank. He hears that the Brits over in the United Kingdom have basically run out of wood because of their pottery businesses and other things that they're doing over in Britain. They're controlling the forest and they're starting to reforest and things but they're having to buy ash and pot ash and, and various things from other, other countries.

00:18:21

Okay, [Whitney](#) tells all the people in the area, listen, if you bring me your trees, I'll pay you a little bit for them. So for the farmers, this is a deal. I chop down this tree, it's worthless, he's going to pay me for it. Boy, what a moron. He's going to pay me for a tree that I don't need. Well, what Whitney does is Whitney makes an ashery and if you go to Kirtland today, you can see his ashery. He takes that ashery, he makes a couple of different kinds of ash. Then he puts it in barrels and then he sells it to the British. It's \$50 a barrel or something if I remember correctly. Which in that day and age is outrageous money. Farmers are making 50 to 75 cents a day and Whitney's getting \$50 for a barrel of potash. He sells it on the east coast in the United States and then he chips it over to Britain.

00:19:09

Well it doesn't take a lot of barrels to make a lot of money. He's just got the gift. He's got a little store. It's about a 20 by 40 foot store that he builds down at the bottom of the hill below where the temple will eventually be. But he marries Ann by all accounts, they're great people. Newel K. Whitney becomes the

second bishop in the church. Ann tells us, this is from her diary that Ann wrote. And so this is Fall of 1830. So they haven't seen the missionaries. She said it was midnight as my husband and I in our house at Kirtland we're praying to the Father to be shown the way and the Spirit rested upon us and a cloud overshadowed the house. So you can imagine this has got to be pretty amazing for them. And the house passed away from our vision. We were not conscious of anything but the presence of the Spirit and the cloud that was over us.

00:19:59 A solemn awe pervaded us. We saw the cloud and felt the Spirit of the Lord. And then to top this experience off, she said, we heard a voice out of the cloud saying prepare to receive the word of the Lord for it is coming. At this we marveled greatly. And I think that's really an understatement, from that moment we knew the word of the Lord was coming to Kirtland. So the missionaries come through and they listen, they hear, Ann is baptized first in November of 1830 and then Newel joins the church. They then pray that the Lord might send the prophet to teach them. Joseph then meanwhile has received section 37 and 38. He's heading towards Kirtland. And when they arrive in Kirtland, he pulls a sleigh up in front of the Whitney store. The account says he bounds out of the sleigh up the stairs, there's a couple of stairs into the Whitney store.

00:20:56 He runs into the store part, which is on the left, reaches out his hand, extends it and says, Newel K. Whitney, thou art the man. You've prayed me here now what do you want? That's so great. And Ann says that her husband's kind of like, who are you? And he says, I am Joseph the prophet. Just a great, great story. And then section 41, which starts our reading this week by some accounts depending on how you read the history is received that day that Joseph and Emma have actually arrived in Kirtland. Something interesting happens at the Isaac Morley farm, not long after Joseph arrives. It involves a young lady by the name of Mary Elizabeth Rollins. And again another teaser, it's Mary Elizabeth Rollins who scoops up pages of the Book of Commandments and runs into the cornfield to preserve those copies. Same young lady.

Hank Smith: 00:21:46 That's not here though Ken, right?

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:21:49 No, no, that's in Missouri.

Hank Smith: 00:21:50 Oh, okay.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:21:51 So that's yet to happen. I love what happens here. This is from her [journal](#). She's just a young lady as I recall. She's what, 12 or 13 years old if I'm remembering right.

Hank Smith: 00:22:02 Okay.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:22:02 But she said quite a number of residents of Kirtland accepted baptism, mother and myself, also in the month of October, 1830, there was a meeting that evening in October and we learned that Brother Morley had a copy of the book. She means the Book of Mormon in his possession. It was the only one in that entire part of the country. I went to his house just before the meeting was to commence and I asked just to see the book. Brother Morley put it in my hand. And as I looked at it, oh I had such a desire to read it, so that I could not refrain from asking him to let me take it home and read it while he was in the meeting. He said it would be too late for me to bring it back after the meeting. He'd hardly had time to read it himself.

00:22:45 And but few of the brethren had even seen it. But I pled so earnestly for it that he finally said, child, if you'll bring this book home before breakfast tomorrow morning, you may take it. He admonished me to be careful and see no harm came to it. And then she continues and says, if any person in this world was perfectly happy in the possession of any coveted treasure, I was when I had permission to read that wonderful book. And then she talks about how they took turns reading by the fire and the next morning she does take it back like she was asked. And she said, when I reached Brother Morley's, they'd only been up for a little while. When I handed him the book, he remarked, I guess you didn't read much in it. And I showed him how far I had read. He was surprised and said, I don't believe you.

00:23:29 You can't tell me one word of it. So I then repeated the first verse and also outlined the history of Nephi. He gazed at me in surprise and said, child, take this book home and finish it. I can wait. She continues in her journal and says about the time I finished the last chapter, the prophet Joseph arrived in Kirtland. Brother Whitney brought the prophet Joseph to our house and introduced him to the older ones in the family. I wasn't there at that time. In looking around, he saw the Book of Mormon on the shelf and asked how that book came to be there because he said, I sent that book to Brother Morley and my uncle told him how his niece had obtained it. And he asked, where's your niece? I was sent for. And when he saw me, he looked at me earnestly and he made me a present of the book and he said he could get another one for Brother Morley. I just think that's a sweet story. I just really like that.

Hank Smith: 00:24:27 And she loves the Book of Mormon and she loves the Book of Mormon her whole life. So Ken, let's keep going. We're in Ohio. Joseph doesn't have yet an established home, but he's got a couple places to stay.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:24:40 The thing to keep in mind with the Ohio period of church history, this is the period of church history when the Lord literally rains revelation on Joseph's head, there is more revelation given in a shorter time that is canonized in the Ohio period than any other time in church history. It's like 65 sections of the Doctrine and Covenants are received in Ohio. So the Lord is pouring information on Joseph's head. They also hold right next to their living room, where the revelation is received, is the little room where the school of the prophets is held. Kirtland is not a big place and everything takes place in a pretty compact area and it's just such a wonderful experience. There's another good family. Well there's many good families, but another good family that's in the Kirtland area is Edward Partridge. He's a hatter, not a job that we think of today, but he's a guy that makes hats and he was a successful businessman.

00:25:39 He does travel to New York. He and Sidney Rigdon both go to New York to meet with the prophet. Joseph receives a revelation for him. He returns not with Joseph, but he gets back to the Kirtland area right about the time Joseph arrives. Then if you look at section 41, section 41 is given on February 4th, 1831. There was probably no one more surprised by Section 41 than Edward Partridge because starting in verse nine, Edward's life is about to change forever as the Lord says. And again, I have called my servant Edward Partridge and I give him a commandment. Boy, normally the church leader offers the church job to you. Edward Partridge receives this calling by commandment Edward, this is not optional. This is a commandment from your Lord. And I give him a commandment that he should be appointed by the voice of the church and ordained a bishop unto the church.

00:26:36 I've wondered if that was a surprise to Joseph too. I've often wondered how much of the unfolding church organization Joseph is given in advance.

Hank Smith: 00:26:46 This is new, right Ken?

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:26:47 It's way brand new to Edward. I really treasure what the Lord says about [Edward Partridge](#). His family talks about him of just how gentle father was. When a lot of people talk about [Edward Partridge](#), they use the word gentle and kind. And in fact, when he's being tarred and feathered later in Jackson County, he said,

I took no animosity against my persecutor. And he said some of them basically stopped because they couldn't figure out why I was being so kind to them. So the Lord's comment though is that he says, and this because his heart is pure unto me, for he is like unto Nathaniel, one of the apostles of old in whom there is no guile with Edward Partridge.

00:27:33 What you saw was what you got. There was no deceit in him, I'm guessing no sarcasm. He was the real deal. [George Washington](#) said it was an awful responsibility to be the first president because everything he did set a precedent. I think that's the same with Edward Partridge. Pretty much everything he did set a precedent for what a bishop is. What a bishop is. Not how a bishop should act, what a bishop should do. Of course he's going to be perfect for the job because he's called by the Lord. But he's such a good guy. His life just completely changes because the Lord at this time calls him to leave his businesses. He becomes bishop in that day and age was full-time. And if you can imagine, there's no wards. And so you've got the prophet, now you've got a bishop. There's no high council, there's no quorum of the 12, there's no 70, there's no, there's not even any high priest at this time. Basically Edward Partridge has temporal responsibility as bishop for all the members of the church. The whole church. Oh, the guy that had to dance the gig on the way home was Joseph because now he's got somebody strapped into the harness with him.

Hank Smith: 00:28:40 Yeah.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:28:41 And then it's Edward Partridge who was sent out to Missouri very quickly because Joseph can't be in two places at once.

Hank Smith: 00:28:47 Can we stop and just do a shout out John and Ken to the bishops of the church. I think there's somewhere around 25,000 of them in the church today. I bet Edward Partridge would shake hands with each one of them and give them a hug.

John Bytheway: 00:29:03 Give them a hug.

Hank Smith: 00:29:05 Can you think John and Ken of the good bishops you've had throughout your life?

John Bytheway: 00:29:09 Yeah, in fact I don't remember Hank who in the 1970s. Okay, I'm going back now. Who won the World Series? Who won the NBA championship? Who won the Super Bowl? I can tell you who my bishops were. Every one of them. The impact they had that they may not even have known they were having.

Hank Smith: 00:29:28 I think the earliest bishop I remember in my life is Bishop Wayne Torgerson. Isn't that amazing John? I mean I must have been five, six years old and I still remember our good bishop and my bishop right now, Richard Lewis, as good as they come, and his wife Janine, just as good as they come.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:29:47 In the military, many times I lived in a branch, so we didn't have a bishop, we had a branch president. But the bishops, I've had very different individuals. All so different and all so suited to the calling. I've had just wonderful bishops. At one point growing up as a teenager, my bishop was my father. That was an especially fun relationship. Bishop is just such an important job. In fact, Joseph, a little teaser for a future episode. But when Joseph is in Liberty jail and he writes that big letter that parts of which become sections 121 through 123, who does he address it to? He addresses it to the church of the Latter-day Saints and Bishop Partridge in particular, he sends that to the bishop. There is a quorum of the 12 at that time, but he sends it to the bishop. Why? Because the bishops are responsible to assist with the temporal welfare and the saints at that time were in temporal distress. But again, it's the same good bishop. It's Bishop Partridge.

Hank Smith: 00:30:52 We can't forget his wife Lydia. When you call a bishop, you call a wife, you call a family.

John Bytheway: 00:30:59 Especially for the calling of Bishop.

Hank Smith: 00:31:01 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:31:02 And I love the way verse nine ends to leave his merchandise and to spend all his time in the labors of the church. We don't use that wording today, but I'm like, whoa, doesn't that remind you of, Hey Peter, lovest thou me more than this nets and the boats and the fish and Peter, you're willing to walk away. And that sounds like what Edward Partridge was being asked to do. Today we have to juggle it all.

Hank Smith: 00:31:30 When we think of a hatter, we don't think, well that guy must be doing well. But I think Edward was doing well as a hatter.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:31:38 We have an account from his daughter that he not only had his hat business, but he also was invested in some other businesses. She doesn't really elaborate what they were, but he understood money. And a hatter at that time could actually earn income several ways. That was the period of the fur hats. So if you had lots of beaver and other fur animals around, but

he also specialized in felt hats that people would wear and that were quite popular at that time. He does feel ill suited because very shortly he is called to administer the law of consecration in Missouri and he basically goes to Joseph and says, look, I'm not a lawyer, I'm not a real estate agent. I'm a hatter. I need some help from the Lord. So you've got a really fun section coming up in section 51 in a couple of weeks where the Lord takes this hatter by the hand and tells him how to administer the law of consecration to the saints. But I think the important thing is the Lord qualifies him for most callings, my first reaction is, okay, okay, I don't know how to do this I'm really not sure what I'm supposed to do.

00:32:45 Isn't it interesting when you look back on callings as you're released where you go, boy, yeah, the Lord just gave me everything I needed and took me by the hand and put me with people that could help and gave me experiences to qualify me. And now that I've had that experience, I can be a better spouse or parent or neighbor. How wonderful. It's, there's a great statement from [President Nelson](#). He said, "think of the miracle of it." And then he talks about the fact that we get church callings. But I love that how he starts, think of the miracle of it. It is a miracle that we get to do these things. That the Lord trusts us enough to give us these callings regardless of what the callings are. You can learn from every calling that you have. And sometimes they come as just, at least in my life, complete surprises. Like I did not see that one coming. What a great process that is. That the Lord lets us participate in the kingdom that way.

Hank Smith: 00:33:40 Hey John, maybe we can start a little movement among our listeners. If anybody listening wants to, you could get out your phone and you could text your bishop and you could say something like, Bishop, Come, Follow Me this week. Very first bishop is called Edward Partridge. Thank you for being a great bishop. Wouldn't it be great if the bishop's out there all of a sudden got a half dozen text messages like what in the world, what is this?

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:34:06 They'll all be surprised because it didn't start with Bishop, I have a problem.

Hank Smith: 00:34:09 Yeah.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:34:11 Bishop, I need your help.

Hank Smith: 00:34:14 Anyone out there who wants to shoot a text message to your bishop tell them you are doing great and mention their sweet

wife. Say Hey, thank you and we pray for our bishops. I bet both of you do as well. We pray for our good bishop every night family prayer.

- John Bytheway: 00:34:32 How do you feel when you hear verse nine if you're Edward Partridge? And then how do you feel when you hear verse 11? His heart is pure before me. He is like unto Nathaniel of old in whom there is no guile. How would you like to hear that? I remember hearing you talk of S. Michael Wilcox and he talked about Jesus and nicknames, how he built people, paraphrasing, but you know Peter, I'm going to call you the rock. What a nickname that must have been. James, John, you boys. You are the sons of Thunder. Yeah. How does that make you feel? Ah, Nathaniel a man in whom there is no guile. Wow. I like this right here. That what that must have done for Edward. It makes me think of that.
- Hank Smith: 00:35:19 I think it was [Mark Twain](#) who said, I can live like three months on a good compliment. Right? I bet you could live a little bit longer on a compliment like that from the Lord.
- John Bytheway: 00:35:29 A compliment that's canonized, right? I mean we get some condemnations canonized here, but I was like a canonized compliment. Yeah. I love the Lord giving that compliment and maybe showing us how to treat each other too a little bit.
- Hank Smith: 00:35:44 I love that. Thanks John.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:35:46 One last note on Edward Partridge, after he's tarred and feathered and beat to a pulp in 1833 in Jackson County, he never really fully recovers. He's in poor health the rest of his life. In May of 1840, he's trying to build a home, but he tells his journal, I'm unable to do hard labor. I can do light labor but not for long. And then he gets sick and dies. His is the first real major funeral in Nauvoo. After the church locates to Nauvoo, Joseph loses his first bishop right off the bat in Nauvoo. But there's a really tender note in section 124, section 124. Again, another teaser for a future episode. It's the longest section in the Doctrine & Covenants. In that section, the Lord lets Joseph know Edward Partridge is with me. I brought him home. It was just a really tender note because Joseph had to deeply, deeply love that man.
- 00:36:47 He had carried so much of the burden and helped the prophet so much and he was just such a good guy and he wasn't perfect. There were times when he was corrected and he acknowledged that in his journal. He said, the Lord corrects me, but basically it's because he loves me. And when he does die early, he dies

not too far apart from when Joseph Smith Sr. dies. So Joseph loses his father and his first bishop in rapid succession. And the Lord lets him know, he mentions both Joseph Sr. and Edward Partridge in section 124. I just think that's kind of a tender, tender mercy from the Lord.

Hank Smith: 00:37:22 I think [Sherilyn Farnes](#), who's an expert on the lives of the Partridges, I think she told me that Edward dies 10 days after his daughter Harriet.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:37:31 Yeah. In fact, we can send the readers to the [Revelations in Context](#) book that's in the church history section of the church library app. I will just recommend the entire book. It's wonderful. But there is a chapter from Sherilyn about Bishop Partridge. It's a really wonderful, wonderful chapter.

Hank Smith: 00:37:53 So if she's out there listening, Dr. Sherilyn Farnes, we love you and we're grateful for your work on researching the Partridges. Ken, this has been fantastic. You're bringing these people to life. That's beautiful. I love getting to know them. Okay, what do we do next?

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:38:10 Well, just five days later, after section 41, you remember in section 37 and 38, the Lord tells them to go to Ohio. And if you do, I'll give you my law. On February 9th, the section heading tells us that this revelation was received in the presence of 12 elders. What I would tell you is there's a note up on the Joseph Smith Papers that I've got here, and here's what it says on the Joseph Smith Papers in documents volume one, it says the earliest extant copies. So the earliest existing copies of this revelation suggest that the law may have been originally a compilation of five distinct revelatory commandments. Each was given in response to a practical question posed by one of the 12 elders present at that 9 February, 1831 meeting, the elders apparently asked questions of Joseph Smith, who then dictated revelatory answers, closing each answer with the words even so, amen.

00:39:10 There are, I believe it's five early handwritten copies of this revelation. For most of the revelations of this period, the earliest copies we have are in the Book of Commandments and Revelations or what the [Joseph Smith Papers](#) website calls Revelation book one. But this revelation, this is such a major revelation. The saints at that time recognize it that there are multiple copies of this. Sidney Gilbert has one. There are several copies and they vary just a little bit. But what they have, and if you go up on the Joseph Smith Papers website, you can see where the questions have been crossed out. And so they're not

currently in the revelation, but we know what the questions were. And the questions vary from version to version. Here's one version of the way the questions read, and they're numbered one through five. So first, shall the church come together into one place or continue in separate establishments? Second, what is the law regulating the church in her present situation til the time of the gathering, the second coming? Third, how are the elders to dispose of their families while they're proclaiming repentance? So what do we do with our families while we're on a mission?

John Bytheway: 00:40:23 Well, don't dispose of them, but it's a different way of using the word I guess.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:40:28 That's the word they used or are otherwise engaged in the service of the church. For example, Bishop Partridge goes to Missouri without his family initially. He doesn't bring them when he first travels out there. Fourth, how far is it the will of the Lord that we should have dealings with the world and how should we conduct our dealings with them? And then the last question they asked was, what preparations shall we make for our brethren from the east and when and how? So they're looking at the church growing as missionaries are going out and the saints are called to gather to the Kirtland area. Kind of fun to see those questions because as you read section 42, it shifts gears a couple of times and out of those original numerous even so, amen, we still have a couple of them in the revelation. There's one for example at verse 10.

00:41:19 Because that first question is answered by verses one to 10. And then it says even so. Amen. And if you turn over to section 42 verse 69, you see a a second one of those. That's the answer to the second question. Even so, amen. The others have been removed as they remove the questions as they would edit the text for publication for the Book of Commandments first and then the Doctrine & Covenants. But it's kind of fun to see that. So you can imagine Joseph, with these 12 elders holding a meeting beginning with prayer. They know that they've been promised the law. In fact, one record says there was mighty prayer at the beginning of the meeting. They're beseeching the Lord, Joseph is here. You've promised that if he would come, you will give us your law. Or as it says in the title of this week's, Come, Follow Me, my law to govern my church.

00:42:13 And that's what happens. So we look at this wonderful section, the Lord even addresses this group. If you look at verse one, he says, hearken. And by the way, hearken in Joseph's time doesn't mean just to listen. It means to listen and obey. And if you jump

forward to verse two, it's the only time in the scriptures that I know of where the Lord defines his own word like this. He says, and again I say unto you, hearken and hear and obey. You know the meaning of hearken I know is going to change over time. So in case you miss it, hearken means to hear and obey. I'm just going to spell it out, but the Lord dropping back that verse says, hearken, oh ye elders of my church who have assembled yourselves together in my name. It's like he's addressing those 12 elders that are there to hear the word of the Lord through the mouthpiece of the Lord, the prophet Joseph Smith. And they get to ask questions. Would that not be a cool experience you know you're in the room with the president of the church and you ask a question and he pauses for a moment and says, here's the word of the Lord on that question. How cool of an experience.

- John Bytheway: 00:43:15 So section 42 is long, let me see, we've got, okay, that's 93 verses. But they were assembled from, did you say five different revelations?
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:43:26 We think that there were five questions and answers.
- John Bytheway: 00:43:28 Yeah, yeah. How interesting. And so by inspiration of course, they assembled these, put them all together. Are those five questions in the app?
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:43:39 To find those five questions, I would recommend going on the Joseph Smith Papers website and you'll see those questions. They're lined out on the answer.
- John Bytheway: 00:43:49 So it's kind of like playing Jeopardy where here's the answer. Now what's the question?
- Hank Smith: 00:43:55 I have an article here, John. We could link under our website, [Grant Underwood](#), the laws of the Church of Christ, a textual and historical analysis that's right on the RSC website, which Ken knows well, Religious Studies Center. So we'll link that in our show notes. Just go to followhim.co and maybe our wonderful Lisa Spice can also find the Joseph Smith papers link and also put that there.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:44:20 So this is just a really wonderful experience that these brethren are having. I haven't been able to find anywhere the list of names of who these 12 folks were. We can guess who might have been there. But as far as I know right now, that's what it is because they're just listed as 12 elders, names are not included. As we look through some of these verses, the Lord in verse nine,

they've asked their first question. And the Lord, as he's closing out the answer to that first question says, ye may be my people and I will be your God. And that kind of echoes Leviticus what, 19 as I recall, where God says, I'll be your God and you'll be my people Israel. That's just a nice reiteration of that in our dispensation, that whenever you lived on earth, the gospel can save you.

00:45:14 And then in the very next verse, he targets his new bishop. I'm guessing Bishop Partridge is one of those. There he says, again I say unto you that my servant Edward Partridge shall stand in the office unto which I have appointed him. I think that's a great phrase to stand, to be solid. When you get a church calling, you do the job, you stand in that calling until you are released. And that's your calling to magnify and to bless the lives of those you've been called to serve. And I just think that image of standing and I kind of have an image of Bishop Partridge standing in while the wind is blowing and it's raining. I don't know if that's the image they intended at the time, but that's kind of the mental image that comes to mind when I read that.

00:46:00 I can just see Bishop Partridge standing alone for a while is the only bishop in the church doing what the Lord's asked him to do. Then we have a section that talks about teaching. It's kind of like Section 76, which we call the vision, but it's actually several visions. The law is actually many laws, but the greater, it's the law of the gospel starting in verse 11. It starts talking about teaching and it tells us to teach the principles of the gospel. A principle, just by way of reminder, [President Boyd K. Packer](#) gave a great definition of principles. He said "a principle is an enduring truth". He said, "it's a law, it's a rule and it's something that you can adopt to guide you in making decisions in your life." That's a gospel principle. The Lord is saying, teach the principles, teach the people how to make good decisions. Teach them how to understand what I am expecting of them. And then he says, those principles are found in the Bible and the Book of Mormon. Well the question should be immediately asked, why not the mention the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price? Well, they don't exist yet is the main reason at this time. The standard works are much easier to carry in your purse.

Hank Smith: 00:47:20 That's funny. And by the way, what would these men say if I said, oh yeah, I have all of those on my little phone here.

John Bytheway: 00:47:27 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:47:28 I have every word of that and a thousand times more right here on this.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:47:33 And I can put in a search term and it will tell me every scripture that uses that word. And I can have my little box read it to me. I don't have to use my eyes. I can use my ears.

Hank Smith: 00:47:46 Ken, you've been teaching for a couple of decades.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:47:49 Been a few years.

Hank Smith: 00:47:51 How would you advise those of us who are teachers to teach the principles of the gospel?

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:47:58 I have found when you teach the word of the Lord, it's easy to find the principles. The scriptures are just jam packed with principles. They've been assembled and under the influence of the Holy Ghost, in the case of the Book of Mormon, targeted to our dispensation, not every class is perfect. And when teaching goes off the rails, I find it's because I'm trying to do a Ken Alford show and not teach the scriptures. If it ever becomes a Ken Alford show, it jumps off the rails and goes off the cliff. So I've learned if you stick with the scriptures, you're always on. You're always on home turf.

Hank Smith: 00:48:35 That's true.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:48:35 What are your thoughts?

John Bytheway: 00:48:37 I love it. I think that if you get too literal where the scripture says teach nothing but repentance. So you just repeat that word. Repentance, repentance, over again. We can spend time on faith in Jesus Christ and on repentance, which is a fresh view about God, about oneself, and about the world. It's right in your Bible Dictionary.

Hank Smith: 00:49:02 Excellent. John I think I've talked about this in a previous episode, but I was a Q and A with a wonderful therapist a couple of weeks ago, and there's 200 or 300 people there, and they got to come up and ask questions of this therapist. And he was a very smart, very brilliant guy. And as they're asking questions, all that's going through my head is, oh, I would use that scripture story. Oh, I would use that verse. And there were times where I really felt for him because he was grasping to help this person with this very difficult situation. And he did a great job. But it hit me what a blessing it is to have this at our fingertips. How many times, I'm sure both of you would say the

same thing, where someone asks a question and you think, okay, let's turn to fill in the blank. Let's turn to Alma 42. Let's turn to the Sermon on the mount. This is where the power is.

- John Bytheway: 00:50:00 We all have this faith and trust in the scriptures that once you go there, we all feel more settled. That's truth. Another thing we might mention is [Elder Lawrence Corbridge's](#) talk "Stand Forever" where he separates primary questions from secondary questions. This same thing helps us, we're getting first principles here. Elder Corbridge talked about primary questions. The first vision. Is God real? Does he reveal himself? Does he have prophets today?
- Hank Smith: 00:50:31 And also, Ken, I loved what you said earlier, no class is perfect. So if there's a Sunday school teacher or a primary class teacher listening going, I don't know how to do this, don't worry. Neither does anybody else. We are all,
- John Bytheway: 00:50:43 We're all doing the best we can.
- Hank Smith: 00:50:45 John, I remember years ago, you and I were talking, it was a long time ago, back when we first met, I think it was your wife and you teaching a Sunday school class, maybe a a 16-year-old class or something. And you said, I just can't get these kids to pay attention. I just can't get them to be focused on the lesson. And I thought the entire church needs to hear that John Bytheway cannot get a group of teenagers to listen to a lesson.
- John Bytheway: 00:51:09 We had a tough class.
- Hank Smith: 00:51:11 It's a hard thing. And they're getting more than you think they are.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:51:15 Look at verse 14 for just a moment. And I would note by way of explanation on this verse in the Come, Follow Me lesson on the app, there's a link to a wonderful short presentation by [Elder Bednar](#) in which he explains this verse. Anyone with a teaching calling anywhere in the church needs to watch that video, because here's the point. Verse 14 says, the Spirit shall be given unto you. And everyone who's taught more than one lesson in any church calling knows that when the Spirit's there, everything goes well. And it says, but the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith. And Elder Bednar discusses that phrase again, I really, really recommend that video.
- Hank Smith: 00:52:04 Those are new Ken. They're called insights from the apostles. They're new on the app. These aren't old videos.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:52:11 They're really wonderful. They're very helpful. They're just short, pithy, and right to the point. Elder Bednar points out that many teachers worry about the next phrase in verse 14. That next phrase says, and if you receive not the Spirit, you shall not teach. I've actually heard Elder Bednar mention this. I've heard it in some of the wards I've been in where a teacher will come into the Sunday School President or Primary presidency. I can't teach today because I don't have the Spirit. Oh. Or I'm not going to be at church today because I know I'm not going to have the Spirit in class. And Elder Bednar makes the wonderful point. He says that phrase, the prayer of faith, ask the Lord for the Spirit. And then he says, recognize that when you say amen. That's not the end of your prayer. And he says, as teachers will get to work, the Holy Ghost will back them up.

00:53:00 He said, go into your, paraphrase a little bit, but go into your classroom confident that the Spirit wants your students to learn and that you've done the preparation and God will make up the difference. I think that phrase, by the prayer of faith, that phrase appears a little bit different in three of these four sections. It's just a really wonderful phrase. There's a difference between praying and applying faith to that prayer. Because faith as it tells us in the lectures on faith, faith is a principle of action. It's great to say, heavenly Father, please X, but it's way better. Heavenly Father, please help me to make X occur.

Hank Smith: 00:53:42 And here we go. Yeah.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:53:44 It's worth multiple listens. And so I just highly, highly recommend that. And all those new apostle clips that they've added and of course are so topical and so wonderful, a shout out to the app developers.

Hank Smith: 00:53:55 After you text your bishop, hit your gospel library app, Come, Follow Me. And it's right there. Insights from the apostles. Ken, I love that you said that because that verse can be really scary. And it's not, it's not meant to be.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:54:09 No, it's the Lord, I think trying to give you a pat on the back.

Hank Smith: 00:54:12 Yeah.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:54:14 Could we back up this, we skipped over 13 very briefly. I just want to note it says, and they, the church shall observe the covenants and church articles to do them. Now that phrase covenants and church articles, it's normally phrased church articles and covenants. The Lord just reverses the order here.

But it's the same thing. If you have a paper copy of the scriptures and you look at the footnote that's referring you to section 20. Section 20 was known by the early church members as the articles and covenants. What the Lord's saying basically is, okay, this law that I'm giving you for my church, it includes all of the things that were said in the articles and covenants. Even today in the section heading for Section 20, it calls it the articles and covenants. It was the very first of the Doctrine & Covenant sections that was published in this dispensation. It was actually published in a newspaper in Missouri, [the Evening and the Morning Star](#) for a time that was the only Doctrine & Covenants that church members had. But I think it's kind of fun that the Lord says, okay, remember that earlier material you got? We're just including that. It's part of this law that I'm giving you now.

- Hank Smith: 00:55:28 Ah, interesting. And we still use that today.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:55:32 Oh, it's very important today. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:55:34 Yeah. Section 20.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:55:36 If you look at verse 17, there's just a wonderful, wonderful principle in there. And that is that the Comforter, the Holy Ghost knows everything. That member of the Godhead who knows everything, what's one of the primary responsibilities that the Holy Ghost does? The next phrase tells us, the Holy Ghost is there to bear record of the Father and the Son. If anyone's having any testimony challenges, they happen, the Holy Ghost knows the answer. The Holy Ghost knows everything. And the Holy Ghost can bear testimony to you again, even if it's happened earlier in your life or if it's never happened in your life. The Holy Ghost knows the answer to that question. Tying it to Moroni 1:10, we just have to ask with a sincere heart or using the language from this section, I would say a prayer of faith. How wonderful that is. We can go direct to the source.
- Hank Smith: 00:56:33 You made me think of Section 121. The doctrine shall distill upon thy soul as the dews from heaven. And that feels like the Holy Ghost to me. I know everything and I'm going to give it to you in this gentle distilling nature.
- John Bytheway: 00:56:55 I've heard [Elder Bednar](#) say, "what I say is for everybody, but what did you hear that I didn't say?" He's talking about listening for the Spirit to teach you things. The Comforter can tailor make it just for you. It's just the way we read the scriptures. We've all read some of the same chapters, but we've had the words hit us differently because of our circumstances at the time.

Hank Smith: 00:57:20 Yeah, it's beautiful

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:57:21 Elder Bednar's idea of the between the lines and the scriptures that if you're in the scriptures and studying the word of the Lord, the Holy Ghost can use that opportunity to teach you all things that you need to know at that time in your life. Then we enter into a section that is kind of a reiteration of the 10 Commandments saying these still apply in your dispensation, but a couple of them have a really nice relook on them. He says, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not lie. He does say in verse 24, thou shalt not commit adultery. But before he does, he just has this wonderful verse. Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart. And I apologize if I get a little teary because I miss my sweetheart, but I want to just share if I could, because he's addressing, obviously the husbands here talking about the wives.

00:58:14 This applies absolutely as much to the wives feeling that way about their husbands. And after my sweetheart died, I went through and I kind of scooped up all her journals. I assembled all the ones I could find and just to have pieces of her. This is a journal she kept when we were, when we were dating, we were in college. Then again, I apologize, I'm sometimes like a Utah thunderstorm. I cloud up and rain quickly and then I'm dry again. This is from Wednesday, April 25th, 1979. And I will tell you that's the day before we got married, okay? In the Salt Lake temple, married by her Uncle Reid, she saved our tags from the wedding ceremony. It says, well here it is, the eve before the most important day of my life and Ken's life. And she talks about taking out her endowments that day then my sweet wife was smarter than I was.

00:59:11 Well always, but in this instance smarter than I was. She committed to paper the way we were both feeling. I just want to share her words and again, I apologize in advance if I don't make it through, but she said, it's almost hard to believe that tomorrow I will become Mrs. Kenneth Lowell Alford. This has been a long awaited day. Tonight I make a promise to myself and to father in heaven, sorry, that I will always love Ken and support him in righteousness. I will never consciously do anything to hurt or disgrace him, and I will do everything in my power to make our house an eternal home. And I felt that way, but again, I wasn't smart enough to write it down. So bless my sweetheart for doing that. And I will tell you she absolutely kept that promise. She never raised her voice in anger to me in 43 years ever.

01:00:24 Not once. It just wasn't in her nature. At her funeral, I invited our children to speak and they all did. And my three daughters who had not coordinated their talks, had all included a comment that their mother never yelled at them ever. Now my son got up and he said, well, I'm going to have to break tradition here. Mom didn't yell at me, but she raised her voice once and he said, I don't remember what I did, but he said, I knew I had goofed up in a major way because mom raised her voice and mom never raised her voice. I would just suggest when it says, love your sweetheart with all your heart, there are things we can do to make marriage heaven on earth. I'm just looking forward to the day when I can be back with her.

Hank Smith: 01:01:17 Thank you, Ken. Thank you. And having known Sherilee, I can see exactly what you're saying. Lest to anyone out there feel terrible that they've yelled at their kids. Don't worry. John Bytheway has.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 01:01:31 My kids cannot say that about me at my funeral.

Hank Smith: 01:01:33 Is that true? Okay.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 01:01:37 No. I married an angel who's really an angel right now.

Hank Smith: 01:01:40 She is. She's your angel. I love it. Thou shalt love thy wife, thy husband, like you said Ken, with all thy heart shalt cleave unto her or him and none else.

John Bytheway: 01:01:55 What I love about this is the Lord could have quoted our Exodus 20, our list. We kind of remember that as a bunch of thou shalt not, or many of them are. This is not just thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt love thy wife, thy husband, with all thy heart. It reminds me of what is the great commandment in the law. And both of those begin thou shalt love, which is fascinating.

Hank Smith: 01:02:27 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 01:02:28 That it's about love and here it's not what not to do, but here's what to do. Also, Hank doesn't that make love sound more like an action word, not just a feeling.

Hank Smith: 01:02:38 Right? Like a choice.

John Bytheway: 01:02:40 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 01:02:41 I think it was Steven Covey who told a story about going out with a friend. His friend said, we just fell out of love. And he said, well then love her. And he said, oh Steven, you don't understand that the feeling's gone. And he said, well then love her.

John Bytheway: 01:02:56 Then love her.

Hank Smith: 01:02:58 And he said, what do you mean? He said, love is a choice. You choose love, you go and you choose love. Now Ken, not everyone listening is going to have this angel spouse. What would you say to those who are thinking, what am I going to do? Our marriage is not working.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 01:03:21 Life can be challenging. I think the first thing that you do is you look within and ask as the ancient apostles did, is it I Lord? It's always tough if not impossible to change someone else, but it's always very possible to change ourselves. And I think the second thing I just say is the Lord understands how to fix everything. There is nothing so broken in mortality that God cannot fix it. One of my favorite verses and especially since she has passed is Revelation 21 verse four. It says that the day will come when he, Christ, will wipe away all tears. There is nothing that can happen to you in mortality. And sometimes awful things happen and sometimes people make terrible choices and sometimes people treat each other in ways they shouldn't. But there is nothing that can happen to any one of us that Christ cannot fix. That is just very comforting to me.

Hank Smith: 01:04:30 I love that.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 01:04:30 Being widowed is not a great thing, but I know that Christ will fix this. We'll be back together. We're still married, we're still sealed. We're just not able to see each other right now. In the span of eternity, this is going to be a blink. I just remember the Lord's comment to Joseph in Liberty Jail. It's just a small moment, Joseph, and I bet if you ask Joseph today, how long was Liberty jail he'd go, it was just a small moment because he's got a different perspective on it than he had on March 21st, 1839. I guess I would encourage folks that where life is not where you want it to be right now, to have a prayer of faith and recognize Christ will just dry all tears. He's going to absolutely fix everything. The time is going to come when nothing's going to be broken. Not in us, not in relationships, not in anything. Christ can fix everything. I think that's the most important thing to remember.

Hank Smith: 01:05:34 I'm grateful that you're here because you show us with your description of your marriage, you showed us an ideal, which I love, but you also showed us when things aren't ideal, what you can do. John, you've been bishop and I know that in our private conversations you have loved ones who have been through struggles in marriage. What would you say to someone who is saying, it's not working for me. I don't have what Ken and Sherilee have.

John Bytheway: 01:06:02 I'm grateful that for all bishops out there, that is at section 107 where bishops are kind of told they have the gift of discernment. Because there may be times when a professional counselor can really help, as we've talked about before, Hank getting to that point that you mentioned, Ken, Matthew 26:22. Is it I? When both spouses are willing to say, what can I do better? Just even getting to that point, knowing we're not perfect. I remember reading a book called [Living a Covenant Marriage](#), and I think it was Brother Matheson who said, if I can just get couples to apologize to each other, the rest of my problems seem to melt away. He said.

Hank Smith: 01:06:49 I want to throw one thing out at you both to get your comment on. Interesting that Ken points this verse out to us. Verse 22, love thy wife with all thy heart. Verse 23. And he, you can swap those as Ken did or she. He that looketh upon a woman to lust after her, denies the faith and shall not have the Spirit. And if he or she repents not he shall be cast out. The principle I see there is that there are boundaries. So I've got a spouse perhaps who refuses to repent. The Lord says there's a boundary there if he or she repents not it's okay to have a boundary. Sometimes we think being Christ-like means well, you just take the abuse, you just take the behavior. I don't think that's the case either of you?

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 01:07:46 That's where you need to counsel with the Lord. And I'd say counsel with your bishop, the abuse as [President Hinckley](#) said, "is never acceptable" and abuse comes in many forms. And if anybody's in that situation, I would just counsel you to talk to the bishop and see if there are church services that might be appropriate. Mental health services, the church has lots of resources to help people. President Holland talked not too long ago about this topic as well. No one has to put up with the circumstances that should not be put up with.

Hank Smith: 01:08:19 Yeah.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 01:08:19 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 01:08:20 The Lord himself doesn't say, Hey, just do nothing.

John Bytheway: 01:08:23 I think how fascinating that there came a point where Nephi had to take his wife, his children, and just, we just got to go. There's no agree to disagree here. We are in a dangerous place. We're not safe. We have to leave. People have wondered if that's one of the things that was so difficult for Nephi, oh wretched man that I am, I couldn't keep the family together in a way. I'm glad that story's there because it says, Hey, there's a time where you may need to go.

Hank Smith: 01:08:56 Yeah. I did speak with a person recently who in his marriage, he felt like pornography is fine and that he has no intention of stopping his use of pornography. I thought, how can we choose to wound? My daughter has been told on dates, well, you won't find a young man who doesn't use pornography. And I thought, yes you will. Yes you will. That is a very healthy boundary to have. I hope we've maybe clarified some things or maybe we've just muddied the waters, but I think it's an important point to pause.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 01:09:34 I would send us a couple verses down because the Lord in the 10 Commandments says, thou shalt not bear false witness. Oh, the Lord takes that commandment. And when he reiterates it in this dispensation, he changes it just this little bit. He says, thou shalt not speak evil of thy neighbor, nor do him any harm. That's different than bearing false witness. That's a higher law. That's a higher standard.

Hank Smith: 01:09:57 Coming up in part two of this episode.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 01:10:02 And then two seconds later, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang. Somebody is just pounding on my front door. Oh, I threw on a robe, went down, opened the door, and my neighbor from across the street, I'm living in Indianapolis at the time, and my neighbor across the street screams at me. Are you okay? Is the family all right? And my first thought I must confess was, well, yeah, I was fine till this maniac neighbor knocked on my door at three o'clock and woke me up. And then he said, you don't get it. And he grabbed me by the front of my robe and he pulled me out onto the snow and he flipped me around.



- John Bytheway: 00:00:00 Continue listening for part two with Dr. Ken Alford, Doctrine & Covenants sections 41 through 44.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:00:08 If you look in verse 30, we enter in where this is the first time the Lord is letting the saints understand what the law of consecration is. He says, thou wilt remember the poor and consecrate of thy properties. I think it's important to recognize what the English word consecrate means. We use it a lot in the church, but we don't always step back and define it. To consecrate something means to dedicate it for a specific sacred purpose. And so if we're consecrating our time, we're donating our time for a sacred purpose. Serving in the temple or doing our church calling or whatever it might be. President Monson said that the storehouse, which is where you put consecrated things, he said, the storehouse also includes our time, our talents, our resources, and basically everything we have. And here the Lord starting in verse 30, lays out these principles on what the law of consecration is and how the law of consecration will work. There's going to be a lot more explanation coming up in the Doctrine and Covenants to help poor Bishop Partridge who's trying to practice this law in Missouri as a hatter.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:23 We saw the Lord do this similarly when he said, oh, I'm going to endow you with power. He just throws a new word out and then we're going to build on that. This is, I think, the first mention of this word.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:01:37 It becomes a big deal.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:39 Yeah. And even for us today, we hear this same idea of consecration later. So Kent, thank you for pointing that out. I'd never seen, John we've talked about this where the Lord says, Hey, what about Zion? And then leaves it out there for a little while. What about the purpose of Zion? I love how he is as a teacher. He doesn't flood them with this information. Let's learn the word first. right?

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:02:00 He doesn't give them all the details on how to practice the law. That's section 51. He doesn't talk about deeds of consecration and deeds of stewardship and having people put money in the storehouse. He mentions the storehouse in verse 34. He says, we're going to have a storehouse. And I'm sure at the time they're probably not even thinking what the mechanics are on all of that. But interestingly, the first storehouse of the church is one of the rooms in the Whitney store. As you look at the Whitney store, it's the room on the right, and that becomes the first storehouse of the church. It's very modest, but everything has to start somewhere, where today the storehouse system is worldwide and is really wonderful. But verse 32, I think is kind of an encapsulation of this law of consecration where it talks about laying before the bishop.

00:02:53 And that's what the saints would do as they did the financial piece. Basically, the law of consecration is the Lord's way of handling things. Christ told us in the New Testament, the poor are always with us. And that's the case. The only time that's not the case is when the people fully live the law of consecration, as it tells us in the book of Moses, there were no poor among them. Well, how did they get rid of the poor? They got rid of the poor because they were living fully the law of consecration. And that eliminates the poor. Short of that, any manmade system doesn't matter whether it's capitalism, socialism, communism, or anything in between, it's never going to work perfectly. And you're always going to have poor people. But God has figured out, like everything else, he's figured out how to fix things. This law of consecration that is laid out here in the initial stages in section 42 is God's plan on how to just take care of everyone.

00:03:54 So verse 32, he talks about consecration, consecrating your worldly goods to the church. He then talks about that you'll have a stewardship, they were given back. I'm sure you'll talk more about this when you get to section 51. But then it talks about people being accountable. So the principles with the law of consecration are you have your agency to do this, then you're given a stewardship that you're responsible for and you're accountable for it. If we all become accountable stewards that have consecrated to the Lord, boy, think what we could do. Sometimes I've heard well-meaning teachers in various church settings say, well, the saints tried to live the law of consecration in the 1830s in Missouri, and they weren't able to do it. So the Lord gave us tithing as a consolation prize. I think [President Hinckley](#) heard that comment as well. He several times said, the law of consecration has not been done away with and still active among the saints. If you go to the [temple section](#) of the church's website, it lays out the covenants that you make in the temple.

And it clearly says on that church website, people going through the temple will promise to obey the law of consecration, that they will consecrate and dedicate their lives and what the Lord has given them to build the kingdom of God. Boy, I think what we could do with people with that attitude, we can do anything.

Hank Smith: 00:05:22

I brought that [webpage](#) with me, Ken. I'll read it exactly here. Law of Consecration. It's listed as the fifth covenant that you make in the temple during the endowment ordinances, which means dedicating our time, talents, and everything with which the Lord has blessed us to the building up of Jesus Christ's church on the earth. I don't think that's been taken away.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:05:47

What has been taken away is the Saints did a financial, an additional financial piece where they would work with the bishop to receive their stewardship back. Today we have private stewardships and we donate to the church. I see the law of tithing and our offerings being part of the law of consecration. We are consecrating that for the good of the building of the kingdom. It's done a little bit differently than it was in Missouri or in Orville or at various places where we tried to live the law, but it's still very much in effect. Could I share a story about tithing since I mentioned tithing. It was February, 1986. We had just come out on orders. I was going to be going to grad school to the University of Illinois at Urbana Champagne for computer science. Prior to going back to West Point in '86.

00:06:35

I was a Major at the time. We were living in the Washington DC area, which was very expensive. And we were going broke, and we weren't going broke slowly. We had savings when we arrived. We were leaving there with no savings. Washington DC had just consumed our financial wellbeing. We were getting ready to move. We were getting ready to put our house on the market. It was a cold February night, and about two o'clock in the morning, I heard somebody shooting 22 rifle and 22's have a really funny ping, just kind of a high pitched ping. I recognized it as a 22 shell. We lived on a corner lot. I woke up, stood on the bed, looked out the window, and the street was quiet. Nobody was out there with rifles shooting 22 shells. But I could hear 22 shells being fired. I did what every respectable husband did at two in the morning when they hear 22's being shot, I woke my wife up and I said, sweetheart, somebody's firing a 22 rifle in the street.

00:07:31

So she said, let me listen. So she listens carefully and of course not a sound The tooth never, never hurts at the dentist's office. And so she said, you know, you might've been dreaming. And so how about if you go back to sleep? So I, I thought, okay, that

feels silly. I'll go back to sleep. 45 minutes later I hear this on my door, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang. And I thought, what? And then two seconds later, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang. Somebody is just pounding on my front door. So I threw on a robe, went down, opened the door, and my neighbor from across the street, I'm living in Indianapolis at the time, and my neighbor across the street screams at me, are you okay? Is the family all right? And my first thought I must confess was, well, yeah, I was fine till this maniac neighbor knocked on my door at three o'clock and, and woke me up.

00:08:19 And then he said, you don't get it. And he grabbed me by the front of my robe and he pulled me out onto the snow and he flipped me around and above my house was about a 10 to 12 foot wall of fire. I was wide awake now. And he said, I'll call the fire department. You go save your family. Well, I went bounding back into my house, and I bounded up the stairs and I went into our bedroom again and I woke my wife up and I said, I think our house might be on fire. Well, this poor woman, I've just woke her up 45 minutes before saying somebody's firing a 22 round. And now I'm telling her our house might be on fire. And she looks around the room and it's perfectly quiet in our bedroom. She's like, oh, I went to the other window just to see, and I opened up.

00:09:04 We had a big, big window on that side. I opened up that window. I was met with Dante's Inferno. My neighbor's house was burning down. What I was seeing was he had built a two story extension on his house that was right to our backyard. We had a corner lot, so we didn't have much of a backyard. Our backyard was about eight feet. And his house, he had built it. He didn't build it to code. He'd built it too close. And his house that was burning down was probably about 12 to 15 feet away from us. The extension was really burning down the whole house. Burned down is the bottom line. In fact, it was so hot. It melted their oven door. It's got to be really hot to melt the glass in an oven. But it melted it into a ball. He later made it into a planter, by the way, but that's an aside.

00:09:46 The family got out. We watched the house burn down. Then later that day, about five o'clock as we were sitting down to dinner, there was a knock on the door. This time, a polite knock. It was an insurance agent from the neighbor's insurance company. He said, I've saved the most difficult house for last. You're the closest to the fire. He said, I've done the other neighbors. He said, the neighbors to the west had cracked windows, smoke damage, thousands and thousands of dollars. The rugs are ruined. He said the neighbors further from them

had cracked glass, that same kind of thing. He said four houses down the street had significant five figure damage from the fire. And he said, I've saved you guys to last because you're the closest. And I said, well, I've actually done an inventory of my home and a survey of my home.

00:10:32 I said, I have nothing to claim. And he said, no, no, no, no. He said, it's really okay. The insurance will cover this. You don't have to be the hero here. I said, no, I have nothing to claim. And so I took him around to the back. There was a wood fence between my home and the neighbor that burned down. The paint had peeled off that fence. I had plastic siding on my house. It was not bubbled. It was not scorched. None of my windows were cracked and there was no smoke damage in my home. And the insurance agent was just astounded. He said, this is impossible. He said, you're the closest to the fire. You should have, he said, you should have significant damage. That night as we knelt down for couple's prayer, just before we started to pray, I just was hit with the strongest impression.

00:11:26 And I told my sweetheart, I said, before we pray, I just got to tell you. I said, I just got the strongest impression from the Holy Ghost. And she said, oh, I did too. And I said, well, you go first. And she said, the Lord just let me know that we were blessed today because we pay tithing. Because I'll tell you, if our home had been damaged, we wouldn't have been able to sell it. If we wouldn't have been able to sell it, we would've gone bankrupt. The Lord took care of us. I will tell everyone, for the Alford home, that when I get a dollar, the first dime goes to tithing. Don't know if that'll happen in every case, but I know for that day in February of 1986 when the Alfords really needed a miracle, God gave us a miracle. I will just tell you tithing's a real thing.

Hank Smith: 00:12:12 I love it. Consecration.

John Bytheway: 00:12:15 I might mention that to the Lord when I get to the other side. Because we had a fire. We were paying tithing. In fact, I was the Bishop. No, I better be very careful because we were extremely blessed. A good Samaritan. We still don't know who it was from some apartment buildings over our back fence called the fire department. We don't even know who to thank. I think they were there in six minutes and put it out in four. Something like that. Amazing. What a blessing that was. We got new carpet. My father-in-law goes, this is going to be a real challenge for three day kitchen and bath. And I'm like, too soon. Too soon. Too soon. You know what this made me think of, Hank? When

you read that law of consecration, it's really an all in thing, isn't it? It's not, you know, give what you can. It's everything.

- Hank Smith: 00:13:12 Under covenant.
- John Bytheway: 00:13:14 Yeah. We talked about, oh ye that embark in the service of God, way back in section four, the idea that it's impossible to sort of embark, it's impossible to kind of get on an airplane because if the airplane leaves, this can cause great physical discomfort. If you just kind of got on the plane, or in the car or on the train. It's this are you in? It's a both feet in type of thing. Consecration.
- Hank Smith: 00:13:41 Yeah, I like that you said that the Lord doesn't want a piece. He wants, bring me everything.
- John Bytheway: 00:13:48 [CS Lewis](#) would say that, right? I want all of you.
- Hank Smith: 00:13:52 And I want to remodel you.
- John Bytheway: 00:13:54 Yeah, that's right. That's what he said. I'm going to tear down the whole place.
- Hank Smith: 00:13:58 Yeah. For you, he's going to burn down the whole place John.
- John Bytheway: 00:14:01 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:14:03 Ken, let me ask you something you see in the next few verses. The Lord talks about those who pass away and weeping for the loss of them that die. How those that die in me shall not taste of death. It shall be sweet unto them. You're in a position here to help our listeners who are suffering in grief. It's not something that we've addressed as often as perhaps we should have. What can we say to those who have had a loss like you've had? And for those who don't know, this isn't Ken's first serious, serious loss in his family, he's lost a son-in-law too young, just like his wife. So Ken, if someone is listening to the podcast today and they're saying, I don't know if I'll ever get through this grief. How do I do this?
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:14:57 Griefs real. That's one thing I've learned. As you mentioned, my oldest daughter's husband died of leukemia, a very rare form of leukemia during the pandemic. And then my sweetheart died in July of 2022. And then my father passed in, October of 2023. So I was kind of braced for 2024 waiting to see who was going to pass. No one did. So we broke the chain. That grief is real and mourning is real. I've learned, like when I was reading Cheryl

Lee's journal. When grief turns on the tap, you're not holding it back. You'll lose. I really appreciate verse 45 of section 42. It says, thou shalt live together in love insomuch that thou shalt weep for the loss of them that die. It's okay to mourn. When Sherilee passed, I should note, she had neuroendocrin cancer for 12 and a half years.

00:15:58 When she was diagnosed in 2009, they gave her a five year life expectancy. She was willing to be very aggressive on her medical treatment. And the Lord gave us another seven and a half years beyond what they said she should have. I really shouldn't complain. Grief and mourning are very real. [President Holland](#) lost his sweet Pat. In conference of April 2024, he gave a tribute to her that I think is just beautiful. It just applies to my sweetheart. But I found it personally comforting to hear the president of the quorum of the 12 saying these things over the pulpit. He began by saying, I have learned some lessons that with the Lord's help I wish to share with you today. That will make this a very personal talk. And I would note that there are lessons that I have learned about life that I couldn't have learned if Sherilee was still here.

00:16:55 They've been really painful lessons, but one of them is I now fully appreciate everything she did for me. I think that's kind of hard to do when they're still here. I appreciated and loved her to death. I appreciate her so much more now she's gone. President Holland said this. He said, the most personal and painful of all these experiences has been the passing of my beloved wife, Pat. She was the greatest woman I have ever known. A perfect wife and mother to say nothing of her purity, her gift of expression, her spirituality. She was a complete daughter of God, an exemplary woman of Christ. I was the most fortunate of men. In his case he said 60 years. And in my case, I would say 43 years of my life with her, should I prove worthy our sealing means I can spend eternity with her.

00:17:43 And [President Nelson](#), soon after he became an apostle, he said in 1992, this is before his sweetheart passed, Dantzel. But he said this, we mourn for those loved and lost. Mourning is one of the deepest expressions of pure love. And I would just say amen to that. I have learned that is the case. And then he said, it's a natural response in complete accord with divine commandment. And then he quoted section 42 verse 45. And then President Nelson said this, I just love the way he has a way of encapsulating truth, just so, so, so well. He said, we can't fully appreciate joyful reunions later without tearful separations. Now, the only way to take sorrow out of death is to take love out of life. And I would say amen. Grief is a real thing for those

who are mourning. I think just the biggest comforting thing is God knows. I'll just share one personal thing if I could. When Sherilee passed, it was the day before her funeral. And I woke up and was just overwhelmed at just the loss. And I just felt, I just felt adrift and hopeless.

00:19:06 And I know the gospel. I have a testimony in it. I know we'd see each other again, but oh, I just missed her so bad. And I remember praying, lying in bed saying, heavenly Father, I'm not sure I can do this. And amen did not pass my lips before I felt as if I received just this massive hug from the Holy Ghost. It was the deepest feeling of comfort I have ever felt in my life. And the Holy Ghost said, this is going to be hard, but it's going to be okay and you'll be together again. And I fell back asleep immediately. And when I woke up, it was time to move on. And so I just will tell you, God knows. He understands mourning. Thank heavens for the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost. So you've set a record. You've got me tear up twice in this episode.

Hank Smith:

00:20:13 I have a wonderful friend, Audrey Sorensen, married to Jake Sorensen, who's part of the family that supports our show. She sent me a talk recently. It's called, [If Thou Endure It Well, 1984 Marvin J. Ashton](#). Sometimes going backwards and listening to talks is almost as fun as getting a new one because it's new to you. This one was new to me and I read through it, it shares wonderful, just some wonderful examples of those who endure. And he says, it's different than putting up with. Ken you're not just putting up with this. I've seen you over the last almost three years. I've seen you flourish and thrive. You know, you've shaken my hand in the hallway with a big smile. And that's not putting up with. This is enduring it. Well, I want to read a paragraph from this talk. This is towards the end.

00:21:11 When heartache, tragedy, disappointment, injury, fame, or excessive prosperity become part of our lives, our challenges and responsibilities will be to endure them. Well, God will assist us in our quest to conquer, triumph and continue if we humbly rededicate ourselves to the meaningful declaration; We have endured many things and hope to be able to endure all things. He talks about the Savior and one of his marks of greatness is his endurance. During his earthly sojourn, he endured well as he suffered agony and rejection in their deepest forms. I bear my witness that God will help us to endure as we put forth the effort to live his teachings, seek his guidance, and keep his commandments.

John Bytheway: 00:22:12 Speaking of [Elder Holland](#), he said once that Alma's declaration at the Waters of Mormon is the most complete scriptural list of what the newly baptized commit to do and be. And you all know that list, but one of them is to mourn with them that mourn. I always think about Jesus before he raised Lazarus in that famous shortest scripture, Jesus wept. Well he knew he was about to raise Lazarus. Mourning is a soul expanding thing. I don't really want my soul expanded that way. I love what you said, Ken. I can't remember Hank, was it someone we had on that lost a child and had pled with the Lord for relief? And the Lord said, I could take away the pain, but I'd have to take away the love too. It was a very interesting thought that we're experiencing an opposition in all things. But the reunion will be so wonderful as wonderful as it is painful now perhaps.

Hank Smith: 00:23:13 I like that John. Mourn with those that mourn doesn't mean cheer up those that mourn or give a pep talk to those who mourned. Right?

John Bytheway: 00:23:21 Right.

Hank Smith: 00:23:21 I'm sure Ken, there were some helpful things said and maybe some unhelpful.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:23:25 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:23:26 Things said.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:23:26 Right. Absolutely. We don't handle grief well in our culture.

John Bytheway: 00:23:31 No. And this, I always go back to Job. His friends at first were so good because they just sat with him and they didn't try to explain God's actions. They just sat with him.

Hank Smith: 00:23:46 But then it all goes south, right when they

John Bytheway: 00:23:48 then it goes south when they, well maybe God's doing this. Or maybe it's you.

Hank Smith: 00:23:51 Now Ken, like you said before, there's so many verses here. Are there any others that we should...

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:24:00 Oh, this section we, you could do numerous episodes on section 42. Just a couple of principles and things along the way here. Verse 40 tells us, thou shalt not be proud in thy heart. That's a tough one. Especially today. Pride is making a resurgence in some new and interesting ways with the internet and

influencers and TikTok and other things. Verse 41, the Lord tells us, let all things be done in cleanliness before me. I think of that phrase that even appears in the Doctrine & Covenants, but it appears in the Bible as well, that, be clean ye that bear the vessels of the Lord. We have an opportunity and a responsibility to keep ourselves as it says in Section 59, unspotted from the things of the world. Boy, if you wrestle with the pigs, you're going to get dirty. We're in the world, but we don't have to become unclean.

00:24:59 Also at verse 42, I just, this is a really important part of the law of consecration. The Lord just says it very simply says, thou shalt not be idle. And in fact, in their, they used to have accountability interviews, in Missouri. John Whitmer tells us that they kicked out the loafers and the idlers, those that would not work in Zion. [Elder Hillam](#) gave a talk in, you have to go back to November, 1997. But this comment just stuck with me. He says, during the second World War when gasoline was in short supply and rationed, he said, I remember signs saying, is this trip necessary today? We might ask ourselves, before we turn on a video game or the television or the computer or access the many programs available, is this trip necessary? Perhaps every person who is listening might also ask, is the information I am receiving from this tool of learning edifying and adding truth to my life?

00:26:00 Are the hours I am investing an effective use of my valuable time? Does this computer game assist me in fulfilling my responsibilities and goals? If the answer is not a resounding yes, then he said, then we should have the courage and determination to click the off button and direct our lives to more important tasks. That was great counsel when it was given in 1997, I think it's just as valuable or even more so today. We have more things to click on and we now have things in our pockets that allow us to click. I think that's just a great question. Is this trip necessary? Don't be idle. You just get one go at life. This isn't a dress rehearsal and you're going to get it right the next time. This is for record every day.

Hank Smith: 00:26:46 Ken, I like that. Tell me what the army taught you about being idle.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:26:50 Thou shalt not. The army used to have a commercial. We do more before 9:00 AM than most people do all day. That was one of my favorite commercials. One thing the army taught me is to be appreciative and to respect those that are placed in authority over you. We don't have generals and commanders in the gospel, but we have prophets and apostles and stake

presidents and bishops, unlike the army which uses a selection process to put those people there, the Lord puts those people there. We owe them even greater respect. And plus, when you do it, the thing that's so magic about the gospel is you do everything the Lord asks and then he blesses you even more. As King Benjamin says, you can never get out of, this is a wonderful debt cycle to be in, but you can never get out of this debt cycle. As soon as you do, everything that the Lord blessed you with, he'll bless you more and then you're just deeper in debt. What a fun cycle to be in.

Hank Smith: 00:27:53 Ken I've noticed it says, thou shalt not be idle. You're not going to eat the the bread or wear the garments of the worker if you're not working. Later he says verse 54, thou shalt not take thy brother's garment. Pay for that which thou shalt receive of thy brother. So Ken, sometimes my students ask me, what's the difference between the law of consecration and say, communism, you're a world history expert, a war expert, and a church history expert. I think you're the perfect person to ask.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:28:23 Well, I don't know if I'm an expert in those things, but I'm old so maybe, maybe that counts. There's a great statement from [Bishop Victor L. Brown](#). He addressed this head on, as did [David O. McKay](#), as have many prophets and apostles. But Bishop Brown, this is in the the seventies, it's been addressed since then, but I just think this is a great statement. He said, some have erroneously thought that consecration resembled either communism or socialism. And he just simply says, this is incorrect. The results of socialism and communism are far different from the results of living the law of consecration. And the big difference that I teach my students is socialism, communism are based on compulsion. The law of consecration is based on agency. No one is forced to live that law. Another fundamental difference is that in communism and socialism, the state is the owner. In the law of consecration, you are a steward.

00:29:20 But while you are the steward, you are the legal recognized owner or steward of the property and things that have been placed in your hand. [President J. Reuben Clark](#), a member of the first presidency said that the basic, basic concept, he said, when you boil the law of consecration down to the basic, he said the the fundamental idea of the law of consecration is that everything belongs to the Lord. Think about it. He said, when you die, you'd leave everything. Anyway, it was the Lord's to begin with. And you are a steward for a little while. But when you die, I mean if Jeff Bezos were to die today and I were to die today, we would both leave the same percentage of our world

of goods. The answer's a hundred percent. The basic idea, if you keep that in mind, that Christ owns everything the scriptures tell us, even the breath that we take is because of Christ.

00:30:19 The light that we see that allows us to grow food that allows us to grow, it comes from Christ. The planet on which we live is because of Christ. Second Nephi tells us everything. So if you keep that fundamental idea, then I'm entrusted with some things. If we're fully living even that financial piece of the law of consecration, but I'm just the steward. I'm just the temporary caretaker of those things. It belongs to Christ. And my job is to magnify it, to use it correctly, to build the kingdom. That is not the purpose of communism. The purpose of communism is to sustain the state and suppress the people. On the surface I can see how sometimes people might draw that conclusion. They are worlds apart. One works and one doesn't. It's always the Lords that works.

Hank Smith: 00:31:16 It reminds me, do you remember John? The Lord says to Martin Harris, thou shalt not covet thine own property. You're like, wait, what? It's not his. And I think he's reminding him, I'm just asking for a farm that I gave you. It's interesting. It's not a sacrifice when you say it like that. When you think of it like that.

John Bytheway: 00:31:38 Thank you for talking about that Thou shalt not be idle. The footnotes on verse 42. There are, there's three more times in the Doctrine & Covenants section 60, section 68, and section 75. Now there's one in the Bible that I just love this. Now we know what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah. This is Ezekiel 16:49. Listen to this list. Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom. And then it lists, here's why what happened to Sodom happened: pride, fullness of bread, which sounds like high standard of living next, an abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters. Neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. Doesn't that hit everything we just hit? Isn't that an interesting verse? Ezekiel 16:49, pride, fullness of bread and abundance of idleness.

Hank Smith: 00:32:38 Yep.

John Bytheway: 00:32:38 And she didn't strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And I think wow, that's describing a cycle, a pride cycle. But I've always liked that verse because you know, we have an abundance of idleness.

Hank Smith: 00:32:52 Yeah, I was going to say I have 4 teen boys. I'm going to put that in vinyl in the kitchen. Thou shalt not be idle. Right.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:33:01 On that note, go back to verse 30. How does the Lord introduce the law of consecration? He says, behold thou will remember the poor.

John Bytheway: 00:33:10 Yeah, it's always on the Lord's mind.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:33:13 And then he says, as he's ending this bit about the introduction of the law of consecration in verse 38, he says, for inasmuch as you do it unto the least of these, you know how that verse is going to end. You do it unto me. He starts with the poor and he ends with the poor. There can be lots of different ways to be poor, but the law of consecration has the ability to just fix all the challenges.

John Bytheway: 00:33:39 And he's giving this law to the church right here too. This is the law given to this brand new church and that he mentions taking care of the poor there still today.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:33:50 And honestly by our standards, all of them are poor.

Hank Smith: 00:33:53 Yeah.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:33:55 Except maybe Newel K. Whitney and Martin Harris. Teaser. Martin's going to give all his to the storehouse. Look at verse 61. This is a great verse. And imagine being in that group of those 12 elders with Joseph and have this come from the Lord. What have they been doing? They've been asking questions. And then the Lord just takes time to say, if thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive, revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge. Why? That thou mayest know the mysteries, you know, things that are mysteries to the world, but things that the Holy Ghost can reveal, and foreshadowing President Nelson's recent admonitions, it's the peaceable things that bring joy, that which bringeth life eternal.

Hank Smith: 00:34:45 Ken, I've noticed in the Doctrine & Covenants that you have a lot of verses that are, oh that's good, that's good, that's good. And then every once in a while there's a vista in a verse. There's a oh wow moment And that seems to be one where you're going like, oh wow, that's the pen of heaven.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:35:03 Don't you notice though, as you go through life that your vista moments, as you call them, the scriptures that really kind of just nail you right between the eyes that they change as you change. I love reading the scriptures when I find a verse that I am just confident it was not there the last time I read that section. This is such a cool verse. I could not have missed that verse, but yet

it's like it's brand new. And I know it's not the verse that changed. I know that you know, there's no angel sneaking extra verses into my Doctrine & Covenants. But I've changed. And I have to tell you, since my sweetheart has passed, I see many things just through a little bit different eyes. I'll also tell you, I hear many of the hymns differently now too. Some of the wording in the hymns that I would just sing before but not really think about now. Boy it just nails me and it'll bring me to tears. Life's a fun journey and it's cool that there's these Easter eggs hidden along the trail that we get to find and so many of them are in the scriptures. And then I think Joseph is foreshadowing Elder Kearon in verse 69 when he says, lift up your hearts and rejoice. Doesn't that sound like we are the church of joy?

- John Bytheway: 00:36:20 Yeah. And that's one of the even so amen verses. Yeah.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:36:25 Yeah. That ends the answer to that question set.
- Hank Smith: 00:36:28 The Lord's revelations are often so positive. He could be pretty negative on this going, oh you guys are struggling. But he usually says, okay, we're struggling. Here's some things. And by the way, rejoice.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:36:42 What are some of the last words of Christ as they're leaving the last supper?
- Hank Smith: 00:36:46 Be of good cheer.
- John Bytheway: 00:36:46 I am with thee.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:36:47 He's about to go and do the hardest thing that's ever been done in the history of the universe. And his words to his apostles are be of good cheer, be of good cheer. Even now be of good cheer for I have overcome the world. That is such an overwhelming victory that even now we can be of good cheer even now. We should all be of good cheer. This is going to be awful and harder than I even know. We should be of good cheer.
- John Bytheway: 00:37:17 These people have pulled up roots and left from wherever they are now they're in Ohio. I'm glad they got a verse 61 in there.
- Hank Smith: 00:37:25 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:37:27 To say this was worth the trip. Did you hear that?
- Hank Smith: 00:37:31 It was worth the price of admission? Yeah.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:37:35 And then I would just send you to verse 78. That just kind of sums up being a church member. And again, every person who belongs to this Church of Christ shall observe to keep all the commandments and covenants of the church. That just makes it simple, doesn't it?

Hank Smith: 00:37:52 We do have two other sections in this lesson. Did you want to take a look at these?

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:37:56 To look at 43 in the fullest light, you have to go back to section 28 because section 28 is when Joseph is challenged by Hiram Page. Because Joseph is teaching, we're a new church, everybody can receive revelation. Hiram Page says, how cool is that? Joseph is using a seer stone with the Book of Mormon, I have a seer stone, I'm going to inquire. He connects with a revelatory source. Unfortunately he connects with the wrong side of the equation. They're recorded. The church has this little crisis where many members in the church, including Oliver Cowdery at one point, want to follow Hiram's revelations because they're probably more fun and easier to follow. They get burned so we don't know what they are. As a historian, I wish we'd saved them so I could look at them, but they're burned and his seer stone is crushed to dust. But the Lord teaches Joseph in section 28 how to handle that.

00:38:53 And he teaches the church, it's Joseph, it's not anybody else. Hiram Page gets fixed because the Lord tells Joseph after he fixes Oliver to have Oliver go fix Hiram Page because they're brothers-in-law, they married two of the Whitmer sisters. Oliver does that quietly. And I would note back in section 42 a verse we didn't mention is in verse 88 it says, if you've got an offense with somebody, solve it privately. Kind of the same counsel that the Lord gave to Joseph for Oliver to fix Hiram. Well that's a challenge in New York. So now let's fast forward to section 43. Satan is nothing if not persistent and clever in New York. He tried, let's have a man get false revelations and Joseph is able to put that down. So in Kirtland he says, let's have a woman claim to be a prophetess. So we'll just take the same play, but we'll twist the main character a little bit.

00:39:48 And we get a report out of Painesville from the [Painesville Telegraph](#) reporting that there's a prophetess in Kirtland who is trying to basically take over and lead the church. This time though, Joseph has seen this movie, he goes to the Lord and the Lord says, look, you're the guy and he says, I give you this, that you won't be deceived. You may know that they, the pretenders to the throne are not of me. That's verse six. And then he says in verse seven, I say unto you that he that is ordained of me shall

come in at the gate and be ordained as I have told you before. Now normally in the scriptures when we talk about the gate, it's baptism. But that is not the case here in section 43. Here the gate means the authorized way that we appoint leaders in the church.

00:40:40 He's saying we have a way of doing that. And members, you know there's common consent that you will have an opportunity to support that there's not going to be a surprise. You're not ever going to show up to church one week. And there's been a coup in your ward and the bishop has been overthrown and Brother Smedlap has installed himself as bishop. That's never going to happen. That is not entering through the gate. The Lord says, we enter through the gate, the woman's name was Hubbell. Laura Hubbell. She's not authorized to do this. She didn't come in through the gate. She came in through the side window. And that's not how we operate in this church. She's just dismissed. And then she leaves Kirtland. Joseph seeing this challenge to his authority the second time, even though it's a little bit different, he knows exactly how to handle it and just dismisses it.

00:41:31 I think that's an important message that Joseph is the guy. As it says in verse four, Joseph has this gift and if it's taken from him, if he were to goof up, and I think we don't recognize that enough that Joseph's told many times, boy, this isn't a guarantee. You have to stay righteous and worthy. And if you do goof up in verse four, he says, you're only going to have power to appoint your successor but you haven't goofed up. So now let's dismiss this out of hand. And I think section 43 has that really good message that it's the prophet, because sometimes even today we hear various versions of that. The prophet's too old, the prophet's this, the prophet's that. But he's still the prophet and he's put there by the Lord and he's released by the Lord.

Hank Smith: 00:42:15 That's excellent. How many times have we run this same movie?

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:42:19 When Satan gets a game plan, he'll run every permutation of it he can find. He's nothing if not persistent.

Hank Smith: 00:42:26 We do see some spiritual casualties along the way.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:42:28 Yeah. One of the recent ways we have heard that is, oh, I follow Jesus. I don't follow the prophets and apostles. And there's a really wonderful BYU devotional that just points out it's called Why a Church? It's by [Elder Hamilton](#). And he gave it at BYU a year or two ago. He just basically says that's impossible because

it's Christ who put the prophet in place and they're singing from the same hymn book.

- Hank Smith: 00:42:56 Yeah I like that. If you reject the Lord's prophet, you reject the Lord. It is a package deal.
- John Bytheway: 00:43:04 I just love that they're learning the orderliness of things. They're learning the way that keys work. I like that verse. We didn't touch on it. It's not just anybody goes out to preach, it's them that are ordained by the church and it's known to them in the church and there's a really nice order to it. That's the way the Lord would do it. There's a lot of people here, very enthusiastic, excited, who have shown up and now they're learning that there's a structure and an order or an, oh Hank one of your favorite words. There's boundaries.
- Hank Smith: 00:43:34 There's boundaries. And we have the benefit, Ken of 195 years of church.
- John Bytheway: 00:43:39 Yeah, we've been doing this for a long time now.
- Hank Smith: 00:43:40 We're still in year one.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:43:42 I think we forget that everybody's new at this and everybody is bringing in their previous church experience. There's still so much that the saints don't know. It's going to be over 10 years until it's canonized that the Father has a body of flesh and bones. Such a basic doctrine. But that's more than a decade in their future. Verse eight is wonderful. It says, I give unto you a commandment that when you assemble together, boy, Latter-day Saints like to assemble, don't we? He tells us what to do when we assemble though that you instruct and edify each other, that you may know how to act and direct my church and how to act upon the points of my law and commandments, which I have given at this point. They have the law. And now he says, okay, now teach each other, edify each other. You know edifice, build up, build each other up.
- 00:44:36 Part of becoming a saint is lifting others in the process. You lift yourself and he says in verse nine, you'll become instructed in my law of my church and be sanctified. To be sanctified is to become like Christ. You'll bind yourself to me to act in holiness before me. Christ is holy. And so if we become sanctified, if we become holy, we become like Christ. He tells us in verse 11, sanctify yourself. So twice after verse nine there. But verse 12 is one I really like. This was a favorite verse of President Faust who was in the first presidency with President Hinckley. And

President Faust and President Hinckley had been friends for decades. They knew each other as young men. [President Faust](#), every time he talked about President Hinckley, you could just see the love President Faust had for that man. He gives a great talk about verse 12.

00:45:27 In section 43. He says, and if you desire the glories of the kingdom, appoint ye my servant Joseph Smith Jr. Here's the key, and uphold him before me by the prayer of faith. But then President Faust went on to explain brothers and sisters, we are to pray for the leaders of the church. And he said, I'm now a member of the first presidency. And he said, we feel your prayers. The Lord lets us feel your prayers. And he said, please know how much we appreciate your upholding us through that prayer of faith. And then he went on to bear testimony of President Hinckley being the prophet at the time. And he says, and I want you to know that I uphold him by the prayer of faith every day. Great testimony. And just a reminder how cool it is to have a prophet.

Hank Smith: 00:46:11 Yeah. I really appreciate that. When we're together, instruct and edify. Because hopefully we're getting the instruct part down. I'm going to teach my Sunday school class. I'm going to teach Elders Quorum. I'm going to teach Relief Society and edify. So what would you both say when I leave my lesson, what's my hope? What does edifying look like? Everybody walks away feeling built, feeling better. How do I teach in a way that edifies and doesn't? What's the opposite? De-edify? Un-edify?

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:46:49 Deconstruct.

Hank Smith: 00:46:50 Deconstruct. Yeah. Throw things down. Hurt people.

John Bytheway: 00:46:54 There's a thing that I'm going to do better in my life in this area. Maybe that's edifying perhaps.

Hank Smith: 00:47:00 How to act on my revelations. Yeah.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:47:04 If students and the teacher leave the classroom with a little firmer commitment to keep the commandments.

00:47:12 Verse 15, talking about teaching, it says you're not sent forth to be taught but to teach the children of men. I remember several times being a missionary in England that we would tract up various vicars or folks from the Church of England and all they wanted to do was talk to us, tell us things that they wanted to share. We had to gently let them know that well, our purpose

here is X and we're happy to do that and we're happy to have a conversation. But here's the the main purpose and a lot of times we get escorted to the door at that point.

- Hank Smith: 00:47:50 I like that you're not sent forth to be taught but to teach. So be confident in your message.
- John Bytheway: 00:47:56 Do you remember back when we were learning about Hiram and it was a seek not to declare my word, but first to obtain it. And then later on he's told, okay, now. Now go declare it. Teach the children of men the things which I have put into your hands by the power of my Spirit. Now you know what to teach.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:48:17 And here's how you're to be taught in verse 16. You are to be taught by me. You're to be taught from on high. For an additional time in this section, this is what at least the third time the Lord has said, sanctify yourselves. Become like Christ. Take him as your exemplar and ye shall be endowed with power. And he says in verse 19, gird up your loins. And that's just scripture talk for get to work.
- Hank Smith: 00:48:39 Yeah. Let's go. Yeah.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:48:43 In verse 20, prepare yourselves. You're going to be required to do things. If you're prepared, section 38, you don't have any reason to fear. Be prepared.
- John Bytheway: 00:48:53 Sometimes people struggle with the idea of is everything that's happening the will of God? Or do we have free will or does it just appear that we have free will? I mean there are theological debates about this, right? But I love verse 24 ye nations of the earth. It's my will, have gathered you together as a hen gather with her chickens under her wings. But ye would not. His will is to gather us. You don't want to be gathered. For me, that's a text that says, yeah, we have free will and he wants to gather us. But some of us are refusing to get gathered. Is that good English?
- Hank Smith: 00:49:35 To get gathered.
- John Bytheway: 00:49:36 We're refusing to get gathered.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:49:39 Ain't been never get gathered.
- John Bytheway: 00:49:40 Or you could put it that way.
- Hank Smith: 00:49:45 I like that.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:49:46 So from that introduction that John just read, look at verse 25 now. And he says, look, you don't want to be gathered, but here's all the different ways I've tried to get your attention. Every teacher understands trying to get a student's attention. And the Lord says, okay, let me just give you a little list here. Here's how I've tried to get your attention and here's how I'm going to try to get your attention. How often. So he's done it multiple times. How often I have called upon you by the mouth of my servants, by the ministering of angels, by my own voice. And then he says, for those that are kind of the slow learners, by the voice of lightnings, by the voice of thunderings, by the voice of tempests, by the voice of earthquakes and great hailstorms. And by the voice of famines and pestilence of every kind. And by the great sound of a trump and by the voice of judgment and by the voice of mercy all the day long and by the voice of glory and honor and the riches of eternal life and would have saved you with an everlasting salvation. But ye would not. You guys are really slow learners sometimes. I've used every trick in the book, every arrow in my quiver. And you bozos have got your ears stuffed with cotton.

John Bytheway: 00:51:06 Well why didn't you call me? I did by the voice of by my mouth, by my servants, by the angels, by the thunderings. By the lightnings. And I like that.

Hank Smith: 00:51:15 I tried texting you, I tried calling you. I tried Facebook messenger, I tried Snapchat, I tried Instagram I tried every avenue there is to get to you. You could just mark all those voices all the ways I have tried to get your attention.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:51:33 Yeah, he gets some people's attention with earthquakes and pestilence or pandemics.

Hank Smith: 00:51:38 Do you guys remember when Mormon goes berserk in Helaman chapter 12 talking about human beings And he says,

John Bytheway: 00:51:46 Yeah. He's in the middle of abridging and he is like, I've just got to take a second here.

Hank Smith: 00:51:51 I've got to stop.

John Bytheway: 00:51:53 I've got to vent.

Hank Smith: 00:51:54 I just let you have it. He does how false, how unsteady the hearts of the children of men. He's like, these guys are so brilliant. At the very time God prospers them. That's when they forget him. And then this is a scary verse. And thus we see, this

is Helaman 12:3. That unless the Lord visits his people with afflictions, death, terror, famine, and pestilence, they won't remember him. Oh, how foolish. We joke around about it. But still, how many of us would go, yeah, why don't I listen, why don't I sit up and pay attention?

- John Bytheway: 00:52:32 At the end of verse 25. And would have saved you with an everlasting salvation. But ye would not. It's like, you refuse to be saved. It seems like such a no brainer when you're in the right frame of mind. Yeah, why wouldn't I want everything the Lord is promising me here.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:52:55 Especially when he promised you everything he has. Welcome to mortality
- Hank Smith: 00:53:00 Yeah.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:53:00 Look at verse 34. He starts the section by saying, hearken, listen to what I'm going to tell you. Listen and obey. And he ends the section by saying, hearken to these words, please listen and obey. because he says, the world generally isn't listening. He's talking to Latter-day Saints, please hearken, please listen and obey. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I know what I'm talking about. The Savior of the world. Treasure these things up in your hearts and I love this phrase. And let the solemnities of eternity rest upon your minds. Be still and know that I am God. And then the next closing verse, be sober. This is serious stuff, folks. And keep all my commandments. One last appeal. And then we see the last even so amen that we've seen in section 42 here.
- Hank Smith: 00:53:55 You know, sometimes the solemnities of eternity don't feel as exciting as the latest movie or the next ball game, but I've noticed one has the lasting power to bring you joy, and the other one comes and goes pretty quick, especially if your favorite team loses by 30.
- Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:54:18 Section 44 is given also in February of 1831. This is a busy month for revelation here. It's basically a call for a conference. The idea of semi-annual conference and annual conferences is not really well set yet. And Joseph, I think has to be reminded to have the people assemble for conference first. He says in verse one, it's expedient, it's important. You need to gather. There's just power in gathering where two or three or the whole church is gathered together. There's just power. But then in verse two he says, and it'll come to pass. It's inasmuch as they're faithful and exercise faith in me, I will pour out my Spirit upon them in the day that they assemble themselves together. Isn't that a great way to describe General Conference? There's a quote

from [President David O. McKay](#). This is an older quote. This is from 1938.

00:55:09 He said, reference to the Doctrine & Covenants, talking about section 44. He said it'll disclose that there are four principal purposes of holding conferences as the church. And then he lists what those four purposes were. And this is 1938. See how many of these purposes are true today? First to transact current church business. Absolutely. We do that. Second, to hear reports in general church statistics, they often come out in conjunction with conference today. So they don't take conference time. They don't read the number of babies born like they used to from the pulpit or from a 1925 church report I have on conference. They actually listed the number of members divorced during 1924, happened to be 269 Okay? They don't do that anymore, but we still hear reports and statistics. Third, to approve those names which I the Lord have appointed and we absolutely do that. And fourth, to worship the Lord in sincerity and reverence and to give and receive encouragement, exhortation and instruction. President McKay just nailed it. Conference does all of those things and I would suggest many more. I just found that was fun to find things from almost 90 years ago showing the church is still doing those things for the members of today. Don't you just always feel buoyed up during General Conference? I mean, General Conference is like a shot of adrenaline. It's good. It's twice a year.

Hank Smith: 00:56:40 It is. Latter-day Saints have a few extra holidays where we get excited about what is going to be said. Could this talk be a talk that I remember for the rest of my life? Thanks, Ken.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 00:56:52 These are just such, such wonderful sections. The phrase, we've seen it in several of the sections. We saw it in section 38 where the Lord says, if you'll do the things I'm asking, I will endow you with power. I just got curious a couple years ago, and I went through and just looked for instances from general authorities, prophets, and apostles of what the many meanings of that phrase. I know it has lots of meanings and I know it helped the saints be early missionaries and do those kind of things. But several apostles and prophets have said, and they've tied it directly to the temple today. They've said, as we attend the temple, we can be endowed with power. And then many, many general authorities have said some of the ways that we are endowed with powers, let me just share some of those quotes, endowed with power.

00:57:45 It's the power of enlightenment, of testimony and of understanding. That's [Elder Haight](#). It's the power to thwart the forces of evil. That's [President Benson](#). It's power which enables us to use our gifts and capabilities with greater intelligence and increased effectiveness. That's [Elder Haight](#). It's the power to overcome the sins of the world and stand in holy places. That's [Elder Glenn Pace](#). It's greater powers that we might be better qualified to teach. That's [President Joseph Fielding Smith](#). It's power with which to strengthen our earthly families. That's [Elder Theodore Burton](#). It's a promised personal revelation that may bless our life with power, knowledge, light, beauty, and truth on high. That's [Elder Haight](#). [President Hinckley](#) said it this way. The need occasionally to leave the noise and tumult of the world and step inside the walls of a sacred house of God. And there we can feel his Spirit in an environment of holiness and peace. Isn't it just wonderful to step inside the temple and take your worldly backpack off and leave it at the door? And for that time in the temple, you don't have to worry about bills and mowing the lawn and all the other things of mortality and you get to concentrate and set your sights a little bit higher.

Hank Smith: 00:59:04 Ken, this has just been fantastic. One, you've taught us a lot and then you've let us in on your personal feelings, what you've been through the last few years, and it has been a special experience and I've known you for a long time, 15 years at least. When I first came to BYU, you were very kind and I knew who you were because we have a shared familial connection in my sister-in-law, Lisa Savage. She's married to Justin Savage up there in North Salt Lake. She is your cousin. So when I came to BYU I knew who you were because of Lisa and you were so kind and you've been kind every day since. Knowing a little bit of your career in the military and then in church history, and then a doctorate degree in computer science then all sorts of personal experiences including tragedy. If someone is sitting here thinking, I just don't know if this is what it claims to be. I don't know if Joseph Smith is a prophet or if this is the Lord's church. Who has some experience. Tell us what you would say to someone with those thoughts, those questions.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 01:00:12 Yeah. This is always the thousand dollar question. I would love to be able to take my testimony and let them borrow it for just a minute and they need to give it back, but I would love to be able to let them see what it feels like. I can share with absolute confidence that I know these things are true. That's one thing that losing my sweetheart has also done. The Lord has blessed me with just an extra measure of testimony. I've always believed the roots are deeper. Now, I guess I would also just remind them that there is no way to transplant it. This is an

individual journey between you and the Lord. It hinges on desire. Moroni spells it out accurately. If you really want to know, you'll know. I would share my testimony with them. I would let them know. I'm happy to pray with and for them, but ultimately this is their quest.

01:01:17 I would also just share I love Alma's statement that everything testifies of God, even the heavens, I don't know how you look at things and not see God's hand in it. God's hand is just everywhere in my view. Even in these crazy mixed up sometimes upside down times that we live in, God's in charge. There's nothing that Satan's going to do where God's going to one day say, wow, he pulled a fast one on me. I didn't see that coming. That's just never going to happen. This is the dispensation where the good men and women win for the first time in history. Again, I wish I could share, but I would encourage them to keep trying and just share my witness. This is it. This is the plan of happiness. This is the Church of Joy. This is the answer to every problem the world has. Every problem any person has, this is, in capital letters The Answer. Christ is the answer every time. I'm so grateful that Heavenly Father has let me see that. You know, you look at Joseph's age and it's just the words that come out of Joseph's young mouth and then you consider he didn't go to school. I mean...

Hank Smith: 01:02:33 This is something that a man with decades of military experience, a doctorate degree, a grandfather, he can take a look at this and spend hours and hours and hours in it. And it came from who? How old?

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 01:02:51 Yeah. I think a [Brigham Young](#) statement, and I'm going to have to paraphrase because I don't have the quote with me here, but he said, I feel to shout Hallelujah all the day long that I knew Joseph the prophet. And I feel that way. I'm not anxious that it happens soon, but I'm really excited to meet Joseph at some point and just thank him for everything he did and all he put up with. And Doctrine & Covenants is a fun book. You're not supposed to have favorite books of scripture, but if you could, this one would be mine.

Hank Smith: 01:03:22 I love that.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 01:03:24 It's for us, there's no translation involved and all the scriptures are wonderful, but this one you can reach out and almost touch those people. They're not that far removed from us.

Hank Smith: 01:03:35 Well, Ken, thank you. Thank you for spending your time with us.

Dr. Kenneth Alford: 01:03:38 Oh, thank you. I appreciate being able to spend some time with you two.

Hank Smith: 01:03:41 It's been fun. We've missed you. We haven't had you in a couple of years and so it's been a treat to looking forward to having you here and then having you here. John, I know you love the military, so it's always a treat for you when Ken comes, you can share stories when the record button is off.

John Bytheway: 01:03:58 Yeah. Thanks Ken. I just appreciate it. Hank we did this four years ago and as we have just remarked here, we are looking at it and seeing different things being instructed and edified exactly as it tells us to. So thank you for doing that for us today Ken.

Hank Smith: 01:04:15 We have been instructed and edified just like the Lord asked Ken. I want to finish with something. Earlier we were talking about the second bishop Newel K. Whitney, and you said he turned ideas into money and then he ended up giving all that money. I think the ashery we talked about in the beginning was deeded to the church. As you said that I was just struck in my heart that I knew a Bishop Whitney, his name was Steve Sorensen, Steve. He had that same gift, Ken. He could turn ideas into money and majesty. I mean, he could take an idea and and run with it, and then giving that money. I thought in our little shout out to him, which we do every time, I'd give him that compliment that Steve Sorensen, our founder, he's a man unto Newel K Whitney. I bet they get along well.

01:05:13 We want to thank our executive producer Shannon Sorensen, who's not a whit behind her husband Steve, our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen as well. We hope you'll join us next week. We are continuing in this brand new village of Kirtland, Ohio on FollowHIM. Thank you for joining us on today's episode. Do you or someone you know speak Spanish, Portuguese, or French? You can now watch and listen to our podcast in those languages. Links are in the description below. Today's show notes and transcript are on our website. Followhim.co. That's followhim.CO. Of course, none of this could happen without our incredible production crew. David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra, Heather Barlow, Amelia Kabwika, and Annabelle Sorensen.

ADJUSTING YOUR IDLE CAN BE EXHAUSTING



- Hank Smith: 00:03 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 sections 41 through 44 today, and you've told me to come to Section 42 because you have a story.
- John Bytheway: 00:14 There's a phrase in here. Thou shalt not be idle. He that is idle shall not eat the bread, nor wear the garments of the labor. But that idea of being idle, what does that mean exactly? Well, soon after my wife and I were married, Hank, we had a couple of kids who kind of outgrew our car, got a Toyota 4runner, we wanted to name it Elias. We thought that'd be funny if people went, oh, Elias was a 4runner. We wanted a license plate that said Elias. Somebody had already had the idea and had taken it. Have you ever been at Parleys Canyon before Hank?
- Hank Smith: 00:45 I have.
- John Bytheway: 00:45 Kind of a grade that you have to go up. We put it on cruise control. You know, it's 65 or whatever, but it just wouldn't make it. It was what people sometimes say, this car's gutless. You know, it doesn't have enough power. Just, yeah. And so it would, yeah. And then, okay, Hank, you know, my son Matthew, it's time to have another, and we thought we need a minivan, and Kim wanted to postpone the evil minivan day as long as possible right? But we went and we got a Honda Odyssey to test drive it. Went up Parley Canyon with my wife. What is this gonna be like? I wonder if this will make it on cruise. Went right up Parley Summit without coming out of cruise control. I thought it was so awesome when we got up there. Finally, we stopped at a stoplight. Both had this impression, what's the word we use when an engine is running, but it's not delivering any power.
- Hank Smith: 01:38 That's idle. Right?
- John Bytheway: 01:39 It's idling. Yeah, and it was this great scriptural connection that we made. We had just come over Parley Summit, and we both

started talking about, whoa, those scriptures, thou shalt not be idle. We came up with our own definition for being idle, tremendous potential, doing nothing.

Hank Smith: 02:01 Mm.

John Bytheway: 02:01 It was this engine just sitting there doing nothing. I knew that that was the term for an engine that was running before I knew it was a scriptural term to not be idle. Thou shalt kind of sounds like a commandment, doesn't it Hank?

Hank Smith: 02:16 Right. Thou shalt not be idle. You can see the Lord saying, you're amazing. You're the Honda Odyssey. What are you doing sitting there?

John Bytheway: 02:24 Yeah. You have this tremendous power and potential, and you're sitting there doing nothing. Thou shalt not be idle. That's what my Honda Odyssey taught me Hank.

Hank Smith: 02:34 Right? I love it. I think there's an old saying that says, the idle mind is the devil's playground.

John Bytheway: 02:39 People get in trouble when they have nothing to do. Right?

Hank Smith: 02:42 Just be too tired to sin when Satan says, Hey, come over here and sin. You're like, I would, but I,

John Bytheway: 02:47 I'm too worn out. I've been busy all day.

Hank Smith: 02:49 I'm exhausted.

John Bytheway: 02:50 I love it.

Hank Smith: 02:51 We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called FollowHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcast. We are with Dr. Ken Alford this week. You're going to love what he does with these sections. He is so good and so smart and so loving. You're going to love it. Then come back here next week. We'll do another FollowHIM Favorites.