



*“What Lack I Yet?”*

## 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 Friday and Saturday.

### Podcast Episode Descriptions:

#### Part 1:

What question would you ask the Savior? Dr. Matt Townsend explores discipleship, self-reflection, and the doctrine of eternal marriage.

#### Part 2:

Dr. Matt Townsend continues to discuss faith, the Laborers in the Vineyard, and trusting in God’s mercy.

## Timecodes:

### Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Matt Townsend
- 00:56 Introduction of Dr. Matt Townsend
- 03:37 Using paradox as the theme this week
- 07:35 Atonement or alonement and the attachment theory
- 17:39 The family model
- 20:24 Peace amidst the paradox
- 25:14 Pharisees question of marriage, Christ uses doctrine to answer.
- 29:31 Eternal ideal, circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation.
- 32:56 Looking for answers through the light.
- 35:18 President Faust and just cause for divorce.
- 40:14 The atonement of Jesus Christ will compensate for all.
- 45:32 President Kimball says we don't find our soulmate, we create it.
- 47:30 Dr. Townsend shares how divorce led him to find light from others.
- 49:23 Turn to the Savior for your specific answers.
- 1:18:10 End of Part 1–Dr. Matt Townsend

### Part 2

- 00:00 Part II– Dr. Matt Townsend
- 00:52 Parable of the Laborer's in the Vineyard
- 07:07 Paradox of comparisons
- 12:53 Alma's joy is more full because of the success of his brethren.
- 16:10 John Bytheway reminds us to always appreciate, and to avoid entitlement.
- 21:32 Elder Oaks teaches the importance of what we become.
- 26:46 Dr. Townsend shares what true conversion means.
- 28:58 A certain rich young man asks the Savior how he can inherit eternal life.
- 36:15 Jesus loves us, and asks us to do the one hard thing to help us change.
- 42:42 The love of anything over God destroys us.
- 44:26 Dr. Townsend shares the impact of a young men's leader in his own life.
- 48:14 Elder Uchtdorf teaches salvation is a gift from God.
- 49:13 What is our dominant love?
- 51:27 Marion G. Romney teaches we must be willing to sacrifice everything.
- 52:32 The prayer of the Pharisee and the Publican
- 59:26 Dr. Townsend encourages a daily connection to God.
- 1:02:47 End of Part II–Dr. Matt Townsend

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## Biographical Information:



For more than two decades, Dr. Matt Townsend has been energizing and educating audiences with his unique lessons on life, love and leadership. Known as one of America's top presenters in the field of Human Relations and Development, Matt blends humor and story-telling with his real-life solutions to inspire and motivate healthier living.

Matt completed both his bachelor's and master's degrees in the field of communication with an emphasis in conflict resolution. He then earned a second master's degree and a Ph.D. in the field of Human and Organizational Systems. Before building his own coaching practice, Matt spent 7 years as a consultant and presenter for Franklin Covey Co., and also worked as a mediator for companies and couples.

Matt can be seen weekly on KSL Television's, Studio 5 with Brooke Walker. His book *Starved Stuff: Feeding The 7 Basic Needs of Healthy Relationships* is a popular pick among those searching for better relationship skills and can be found on Amazon, and on his website at [MattTownsend.com](http://MattTownsend.com). He also has his online workshops about Marriage, Parenting and Anxiety and coaches individuals and couples on these issues.

Matt's greatest love in life is his wife Mardi, and they have been married for 28 years. They are the parents of 6 children: one girl and 5 boys. Their daughter and son-in-law have blessed them with their first 3 grandchildren.

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Hank Smith:	00:01	Welcome to followHIM, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their Come Follow Me study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	00:09	And I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	00:11	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	00:11	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	00:13	We want to learn and laugh with you.
John Bytheway:	00:15	As together we follow Him.
Hank Smith:	00:19	Hello my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith, and I'm your host. And I'm here with my lacking nothing co-host, John Bytheway.
John Bytheway:	00:31	John, I'm lacking intolerant.
Hank Smith:	00:34	There is a point in the scriptures where a young man asks Jesus, "What lack I yet?" And I thought, "If John asked Jesus that question, what lack I yet?" Jesus would say, "John Bytheway, nothing." If I asked that of Jesus, he would say, "Do you want it in alphabetical order or chronological order? Because I have a couple of volumes for you of what you lack."
John Bytheway:	00:54	That's what would happen to me.
Hank Smith:	00:56	John, we're going to be in the Four Gospels again today, and we needed an expert to join us. We have an expert here. Who is it?
John Bytheway:	01:04	Yes, we're so excited today to be joined by Matt Townsend, and some of you may have already heard that name, many of you probably heard that name. For more than 25 years, Dr. Matt Townsend has been entertaining and educating audiences with his unique lessons on life, love, and leadership. He blends humor and storytelling to inspire and motivate healthier living. Matt attended the University of Utah, Brigham Young University

and Fielding Institute, has completed his bachelor's degree, I love this part, a few master's degrees and a doctorate degree. Matt has his own coaching practice where he helps people with their marriages, parenting, and anxiety with online workshops and in-person sessions. So many of you may have seen him before on KSL television Studio 5 with Brooke Walker. He has a book called Starved Stuff: Feeding the 7 Basic Needs of Healthy Relationships.

- Hank Smith: 02:01 And it's fantastic, John.
- John Bytheway: 02:02 It's a really good book for those searching for better relationship skills, and that can be found on his website. Many years ago, Matt served in the Cordoba Argentina Mission, has enjoyed serving in various church callings through the years. His latest favorite callings have been Sunday school teacher and institute teacher. He's been married for 32 years, the greatest love of his life is his wife Marty. They're the parents of six children, and one of those took Book of Mormon from me, and through extensive therapy, he's okay now. And one girl and five boys. Thanks for joining us today, Matt.
- Dr. Matt Townsend: 02:38 Thank you. You guys, good to be here. It's about time.
- John Bytheway: 02:42 I know.
- Dr. Matt Townsend: 02:43 To hang with you two.
- Hank Smith: 02:44 Yep. Matt, I am so excited. We have our wonderful listeners out there, and if they don't know you, I think they're going to remember this forever just because you're my favorite. Ever since the first time I heard you speak, I was a young seminary teacher, and I think we had an in-service, and you spoke, and I was just uplifted, I was educated-
- Dr. Matt Townsend: 03:06 By the way, likewise to you both. I've learned so much from both of you. I've even learned what not to do, which is also helpful. So it's good that it goes both ways, right?
- John Bytheway: 03:16 Yep.
- Hank Smith: 03:16 It's good that it goes both ways.
- Dr. Matt Townsend: 03:19 Absolutely. So good to be here.
- Hank Smith: 03:21 Matt. We are going to be in the Four Gospels today. So, what we do, is we're going to hand the reins over to you. Where do

you want to start? We've listed here in the manual, Matthew 19-20, Mark 10, and Luke 18. Power packed chapters, power packed.

- Dr. Matt Townsend: 03:37 I've been studying this stuff for the last month straight, and I didn't know where to go. So then I did this weird thing, you guys, have you ever tried this? I prayed for insight, and what I actually prayed for was just simplification, I had it down to five, and that was really complicated. So then I'm like, "Is there one thing?" And I woke up just two days ago, and there was a word in my mind that I interpreted that was the answer, and the word is paradox. So, what I want to talk about that I think is this overarching theme of these four sections with some really rich stories. I love them too, because they're rich, but they're also very human. This is me, this is you, this is every one of us, we've seen this, we've felt this. This is why some of us struggle in the church, this is why some of us struggle in our marriages, and in life, but the word is paradox.
- 04:37 The overarching term, and let me just define paradox, for anybody that doesn't just love words as much as I do. But a paradox is simply this, it's a concept or an idea where two ideas seemingly contradict, but they actually go together, it actually works together. The exact definition is, a situation, a person, or a thing that combines contradictory features or qualities, but can actually go well together. Paradox is everywhere. I for example, love my children with all of my heart, and they drive me crazy, I really get bugged by them. And I love my wife, and we are so different. I love church, and when they said we were going to two hours, I loved it even more if that was possible.
- 05:33 It's not that I didn't love the three hours, but when I found out it's just two hours, and then they were saying, "Well, it's because we're now going to have a family-centered church supported church. It's about the family now." Then I realized, "No, hold on. Who's going to teach my kids in that third hour?" And they were like, "No. You guys are." And I said, "You know I can't teach my kids." And they're like, "I know, neither can we."
- 06:00 The paradox of everything that we have in our existence are these contradictory ideas, and the world is full of some. Here are some examples. The more afraid you are of death, the less you are able to enjoy life. The more something scares you, the more you should probably go do it. The more you fail, the more likely you are to succeed. The less you care about others, the less you actually care about yourself, weirdly. The harder you push for something, the harder it will feel to achieve it. Have you ever done this one? The more time you spend shopping, I

don't know if you know this, your buyer's remorse actually goes up. So, these are contradictory to what we think should happen. Another one is in the church, we see it all the time. The first shall be last, and the last shall be first.

06:47 The funny thing is we were told Abraham's story of sacrificing his son is such a paradox. "What? The one that we prayed for to get, and now you're just going to go off him." Nephi, paradoxically, needed to get the plates, and there were probably a million ways that God could have gotten the plates, and he chose to have the innocent Nephi murder Laban, paradox. And it's so hard, and what we're going to be talking about here, are a bunch of different paradoxes that people are running into. And what I honestly believe just from my coaching world, there's only one place where you can truly get peace through paradox.

07:35 And it's not going to come from the world, it's got to come from the spirit. It's got to come from our at onement with Christ. And in all of these examples, what the Savior's asking us to do is to create at onement, and just come follow him. And a paradox is, "I am going to follow him, I'm already following him, I'm doing everything I need to do, here's the list." And then the Savior asked him to just do one more thing, and he couldn't do it. The paradox, paradox is the theme, and why it's important is this. So there's five, I call this, it's either the atonement cycle, or the alone cycle.

08:19 We're either going to be atoning, or we're going to aloning. And in my world of working with relationships, I see so many people right now that don't know how to attach. They don't know how to be vulnerable enough to be in. In fact, there is a theory called Attachment Theory, which right now they believe about 60% of millennials can't safely attach to their most intimate love partners. They can't emotionally open up. So what it basically is, it's the lack of knowing that they're lovable, the not knowing that they're capable, the not knowing that they belong, and the not knowing that they're safe. And when those needs aren't met, we generally retreat, and we pull away. And what we do is we make up either fight or flight stories.

09:08 So, because we live in a world full of paradox, and it's good, this is the opposition in all things, that paradox makes us humans. It makes us feel vulnerable. And when human beings feel vulnerable, or naked, as they learned in the garden, the minute they felt naked, humans' natural man kicks on. And when our natural man kicks on, we either fight or we flight. In a lot of these stories, you're going to see their vulnerability, make some

fight or flight. And what the Lord's telling us to do is, don't do either. Just stay with me, and trust me, and have faith in me, and I will deliver you, stay with me.

09:55 And as we'll see one by one, they all go different directions instead of looking for the peace within. So, once our fight or flight kicks in, we have a bunch of little patterns we do, and we're going to see a bunch of human patterns. And the only thing to really fix it, I believe lastingly, that will bring lasting happiness is to seek at onement with Christ, not just atonement, but also at onement. Meaning, don't just obey the commandments, become alive in Christ, and literally connect in with Christ, and let him be not just the guide, but the comfort, and the peace, and the insight, and the direction.

10:37 That's what we're going to slowly go through is four or so stories, however many we can get to, and hopefully show you more and more this theme of paradox, and the invitation to come unto Christ.

Hank Smith: 10:50 Awesome. This sounds fantastic.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 10:54 Just to get started, yeah.

Hank Smith: 10:56 Joseph Smith made a statement that sounds similar to what you're talking about. I don't know if it is. And he said, "By proving contraries, opposites, by figuring out opposites, truth is made manifest."

Dr. Matt Townsend: 11:10 Yeah. I love that.

Hank Smith: 11:11 "By proving contraries." That sounds a little bit like what you're talking about.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 11:15 Well, it is, and you'll see the proving contraries, it's all through the scriptures. By the way, what I learned in one of my graduate degrees is this theory called Symbolic Interaction Theory and Appreciative Inquiry. So, if you're going to inquire into an issue, a challenge, or a problem, there's two sides you can approach. When I coach people, there's two sides of every problem we can approach. We can approach the problem side where we're broken, where we don't like each other, where my wife drives me crazy, and we get all mad about it, and that's called the depreciative side. It's where we're broken, or we can talk about the appreciative side of where we're healthy, or what it would look like if we were healthy, and inherent in every issue is depreciative and appreciative.

- 12:04 But as human beings, we are so much more drawn to, amazingly, the depreciative side. Which is why when most of us talk about the gospel historically, and every major religion talks about it historically, we talk a lot about the sin, the fall, the broken nature of man, the problem, the evil. What it does, is it makes us start overcompensating on the sin side, and not actually seeing the light of the Christ's side. And even when we talk of Christ, we talk about his fixing, the depreciative, instead of attracting to the appreciative side.
- 12:47 I'm not sure that we're on this earth to just avoid sin. I think we're on this earth to become like him. And every invitation through the scriptures is an invitation to become like him. But I think, because so many times it was written by men, we write it depreciatively, that's human nature. It's much more, we are always more inclined to go for the negative thought, we call it negative interpreting, in my world. If I was bit by a rattlesnake in my garden, when I go out to the garden, what am I looking for? Every time, I'm looking for snakes. But what if I see the garden hose? It's still a hose, but I interpret it like it's a snake.
- 13:30 So, it doesn't matter if it's a snake or a hose. In my mind, it is what it is. To me, whatever story we end up using as the map for how we get back to God impacts us. There's a bunch of stories we use, and I think every story is important. As we're going through this, you can look at the plan of salvation through the war metaphor, where we're all a bunch of warriors. Your job is to be a fighter and a warrior, the goal is to win against evil, Christ is our captain, and we see everyone else as either a friend, or a foe. We need to be vigilant, we need to armor up, and the residual feelings of the warring model that we may have learned growing up is contention and division. We are at war.
- 14:17 There's a legal model of the planet of salvation, which is, you're either a criminal or you're an offender. You're a dirtbag, quite honestly. The justice model would say that Christ is our advocate, that we see other people with a judgment of good or bad, we either obey or we pay. And we have residual feelings from that model of feeling alone and hopeless.
- 14:45 Daniel Judd in his book on mental health in the church talked about whenever we use the legal model, or the justice model in teaching the gospel. And it comes off too heavy in justice and legality, we tend to breed more aversion to the gospel. But again, it's just a map to learn how to do it. We have a cleansing model like we're going to go to the cleaners, and our part is we're dirty and stained, and it's unacceptable. The goal is

cleanliness, perfection. The Christ role is the lamb, through his blood we'll be cleaned. We see others as clean or dirty, we judge them binarily, and we try to stay away from a dirty world.

15:28 And what we get a lot of times in the cleansing model is the residual feeling of unworthy and ashamed. And you can see some of these models working on these stories we're going to get into. About the rich man who was doing everything he could to be legally justified, and then God asked him to do one more thing, and it kind of tips him. There's the financial model of the plan of salvation, which is, "You're a debtor, you're bankrupt, you're an unprofitable servant." The goal is to be in the black. Christ's role is, he's our benefactor. He'll ease the debt, pay the debt, and the daily focus is we play catch up with our collectors. We're constantly playing to catch up. And the problem with the financial model is we're always seemingly behind. We're never enough, because we're unprofitable.

16:16 There's the medical model where we're sick, and we're injured. We stay in the hospital with a bunch of other sick people, and hopefully we're making it better for each other. But sometimes the sick people keep infecting sick people. The Christ is our healer, and we see others as either healthier or less healthy than us. So notice, with every one of these paradigms, they create a comparative mentality. We're constantly comparing based on the model, and we look to God to be healed, and we, at the end, either feel hopeful because of healing, or we feel broken. Now, when we feel broken, we should turn to our healer for healing. That's the model.

16:53 Just two others. One is the school model, which means you're on this earth to learn, you're a student, you're here to develop.

John Bytheway: 17:00 It's a classroom.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 17:02 You're here to be changed. That's why the fall was so powerful, because when God saw that they had partaken, he testified, "Now, you have become one of us, and now you're going to go through the process of becoming." The Savior's role is our teacher. We see others as more or less capable than we are in the classroom. We learn the answers that we need to learn, and we try to pass the test. You may have seen the rich servant as seeing this as a student model where he was trying to just pass the test. And then what we feel over time is either adequate because we're progressing, or inadequate.

17:39 But there's one model that I think is restored. I think it's the core to the restoration. It's the model that when Joseph Smith

met the Father and the Son, and was taught that the traditional creeds need to be corrected. And I think some of the traditional creeds had some of this modeling going on, and thoughts going on. But the model was, "You're my son, we're a family." And in the second estate, there's a first estate, where we were the most loving family you've ever seen. And each and every one of us knew love purely inside and out. When we're in the family model, we don't see each other as better or worse. We see each other as brothers and sisters. In the family model, Christ is the big brother, and he's coming to get us, and the goal is to return home and to be like mom and dad.

18:42 And what we're looking for is family, and fellowship as a family. And the daily focus is at onement, and loving one another. So, I seek at onement with my heavenly parents, and I seek to love one another, and at onement Zion with everyone around me. And last but not least, the residual feelings of the family model is loved, hope, and at one, and you belong. And if you go back to our attachment needs, that takes care of the four needs of, "Are you lovable?" "Yeah, I'm in a family." "Do you belong?" "Absolutely." "Are you capable?" "No, but I'm learning, and I have people that'll help me." And, "Are you safe?"

19:26 So, I think that's the model that this world needs, and we need to make sure we are not always using mixed models. Maybe we need to stick more to the model of we have a heavenly parent. And there's this awesome quote by Parley P. Pratt, in the Key to the Science of Theology, where he says, "After God's spirit children were born." So up in the premortal world before we were born, "they were matured in heavenly mansions, trained in the school of love, in the family circle, and amidst the most tender embraces of parental and eternal affection." So for eons of time, we were raised to be loving, connected family members. And then we come to this earth, the veil is lowered, and now all of a sudden paradox starts to take us on.

20:24 Now, when we lived pre-mortally, we felt loved, we felt peace, we felt capable. And one of the greatest things, it's we weren't perfect. We weren't perfect beings. We lacked bodies and experience, but we still felt love, joy, hope, peace, and understanding, which tells me that in the spirit, and closeness to our father, we have the cure to the paradoxical problem. It's always in being and connecting back to home. So, I really believe that's what our heavenly Father and the Savior are doing, it's just trying to get us to connect back to home. And when we do, we can stand in the chaos.

21:10 And I've done this. We had a really close family member or a friend who lost their child in a plane crash, and I'm at the viewing of their son, and I'm hugging my friend. She whispers in my ear, because I had taught this idea that we're in the world in paradox. In our minds going crazy, and we can then all actually get into our bodies, and be exhausted, and sick, and then back into our minds saying, "This isn't fair." Then we can go back to spirit and feel peace. And she said, "Matt, throughout the day, I get into my mind, and I'm overwhelmed by how unfair this is, how not right this is. And my body reacts when I smell his shirt, and then I imagine the Savior coming to me, and he instantly brings me peace, and I'm back to the peace in the midst of the paradox."

22:09 So, that, is what we're going to try to show. Go through these stories, and each of the stories are different, but what you're going to see is that people are fighting for some identity. They're fighting with their riches, they're fighting with their religion, the Pharisees trying to catch the Savior. We are arguing about our marriage and divorce, arguing about whether the children should be brought to Christ, so that he can touch them. We're talking about some pretty weird stories, but every one of them are nothing more than this weird paradox of are we going to turn in the moment or not? And if we do, we have the promise of peace, and when we don't, we have the promise of alonement.

Hank Smith: 22:50 Awesome.

John Bytheway: 22:51 I'm just so struck by how many times we have talked in the scriptures about the Lord promising to be with us. And the idea of atonement is with us, we're at one, but we're not one alone, we're with. So I love those two words, atonement and alonement, it's the opposite.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 23:12 And isn't this world alone?

John Bytheway: 23:14 Yeah.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 23:14 Yeah. It's lonely.

John Bytheway: 23:15 And the promise at the end of the sacrament prayer, that we hear every week, that always have his spirit to be with us. There's no alone, there doesn't have to be. So I love that. Thank you.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 23:27 There's a great quote by Joseph Smith in The Joseph Smith Papers, that's the power of this union and oneness. He says, "By union of feeling, we obtain power with God. Nothing is so much calculated to lead people to forsake sin, as to take them by the hand and watch over them with tenderness. When persons manifest the least kindness, and love to me, or whatever power it has over my mind, while the opposite course has a tendency to harrow up all the harsh feelings, and depress the human mind. It is the doctrine of the devil to retard the human mind, and retard our progress by filling us with self-righteousness." Which we're going to hear in these stories. "The nearer we get to our heavenly Father, the more we are disposed to look with compassion on perishing souls, to take them upon our shoulders, and cast their sins behind our back. If you would have God have mercy on you, have mercy on one another. By this, shall men know, you are my disciples if you have loved one to another."

24:35 To me, the entire Gospel is this. It's at onement. And when we have at onement, we are turning over the paradox. We're completing the paradox. We can rest now in the peace that passive understanding. Now, we can sit in it, and we can handle the disparity, and the lack of fairness, and we can handle the rejection. And the rejection won't go away, we will just be yoked, and the God will pick up the yoke a little bit more on us. So, that's what we're going to try to get into today.

Hank Smith: 25:12 Fantastic.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 25:14 So, let's start in Matthew 19, and talk about marriage and the little moment of temptation where the Pharisees are trying to tempt our Savior. I would've been a whole different guy with those Pharisees. That's because I'm not there. But, this is chapter 19:3, "The Pharisees also came onto him tempting him, and saying unto him, is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" By the way, notice immediately negative topic, we're going to go to the dark side of the issue. And I get it. There's real negative stuff. I do this every day in my profession. "And he answered and said unto them, have you not read that He, which made them at the beginning, made them male and female." Okay, he's clarifying, by the way, notice where he goes. He goes back to the beginning.

Hank Smith: 26:10 Yeah, Genesis.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 26:10 He has to go to the doctrine, and to the beginning of the doctrine. So, there's a great quote that models what the Savior is doing here. Joseph Smith said, "If we start right, it is easy to

go right all the time. But if we start wrong, it is a hard matter to get it right." So, now the Pharisees are taunting him and taunting him. And where he goes is, he doesn't just chase their story, he goes right to the beginning. Now, we could go back with our revealed Gospel to the premortal world, and we could go to our proclamation on the family, and find out that our identity and gender identity premortally was divine and of God. So, "Have you not read that He, which made them at the beginning, made them male and female and said, for this cause, shall man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh. Therefore, they are no more twain but one flesh. What therefore God have joined together, let no man put asunder."

27:14 "They say unto to him. Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committed adultery and whoso marry with her, which is put away doth commit adultery." So he's teaching a doctrine, and he's teaching a doctrine of eternal marriage, we've received clarity on this.

27:55 So, is the idea that he's saying you can't divorce? Because if that's what he's saying, I'm scared, because my parents divorced when I was 9. So, I've grown up with this divorced parent thing, and divorce is again a paradox of this world. It's an eternal covenant which God puts together, and when God seals it together, God intends it to be forever. And we know that that can't always be. When God joined Adam and Eve as husband and wife, neither we nor any other mortal can alter this divine order of matrimony. It is not a human invention.

28:41 What Christ is witnessing and testifying of is marriage is a Godly invention. It is the combination of and bringing together of two people. Now, Moses was allowed to write the divorcement, and would allow people to divorce, and the Savior will too. It's the living of a lower law. And President Dallin Oaks taught that heavenly Father intends for the marriage relationship to be eternal. However, God also understands that divorce is sometimes necessary. President Oaks explained that the Lord permits divorced persons to marry again without the stain of immorality specified in the higher law. Unless a divorced member has committed serious transgressions, he or she can become eligible for a temple recommend under the same worthiness standards that apply to other members.

- 29:31 So, of course, you can divorce. And the ideal is eternal, and an eternal marriage. And paradoxically, again, the eternal marriage, and the proclamation on the family says circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. The interesting thing about that, that is the plan of God, there's always been individual adaptation. He didn't have Abraham sacrifice Isaac, they had to adapt how they were going to get the plates back. He had to adapt the Kirtland temple, the Nauvoo Temple, the Independent Stop, and Salt Lake City. That's a long bit of adaptation. So, adaptation and the Israelites and the wilderness, it's the plan. The goal is the process of creating this loving relationship, not just the existence of the covenant.
- Hank Smith: 30:25 These teachings about marriage in the New Testament are hard.
- Dr. Matt Townsend: 30:29 Yeah, that's brutal. It's just not clear enough, is it?
- John Bytheway: 30:33 I have a huge document of Dr. Richard Draper about the Shammai and... what was the other school of thought? Because one it was, "Yeah, you can put away your wife for every cause." And the other was more of the, "Well, only in cases of adultery." Which sounds like what Jesus is going to say in verse 9. But then, we've got the issue of, "So, if you've been divorced, and you get married again, is that adultery?" Which Elder Oaks says, we're not currently enforcing that celestial standard, or something. In the Institute manual that everybody has it. This is what I love. Everybody can go to library, manuals, adults, and then institute, and find this in their religion 211 manual. It says this, "During the time of the Savior's Mortal Ministry, divorce was a vexing issue debated without resolution among the rabbis. For many people, divorce was justified, even for trivial reasons. The Pharisees sought to involve Jesus in the controversy by asking his opinion about divorce. In response, the Savior emphasized the sanctity of marriage by referring to Adam and Eve, who provided the ideal of marital unity and permanence."
- 31:41 And this is exactly what you were saying, Matt, you have to start right, and so Jesus didn't go right to this exception. He went to, "Let's talk about what marriage is for." And also Dr. Camille Fronk Olson that we've had on the program before, and will again. She said, "The Pharisees asked Jesus, is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause. In other words, when am I justified to divorce my spouse? The Jewish law, as these leaders interpreted it, required that a man obtained only a letter of divorcement from a legal official. However, what did Jesus start

talking about in his answer to them? This is fabulous." I'm still quoting Camille.

32:19 "This is fabulous. Does he talk about justifiable reasons for divorce? No. He focused on marriage, and the sanctity of marriage. Have you not read that He, which made them at the beginning, made them male and female and said, for this cause, shall man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh? What therefore, they are no more twain but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. Jesus was reminding these leaders to focus on the principle, and then do the best you can in those circumstances. We can spend too much time talking about exceptions rather than the principle, which confuses the real question."

Dr. Matt Townsend: 32:56 To me, it also goes back to that answer that, we're going to look at the issue darkly or from the light? And the light is we know in Moses 3:18 that we were given a help meet to help us meet the Savior. Help is translated from the Hebrew word suggesting suitable and equal, and mate is suitable, and equal companion possessing the power to save. We need the partner. Now notice, the Pharisees want to talk about divorcement, and the decree, and the law. Because the law they're believing will save, and they're talking to the Savior as they're talking about it. And in the Savior is the richness of life, in the Savior is the power to make these decisions. And what we need is the partner that is equal to save us. What we could be getting into instead of the outlier idea of divorce is, what does it take to make a relationship work? And why do we need each other? And what do we do with each other?

34:00 Elder Bednar said, "After the earth was created, Adam was placed in the garden of Eden. Importantly, however, God said it was not good that man should be alone. One of God's teachings is we shouldn't be alone. We need the tension, and the excitement, and the goodness, and all of the benefits of our relationship to make it through this. And Eve became Adam's wife and help mate, the unique combination of spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional capacities of both males and females was needed to enact the plan of happiness. Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man and the Lord. The man and the woman are intended to learn from, strengthen, bless, and complete each other. So even if you divorce, we need to find healthy relationships, and learn this process of becoming one."

- 34:53 Remember, D&C 1:30 talks about that. The same sociality that we have here, the same relationships, eternal relationships, marriage relationships that we have here, we will have there. They will just be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy. So, this is still part of our process of developing. The interesting thing about President James Faust, he made a really interesting comment about divorce.
- 35:18 He said, "Divorce in my opinion," and he got into just cause for divorce, "Should be nothing less serious than a prolonged and apparently irredeemable relationship, which is destructive of a person's dignity as a human being. At the same time, I have strong feelings about what is not provocation for breaking the sacred covenants of marriage. Surely it is not simply mental distress, nor personality differences, nor having grown apart nor fallen out of love. This is especially so where there are children. So it's about learning to become one with a partner. And as we righteously learn to become one with a partner, we can learn to become one with our God, and learn to become one with a family. And create that family environment on earth that we created and experienced in heaven."
- 36:14 And the reality of our existence paradoxically, is a lot of marriages don't work, for a variety of reasons, and because they don't work, it leaves us in the middle of a paradox. Am I supposed to stay and be hurt emotionally or whatever? Or am I supposed to divorce and move on? And that is a decision that has to be between you and the Lord. I have seen people make the most incredible decisions to stay. And over time the Lord worked the relationship through the spirit, which is one member doing it, and it eventually saved a marriage. I've also seen the Lord, even in my own family life, prompt the marriage to end, and my mother made a hard decision to end. And when she ended it, it ended up being seriously blessed for me, and it created a space where I would be in the Gospel, and I would be able to become what I've become in my life.
- 37:15 And remember Elder Ballard in conference recently talked about more than half of adults in the church today are widowed, divorced, or not yet married. Some wonder about their opportunities, and place in God's plan, and in the church. We should understand that eternal life is not simply a question of current marital status, but of discipleship, and being valiant in the testimony of Jesus Christ. When Christ comes, he's not checking our marital status, he's checking what we've become as we've joined into this covenant relationship. What have we become through it? Ballard continues all those who accept the Savior's gracious gift of repentance, and live His

commandments will receive eternal life, even though they do not attain to all its characteristics and perfections in mortality. So, God will provide and take care of us.

John Bytheway: 38:09 I am so appreciative of that because I have family, and extended family in all of these circumstances. You've talked about one of the things, and this is just John Bytheway's personal opinion. But I think Moroni's greatest work was accomplished as a single adult. And when I drive down I-15, and I see Moroni alone on top of a temple, I'm reminded of how much of his life he spent alone, but how he thought of us. And I'm going to finish my father's record, that they may be of benefit to the Lamanites, and to the whole world at some future day. He was a single adult, and he found a way to contribute and change the whole world. If we don't have him continuing to write, we don't have Moroni's promise, we don't have Mormon 8:9, we don't have the book of Ether, and we don't have Moroni 1-10. And that would be a loss.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 39:07 And again, think of it paradoxically. So now, you are in the true Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You are on the earth, the one earth that will eventually be the celestial kingdom. You're in the covenant, and you're single. And in the family-oriented church and Sister Sharon Eubank said, "Being single myself, I get how this feels. You have no wing man sitting at church, and is awkward. Parties can be torture, relatives feel like they can comment, when no one should be saying a word. Fitting into the church focused on family can also be challenging. But the reality is that the majority of church members do not live in perfect family situations. I'm not sure anyone lives in that perfect, ideal family. So, why keep the emphasis? Because the family is our destiny, and we are on this earth to learn the skills of strong family relationships, no matter what our situation. So whether the dark side is just the brokenness of our own families, why do we talk about the light of eternal family? Because that's our destiny."

40:14 And that's the destiny Elder Christofferson says, "Everyone is promised with confidence. We testify that the atonement of Jesus Christ has anticipated, and in the end will compensate all deprivation and loss for those who turn to him. No one is predestined to receive less than all that the father has for his children." And then meanwhile, we're still feeling lonely, if you're a divorced person, or if you're a single person that wants it. Again, back to the paradox, think of all the singles that would love to be married and aren't. Think about all the mothers and fathers that want kids but can't. And paradoxically, there's so many people that can have kids but don't want them. This is the

paradox, and this is where we are learning. This is where we grow one line at a time, one step at a time. We have another trial even from our family, and then we look to God, we receive peace, and we live another day, or another half a day, or a minute, or half hour.

- Hank Smith: 41:22 Matt, John, just to add a little more clarity on these scriptures, there's an article that you can look up. Just go, you can go to our show notes, followhim.co, we'll link this. It's called, What Therefore God Hath Joined Together, Let No Man Put Asunder by Dr. Richard Draper, an incredible Gospel scholar. I just want to give you a couple of thoughts from his article.
- John Bytheway: 41:42 That's the one I was mentioning.
- Hank Smith: 41:44 Yeah, the schools of thought in the Jewish world.
- John Bytheway: 41:48 The guy can read ancient Greek like English I can read on a blackboard. It's amazing.
- Hank Smith: 41:53 One thing that Dr. Draper does here is he says, "You have to take account who the Savior's talking to." He's talking to a group of people who very likely see divorce not only condoned, but proper. When you're done with a person, you just give them a writing of divorcement, and go find another. It says, "In Jesus' rebuke to these people, he left no grounds whatsoever for divorce. They were there for adulterers, for there were no proper grounds for divorce. Even a writing divorcement did not in God's eye annul their marriages. Further, they contributed to the corruption of the time by setting the precedent for others to divorce, and committed adultery as well." And he goes through the schools of thought, Shammai or Hillel, that the Pharisees were involved in.
- 42:36 But then Dr. Draper goes on to say all the scriptures combined to make one point. The Lord taught against divorce, his new covenant invited his disciples into the higher ideal demanded by the perfect will of God. In doing so, the Lord emphasized the importance, and eternal nature of marriage and the purpose for which God instituted it on the earth for the eternal life, even the deification of his children. So, how are we doing toward reaching that ideal standard today? He quotes Elder Oaks, "We live in a world in which the whole concept of marriage is in peril, and where divorce is commonplace. The concept the society has a strong interest in preserving marriages for the common good as well as the good of the couple, and the children. It has been replaced for many by the idea that marriage is only a private

relationship between consenting adults, terminable at the will of either."

43:28 Elder Oaks adds, "In contrast to the world's view, modern prophets have warned that looking upon marriage as a mere contract that may be entered into at pleasure, and severed at the first difficulty is an evil meriting severe condemnation, especially where children are made to suffer. Indeed, the kind of marriage required for exaltation, eternal in duration, and God-like in equality does not contemplate divorce. In the temples of the Lord, couples are married for all eternity, but some marriages do not progress toward that ideal because of the hardness of our hearts." He quotes Jesus there, "The Lord does not currently enforce the consequences of the celestial standard. Thus, we must conclude that where abuse, and infidelity exist, divorce must also." I really like this article, and encourage our readers to go there and dive into it.

John Bytheway: 44:22 Now, Hank, is that on the RSC website?

Hank Smith: 44:25 Yeah, we'll link into our show notes, but yeah, it's on the RSC website.

John Bytheway: 44:29 I think Matt has hit on a wonderful point here. This was clearly a situation where they had set up a gotcha and a trap. It just sounds like the Pharisees came unto him, tempting him. We know the motive. It wasn't, "I really want to learn the truth about this." It was, "Here comes a trap." So then they asked the question, and then it's almost like the reflex, he answered the question, "Okay, well then why did Moses say this?" You knew they were just waiting for Jesus to answer, so they could do that. So, sometimes we talk about teaching in the Savior's way, and sometimes I thought, "Wow! So often when the Savior taught, there were some real adversaries in the same room." Which we usually don't have in gospel doctrine class. But boy, Jesus did all the time, and they sprung traps for him like this. So, it's really interesting to see how he did exactly what Matt was talking about. Let's talk about marriage as an ideal first, and how would you wrap this all up for us, Matt?

Dr. Matt Townsend: 45:32 Yeah. One of the things just as you were even going through it is, again, it goes back to the paradox of the relationship and what marriage is for. I think we still have a really deeply ingrained view of marriage is this utopia, it's this, you found your soulmate, the completion of the other half of you. And Spencer Kimball blew up the concept of soulmate that we don't necessarily find our soulmate, we forge it. We create this soul connectedness by working well together. Another powerful

thing that I think is just as valuable to our development on this earth. It's, if you marry somebody that is difficult, that isn't optimal, that is struggling, that is creating tension and problems that might eventually lead to divorce. It is also for your development, you are also still growing. So, with Christ in the mix, in the promise and the covenant with you, nothing will be wasted.

46:35 And instead of thinking as an outcome of the marriage working or not, what we probably ought to be thinking is the means of what are we becoming in our marriage. A lot of times with my clients, I have them face each other, and look at each other and I don't let them talk for five to seven minutes. And then I ask them to just ask a rhetorical question in their head, what is it like to be them married to me? And for five or six minutes they don't talk, and they just have to internalize, "What is it like for her to be dealing with me every day?" It is the most humbling thing, and I think that's where we get back to the spirit. And as we allow the Lord into any of our tension and contention, as we learned in conference, anytime we let him in, he can let the light in.

47:30 And again, this is coming from a boy raised in a divorced family. It's through the cracks of our family that the light got in. It's through the cracks of having to be shifted off between mom and dad, that I had to look for other light. And I got it from young men's leaders, and I got it from brothers and family members, and brothers-in-law. I got it from other people that literally raised me up. My young men's leader became my greatest spiritual advisor, and he jumped in right in that space, and then my father-in-law jumped in another space. So, this is why it takes a village to raise a family, and this is why God put you in the orbit. As Elder Maxwell says, "The very same orbit that lit the sky up for the wise men to get to Jesus, that star was put in orbit millions of years before. That same God put you in your orbit to go through what you're going through in your family. So, don't give up if it's not ideal, nothing's ideal really. In the end, Christ makes everything ideal when we turn to him."

John Bytheway: 48:41 I was going to say, I have a book on my shelf called Living a Covenant Marriage. And I think it's Kenneth Matheson's chapter where he asks a series of questions, and my favorite one is the one you just mentioned. What is it like to be married to me? To seriously and honestly ponder that, that can lead to some decent, humble introspection could be super helpful. So it sounds like that's what you use.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 49:12 Yeah, I love it. And the spirit is brought in instantly, then the spirit is doing the teaching, not me trying to break them down. Now they're being changed from the inside out. So powerful.

Hank Smith: 49:23 John, Matt, I think in all of this, it needs to be said that we have listeners who are in so many different unique situations. We have some who are currently going through divorce, some who are divorced, some who are thinking about getting divorced. I wish we could give them all their answers. I just wish we could hug them, and say, "Here's what you should do." But we do know we have a loving Savior who everyone can go to and get their answers.

John Bytheway: 49:48 Thanks, Hank. I'm really glad you said that. I know there's a lot of people out there hurting looking for answers, and generally you don't find answers for specific things on a podcast. But your Heavenly Father has specific things for you, so it's nice to know you do have a place to turn.

Hank Smith: 50:10 Please join us for part two of this podcast.



John Bytheway:	00:00:01	Welcome to part two with Dr. Matt Townsend. Matthew 19 and 20, Mark chapter 10, and Luke chapter 18.
Dr. Matt Townsend:	00:00:09	Let's go from a big one to a big one.
Hank Smith:	00:00:10	Okay.
Dr. Matt Townsend:	00:00:10	A bigger one. So, if you turn to Matthew 20:1-16, we're going to uncover the laborers in the vineyard. What a great parable this is, and I'm so excited.
Hank Smith:	00:00:25	I don't know if there's a greater parable out there, Matt.
Dr. Matt Townsend:	00:00:27	Is this one of your favorites?
John Bytheway:	00:00:28	It just gets you thinking, it's so good.
Hank Smith:	00:00:31	So many details here that you can learn from.
Dr. Matt Townsend:	00:00:34	It's rich and so everybody ought go listen to Elder Holland's message, the laborers in the vineyard, as he breaks this down.
John Bytheway:	00:00:42	Yeah. I have him teach this for me when I get to this. I just... "Okay, watch this," and it's just so good.
Dr. Matt Townsend:	00:00:48	Why don't we just run the video?
John Bytheway:	00:00:50	Yeah.
Dr. Matt Townsend:	00:00:52	In this, there's a householder, a person that owns property. A farmer, I guess. Somebody wealthy enough to own property and he needs laborers to work in his field, and so he went out early in the morning and he hired his laborers at about 6:00 AM and it was hard to find jobs for people back then and labor for that day would pay for their food, so it was pretty much everyone was living meal to meal and those early laborers at 6:00 AM, they all got hired. Then the house owner got them working and he went back out at 9:00 AM and at noon and at

three hiring more workers as his urgency in his harvest was increasing, so he was hiring throughout the day.

00:01:34 At about the 11th hour, so about five o'clock he hired a few more laborers, so some are getting hired one hour before closing time and work ends, and then at six o'clock, he went to pay off his laborers and the day was going to be done. Now some of them had only been there an hour. They had only been hired for one hour. Surprisingly though, and this is Elder Holland's words, "Surprisingly, all received the same wage in spite of the different hours of labor." Immediately, those hired first were angry, saying, "These last have wrought but one hour and thou hast made them equal unto us, which has borne the burden in the heat of the day."

00:02:19 Elder Holland says, "When reading this parable, perhaps you as well as those workers have felt that there was some injustice being done here." Let me speak briefly to that concern. Now, check your gut on it. When you hear that somebody came in for one hour of labor but got paid a full day's wage, what does it do to you? What does it do to your head? Do you immediately think that's not fair? Do you immediately get a little upset about it? This again goes back to the paradox. This loving, amazing, caring housekeeper and property owner was kind and he paid everyone for the wage. He paid them for the day and yet people were upset about it paradoxically, and this is the rub of all of this. Now, interestingly, Elder Holland was very clear. "No one was mistreated," he says. The early workers agreed to a full wage for the day and they received it. The owner kept the contract that they made with them.

Hank Smith: 00:03:30 And apparently, they were very happy about it. They took the work.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:03:33 Yeah. They took the work because the work they were desperate for and you know what else? They knew the wage. They knew what they would be paid. The others didn't necessarily know what they would be paid, and because they didn't know what they would be paid, they were in a riskier place. They were grateful to receive the work. Remember, no work, no money, no eat, and with more workers than jobs being chosen in the morning, it was a blessing. For every hour, for everyone that got hired, it was a pure blessing because that meant that they were going to be able to exist and to subsist. Now, what about the men not chosen? What about the men not chosen in the first hour or the third hour or the next hiring?

- 00:04:18 Those people had to go half a day wondering where their food was going to come from, so they had to take on a different burden, and apparently, the house owner was basically paying for that as well. Others were hired that were not told what they would be given as far as the amount, and they were still treated more than fairly. So everybody throughout the day was treated fairly, and yet, Elder Holland asked, "Why should you be jealous because I choose to be kind?" He's paraphrasing what the householder would say. Why should you be jealous because I chose to be kind? I think a lot of us see this in our own existence where we watch people. How come they get that benefit?
- 00:05:02 How come they were called to that calling? How come they always get to do that? We probably need to break this down and start to figure out what is it about us that makes our jealousies so real? Again, I'm going to go back to that's part of the paradox of life, is that it isn't fair and it doesn't make sense because by the way, the next day, another householder might not do this. Probably wouldn't do this. So you can't count on the blessings to keep coming.
- Hank Smith: 00:05:33 One thing that this parable speaks to me is that human beings can grasp defeat out of the jaws of victory because everyone could celebrate at the end of this day. Like we talked about earlier, Matt, with a family mentality, everyone's happy for everyone. Everyone's celebrating each other's success, but I had a great day, I worked all day. I didn't have to think where my food was going to come from today, and it was hard. It was difficult. I sweat a lot, but still, I'm glad to have the work and yet, I can have that whole day ruined because someone else got a blessing.
- Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:06:12 Isn't that crazy?
- Hank Smith: 00:06:13 Yeah, someone else got something good that happened to them, so I throw it all out.
- Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:06:17 It's just not fair. It's just not. By the way, when you see that little jealousy, a lot of times, the jealousy almost... I see this with clients arguing back and forth, and they'll even use words like, "That's not fair," and it's not fair. It's just kind. It was just kindness, and sometimes what you'll see is if we have a really traumatic event that happens to us when we're really young in our lives, we emotionally are stunted and it's no longer safe to risk with people, so we judge them more harshly and you can almost see that they're coming off as a lot more immature emotionally. So a lot of times, you can bet that they've been hurt. CS Lewis has this quote I know you guys have heard a

million times from Mere Christianity, "Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. It is the comparison that makes you proud, the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition has gone, pride is gone."

00:07:16 So the darn problem with this darn world is the paradox of we're competing, we're comparing, we're contrasting, and if one person gets ahead and we have a zero-sum mentality, then we are actually getting behind, where with God, it's abundant. When you then hold this metaphor, this story up and parable up as an image of what our heavenly Father will do for us, where it doesn't matter when you show up, just show up and he'll pay you the full blessing. He'll give you the full blessing, and that is a point that Elder Holland drives home. Show up. It doesn't matter when you show up, just show up. Hold on. Oh, by the way, another lesson he gives is stop pouting. Lesson number one from the Lord's vineyard, coveting, pouting and tearing down others does not elevate your standing, nor does demeaning someone else improve your self-image, so be kind and be grateful that God is kind. It is a happy way to live your life.

00:08:18 Another point that he drills that is so beautiful at the end, he says, "My beloved brothers and sisters, what happened in this story at nine or noon or three is swept up in the grandeur of the universally generous payment at the end of the day. The formula of faith is to hold on, work on, see it through and let the distress of earlier hours, real or imagined, fall away in the abundance of the final reward. Don't dwell on old issues or grievances, not toward yourself, nor your neighbor, nor even, I might add, toward this true and living church. The majesty of your life, of your neighbor's life and of the gospel of Jesus Christ will be made manifest at the last day, even if such majesty is not always recognized by everyone in the early going." So don't hyperventilate about something that happened at nine in the morning when the grace of God is trying to reward you at six in the evening, whatever your labor arrangements have been throughout the day.

Hank Smith: 00:09:21 I love it. John, I'm ready for you to tell us how you teach this.

John Bytheway: 00:09:24 When we talk about the parable of prodigal son, which I love, everything's fine until there's a comparison and looking sideways and wait, what do you get? Wait, what did I get and what... Wait, hey, wait a minute, and you use those phrases, abundance, and I think it's Stephen Covey that talked about an abundance versus a scarcity mentality. If you get one piece of

Little Caesars, there's less for me is the scarcity mentality, but the abundance mentality is we have a pizza factory.

- Hank Smith: 00:09:54 It's a great analogy, John.
- Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:09:55 You always go with pizza.
- John Bytheway: 00:09:56 We have all the pizza that we want. There's not finite pizza. We have Little Caesars just down the street, so that idea of your success doesn't take away from mine, and I love this Book of Mormon example when Alma and the four sons of Mosiah meet again. "When I look at these, the success of my brethren," he says, "then I say to myself, 'Oh, you guys did better than I did. I wish I wouldn't have been called there to that mission.'" No, he doesn't say that. He's thrilled that his brethren have been successful, and I guess that's the place we have to get to. Easier said than done, but there's one more thing I want to add, which I think I learned on this podcast that's in my scriptures, to look at this parable of the laborers in the vineyard dispensationally, and if you look at it that way, we are the ones who showed up at the last hour.
- 00:10:47 We didn't have to bury our ancestors every morning on the plains. We came to a church with temples already built and handbooks and manuals already written, with those tough times already gone through and we show up and we've got church buildings and meeting houses and programs and we are the ones who showed up last if you look at it that way, and maybe those earlier dispensations are looking at us going, "Wow, we laid the foundation for all of this and you guys just showed up." That helps me think if it's dispensationally, we showed up at the 11th hour and we're getting all the benefit from what our ancestors provided for us.
- Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:11:26 Yeah. Then all of a sudden, we're like, "No, no, no, they're good. Let them in. Let them in. They're awesome. Let them have the full reward," because it's us at that point. Depends on who you identify with in the parable. I got to read another thought from Elder Holland from a different talk actually. He says, "How does this happen?" He's talking about how we get upset with other people's success. "How does this happen? Especially when we wish so much that it would not. I think that one of the reasons is that every day, we see allurements of one kind or another that tell us what we have is not enough.
- 00:12:01 Someone or something is forever telling us we need to be more handsome, more wealthy, more applauded or even more admired than we see ourselves as being. We are told that we

haven't collected enough possessions or gone to enough fun places. We are bombarded with the message that on the world scale of things, we have been weighed in the balance and found wanting." Listen to this. "Some days it is as if we have been locked in a cubicle of a great and spacious building where the only thing on TV is a never-ending soap opera called Vain Imaginations."

- Hank Smith: 00:12:33 That's a great-
- John Bytheway: 00:12:33 It's so good.
- Hank Smith: 00:12:34 Yeah, it's really good.
- Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:12:34 Is that wonderful? That's not how God works. "No one of us," he says later, "is less treasured or cherished of God than another. He loves each of us, insecurities, anxieties, self-image and all."
- Hank Smith: 00:12:52 That's good.
- John Bytheway: 00:12:53 So in the Book of Mormon, Alma goes to a different mission, more to the Nephites. This is more reactivation. The four sons of Mosiah go to the Lamanites, but I love this verse, Alma 29:14, "I do not joy in my success alone. My joy is more full because of the success of my brethren who have been up to the land of Nephi. Behold, they have labored exceedingly and have brought forth much fruit and how great shall be their reward. Now, when I think of the success of these, my brethren, my soul is carried away even to the separation of it from the body as it were so great is my joy." Great example of I can be happy for the success of others. Easier said than done, but it shows you where he was.
- Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:13:35 Whenever we see, and this is a big thing I try to teach when I'm coaching my clients, is the minute we see the tension that you can start to see these people vibrating and being frustrated about what the homeowner did, once that tension is created, that's fine because the tension is starting to teach us something. So Brigham Young said, "The gospel causes men and women to reveal that which has slept in their dispositions until they would drop into their graves. The plan by which the Lord leads this people makes them reveal their thoughts and intents and brings out every trait of disposition lurking in their beings." So every interaction of our life is a chance to let our disposition be revealed, and when our disposition is to do evil and it appears, that's okay.

00:14:30 Now, take it and let's correct it and let's turn and adjust away or toward God. Now, one other point that I think is so important is Elder Renlund was talking in general conference, in his talk, "As I draw all men unto me," and he was quoting Elder Wilford Andersen on a principle that you guys have heard, I'm sure. I call it the principle of proximity, but this is the principle. He says, "The greater the distance between the giver and the receiver, the more the receiver develops a sense of entitlement." So, when you're hiring workers and laborers that hardly know you, they might have a higher sense of entitlement than when you hire someone that knows you.

Hank Smith: 00:15:25 Because of the distance.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:15:26 Yeah, because of the distancing. One of the powerful things in our relationships is the more we get to know our partner, that should create more insight, more health, more appreciation, more giving of the benefit of the doubt that you know they're good. One of my goals in life is to always make sure as I'm getting to know people deeper and deeper, that I'm doing it in a way so that I can be more effective and more influential with them and also more influenced by them. Proximity and closeness to the people around us can also, if it's done with appreciation, if it's done with love, can actually make it so we have fewer and fewer of these entitled incidents.

John Bytheway: 00:16:10 My wife and I, before we had any kids or anything, we went to an education week talk by Dr. Charles Beckert and he wrote three words on the chalkboard which have blessed my marriage and I didn't realize how much would bless my family. Three words. He wrote, appreciate, expect, and demand. He said, "When we're first married, our spouse does something for us. We appreciate it so much, but over time, if we're not careful, what we first appreciated, we begin to expect, and then over time, if we're not careful, what we've come to expect, we begin to demand."

00:16:44 Hank, I give my students a pretty generous test review, but if I don't mention something in one or two of the questions, they come back, "Hey, you didn't say anything about this one." I'm like, "I handed you most of the test. You appreciate that, right?" I think about this parable we just read. They appreciated getting the work and that's where we've got to stay, is on appreciate, and now we use that with our kids. Are you at appreciate, expect or demand about this family vacation? We've got to stay on appreciate.

Hank Smith: 00:17:17 John, that is so great. I love that principle. Matt, I love that principle of appreciating and not having an entitlement mentality. Let me show you one other thing in here that I've thought of and that is, let's say, that the vineyard is the church and you were called early in your life to be part of the church. You were born into the church and then you see other people who join the church late in life. They're 85 or something. They join the church and you think, man, I had to work so hard. I had to get up at dark 30 for four years and go to seminary. I had to serve a mission. I had to keep the commandments.

John Bytheway: 00:17:58 I had to go to stake priesthood.

Hank Smith: 00:18:00 I had to go to stake priesthood-

John Bytheway: 00:18:02 At 7:00 AM.

Hank Smith: 00:18:03 I had to keep the Sabbath day for those many years. Is that maybe part of revealing my disposition, Matt, and how I feel about my membership in the church? I don't see it as a blessing. I see it as a burden.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:18:17 Yeah, and remember, the anti-Nephi-Lehi said, "No more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually." By the way, I don't think it meant they didn't do evil. They just didn't want to. They didn't like it. They'd fall into it, they'd start feeling that feeling and then they'd catch it, but the cool thing is I think that's the plan. God wants our disposition to be worn on our sleeve, not like the hypocrites that hide it in whited sepulchers where moth and death doth corrupt. So I think he likes that it's out there. One of the examples that is the ultimate paradoxical example is I call it the Peter paradox because Peter, he fell asleep during Gethsemane. Peter is me. When he's in the upper room and the Savior wants to wash his feet, he won't let him. He is like, "No, no-

Hank Smith: 00:19:12 You need to.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:19:13 ... you're not washing my feet." "Then you won't have place with me." He's like, "Then wash my whole body." Okay, you're missing the point, Peter, but one by one by one, Peter was just impetuous and just me. He's so me and yet at the end... And he denied Christ, and at the end, Christ gave him the keys to the kingdom, the priesthood to lead and the power to lead it, so he's okay with it. Just own it and be okay with your own self and literally allow yourself to be the servant. Allow yourself to be the lowest, but again, that goes so contrary to human nature.

00:19:53 Natural man's an enemy to God, has been since the fall and will be forever and ever unless we learned to yield to the enticings of that Holy Spirit and putteth off that paradoxical natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement at onement with Christ and become meek and submissive and humble, Mosiah 3:19. To me, it's the anchor of our existence and I think God loves our trying this. If it was about us being perfect, then they drop the veil. Just drop it and I'll show you how good I can be, but if it's about us figuring it out and working it from the inside out, I think we're in the perfect situation.

Hank Smith: 00:20:33 I would love to see these laborers who have been there all day say to those who just got there, "Congratulations on getting paid that much. That's awesome. I wish you could have been here all day. I wish you could have been with the householder all day. We're so lucky to have been here all day." That would be a different story.

John Bytheway: 00:20:51 In a way... He didn't join the church at 85 years old, but at 24, my dad, and if you wanted to irritate him, you could say something like that. "Oh, so when you were a teenager, you got to..." Blah, blah, blah.

Hank Smith: 00:21:04 You got to do that. Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:21:05 As if wickedness really was happiness. Is that what we're saying?

Hank Smith: 00:21:09 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:21:10 He didn't. He was a pretty good boy actually, but you see what I'm saying? He also never got to go to a fireside and never got to go to a youth conference and never got to have those experiences, so yeah, that's a good idea to remind us. Don't look at it that way, and I guess this really isn't about economic labor practices as it is as much about when people come into the kingdom.

Hank Smith: 00:21:32 Elder Holland finishes with, "His concern is for the faith at which you finally arrive, not the hour of the day in which you got there." For another twist on this parable, then Elder Oaks gave a talk called The Challenge to Become in October of 2000. John, we've talked about this talk how many different times, how many different episodes? It just keeps coming up. He says about this parable, "Like other parables, this one can teach us several different valuable principles. For present purposes, its lesson is that the master's reward in the final judgment will not be based

on how long we have labored in the vineyard. We do not obtain our heavenly reward by punching a time clock. What is essential is our labors in the workplace of the Lord have caused us to become something. For some of us, this requires a longer time than for others."

00:22:23 That's an interesting insight that, oh, I was born in the church because the Lord thought, yeah, you're going to need a long time in the church to change. "Many who come in the 11th hour have been refined and prepared by the Lord in other ways than formal employment in the vineyard. These workers," and I thought of Mother Teresa here, "these workers are like the prepared dry mix to which it is only necessary to add water, the perfecting ordinance of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost. With that addition, even in the 11th hour, these workers are in the same state of development and qualified to receive the same reward as those who have labored long in the vineyard." Then he adds one hopeful thought here; "This parable teaches us that we should never give up hope and loving associations with family members and friends whose fine qualities evidence their progress toward what a loving father would have them become." Just another wonderful insight into this incredible parable.

John Bytheway: 00:23:22 I had a beloved mission companion, I will call him Elder C, and I will never forget once when he was promising this good man that he could quit smoking and he could quit drinking and he could quit all of these things, and he finally blurted out, "I know you can because I did." Missionaries know it's not necessary to divulge their past sins, but... So we're riding our bikes back and I'm like, "Elder, tell me about your life." He just starts laughing... "Oh man, I had to see a general authority before I came out," and it was so wonderful.

00:23:58 I don't think he graduated from seminary. I don't think he went to early morning like I did and all that stuff, but the beautiful thing was he was one of my most beloved companions and there we were teaching together and speaking of Alma and his success, I ran into him the other day. Firm in the faith, kids on missions, and I felt that joy the Book of Mormon promises. Okay. So we came into the field at a different time, but never forget hearing him say that and hearing his backstory and who cares? Here we are right now and we're teaching together and having a wonderful time in the Philippines.

Hank Smith: 00:24:37 Matt, before we finish out this parable, I just want to ask you, you're the expert here, why are human beings like this? Why are we so quick to get jealous and even of our own spouse and

people we want to see succeed? Yeah, we want them to succeed, but not that much, right?

- Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:24:54 It's so real and you know what I really think? I think so much of it is it's our body. I think we think it's always our mind that makes us think this way, but our body is designed to fight for survival and we are designed to know what's right. I did not know this, but empathy, the reality of you having an empathic feeling for another person, do you know where it begins? It doesn't begin in your mind as you think about them. It begins in your eyes as you watch them. That's why the Savior would always cast his eyes roundabout on the multitude and when he beheld that they were in tears, the eye to eye is what we call mirror neurons in our brain, so when I'm looking not in his eyes, but I'm looking at someone that's sad, my brain goes to my sad part of my body and creates chemistry for sad. That's where empathy begins and then we hang a thought onto it that then makes it what we should do or how we should act.
- 00:25:56 So if our body is doing so much of this leading, but our body is also where the fight or flight instinct leads, and once that fight or flight natural man kicks in, I no longer see you as a brother. I see you as a competitor and as a thing that's going to take something from me, so I really think deep down, that's where it goes, which is why the power of just hearing these stories I think is so incredible, and then looking into our own self, what is keeping me from... and this will be a perfect segue into our next topic, what's keeping me from being the godly person I want to be and be open sincerely? To not just turn off the feelings and to not just change your mind, but to let the spirit start to work on you and let the spirit start to control the body and the mind.
- 00:26:46 I think that's really what God means by conversion and turning us. I love the idea that the concept of the word repentance, metanoia, would mean to have a change or a shift of mind. In our Bible dictionary, it says, "A change or a shift of mind towards yourself, God and others." So once we shift our mind from maybe the carnal mind to the spiritual mind, from the carnal body and the brain to the spiritual mind, that is the beginning of repentance and we could put it in five steps. We could also put it in one feeling. I think that's why humans do it and I actually think it's good, weirdly. Remember, these things are good. These things are good.
- Hank Smith: 00:27:29 They reveal our own disposition. I love it.
- Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:27:33 Okay, so let's go back now, Matthew 19:16-22, where we're going to talk about the story of the certain rich young man. I am

so excited to hear your view on this, you guys, because to me, if I had a chance to ask the Savior a question, that's a big deal. I had a chance to ask an apostle, President Hinckley, in the first presidency at the time. When I was an 18-year-old, right before my mission, we sat down in the house with President Hinckley and about 15 or 20 of my friends, and again, remember, I was raised with some inactive parents and not used to all this church stuff at first, but I'm sitting there and he is like, "You guys can ask me any question you want."

00:28:20 So what would you ask? Because I regret my question, because I went with dinosaurs. I just said, "So what's with the dinosaurs?" I had this magic moment and he just looked at me like, "Really? You're going to go there?" Of all places, you're going to the dinosaurs. You have a member of the first presidency and you're going with the dinosaurs. So I wish I could do it again, but here is a young man that comes up to the Savior and he asks him a question, so by the way, what would you guys ask?

Hank Smith: 00:28:58 Well, Matt, it says right in the first paragraph of the manual, "If you had the opportunity to ask the Savior a question, what would it be?" When a certain rich young man met the Savior for the first time, he asked, "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" The Savior's response showed both appreciation for the good things the man had already done and loving encouragement to do more. When we ponder the possibility of eternal life, we may similarly wonder if there's more we should be doing. We may ask in our own way, and this is the question I just don't think I could ask Jesus, what lack I yet? The Lord can give us answers that are just as personal as his response to the rich young man. So my response to your question is I don't think I could ask, what lack I yet?

Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:29:40 No.

Hank Smith: 00:29:41 Yeah, I don't know if I'm ready for that. John, what would you ask?

John Bytheway: 00:29:45 I can fill yellow pads with what I lack. I think he's coming from a checklist, check-off-the-box commandments mentality and not a what am I becoming mentality that we've talked about with President Oaks. I think I would ask, am I doing anything adequately? Maybe I'd ask that. Am I doing anything right?

Hank Smith: 00:30:08 Matt, I also don't think I'd say to Jesus, "So what about the dinosaurs?"

Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:30:13 Yeah, I wouldn't lead with dinosaurs next time. I'm not going there. I figured that out. It is an interesting thing. I think it's really neat when you think... His question was, what good thing shall I do? So his model of his ideal is a doing model, not a becoming model. Like what lack I yet is seeming to get more into becoming but, "Good master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life, life like you?" He said unto him, "Why callest thou me good?" By the way, this, again, still, I can't fathom this. The Savior is saying to him, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one. That is God." Look how single-minded the Savior is. It's not about me. Again, I think he's teaching. I think he understands, just like President Hinckley understood, that that guy didn't have a clue, but this is what he said, and this is something that I think is really important when we're talking about the list making approach and the other.

00:31:21 He said, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one. That is God." This is verse 17, "but if thou wilt enter into life and keep the commandments," what do you guys think entering into life means? When I heard that, I immediately thought, if you will enter into life with me to partaking me as your life, to partaking me as your bread, as your water. If you'll make that covenant and then become alive with me, like we read in 2 Nephi 25:23-27, "For we labor diligently to persuade our children and also our brethren to believe in Christ and to be reconciled to God, for we know that it is by grace that we are saved after or in spite of after all we can do, and notwithstanding, we believe in Christ, we keep the law of Moses.

00:32:19 We still live the law and look forward with steadfastness unto Christ until the law shall be fulfilled. For this end was the law given, wherefore the law have become dead unto us and we are made alive in Christ because of our faith, yet we keep the law because of the commandments and we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, we write according to our prophecies that our children may know to what source they may look for the remission of sins." I think he's begging us to become alive in him so that we can experience a happier life.

Hank Smith: 00:32:59 Yeah. Get both feet into this work, to my work.

John Bytheway: 00:33:03 When I hear the phrase enter into life, I look at his question. What shall I do that I may have eternal life? We all know that immortality and eternal life mentioned in Moses 1:39 are not the same thing. Everybody's going to be immortal, but eternal life is not just a length of life, but a quality of life. It's exactly

what you're saying. It's the kind of life that God has. If you want to enter into eternal life... That's what I've always thought it meant. The kind of life that I live, which is, I guess, exactly what you answered there.

- Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:33:35 He's going to see in a few more verses what that's going to mean. Brigham Young said of Jesus, "Why should we imagine for one moment that we can be prepared to enter into the kingdom of rest with him and the Father without passing through similar ordeals?" It's interesting. This rich young man, the ordeal was give up your God, give up the money with the other man who wanted to follow the Savior, but, "I want to be with you." The Savior's like, "Great. Come with me now." "I just need to go bury my dad." "Well, let the dead bury the dead and you come with me now." It just seems like the Lord is always going to push us to our highest obstacle so that we can then take it on and overcome it with him. That's why it is probably difficult for any of us to dare ask, what lack I yet? Well, let's start here. We almost don't want to attempt it.
- John Bytheway: 00:34:31 I don't know if every meeting house has the same paintings and there's an official place for each painting or a true and living place for each painting, but as I've gone around to different meeting houses, I've seen the Woman at the Well in almost every relief society room and in foyers, I usually see the Rich Young Ruler and I see-
- Hank Smith: 00:34:52 Yeah, that's true.
- John Bytheway: 00:34:53 ... Jesus pointing over here in the Rich Young... He's got some fine costly apparel and that painting is always there and it looks like Jesus is gesturing to the poor in that painting. So, "Well, you haven't given to the poor." I guess that is a nice reminder to all of us as we lead through the foyer there of this little story.
- Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:35:13 So let me now take you to the Mark 10 account. In the Mark 10 account, there is something I think that is so revealing about our Savior. So this young rich man wants this opportunity to have eternal life with God. God tells him to enter into life with him, that we read about. He told him to obey the commandments and in verse 19, in Mark 10:19, "Thou knoweth the commandments. Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, honor thy father and thy mother." He answered and said unto him, "Master, all these have I observed from my youth."
- Hank Smith: 00:35:55 Wow.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:35:55 Okay. He basically said, "I'm crushing it. I'm doing a great job." Then this is the most beautiful thing that I think tells us about our Savior. Verse 21, "Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him." He loved this kid that wants to do well. He wants to do good. He's trying. He's trying. He may not quite get it and he beholding him. Just seeing him, he loved him and said unto him, "One thing thou lackest, go thy way..." By the way, that is pretty impressive. One thing-

Hank Smith: 00:36:34 Yeah. One thing.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:36:35 ... thou lackest.

Hank Smith: 00:36:36 I would pump my fist like, wow.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:36:38 Only one?

Hank Smith: 00:36:39 Yeah.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:36:40 "Go thy way. Sell whatsoever thou has and give to the poor and thou shall have treasure in heaven and come take up the cross and follow me." This verse 22 crushes me, and he was sad at that saying, and he went away grieved for he had great possessions. He went away sad. He was grieved. You want me to give up the one thing? Now in my world, a lot of us, I think most of us, all of us, have built an identity on our things, on our titles, on our names, on our degrees, on everything. Why I fear sometimes asking what I lack is because he's going to ask the hard thing, and the hard thing is the one you've probably most closely wrapped your identity around.

00:37:40 It's the thing that has to be a certain way. It's the thing that your fight or flight goes off on a lot. It's the thing that nobody should mess with. Again, it's in Mark... is the only place that this is mentioned, that beholding him, Jesus loved him. I love that idea that no matter what, every rebuke, every correction the Savior makes will start with a really strong swelling of compassion and love, and I really believe, because of that mirror neuron thing that we were talking about, when the Savior approaches us with love and he is looking in our eyes, our body and our mind will start to pick up that love. I think the Savior uses that as a way to help convert us to this change. It's powerful.

John Bytheway: 00:38:27 I love that Mark added that phrase because I just feel like even though we've had some fun with who would ever ask that question, it sounds like this was a good kid and that Jesus loved him for that. I also love that the Pharisees, the marriage

question, they were like, "Hey, watch this." They knew. They were going to draw him into a situation where they had the next comment already ready. This question was sincere and Jesus beholding him, loved him, and maybe someday, we'll get the rest of the story. I want to believe that it took him a while, but that he came and followed him. I hope that's what happened.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:39:07

Verse 17 at the beginning in Mark also maybe teaches you a little bit more about this boy because he was a young ruler too, "And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running and kneeled to him and asked him..." So this boy comes running in and kneels before him. So there is a submissiveness to this kid and there's an innocence to it. "Hey, what do I have to do to get eternal life?" He is like, "Okay, you got to do this." "Well, I'm already doing all that. I've done it since I was a kid." "Okay, here comes the big one." To me, this is pretty much all of us in the church. We're doing great work.

00:39:43

Now, there is a component where some of us, we don't have this cockiness or naivete. What we have for some of us is more imposter syndrome where we don't think we're good enough and we wouldn't be strong enough to go ask the Savior the question and we would just watch the Savior pass and long to say something like the woman that touched the hem of his garment that had to sneak in for her variety of reasons, but either way, whether you do an over behavior because you're too confident or you do the under behavior because you're not confident enough, either one of those could keep you from God, and we don't want to be kept from God with our over behavior or our under behavior, so we want to start noticing, do I go too over? Do I play too hard or do I play too little? Am I risking enough? Am I trying enough? Am I asking enough? It's powerful.

John Bytheway: 00:40:44

Dr. Robert L. Millet that we've had on the program, he mentioned to me one day, "You should go read this book." It's called The Gospel According to Jesus by John MacArthur, who's at Grace to You Ministries in Southern California. He took this story apart in a way I had never seen it before. This young man said, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Jesus did not say, "Oh, just confess me as your personal Lord and Savior and you're pretty much done." Sounds to me like works righteousness right there. I had never thought of it that way, but Jesus could have said that, "Oh, just say, 'I accept you as Lord and make you a Savior and make you Lord of my life,' and you're done. You're saved," which is the easy believism side of it, but I don't want to offend any evangelicals listening, but that

was interesting to me that yeah, he didn't say that. He told him to go do something really hard for him.

Hank Smith: 00:41:49 Yeah. Matt, I don't think we want to give the idea that money is a sin, that being rich is a sin. There's a verse that everybody quotes, the 1 Timothy 6:10 where Paul says, "For the love of money is the root of all evil." Not money itself, but the love of money is the root of all evil, but he goes on to say something which I don't hear quoted very often. He says, "While some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." I'm not quite sure I know exactly what Paul's saying, but it seemed that he's saying for the love of money is the root of all evil, and if you chase it, you can chase it at the expense of your faith and it will leave you pierced with many sorrows, and you're what I call the greatest marriage counselor out there. Have you seen money destroy relationships?

Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:42:42 Oh yeah. Honestly, I've seen everything destroy relationships. I've seen success. I've seen jobs. I've seen people say they wanted a divorce over lettuce. That caused a fight and that turned on the natural man. I've seen pride, I've seen anxiety, I've seen depression. I've seen mental health. I've seen ADHD. I've seen self-righteousness. I've seen controlling. I have literally seen everything, which is why money is an easy one to beat up. Yeah, I think what the point is it's the love of anything but Christ. It's the love of anything but God. It's the love of anything but one another. That is why I love Moses and Enoch's story, where Enoch witnesses God weeping and, "How can you weep?" He's like, "These are my creations. These are mine. I've made them, and they don't have that love and affection for each other."

00:43:41 So if us not being able to love each other and ourself and God enough to make this work in this paradoxical world we're in, that's what makes our God cry. To know that we have a God that weeps is powerful, and then to know that someday, he's going to run and chase us down like that prodigal son, like we learn about in Enoch, and he's going to kiss us on the neck and we're all going to be able to be there with him, it's going to come back to love. It just seems like what we have to love is love, and in the end, this is one of the greatest things I've ever learned in my life... was going to church as a 12-year-old, and I had a Young Men's leader named Bart Summerhayes, who would teach me every week just great stuff.

00:44:26 He's the first guy that told me, "You are going to go to college," because I didn't think I'd be going to college. My dad didn't go

to college, my mom didn't go to college, my grandparents didn't go to college, I didn't think I was going to college, but this is what he said, and he said this every single Sunday; "If at first you do not choose the kingdom of God and his righteousness, it matters not what you've chosen instead. It matters not what you've chosen instead." At 12, I learned that. At 13 and 14 and 15, I had this drilled into my head through Young Men's, and now I see it in this weird way. If I'm not choosing a relationship with Christ in the moment, it doesn't matter what I've chosen, whether it's money or a career, and I think we've all experienced... It's never what you think it is. That's why it's paradoxical. Most of us don't actually want what we have. We want more. We want something else.

- Hank Smith: 00:45:18 We want more.
- Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:45:18 We want a bigger degree, we want a newer car, we want a faster computer, and yet, we have all of these things, so if at first we're not choosing God, I'm not sure it matters what we choose.
- Hank Smith: 00:45:32 Money is just the example here, but it's going to be the thing that you don't want to be asked about. That's what the Savior's going to ask about.
- Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:45:41 By the way, that's a great key. What is the thing that you know you can't give up and whatever that is, is the thing you'll eventually have to give up.
- Hank Smith: 00:45:53 Yeah, when-
- Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:45:53 We have attachments and we have preferences. One of the things that our human mind does is we make a preference. We like things. The funny thing is the more you like things, the more you become attached to having to need them, and you have to have them around, but I don't know if you've noticed, is it doesn't matter if you prefer not to get cancer, people still get it and you may not prefer to die and you may not prefer to lose your job, but your preference doesn't matter. As soon as you can give up some of your preferences and just allow things to be... That's why the Savior and Buddha and Gandhi and all these people died with nothing, because they didn't have attachment to things. The thing didn't matter. What mattered was my love for you and my love for God. That mattered. Now we have to have things, but the minute the thing becomes a priority, then it's just a thing that's getting in the way.

John Bytheway: 00:46:50 I think the three of us here know people who are wealthy, maybe even really wealthy, who have done great things and have their hearts in the right place. I'm looking at the center footnote on Mark 10, so I'm using the old-fashioned paper version on page 1,259, but the JST-

Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:47:10 Oh, do we still have those?

John Bytheway: 00:47:12 Yeah, I do. I've got one. I dusted it off. It was like Indiana Jones trying to find it, but this is what Mark 10:27 says, "And Jesus looking upon them said, with men it is impossible, but not with God for with God, all things are possible," when they said, "Who can be saved? Because a rich man can hardly get into heaven." Here's the footnote; "With men that trust in riches, it is impossible, but not impossible with men who trust in God and leave all for my sake, for with such, all these things are possible." I think the story of the Book of Mormon is build your foundation on Christ, but as soon as they prosper, they switch real estate and start setting their heart on their riches, and that's when all the trouble comes because they're trusting in their riches instead of trusting in God. My mission president, many others that we could name, very successful in a wealth sort of way, but they trusted in God. It was, how can I consecrate what I have to bless the kingdom type of thing.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:48:14 Then he magnifies us. He magnifies us. I love this thought by Elder Uchtdorf where he says, "Salvation cannot be bought with the currency of obedience. It is purchased by the blood of the Son of God. Thinking that we can trade our good works for salvation is like buying a plane ticket and then supposing we own the airline or thinking that after paying rent for our home, we now hold the title to the entire planet Earth." You're blessed. You're given an incredible gift by our Savior and all he really wants in return, it seems like, is this covenant and this connection to us as a brother, back to the whole beginning is the end idea, he's bringing us home. There's a great thought that changed me the first time I heard this.

00:49:06 Emanuel Swedenborg, from Sweden, by the way, a Christian theologian who said this. He said, "What is our dominant love? What we love constitutes life itself to us. What our love is like determines what our life is like, therefore, what we are like as human beings. In particular, it is the love that is dominant or supreme in us that makes us who we are. That love has many loves that are subordinate to it. Loves that derive from it, they take on various guises, but they are all nevertheless present with the dominant love and together with it make one kingdom. The dominant love acts as the monarch or head of all the rest. It

governs them and it works through them as intermediate goals in order to focus on and strive for its primary and ultimate goal, doing this both directly and indirectly. The object of our dominant love is what we love more than anything else."

00:50:13 A really interesting thought of mine is that I always want to make sure I'm seeking the highest, healthiest, purest, dominant love. What is my dominant love? If it's Christ, then everything underneath that love will be added to that love, but if it's money, that's different. If it's fame, that's different. If it's notoriety, that's different. A fun thing that we all should be thinking about as we are thinking about these stories is what is our dominant love? Whatever it is that we love the most will become the thing we are becoming and everything will follow that lead. Spencer Kimball said, "Whatever thing a man sets his heart and trust in most is his God, and if his God doesn't also happen to be the true and living God of Israel, that man is laboring in idolatry," but what he basically means is we're spinning on the thing that's irrelevant to our existence, but it's occupying our time and space.

John Bytheway: 00:51:19 It's like your Young Men's leader said, "Unless you've chosen the kingdom of God first, in the end, makes no difference."

Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:51:26 Yeah, power.

Hank Smith: 00:51:27 Marion G. Romney said back in 1949, he said, "A half-hearted performance is not enough. We cannot obtain these blessings and be like the rich young man who protested that he had kept the commandments from his youth up, but who went away sorrowful. When in answer to the question, what lack I yet, Jesus said unto him, 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell what thou has and give to the poor and come follow me.' Evidently, he could live everything but the welfare program. There can be no such reservation. We must be willing to sacrifice everything. Through self-discipline and devotion, we must demonstrate to the Lord that we are willing to serve him under all circumstances. When we have done this, we shall receive an assurance that we shall have eternal life in the world to come. Then we shall have peace in this world." What lack I yet? You got to overcome it and you have the time. We're not saying today, but I think Matt's taught us that eventually, it's going to come to a head. Do you love this thing or do you love the Lord? You've got to make a choice.

John Bytheway: 00:52:32 Let's finish today with the prayers of the Pharisee and the publican found in Luke 18:9-14. Again, another paradoxical experience, two men went up to the temple to pray. One a

Pharisee and the other a publican, a tax collector. The Pharisee, verse 11, says, "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself. 'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are. Extortioners, unjust adulterers, or even as this publican.'"

- Hank Smith: 00:53:03 He looks at the guy next to him.
- John Bytheway: 00:53:06 Yeah. "Boy, I know what he lacks."
- Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:53:08 Yeah. It's like an interview for a job. "I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all I possess, and the publican standing afar off would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other, for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Notice the paradox. If you exalt yourself, and so if the only way that you can elevate your persona, your existence, your state of being, is to elevate yourself above others, you can't elevate yourself above a child of God without diminishing a child of God. I love the CS quote that, "There are no mere mortals around us." You're sitting next to somebody that has this divinity inside of them, and if we could see it, we'd want to fall on our knees and worship them.
- 00:54:12 As soon as we have the eyes to see, we'll be able to feel what we need to feel to become more Christ-like. Then we'll be able to be motivated to do what we need to do and then we can actually become what we need to become, and again, to me, this is a pretty natural thing where, as humans in relationships, if I need to pull you underwater to keep my point above the water, then that means my point isn't very good. We don't need to compete in all things. Instead, we need to actually learn. How great would it have been if that Pharisee could have learned from the publican and the publicans are tax collectors. Nobody really wants to learn from a tax collector, but it is interesting how humble his prayer was.
- Hank Smith: 00:54:56 I noticed that the Pharisee's prayer is missing humility. He's doing a lot of great things, but there's nothing about repentance or what lack I yet. Nothing like that in his prayer.
- Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:55:10 The minute you're listing anything, you're in trouble. He has to list it.
- John Bytheway: 00:55:14 There's a little phrase there that I think, does that mean what I think it means? Because it doesn't sound like his prayer got very far, because in verse 11, it says, "He prayed thus with himself,"

and it just sounds like it didn't even get out of the temple. It was like as soon as he said, "I'm so glad I'm not like other people," it didn't go very far.

Hank Smith: 00:55:39 Yeah, it's this self-righteousness that gets us in trouble. Matt, how does that happen?

Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:55:45 Yeah. I think again, it's our identity probably trying to validate us in a way. The greatest validation you could have, I think, is to know that you're known by God and know that you're being moved and influenced by him, and to know that you can connect and feel him. If I could feel the spirit of God's atonement and feel it consistently, Henry Eyring, Elder Eyring, taught us that that is a sign that the atonement is working on us. When we're feeling that spirit, that is the greatest connection I can have to validate us. In D&C 121, that's where we learn that our confidence starts to wax strong in the presence of God. So instead of me having to build my identity up, what I can use is my righteousness, my charity, my focusing and taking care of the church and exercising my priesthood covenants and exercising my marriage covenants and being there for the people around me.

00:56:48 That's what actually elevates my confidence, and then I get a scepter, an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth. My power is unchanging and the thing that I can lean on. The royals used to lean on their scepter to give them stability so I could lean on my spirit and the spirit of God and the doctrine of the gospel will distill upon my soul like the dews of heaven. It will just drip down into me, and I eventually become God through that process, line upon line. He's changing me, one interaction with him at a time. So if I could connect into God 10 times a day, 15 times a day, that's the key. Not all these actions are the key. The key is the spirit of connection that's created in that process. It's that conversion. It's through the spirit. I gained the traits and the gifts of God. It's through the spirit that I become more like him and I'm healed and I'm cleansed.

Hank Smith: 00:57:47 There's a quote by Charlotte Gillum. "I ran into a prejudice that quite cut off my view." When we look at other people and our prejudice kicks in and we can't see anything else.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:58:02 President Russell Nelson said, "When we choose to repent, we choose to change. When we choose to turn to God, we choose to change. We allow the Savior to transform us into the best version of ourselves. We choose to grow spiritually and receive joy, the joy of redemption in him. We choose to repent. We choose to become more like Jesus Christ," and then of course,

Ezekiel 36:26-27, "A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh and I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes." Power.

Hank Smith: 00:58:45 That's really good. Fantastic talk from Elder Uchtdorf, "You are my hands." The statue of Jesus, the hands were cut off and so they added a sign that says, "You are my hands," and what this publican... I know it's a fictional story... this publican should have seen that everyone is in need of mercy. We all hope that our imperfections can be forgiven. Elder Uchtdorf says, "Shouldn't we extend to others that which we so earnestly desire for ourselves?" Matt, this has been a fantastic day as I knew it would be when I invited you to come on the podcast. Just really good. What do you hope our listeners walk away with after having gone through all these stories?

Dr. Matt Townsend: 00:59:26 The main thing is that the complexity and the paradox of life is normal. It's essential. I think another thing that I really want to make sure is that there's a God there, that Christ loves you. He is there to teach us how to do this, and if we could do one thing, it's if we could just start to, in a more daily way, incorporate him not just in our three prayers of the day, but if we could carry him a little bit more with us, and if we could make sure when we're doing our prayers that we're feeling the connection, a real connection to a higher purpose and a higher God and a higher being. That's what I want, because to have all the promises we have... Stephen R. Covey said, "Being a member of the church sometimes is like fish discovering water last." We're so in the church that we don't necessarily fully see the blessings of the church.

01:00:23 He taught his students once, "It is possible to be given the gifts of God and eternity and life and not necessarily be receiving them." I don't think we need to think that eventually God will redeem us someday. I like to think that he'll redeem us all day through the day. He'll come back and pick us up through that next situation and through that next situation, and I think he actually longs to be there with us. One final thought that I just thought about and learned that really blew my mind is a lot of us sit on this earth. We seem to be alone and feel lonely a lot, and we don't seem to have the onement as much as we want with the Savior, but there was a moment where the Savior on the cross had to suffer the alonement and he had to suffer it in a really big way.

01:01:14 It was devastating to him because he was one who had always lived with it, lived with his father, and been with his father. The idea that that suffering hit him so hard tells me, but I can live in it daily without it bothering me as much. If we strive to do anything, what if we could just start to become even more used to it? So its absence does impact us, and one way to do that is probably to be looking more to the Savior and finding him in everything. Notice as we go through these stories, he's in every part of it and he is the only thing that will bring peace in all of the tragedy and trials and issues that we're going to face in our life.

Hank Smith: 01:01:58 Wow, Matt, thank you. What a great day. John, what a fun day we've had. We've laughed and cried and learned.

John Bytheway: 01:02:06 Yep. Filled up my margins again. Good deal.

Dr. Matt Townsend: 01:02:09 You guys are awesome. Thank you for this.

Hank Smith: 01:02:10 Thank you for being here, Matt. We want to thank Dr. Matt Townsend for being here today. We also want to thank our executive producer, the wonderful Shannon Sorensen. We want to thank our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen, and of course, we always remember in our hearts our founder, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll all join us next week. We got more New Testament on followHIM. Today's transcripts, show notes, and additional references are available on our website, [followhim.co](http://followhim.co). [Followhim.co](http://Followhim.co), and you can watch the podcast on YouTube with additional videos on Facebook and Instagram. All of this is absolutely free, so be sure to share with your family and friends. To reach those who are searching for help with their Come Follow Me study, please subscribe, rate, review, or comment on the podcast, which makes the podcast easier to find. Thank you. We want to thank our incredible production crew: David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilsen, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, and Ariel Cuadra.

## IS IT SINFUL TO BE RICH?



- Hank Smith: 00:04 Hello, my friends. Welcome to another followHIM Favorites. My name is Hank Smith. I'm here with the amazing John Bytheway. Hi, John Bytheway.
- John Bytheway: 00:12 Hi, Hank.
- Hank Smith: 00:13 I think you're amazing, John.
- John Bytheway: 00:15 Right back at you.
- Hank Smith: 00:16 We are going to cover one question from this week's lesson. John, the question that we have this week, is it sinful to be rich? Because Jesus says in Matthew 19 after having this exchange with a rich man who couldn't sell his possessions, he says, "Oh, verily I say unto you that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." The apostles are like, "Oh goodness, who can be saved?" John, what would you say to someone who thinks Jesus is saying it's sinful to be rich?
- John Bytheway: 00:51 It's a good question, and we can play doctrinal ping pong with this one a lot. The fact is it's not what's in your wallet, it's what's in your heart. I've known people and you've known people who we would call rich. I didn't think I was rich until I went to the Philippines on my mission, and then I came home and went, "Wow, we're rich." What the scriptures teach over and over again is not so much that you have riches, but if your heart is set on your riches instead of your heart set on God.
- 01:20 I love that Jesus didn't say it's impossible. He said, "It's hard. It's hard." And then when the apostles said, "Well, who can be saved," he said, "Well, with God it's possible," because God can do things to people's hearts, that they don't set their hearts on their riches. They set their hearts on God. Is that what you were thinking?
- Hank Smith: 01:35 Absolutely, John. I think one of the things that you hit on early in your comment was, who's rich? Because when I think of

other people, I'm like, oh yeah, they're going to have a hard time.

- John Bytheway: 01:45 They're rich.
- Hank Smith: 01:47 They're rich. They're really going to struggle. If we look across the history of the world and what most, if not all of our listeners have, you are definitely in the top percentage of what you have, possessions that you have. I think we all need to read this as if we are the rich.
- John Bytheway: 02:03 We're the rich. We have multiple changes of clothes. We have food in our refrigerator right now, change in our wallet. He who has eternal life is rich. You'll have the riches of eternity, the scriptures say. That's exactly where to start. What do you mean by rich exactly?
- Hank Smith: 02:18 Yep. Because once I realize I'm the rich man, then all of a sudden I'm worried. John, I've heard it said that there's a gate in Jerusalem called Eye of the Needle. Have you heard that?
- John Bytheway: 02:29 Yeah. It's kind of a fabled. I mean, the idea sounds kind of, oh, I see, a camel has to shed all of its possessions and kneel down in order to get through this gate. Somebody made that up. But the scholars that I know that know Jerusalem say, "No, no such thing existed. Jesus was just using some hyperbole."
- Hank Smith: 02:50 That used to be in scholarship. That was something in the early 1900s, late 1800s, that was thought to be true. Afterwards, it was found not to be true. I usually ask my students, if that's not true, what is Jesus saying? Can you get a camel through the eye of a needle? They're like no. I'm like, well, sure you could. It's going to hurt the camel. But if you had a pretty heavy strainer, you could get a camel through the eye of a needle.
- 03:14 I like this idea that you brought out, John, that he is saying on their own, you can't. You're not going to get into heaven. But if you'll turn your life over to God and your riches over to God for whatever he wants you to do with them, then yes. With God, those things that seemed impossible are possible.
- John Bytheway: 03:34 It's a good warning for us. Because like you said, when we start to count our blessings, it will surprise us what the Lord has done and we'll have to go, "Yeah, we've got a lot." We have to be careful that we're focused on the right things too.

Hank Smith:	03:48	Now, Paul said the love of money is the root of all evil. We've really got to check that, and maybe that's one of the purposes of tithing, is to make sure I can tell the Lord I love him more than money, and I get a chance to do that every month.
John Bytheway:	04:03	The law of consecration.
Hank Smith:	04:04	Do you still love me more than money? Yes, I do. Yes, I do. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. We're with Dr. Matt Townsend this week, and you're going to love what he has to say about these chapters. And then come back here next week, we'll have another followHIM Favorites.