



"Be Ye Reconciled to God"

Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

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

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

Podcast Episode Descriptions:

Part 1:

How is charity a result of conversion? Dr. Larry Nelson discusses the purpose of trials, the role of Jesus amidst difficulties, and the power of resiliency.

Part 2:

Dr. Larry Nelson continues to examine Paul's letter to the Corinthians and explores the themes of forgiveness, unity, and charity.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Larry Nelson
- 01:27 Introduction of Dr. Larry Nelson
- 03:10 Paul writes to address admonishment
- 04:52 God is raising children to be like Him
- 08:31 President Oaks and charity
- 12:06 The Savior’s role isn’t only judgment
- 15:40 Elder Lynn Robbins and to be list
- 19:01 The metaphors of a crucible and driving a car
- 23:05 L. Whitney Clayton teaches about trials
- 25:24 Elder Renlund “Infuriating Unfairness”
- 28:35 The nature of God
- 32:26 Cause of trials
- 34:46 All things for our benefit
- 37:06 Jesus succors us
- 41:03 The eternal nature of learning
- 44:18 Elder Kearon talks about challenges and the Savior’s role
- 48:57 Resiliency
- 51:21 Chain breakers
- 52:19 Learning is for our benefit
- 55:19 End of Part 1–Dr. Larry Nelson

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II–Dr. Larry Nelson
- 00:54 The analogy of a car race
- 02:15 2 Cor 5-11
- 04:23 Forgiveness
- 08:14 Elder Holland’s on reconciliation
- 09:07 Dr. Miller on forgiveness within marriage
- 11:15 Admonition and repentance
- 14:53 Hope in repentance
- 17:08 Jesus can make all trials for our benefit
- 19:49 Research about forgiveness and repentance
- 21:07 All truth is compatible
- 25:01 Becoming Christlike and creating Zion
- 28:36 Jesus, poverty, and responsibility of the Saints
- 34:21 Helping the poor
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- 40:22 Practical advice for charity
- 44:53 CS Lewis and temptation regarding neighbors
- 48:47 Dr. Nelson's takeaways
- 55:08 End of Part II—Dr. Larry Nelson

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Dr. Larry Nelson is a professor of human development in the School of Family Life at Brigham Young University. He earned a master’s degree in family sciences at BYU and a Ph.D. in human development from the University of Maryland. He teaches courses on human development, parenting, and marriage/family relationships. He studies factors that lead to flourishing or floundering in the transition to adulthood with a particular interest in parenting, social competence, social withdrawal, identity, and culture. Dr. Nelson served a mission in Zurich, Switzerland. He and his wife Kimberly have been married for 32 years. They have three children and two grandsons. He serves as a priest quorum specialist in his home ward in Pleasant Grove, Utah. In his free time, he loves to be outdoors.

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Hank Smith:	00:03	Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith, I'm your host. I'm here with the incredible John Bytheway. Welcome, John.
John Bytheway:	00:10	Hi, Hank.
Hank Smith:	00:11	John, we're going to have a great time today. This 2 Corinthians is an interesting letter. It seems that Paul starts the church in Corinth, then writes a letter to them, then apparently wrote another letter to them that hurt some feelings, and now he's going to write this new letter, the 2 Corinthians, to try to reconcile. They want to be reconciled to him. He wants to reconcile to them. He's going to go through some of the doctrines. They're missing some of the important principles, maybe they're not living. I'm looking forward to this. John, what are you looking forward to in 2 Corinthians?
John Bytheway:	00:42	Yeah, the same thing is that, boy, this is so new and it's in a new part of the world where you have Jews that are converted and Greeks and how do you do that when you can't just pick up the phone. And this is some of the challenges. I was reading in the New Testament manual that institute students have and it says, "In the 2 Epistle of Paul of the Corinthians, we see evidence of a growing rift among some of the Corinthians Saints and Paul. A small group of church members in Corinth opposed Paul and wanted him to have less influence among them." Like what? It just sounds pretty foreign to us, doesn't it?
Hank Smith:	01:19	Yeah. It's fascinating to me that the people of Corinth are kind of rejecting Paul, yet the entire branch wouldn't exist without him.
John Bytheway:	01:26	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	01:27	John, we're joined today by a brilliant mind out of BYU. Dr. Larry Nelson is with us. Dr. Nelson Larry, what do we have to look forward to in this Come, Follow Me lesson.

Dr. Larry Nelson:	01:37	Thanks for having me. First off, happy to be here. I'm really excited to look at some of the same things that we're facing today, seeing that the Lord through his servant Paul absolutely understands the day-to-day challenges that we face and how we can grapple with those.
Hank Smith:	01:56	Yeah, this is going to be fun. John, can you introduce our audience to Dr. Nelson?
John Bytheway:	02:01	Yes, this is fun to have Dr. Larry Nelson with us today because many of our folks that we've had have been teaching in religious education or institutes around the country.
Hank Smith:	02:12	Right.
John Bytheway:	02:12	Dr. Larry Nelson actually teaches in the School of Family Life. He's one of the very few outside of religious education that teaches a religion course in eternal families. So we're thrilled to have him. He was born and raised in Woods Cross. He served his mission in Zurich, Switzerland. I went there years ago and I thought, "I will never eat American chocolate again when I get home."
Dr. Larry Nelson:	02:36	Number one lesson learned, yes.
John Bytheway:	02:38	He got his bachelor's and master's in Family Sciences at BYU. Then he went to Maryland where he received a PhD in Human Development. He told us that his anniversary is coming up for 32 years, married to his wife Kimberly. He has three kids and two grandsons. He was one of the best 300 professors in the country according to Princeton Review. So, we're thrilled to have you and to have your perspective on these chapters in Corinthians today. Thank you and welcome.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	03:08	Thanks so much.
Hank Smith:	03:10	Larry, I'm going to read a little bit from the Come, Follow Me manual here and then let's see where you want to go. Here's what it says. "Sometimes being a church leader means having to say some difficult things." I'm sure there's plenty of people who are church leaders listening who are like-
Dr. Larry Nelson:	03:23	Who are nodding.
Hank Smith:	03:24	Yeah. Just as it is today. Apparently, a previous letter from Paul to the Corinthian saints included chastening and caused hurt feelings. In this letter that now becomes 2 Corinthians, he tries

to explain what motivated his harsh words and he said, then they quote 2 Corinthians 2 verse 4, "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote to you with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you should know the love, which I have more abundantly unto you." The manual goes on, "When you're on the receiving end of some correction from a leader, it definitely helps to know that it is inspired by Christ-like love."

03:59 I think the manual could have stopped there, but I like what they added. And even in the cases where it is not, so saying that sometimes leaders don't correct with Christ-like love. If we're willing to see others with that kind of love that Paul felt, it's easier to respond appropriately to offenses. And then this great quote from Elder Holland, "Be kind regarding human frailty. Your own as well as that of those who serve with you in a church led by volunteer, mortal men and women, except in the case of his only perfect begotten son, imperfect people are all God has ever had to work with." And I think he adds something on that, John, that they've left out of the manual. Doesn't he say "that must be...

John Bytheway: 04:37 "Incredibly frustrating to him, but he deals with it, and so should we," I think that's what he said.

Hank Smith: 04:45 I bet today, Larry, we have a chance to talk about dealing with some frustration. Where do you want to go with this lesson? How do you want to start and where do you want to take us?

Dr. Larry Nelson: 04:53 I'd like to start off exactly where the introduction of me did, which is what I'm not. I'm not a religious ed scholar. I'm not a scholar of Paul and the scriptures. So, this could feel very different than maybe previous episodes with other guests. Maybe lay the foundation for what I hope to bring and I hope it will be an interesting perspective for listeners. I'm a developmentalist. What is that? So, I teach and study the development of human beings from conception to death. I refer to my human development class as a womb to tomb course. I tell my students that I believe human development is the most important topic taught at BYU. I know some of my colleagues in other departments may disagree, but I believe that because of what we read in the book of Moses, Moses 1:39, that God's work and glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of all of His children. In other words, God's work and glory is the development.

Hank Smith: 06:05 Yeah, human development.

Dr. Larry Nelson:	06:07	<p>That is the plan of salvation. Our development from spiritual babies into divine adults, deity, like our heavenly parents. So, I feel blessed to be able to study professionally the part of that process that occurs here in mortality. But I feel blessed as a disciple scholar to have the scriptures and modern prophets and apostles to help me study more of the entire process of growing from spiritual infants to become like heavenly parents. And when we're looking at the plan, we don't refer to it as development. So maybe I'll ease from that language of development into what we're more familiar with, which is becoming. That process of becoming like our Heavenly Father. So that's the second thing I'd like to preface our examination of 2 Corinthians with if I may, and that is understanding becoming. Kittens grow up to be cats and puppies grow up to be dogs. Children of heavenly parents as the Family, a Proclamation to the World states, grow up to be like them. And understanding "that is the plan, that's the process" is so important.</p>
	07:29	<p>President Oaks has said it this way, "The final judgment is not just an examination of a sum total of good and evil acts, what we have done. It's an acknowledgement of the final effects of our acts and thoughts, what we have become." I just love that. He goes on to say, "You'll qualify for your inheritance by learning what I have learned and by living as I have lived." Elder D. Todd Christofferson has said, "Exercising agency in a setting that sometimes includes opposition and hardship is what makes life more than a simple multiple choice test. God is interested in what we are becoming as a result of our choices. He's not satisfied if our exercise of moral agency is simply a robotic effort at keeping some rules. Our Savior wants us to become something, not just do something." This is central to how we examine these chapters in 2 Corinthians.</p>
Hank Smith:	08:31	<p>John, just last week we talked with Dr. Dan Peterson about kind of the same idea about charity, how charity has to govern everything we do in the church. And I think in that talk you reference the Challenge to Become, Elder Oaks talk about charity.</p>
Dr. Larry Nelson:	08:45	<p>That's a classic talk. I'm glad you brought it up.</p>
Hank Smith:	08:48	<p>This is what he says. "We are challenged to move through a process of conversion toward that status and condition called eternal life." Just what you explained, Larry. "This is achieved not just by doing what is right, but by doing it for the right reason, for the pure love of Christ. The Apostle Paul illustrated this in his famous teaching about the importance of charity. The reason charity never fails and the reason charity is greater than</p>

even the most significant acts of goodness”, he cited, “is that charity, the pure love of Christ, is not an act but a condition. It's a state of being. Charity is attained through a succession of acts that result in conversion. Charity is something one becomes.”

- 09:27 So I think with what you've said, it seems that Paul is a little bit of a developmentalist. He wants people to become something, not just do the right things.
- Dr. Larry Nelson: 09:38 Yeah. And that's going to be a theme over and over. Maybe an analogy for us to think about. I am sure present company excluded. But the majority of the time that somebody learns how to sit behind the wheel of a car for the first time, they're not good drivers.
- Hank Smith: 09:56 Yes. I distinctly remember being terrified actually.
- Dr. Larry Nelson: 10:01 Even though you'd driven with good drivers, you'd been taught by good drivers, you'd been in a car with good drivers, but you only became a good driver by practicing. If you want to become a pianist, you got to practice the piano. If you want to become a basketball player, you need to practice basketball. Therefore, President Oaks is teaching us to become as God is, we need to do as he does and live as he lives. Not just doing something because we're supposed to. It's important that we do those things, but it's because that is how God lives. And therefore, by doing as he does, we become as he is.
- 10:48 God is honest, so he asks me to be honest. When I do honest things, I become honest. It's this beautiful process of becoming. And so, I hope introducing our examination of Paul's Epistle here through the lens of becoming, it will maybe be a unique look, provide something that understanding the historical context or the Latin or the Greek that is fascinating way to stay the scriptures, but not where I'm an expert at. And I hope we'll also model that there's no one right way to study the scriptures, but it can still be informative.
- Hank Smith: 11:33 Yeah. That's why we invite people like you.
- Dr. Larry Nelson: 11:37 The oddball like me.
- Hank Smith: 11:38 Yes. Because we want a different look, we want a different take, right John? We're open to learning how to study the scriptures a little bit differently today.

John Bytheway:	11:47	Absolutely. And that's one of the beautiful things about the scriptures. We're supposed to read them again and again and again and again because we'll have a new insight or a new approach the next time we come around. So, this is great.
Hank Smith:	12:00	Yeah. So please don't feel bad that you don't speak Greek. Neither do John or I.
John Bytheway:	12:03	Right.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	12:06	Wonderful. So maybe through that lens, to show that right off the bat that indeed Paul is helping us understand that, maybe we can look at 2 Corinthians 5 for a moment because some astute student of 2 Corinthians may look at 2 Corinthians 5 verse 10 and say, "This sounds a little different than how President Oaks just explained it." Could one of you read that for me please?
John Bytheway:	12:39	Okay. 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in His body according to that He hath done, whether it be good or bad."
Dr. Larry Nelson:	12:54	That sounds a lot more like acts being judged rather than what we have become. But this is another reminder to us that Paul didn't write an Epistle with numbers dividing it up into verses. We can't just take one verse and believe that that is stating the doctrine being taught. Instead, we need to look at it in context. And indeed, he goes on to basically say, Yeah, if it were based on your acts we're all in trouble, and knowing therefore the terror that that would put us in. And then starts to bring the Savior in to the role that He plays in this process of helping us become something rather than just being judged for our acts.
	13:43	As we get to verse 17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, He's a new creature. Old things are passed away. Behold all things are become new." Through our acts, through doing as God does, living as he lives, we become this new creature. If we go back to 2 Corinthians 3:3, we see it again and again. It says, "For as much as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but with the spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone but in fleshy tables of the heart." Verse 6, if one of you would read that for me.
Hank Smith:	14:33	Yeah, I'll read. This is 2 Corinthians 3:6, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit, for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life"

Dr. Larry Nelson:	14:46	Over and over again about what our flesh has become, what our hearts become all the way into 18. "But we all with open face beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, what we have become. Work and glory, our development, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the spirit of the Lord." So once again, it just isn't a sum total of good and evil acts, what we have done, but what we have become through those acts. That's just the foundation I think for understanding so many of the things that we can now dig into in 2 Corinthians.
John Bytheway:	15:31	I love that you've done this kind of equated development, that word with becoming. And that talk of President Oaks is just a favorite of mine because it makes so much sense. When we come from a background of, "Did I check all the boxes?", then we come up with questions like, "What lack I yet? I've checked all these boxes." But when it becomes a question of becoming, it reminds me of, do you remember Elder Lynn Robbins gave that talk about we all have to-do lists, but what's harder is a to be list? How do I check off "I am now a good husband"?
Hank Smith:	16:03	Right.
John Bytheway:	16:04	Or when do you check a child off is done? And that idea of becoming is that lifelong development. So, I love that you've made that development kind of as a synonym for becoming. Thank you.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	16:18	And just as we'd never look at a four-year-old and say, "Why aren't you doing adult things yet?", we understand this process and where that four-year-old is. I think we can be more kind, provide more grace to other people and to ourselves in this process of growing up. So right off the bat, I think one of the things that stands out of Come, Follow Me lesson for the week focuses on trials, tribulations, sufferings, afflictions. Paul outlines at the very beginning of his Epistle, some of the things that they've been through that he's been facing. In chapter 4 verses 6 through 10, we read a full list of challenges and attributes. I think it's important, let's look at some of these, chapter 4, verses 6-10.
John Bytheway:	17:16	Yeah, I would love to read these because these are some that I have marked. Okay, 2 Corinthians 4:6-10, "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earth and vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed. We are perplexed but not in despair. Persecuted but not forsaken.

Cast down but not destroyed. Always bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."

- Dr. Larry Nelson: 18:01 Manifest in our body, what we have become and how can we experience those hard things but then have those wonderful attitudes of how to approach it or develop the characteristics mentioned here. Then when we study development, or when I study and teach development, we talk about risk factors and protective factors. Risk factors are anything that might hinder development, hinder a child from reaching milestones, from reaching their potential. And protective factors, those things that facilitate growth and healthy development. So, I think we should look at how challenges, they can either become risk factors or can actually facilitate growth. I think that's what we're being taught here.
- 19:01 To help us think about this, let me introduce a concept or a metaphor that might be helpful, and that's one of a crucible. Crucibles are furnace-like vessels that can endure intense heat and chemical reactions. Crucibles facilitate a process that purges impurities and creates a qualitatively different final product. So, thinking about that language of purging impurities and creating a qualitatively different final product through the lens of becoming, especially as described in chapter 5 verse 17, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away. Behold all things are become new." This process of going from the old to a new, a new creature in Christ. So having a crucible mindset of challenges can help us see the things that we suffer, struggle with, become the process through which those things facilitate our growth are becoming like God.
- John Bytheway: 20:13 Is it in how we see them?
- Dr. Larry Nelson: 20:14 It's the process of going through them and one way is how we see them. Let's stick with the driving a car analogy. I have a goal, I want my child to become a good driver. But for that to happen, I know she's got to get in the car.
- Hank Smith: 20:33 Step one.
- Dr. Larry Nelson: 20:33 I can only teach her so much, she has to get in the car. But what if I went the next step further and really wanting to teach her, should I call some friends and say, "Hey, I want you to cut her off in traffic or I want you to tailgate her, or you know what? I think I'm going to go out and I'm going to slash her tire so when

she comes out of school, she'll find a flat tire"? John, Hank, why don't I do those things?

Hank Smith: 21:02

I would think she's going to run into enough problems as it is being a driver. I don't need to create more problems for her.

Dr. Larry Nelson: 21:09

Exactly. I don't need to do it. That is part of being in a car out on our roads. It's just natural. If I want my daughter to become a good basketball player, that's my goal, I see that long-term perspective of becoming a basketball player, do I contact her coach and ask her to berate and yell and put her down and then bench her? Do I sit on the sidelines as she's trying to make a game winning free throw and heckle her? Do I trip her so she sprains an ankle and has to sit out? Again, silly questions maybe, but I don't have to do those things because that's all part of playing basketball.

Hank Smith: 21:59

Yeah. In fact, your role is to cheer her on and probably not take away those difficulties, right?

Dr. Larry Nelson: 22:05

Exactly. And being there for her to come to me when she's going through those things because it's going to happen. So, this is critical that we think about this as we approach the role of God in our trials, because a commonly held perception is that God causes our pain and suffering. That He's sitting on high, distributing cancerous tumors, mental health challenges, diabetes, and infertility, that He's the one orchestrating your parents' divorce or abuse of your child by a relative or forcing somebody to drink and drive just so they'll hit a loved one and cause the trial that they need. But He doesn't have to do any of those things. I'll ask again why.

Hank Smith: 23:03

They're part of the classroom.

Dr. Larry Nelson: 23:05

They're part of mortality. He doesn't have to do it. We're taught in general conference by L. Whitney Clayton, "Life presses all kinds of burdens on each of us. Some light, but others relentless and heavy. People struggle every day under burdens that tax their souls. Many of us struggle under such burdens. They can be emotionally or physically ponderous. They can be worrisome, oppressive and exhausting and they can continue for years. In a general sense, our burdens come from three sources. Some burdens are the natural product of the conditions of the world in which we live. Illness, physical disability, hurricanes and earthquakes come from time to time through no fault of our own. We can prepare for these risks and sometimes we can predict them, but in the natural pattern of life, we will all confront some of these challenges."

	23:57	"Other burdens are imposed on us by the misconduct of others. Abuse and addictions can make home anything but a heaven on earth for innocent family members. Sin, incorrect traditions, repression and crime scatter burdened victims along the pathways of life. Even less serious misdeeds such as gossip and unkindness can cause others genuine suffering. Our own mistakes and shortcomings produce many of our problems and can place heavy burdens on our own shoulders."
	24:28	"The most onerous burden we impose upon ourselves is the burden of sin. No matter the burdens we face in life as a consequence of natural conditions, the misconduct of others or in our own mistakes and shortcomings, we are all children of a loving Heavenly Father who sent us to earth as part of his plan for our growth and progress. Our unique individual experiences can help us prepare to return to him. The adversity and afflictions that are ours, however difficult to bear, last from heaven's perspective for but a small moment. And then if we endure it well, God shall exalt us on high."
	25:09	So what was lacking in that list of the sources of our pains and our sorrows and our afflictions?
Hank Smith:	25:16	Yeah, there is no "God is up there creating this huge problem for me to face." Yeah.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	25:24	It's not. The instant classic of Elder Renlund's talk in 2021, Infuriating Unfairness, he too makes it clear. "Some unfairness cannot be explained. Inexplicable unfairness is infuriating. Unfairness comes from living with bodies that are imperfect, injured or diseased. Mortal life is inherently unfair. Some people are born in affluence, others are not. Some have loving parents, others do not. Some live many years, others few, and on and on and on. Some individuals make injurious mistakes even when they are trying to do good. Some choose not to alleviate unfairness when they could. Distressingly, some individuals use their God-given agency to hurt others when they never should. Different types of unfairness can merge creating a tsunami of overwhelming unfairness."
	26:19	Again, he doesn't point to God as the source of any of this infuriating unfairness. And I think this is really important that we understand that, that it's essential to understanding who God is. Is he the one slashing my tires? Is he the one heckling from the sidelines? He's not. He's there for us. "Come to me. I love you. Let me help you make this better."

	26:48	I was trying to discuss this concept with a loved one and he was just convinced that God causes our pain and suffering and he used the metaphor of a loving parent who has a child who wakes up in the morning with snarls and tangles in her hair and as a loving parent has to comb that out even though it causes pain. And I said, "That's a great analogy of what the Savior does with us as we're struggling, but the key is the parent in this metaphor didn't cause-"
Hank Smith:	27:30	Didn't go and tangle the hair, yeah,
Dr. Larry Nelson:	27:33	No. But helped succor the child's bedhead. Help them in that. Didn't cause the tangles. There's so many important reasons to understand that God's not doing this to us, to help us understand His nature and that why we can come to Him instead of, "Oh, why did you do this?" And even the concept of, "Yeah, okay, but he allowed it." But just like I as a father see the view of my child becoming a basketball player, I see that with the long view of my child, the need to become a good driver, He has the perspective of what we can grow up to become. But to do that, He's got to allow some of this, but He doesn't have to cause it.
Hank Smith:	28:29	And this seems to be one of those ways that if you understand this, you won't get as angry. What did Nephi say about Laman and Lemuel? John, you'll have this memorized. "And they did murmur because they knew not the dealings of that God which had created them."
John Bytheway:	28:45	Which had created them. And that's a good verse to bring up, Hank, because I think sometimes we can be quick to say they had a bad attitude or something. "Oh no. It was much more fundamental than that. They knew not the dealings of that God which had created them." And speaking of Nephi, what I've been thinking of as you were talking was, "Knowest thou the condescension of God," the angel asks Nephi in 1 Nephi 11, and Nephi's answer is just so good, "I know that he loveth his children. Nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things." And if we start with knowing God loves us and stop going up and down with, "Well, maybe he does, maybe he doesn't. Maybe he's given me this trial," if we start that starting point, "I know God loves his children," it makes the wrestling with the rest of it a little easier.
Hank Smith:	29:35	Yeah.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	29:35	Yeah.

John Bytheway:	29:36	Because nope, I'm not going to give that one away. He loves us.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	29:39	He loves us. And it's so important that we understand this and yet I'm sure there are listeners to this who are struggling with that concept for reasons that I understand and I'll address in just a moment, but I just, one more time, make sure it's just remembered. Elder Renlund, Elder Clayton, and now Elder Holland had a devotional address at BYU in January of 2022. Elder Holland teaches, "In his farewell address, King Benjamin taught that a fundamental purpose of mortal life, perhaps the fundamental purpose, is to become a saint through the Atonement of Christ the Lord, which will require us to become as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him even as a child does submit to his father."
	30:42	Some may instantly say, "There's that term inflict. See, God is doing it." Elder Holland knew that might be a first thought of some and he says, "I think the only commentary needed for this verse might be regarding the line suggesting God inflicts trials and burdens upon us." In English, the word inflict, which comes from the Latin..." I can't pronounce it, I told you I'm not a Latin scholar-
Hank Smith:	31:08	Inflicta.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	31:08	... has at least two meanings.
Hank Smith:	31:10	No, no.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	31:10	Thank you.
Hank Smith:	31:11	Yeah. Yeah.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	31:13	"Has at least two meanings. One is to strike or dash against. And another is to beat down. But those definitions are not applicable to God or his angels. No, the proper definition of the word as King Benjamin used it is to allow something that must be born or suffered. Now, allowing something is a different matter. God can and will do that if it is ultimately for our good. I'm going to say it again. God does not now nor will he ever do to you a destructive, malicious, unfair thing ever. It is not in what Peter called the divine nature to even be able to do so by definition. And in fact, God is perfectly and thoroughly always and forever good, and everything He does is for our good. I promise you that God does not lie awake nights trying to figure

		out ways to disappoint us or harm us or crush our dreams or our faith."
John Bytheway:	32:24	Great statement.
Hank Smith:	32:26	Yeah. I have a couple thoughts here, Larry. One, when you said a lot of our trials are created because of our own choices, that just made me chuckle a little bit because I have to admit that a majority, I think, of the difficulties I face are because of my own poor choices, my own things I do without thinking. It's almost as if I can hear the Lord saying, "Well, I could give you trials, but you do a great job making your own. You do a good job making your own."
	32:55	The other thought I had was I think this is why our doctrine of the premortal life is so important because we signed up for this, that is our doctrine, that we wanted this. And if we were born into mortality without that choice, if there was no premortal life and we just were born and created at the moment of our birth, we didn't sign up for this, but agency is in a paternal part. So, I can almost hear the Lord saying when we're angry, "Hey, we talked about this, that you were going to face these things." I think that's a supporting doctrine to what we're talking about.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	33:28	But to be kind to ourselves. Preexistence is where we were taught in theory. I've heard that language.
Hank Smith:	33:36	Driver's ed.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	33:38	A driver's ed. And just like little kids, "You sure you don't want to wear your coat?"
	33:43	"No, I'll be good."
	33:44	"You sure you....?" And then they're cold. I'm sure we were told, "Hey, to become like heavenly parents, you just need to do these things." And we're like, "How hard can that be, right? I just need to control what I eat, control my body, its appetites, its passions."
Hank Smith:	34:05	Yeah, suffer a little bit, I'm sure.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	34:07	And then we get here and we learn about Swiss chocolate and, "Oh okay," how good food is and different things. And being in this body, we have to go through it again and truly understand. I wish that we could remember how badly we wanted it as kids, "I want to grow up to be like you." And if we could remember

that, I think it'll help us when we are grappling with these things. And that's what I believe we're being taught here. To make sure where we're going, let's read once again 4:15,

Hank Smith: 34:46 2 Corinthians 4:15, "For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God." I might have to look up another version of that just to make sure I know what he said.

John Bytheway: 35:00 Redound.

Hank Smith: 35:01 Yeah. I just used that yesterday, didn't you, John?

John Bytheway: 35:04 Yeah, I knew what a rebound is, but what's a redound? I don't know.

Hank Smith: 35:08 Let me read that verse. I'm going to read it in the NIV just to give everybody another take on it. The NIV says, "All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God." A little simpler there.

Dr. Larry Nelson: 35:26 It is. We read that, "For all things are for your sakes." And I think... Or for your good, for your benefit. So it makes it feel like the trial was exactly what we needed to teach us to help us become, to help us develop an attribute. A Christian writer in a fictional account put it this way, "I just love the language and I couldn't craft it any better, but writing from the perspective of God, just because I work incredible good out of unspeakable tragedies doesn't mean I orchestrate the tragedies. Don't ever assume that my using something means I caused it or that I need it to accomplish my purposes. That will only lead you to false notions about me. Grace doesn't depend on suffering to exist, but where there is suffering, you will find grace in many facets and colors." And that's William P. Young who's writing that.

36:30 But bringing it back to the language of the scriptures would be turning to Alma chapter 7 verses 11-13, where we are taught just exactly what the Savior's experiencing. We often think about it's suffering for our sins. But 11-13 makes it very, very clear by what comes first what he wants us to know when we're in the midst of our challenges. Do one of you have Alma 7?

Hank Smith: 37:05 John has it memorized.

John Bytheway:	37:06	So Alma 7 starting in verse 11, "And He, the Son of God, shall go forth suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind. And this that the word might be fulfilled, which saith He will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of His people and He will take upon Him death that He may loose the bands of death which bind His people. And He will take upon Him their infirmities, that His bowels may be filled with mercy according to the flesh that He may know according to the flesh how to succor His people according to their infirmities."
	37:43	Now here's verse 13. "Now the spirit knoweth all things, nevertheless the Son of God suffereth according to the flesh that he may take upon him the sins of His people, that He might blot out their transgressions according to the power of His deliverance. And now behold, this is the testimony which is in me."
Dr. Larry Nelson:	38:01	Those verses are my favorite verses in all of Holy writ. Our Savior experienced in Gethsemane everything that we're going through, not just our sins though, which I'm so grateful for, but our pains, our infirmities, our sufferings. And so if there is somebody with us listening to this asking, "Does that really mean that he experienced what I'm going through?" Yeah, that's exactly how it feels to have your... Not generally. Your anxiety, depression, battle with infertility, broken heart caused by miscarriage, enduring an experience with an eating disorder, struggles with pornography, experience of bullying and disability and on and on, that very personal nature so that He can be there with us. And here's the key, if we will allow it, because He knows what we're going through, He knows how to get us through it. The fact that he experienced all that so that He knows me well enough, I need to remember that I need to do as He did, which is after He experienced it, He didn't stay in the garden, he got up and left the garden.
	39:33	And so, while I am going through these same things, I can't just... Here's the attitude or the perspective that you mentioned previously, Hank, is I can't just sit there and focus on it. I need to get up and leave the garden. I need to keep moving forward, but knowing He can help turn that experience into something that benefits me, that changes me.
	40:04	We could listen to a thousand general conference talks on patience and at a cognitive level understand patience, but only when we're struggling with something come to truly become patient. I can hear so many talks and elder's quorum lessons on forgiveness, but until somebody who I care about hurts me deeply do I all the sudden understand then in order to become

as Christ is, I need to do as He does and live as he lives, and by so doing become forgiving as He is forgiving. These are the things that if we will allow him to succor us through, can turn our challenges into things that are for our sake as Paul's teaching.

- Hank Smith: 41:03 Larry, that seems to be what Paul is saying here in 2 Corinthians 4 if we continue down the verses we read, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, we're looking for the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." Doesn't that seem to fit exactly what you're saying here? Paul is saying, these trials, these difficulties, this suffering is creating in me or creating a new creature," as he says then in the next chapter.
- Dr. Larry Nelson: 41:40 And the thing is he's saying, "We may find ourselves focused on the thing that we can see, the pain, the struggle, the challenge, the harm done to us. That's what we can see. And too often that's where our focus ends up instead of what we can become because of it." Coming back to development, how often do we as parents, as our children growing up, do we keep a growth chart? Do you have a place in your home, in your child's room where the date and the mark and you watched them grow? But you didn't do that on a daily basis because day to day-
- John Bytheway: 42:21 You wouldn't see it.
- Dr. Larry Nelson: 42:23 You wouldn't see the growth. I can't see that. I wish that we had a spiritual growth chart to where we could take marks and at the end of that trial-
- Hank Smith: 42:37 Say, "Wow, look how much you grew up." Yeah.
- Dr. Larry Nelson: 42:40 "Look at the growth. Look at what you've become." Those things that we can't see in the moment just as we can't see the physical growth moment to moment, but can we hang on to what the Savior can help us become through our trials? I wish we could see those things. But that's the perspective that the Atonement of Jesus Christ provides us. Not to say it's easy when we're going through it, not to say the pain isn't real or that we should just dismiss it and be happy. It's not that easy, it's real, but we can sit with the pain. We can't stay there. The Savior got up and left the garden and we need to move forward with Him at our side because He can succor us and help us become like Him through these very things that we're experiencing.

Hank Smith:	43:36	<p>Larry, there's something about the Savior that you mentioned there in Alma 7, that the Savior was willing to suffer as well. "I'm not going to send you down to this mortal classroom and suffer so much. I'm going to come with you." Elder Holland said this, "Salvation never was easy. We're the church of Jesus Christ. This is the truth. He is our great eternal head. So therefore, how could we believe it would be easiest for us when it was never ever easy for Him?" So, kind of the expectation, if you want to become more like Christ, He suffered. He suffered and you're going to join in that suffering in some way.</p>
Dr. Larry Nelson:	44:18	<p>Part of that is going through the challenges of mortality. Elder Patrick Kearon said it so well in the challenges we have in a talk principally focused on abuse but can be applied to all of our challenges and the role the Savior plays in our lives. He concludes his talk by saying, "Dear friends who have been so terribly wounded, and for that matter, anyone who has borne the injustices of life, you can have a new beginning and a fresh start. In Gethsemane and on Calvary, Jesus took upon himself all of the anguish and suffering ever experienced by you and me, and He has overcome it all. With arms outstretched, the Savior offers the gift of healing to you. With courage, patience, and faithful focus on Him, before too long you can come to fully accept this gift. You can let go of your pain and leave it at His feet."</p>
	45:11	<p>"Your gentle Savior declared, 'The thief cometh not but for to steal and to kill and to destroy. I am come that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly.' You are a survivor. You can heal and you can trust that with the power and grace of Jesus Christ, you will overcome and conquer."</p>
	45:33	<p>Jesus specializes in the seemingly impossible. He came here to make the impossible possible, the irredeemable redeemable, to heal the unhealable, to write the unwritable, to promise the unpromisable. And he's really good at it. In fact, he's perfect at it." He can turn everything out unimaginably painful and hard into something for our sake and our benefit, meaning for our becoming like Him.</p>
John Bytheway:	46:12	<p>I love that you used the word succor a couple of times, and that's what Alma uses in those verses. He says, "According to the flesh" twice, He's reminding us He's going to be here. As Elder Holland reminded us, "It's the wounded Christ who comes to us letting us know that even the pure and the perfect might suffer wounds in the house of their friends," he said. Wow, what a statement.</p>

- 46:33 But I looked up, and you see succor, S-U-C-C-O-R, when I was a kid and I heard succor, I thought, "That's a lollipop. That's what mom gets at the drive-thru at the bank." But in Webster's 1828 dictionary, which is all online, you can look up succor and it makes Alma 7:11 and 12 even more beautiful when it says that succor means literally to run to, to come to aid in time of need. And when you read that, "That He may know how to succor His people, that He may know how to run to His people in their time of need because He's been here," it makes that so powerful.
- 47:11 One other thing. I just found myself writing next to verse 15, "All things are for your sakes," I was like, "We just talked about this somewhere." But it was Romans 8:28, a couple of weeks ago, that says, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." So, as you said, some problems are caused by a natural product of being in the world, some are imposed by the misconduct of others, but God can use that for our good as you so beautifully said.
- Hank Smith: 47:45 Larry, I like what you're saying here, and I think Paul is kind of showing us as an example of he's got this perspective which makes him able to talk this way about his own suffering. Back in chapter 4, "We are troubled on every side, yet we're not distressed. We are perplexed, but not in despair." I read that in the New Living Translation. He says, "We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed but not driven to despair. We're hunted down but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies."
- 48:31 So it seems that Paul understands this perspective and is able to at least see his trials in a way that will make them bearable and even he sees them in a way of even opportunity. You mentioned that trials can be crucibles. In your research, in your experience in this field, what are the keys that help human beings use trials as crucibles for good to create growth, like you said?
- Dr. Larry Nelson: 48:57 So we talk about resiliency a lot in this study of flourishing individuals who flourish, who overcome so much. In language, that may sound more familiar to many, it involves acting rather than being acted upon, looking for growth. Those children who are resilient, they don't do it on their own. They look for and accept the help of mentors.

	49:29	So I study the transition to adulthood as one of my areas of specialty, and we know those who have come from difficult backgrounds and who change the course of their lineage through their choices, we know that they tend to do things like they set their mind to it. They are intentional about wanting to change. They start to distance themselves from those who may try to prevent change. And that's interesting. We could spend some time there. Come, Follow Me talks about who we surround ourselves with. Individuals distance themselves from those who may try to prevent change. They seek an education, so light and truth, ways that will help them.
	50:20	So for example, if they come from homes with abuse and poor parenting, they seek out parenting skills. So, there's pursuit of education, of light and truth. They surround themselves with support groups. We can look at the power of that. Of course, wards and congregations would fit the description here, surrounding yourself with those who can build you up and strengthen you and help, reading good books on the topic. So, their intentional acts to grow and to change and become who it is they want to become so they can change the lineage of their families as well as their own development for good.
Hank Smith:	51:11	You're the change agent, right?
Dr. Larry Nelson:	51:14	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	51:14	I don't want to say evil traditions, but the weaknesses of your forebearers that have been passed down, they stop with you.
John Bytheway:	51:21	I've heard it called a chain breaker. Dr. Carlfred Broderick in one of his books talks about giving a woman a blessing who could not understand why as a child she had to go through this. And in that blessing, Dr. Broderick was inspired to tell her that she was sent to break that chain for her future posterity. So instead of feeling like God doesn't love me, it completely changed that God loved her so much and trusted her to go and change that in that family, this kind of family... What did you call it, Hank? These kind of bad habits or horrible sins that had been kind of been generational and she was sent there to be a chain breaker, is another way I've heard it, to stop that from continuing. Just an amazing idea.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	52:19	I tell my students on the last day of class every semester that they've now put in a semester's worth of work through their efforts to be in class, to read, to learn the material. They've done all that. And now what will they do with it? I tell them very clearly that I truly hope that something we covered in class

benefits them, benefits their development, benefits their lives. And that I hope in the process of going through the semester with them, they felt my love for them and what I hope they can become. But I tell them very honestly that while I love them, I actually teach the class for their children, hoping that now everything they've done, they will implement it, they will become the types of parents and teachers and leaders and members of their communities who will benefit the next generation.

53:23 And if every single one of us were to improve upon, we don't even have to go to the real weaknesses that are great, if every single one of us could remove one of the impurities in our family's line, each one of us, every generation will improve until I think we'll have one ready to meet the Savior at His second coming.

Hank Smith: 53:48 That's awesome. What a great idea. Larry, this discussion has been fantastic. I think we could probably talk about trials and difficulties and pains for the rest of eternity and trying to grasp why, but I hope people are feeling some of the healing that comes from just what you've taught us from understanding and then maybe some energy to do the things you said. Go out and take on these trials and difficulties. Act instead of being acted upon.

John Bytheway: 54:18 Please join us for part two of this podcast.



John Bytheway:	00:01	Welcome to Part 2 with Dr. Larry Nelson, 2 Corinthians chapters 1-7.
Hank Smith:	00:07	What do you want to do next here with Paul's Letter to the Corinthians?
Dr. Larry Nelson:	00:12	Since we've really talked about the sources of our afflictions, of our trials, of our pains, of our sufferings as being the conditions of mortality, our own bad choices and the bad choices of others that affect us, I think we ought to look at some of the verses that wherein Paul teaches us, Okay, part of acting rather than being acted upon and how you can be made free from the effects of these choices, your own or others, and that's maybe talk a little bit about the verses that deal with forgiveness and repentance.
	00:54	And I'd like to maybe introduce these by having us think about the analogy of being in a car race. Think of NASCAR or some other car race and you're in your car revving your engine and they wave the flag to go. How well is the race going to go if you're constantly looking in your rearview mirror? Trying to race forward but looking in your rearview mirror. Well, when we're thinking about development, this process of becoming, progressing, moving towards the divine destiny that each of us has to become like heavenly parents, we can't do that if our view is always backwards.
	01:42	If some of our challenges come from the bad choices of others that impact us, we have the beauty of forgiveness, which is simply put, we stop looking in our rearview mirror of what was done to us and we start looking forward. If some of our challenges come from our own bad choices, then simply put, repentance is this process where we stop looking in our rearview mirror and we start moving forward. So maybe in turn we could discuss these two important processes in becoming like God if we go to 2 Corinthians 2 starting in verse 5 and read 5-11.

John Bytheway:	02:29	"Sufficient to such a man is this punishment which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise, ye ought rather to forgive him and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with over much sorrow. Wherefore, I beseech you that you would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write that I might know the proof of you whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also. For if I forgive any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes, forgave I it in the person of Christ, lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."
Hank Smith:	03:10	John, I think it'd be good to read that passage again, but I'm going to read it out of the NIV if that's okay. Start in 2 Corinthians 2 verse 5. "If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent, not to put it too severely. The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient." So, I think he's saying everyone was upset with him. And man, whoever this person was that caused so much pain, the punishment inflicted on him by the group was sufficient. He said, "Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you therefore to reaffirm your love for him. Another reason I wrote to you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven, if there was anything to forgive, I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake in order that Satan might not outwit us for we are not unaware of his schemes."
	04:14	Again, the NIV can just help us a little bit more than the KJV sometimes in just understanding what Paul's saying so we can get the principles out of it. We got to know what he's saying.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	04:23	And especially if we do so through the lens we've talked about of becoming in particular the notion that in order to become as He is, we need to do as He does and live as He lives. And if I want to become like our heavenly Father, like Jesus Christ, I need to do as they do and live as they live, and daily they forgive. I have to engage in this same process that they engage in daily with me. I have to forgive.
	04:55	So that's one of the things I think this lens of becoming helps us understand what forgiving can do for us. It changes us from a "forgiveness is something I'm supposed to do" is that "By doing it, I become forgiving as God is forgiving." It's that becoming. And in the process of forgiving, it frees us. This isn't about the other person. I think these verses, especially in the translation

that you read, Hank, helps us see it's really not about Him, it's about you. It's about each of us.

05:34 I love this quote, I found it on the Campus Well-Being website years ago, but it says, "When we withhold forgiveness, we withhold the possibility of healing and hope for our own future. We're looking in the rearview mirror if we withhold forgiveness. We allow the bonds of resentment to imprison us underneath our offender's control and power. Forgiveness is not excusing harmful behavior nor dissolving another person's responsibility for wrongdoing. It is not minimizing the pain caused or quieting an injustice. It is simply a decision and a process of letting go, letting go of resentment and thoughts of revenge. Forgiveness removes us from the grip of others, for something as beautiful and unique as a human being should not be formed by error or wrongdoing. It is freedom from our prison and liberation into our Eden."

06:30 I remember President Hinckley giving the analogy of a monkey trap, good old-fashioned monkey trap where you take a box or something else and put a hole in the box with fruit inside the box. And the hole was just enough to get the monkey... The monkey could put its hand through the hole. But once they grabbed hold of the apple or banana, the hole's now not big enough to get out.

Hank Smith: 07:00 So all they have to do is let go.

Dr. Larry Nelson: 07:01 That's all they've got to do to be free, but instead they won't let go. And so the hunters can come, and that's their life. If we were watching the monkey in this, I don't think there's one of us that wouldn't be yelling, "Drop the banana."

Hank Smith: 07:16 Right. Just let go.

Dr. Larry Nelson: 07:17 "Let go of the apple. Pull your hand free and live." And I can just see the same from the other side of the veil being proclaimed. Drop whatever the banana is in your life. Drop it and let it go. Be free. It's not about the person who did this to you, it's about making it so they no longer have control because you're no longer looking in the rearview mirror, held captive to what was done to you and once again, turning around and developing, becoming and doing that in the same way that Christ lives, which is forgiving. As we forgive, we are doing as He does, living as He lives and that's how we become like Him.

	08:09	So I think forgiving is something so powerful that we've been taught here. And in this week's Come, Follow Me, one of the talks that we're directed to is Elder Holland in the Ministry of Reconciliation and just one paragraph captures exactly what you said, John, "In such an invitation to be His disciple and try to do as He did, Jesus is asking us to be instruments of His grace, to be ambassadors for Christ in the ministry of reconciliation. As Paul described it to the Corinthians, the healer of every wound, He who rights every wrong, asks us to labor with Him in the daunting task of peacemaking in a world that won't find it any other way." Joining with him as we do as He does to change the world by being ambassadors for Christ.
	09:07	Dr. Rick Miller of the School of Family Life gave a devotional on campus on forgiving with a specific view of forgiving within marriages and gave several just overwhelmingly sad examples of a spouse who could not let go of the metaphorical banana or apple in their marriage and it ended it. So just as forgiveness then is one of the ways that we act rather than being acted upon by one of those sources of our pain, for forgiveness, it was when the bad choices of others that affect us. Repentance is the way we become free of the pain caused by our own bad choices. We have access to Paul's reiterating this or teaching this in chapter 7 verses 8-11.
John Bytheway:	10:01	2 Corinthians chapter 7 verses 8-11, "For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent, for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice not that you were made sorry, but that you sorrowed to repentance. For you were made sorry after a godly manner that you might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow, worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of. But the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing that you sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you? Yea, what clearing of yourselves. Yea, what indignation. Yea, what fear. Yea, what vehement desire. Yea, what zeal. Yea, what revenge. In all things, you have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter."
	10:58	Yeah, I think I know what he's saying there, but now I turn to Hank.
Hank Smith:	11:03	Yeah, I think this could be good. This would be a good practice. I think we're learning to study the scriptures and sometimes turning to other translations to help us understand. So, this is the New Living Translation. I'll use a different one this time.

- 11:15 John, you started in verse 8. Paul says in the New Living Translation, "I am not sorry that I sent you that severe letter, though I was sorry at first for I know it was painful to you for a little while. Now I'm glad that I sent it, not because it hurt you, but because the pain caused you to repent and change your ways. It was the kind of sorrow God wants his people to have so you were not harmed by us in any way. For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow, but worldly sorrow which lacks repentance results in spiritual death. Just see what this godly sorrow produced in you. Such earnestness, such concern to clear yourself, such indignation, such alarm, such longing to see me, such zeal and such a readiness to punish wrong. You show that you have done everything necessary to make things right."
- 12:13 He felt bad that the letter was going to sting, but in the end he says, "You know what? It was a good thing because you really showed that you want to repent in a big way. You're going to do everything you can to repent."
- Dr. Larry Nelson: 12:24 For me, that verse 11 is, "Look at what repentance cleared from you. Clear took away all the indignation that you had, this anger, this fear, this wanting of revenge, and it unburdened you of all those negative things." And that's powerful. We've been taught so often by President Nelson that repentance isn't a punishment or something bad, but simply put, it's about getting back on the path. So, using the analogy I've been using of looking forward versus your rearview mirror, if we hope to become like Him, we have to be doing as He does and living as He lives. And sin is when we are no longer doing that. It's very simple definition. When we're no longer doing as God does and living as He lives, we're now sinning. And repentance is the act of getting back on the path of becoming.
- 13:26 It's amazing to me how many languages I've learned over the years that the direct translation of repentance in that language to English is turnaround. Having served a German-speaking mission, I know that it... "Turn around. Quit looking backwards at the mistakes. Quit living or walking on a different path, walking backwards from God. Turn around back on the path of becoming that'll help you reach your divine potential." Again, just like forgiveness, it's easier explained and said and harder done, but it doesn't need to be. Just turn around. Turn around. Let it go. Let all the zeal, the fear, the indignation, the desire for revenge, the guilt, the shame, turn around. Start living as He lives, doing as He does once again and you'll become like Him.

Hank Smith:	14:28	So this time it's kind of like the monkey trap that you talked about, "But I'm not holding onto my grievances like I am when you said let go and forgive. It's just I'm hanging onto my sins. I don't want to let them go. For some reason or another, I don't want to let them go." And you're saying just let them go. Let them go. Give them up.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	14:47	Turn around. Turn around. Start becoming. Start moving forward again.
John Bytheway:	14:53	I think it was Elder Jeffrey R. Holland who said, "Repent is perhaps the most hopeful and encouraging word in the Christian vocabulary." And another real gem in the Bible dictionary says, and sometimes I've used this in class, I've put repent in big red letters with an exclamation point, "What word came to your mind?" And then we look up the Bible dictionary which says, "A fresh view about God, about oneself, and about the world." That's in the definition of repentance. It's a whole new way of looking at things. My students, sometimes they hear sin, punishment, coercion, that I'm angry, but the Bible dictionary says it's a whole new way of looking at the world, which is beautiful.
Hank Smith:	15:40	Yeah, we had a guest say, "Look at those four principles of the gospel, faith, repentance, baptism, the gift of Holy Ghost." Do you remember this? They said, "We celebrate those other three." When someone has a testimony and pronounces their testimony that they have faith, we're cheering them on. When someone gets baptized, we all show up. We want to see it. When someone gets the gift of the Holy Ghost, we're right there. We're so excited. We shake their hand. But then someone repents we're like, "Ooh, what'd you do? Oh, that's such a sad thing. "And it was just kind of an interesting thought to me that I thought, "Oh, maybe we should be a little bit more excited about this opportunity than scared of it or ashamed of it."
John Bytheway:	16:17	Was that the episode where we heard the phrase repent relentlessly? Is that the one? Because I've never forgotten that phrase, that not a one-time thing, it's a daily thing and keep making course corrections on the covenant path if we need to.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	16:33	And like you said, John, we made sure it was clear as we were talking about forgiveness, we're not alone in this. We're walking on our own down towards the bishop's office or whatever we may view repentance as, because our Savior suffered in Gethsemane, we've made it clear he did that for our infirmities, our pains, our sorrows. But we can't forget verse 13 in Alma 7,

which, and for our sins so that he can walk that path with us too. He's there.

17:08 So all these things that we've learned from these chapters and from modern day prophets and apostles, that our pains, our sorrows and our afflictions are from our own bad choices, the bad choices of others and the condition of mortality and all of those can be for our good because of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who's been through it all so He can help us grow from these experiences so He can help us let go of the injustices done to us and move forward and so He can help us as we turn around our lives. He's there. We're never alone in any of these things that bring us sorrow and tribulation.

John Bytheway: 17:52 And like Elder Kearon said, "And he's really good at it." I love that part.

Dr. Larry Nelson: 17:58 In fact, he's perfect at it.

Hank Smith: 18:02 I think we brought this up many times before, John, but I'll bring it up again. Our friend Brad Wilcox, his BYU devotional, his grace is sufficient. He says, "Christ's arrangement with us is similar to a mom providing music lessons for her child. Mom pays the piano teacher. How many know what I'm talking about? Because mom pays the debt in full, she can turn to her child and ask for something. What is it? Practice. Does the child's practice pay the piano teacher? No. Does the child's practice repay mom for paying the piano teacher? No. Practicing is how the child shows appreciation for Mom's incredible gift. It is how he takes advantage of the amazing opportunity Mom is giving him to live his life at a higher level. Mom's joy is not found in getting repaid, but in seeing her gift used, seeing her child improve, and so she continues to call for practice, practice, practice."

18:55 Then he quotes Elder Hafen. And Elder Hafen here sounds a lot like Dr. Nelson. Sounds a lot like you Larry. He says, "The great mediator asks for our repentance not because we must repay Him in exchange for His paying our debt to justice, but because repentance initiates a developmental process that with the Savior's help leads us along the path to a saintly character." I thought you might like that.

Dr. Larry Nelson: 19:22 I do. One eternal round in all this is thank you Brad and Elder Hafen because there's a reason that I chose as an analogy for this. If you want to become a pianist, you practice the piano. The wonderful teachings of both those men have helped me see things-

Hank Smith:	19:43	Shape that.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	19:44	... through the lens of becoming in development. So yeah, intentional nods to them.
Hank Smith:	19:49	Larry, since we have your expertise here, let's ask a couple more questions about this. What have you seen in the research for both forgiveness and repentance?
Dr. Larry Nelson:	19:59	So there's been a movement now for a while to understand what we call it positive psychology. So long scholars would look at maladaptive development. We call it psychopathologies, challenges to healthy development. But there's been a real push to look at what are the factors that can lead to wellbeing, healthy relationships.
Hank Smith:	20:24	It sounds like instead of what's wrong, focusing on what's wrong, but also focusing on what's right.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	20:30	Yes, because I state this frequently, any setting I'm in that this would benefit and that's the absence of negative doesn't mean the presence of positive. And so, sure, we want to ameliorate the negative in our lives, the risk factors in development, but at the same time we need to be implementing or facilitating or fostering positive healthy protective factors, things that facilitate healthy development. And that movement has helped us see.
	21:07	So here's in a world of science, and I love when this happens. I quote all the time President Nelson, who at the dedication of the Life Sciences building on Campus said, "All truth is compatible. Whether from a scientific laboratory or by revelation, it is the same. It only appears to be incompatible if there's a misunderstanding of one or the other or both." And so for me, truth is truth. And indeed, we see it in the work that has been done examining positive psychology, the factors that are present that lead to all of the outcomes we want. Again, becoming healthy adults, emotionally healthy, physically healthy, being able to maintain healthy relationships. Those are some of the very things that have been found. Gratitude, forgiveness. Repentance may not be the word, but we see things such as accepting responsibility for the consequences of your actions. These are all volunteer activities, service to others helping behaviors. So yeah, we see it over and over again that healthy development isn't just the absence of negative things, but the presence of positive, healthy things that lead to that healthy developmental outcomes, becoming.

John Bytheway:	22:35	I like that a lot. And when I try to teach the parable of the sower or the four kinds of soils, I always talk about clearing the weeds. But if you just clear the weeds, that's only part of it. You've got to put good things in there. One of the things I learned from my own garden, if you want good things in your garden or in your life, you have to put them there. Just clearing the weeds isn't enough, but you want the good stuff. Intentionally, you got to put it there. I wish it were the other way where tomatoes, cucumbers would just float in out of the sky like dandelions, but they don't. You have to put them there if you want them. And then you got to take care of them and nourish them and everything if you want to enjoy them one day. So I like that, intentional idea.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	23:22	Absolutely.
Hank Smith:	23:23	Isn't it Paul himself who in the Article of Faith 13 that Joseph Smith quotes?
John Bytheway:	23:28	Mm-hmm. Philippians.
Hank Smith:	23:29	"If there be anything virtuous-
John Bytheway:	23:31	Lovely...
Hank Smith:	23:32	... lovely, of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things." We just don't want them. We're seeking after these good things.
John Bytheway:	23:41	That's what the Article of Faith says. But Paul actually says, "Think on these things." And I like both of those perspectives. To quote King Benjamin or to quote Mormon to his son Moroni, "Let this rest in your mind. Let not the things which I've written grieve thee, to weigh thee down, but let Christ and his sufferings and showing his body to our fathers, let that rest in your mind." And I think that's like Paul, "Think on these things. What are you focusing on?"
Dr. Larry Nelson:	24:09	Change your thoughts and watch it change your behaviors. Change your behaviors, watch it change your thoughts. Is this beautiful connection between our thoughts and actions.
John Bytheway:	24:18	I like them both. I like, "Seek after these things" which is active, which is action, which is intentional. I also like, "Think on these things" because if you're not thinking on those things, what are you thinking about? Social media will give us plenty and the news media to think about, but if we let that rest in our minds,

what's the fruit of that? It's not good. What's President Nelson's recent comment that the joy we experience is not so much the circumstances of our lives, but the focus of our lives is focusing on Christ.

Hank Smith:	24:52	Larry, so far you've taught us about trials, repentance, and forgiveness. I think these are pretty useful principles.
John Bytheway:	25:00	Very practical.
Hank Smith:	25:01	The feeling I can use these things. What else are you seeing in 2 Corinthians that could bless our lives?
Dr. Larry Nelson:	25:09	When I read 2 Corinthians through this lens of becoming, and the way that that happens is I do as God does and I live as he lives, I do as Christ does, I live as Christ lives, then I have to peek a little bit into next week's Come, Follow Me. I just have to look a little bit into Paul's teaching them about the importance of caring for those who are poor and in need. Because once again, that is the life of the Savior, caring for each of us because we are all poor and we are all in need.
	25:53	Maybe just a little bit, if I could, have us think about caring for those who are poor and those who are in need through the lens of why we need it in our development, in our becoming process. Because caring for those who are poor is of temporal importance to them, but it's of spiritual importance for us. Because sadly, once again, often our discussions come back to a checklist sounding approach of, "I've given a dollar to a beggar. Woo-hoo. Let me and God check that off the list of doing a good act." Whereas we need to see that it's our continual efforts to rid poverty from amongst us, that is how we will become like the Savior. Indeed, we read that. That's Zion. Zion is a place where there will be no poor amongst us and where the pure in heart will live. So, I think it's in how we care for those who are poor and in need that prepares the hearts of those who will live there.
Hank Smith:	27:09	John, this is very reminiscent of our Doctrine and Covenants here where I remember something being flipped in my mind, which was, I came into that you're thinking I can't wait until the Savior comes because then we'll have Zion. And what we were really taught that year was have Zion, build Zion-
John Bytheway:	27:33	So that?

Hank Smith:	27:34	... and then the Savior will come. And so what Larry's telling us here is we don't wait for Jesus to come to get rid of poverty. That's our role.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	27:41	Absolutely. Well, in fact we need to stop. Each of us, anybody who may be listening to this, and just for a moment, in just these few moments of starting to talk about caring for the poor and those in need, have any of us started to have thoughts like, "Yeah, well, but they... Well if only they had..." Or, "Yeah, but I've worked so..." And fill in. Hey, we got to go back. We got to go back. Does Christ do that? I was thinking about this and I searched, but I'd love some help. Is there any place in the scriptures that you can think of where the Savior ever chastised the poor for being in the condition that they were in?
Hank Smith:	28:33	I can't think of anything, yeah.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	28:36	In the Book of Mormon, he cautioned those who are learned and he gave a caution, if I remember correctly, to those who may be poor, but not once can I ever think of him chastising them. And yet how often do we start to judge? "Well, they're lazy" or, "If they had only worked hard" or, "This is what they would do with the money." There are no caveats. There's nothing. If we just start to go through, I can... So many scriptures, whether it's in the Old Testament, New Testament, "Whoso mock the poor, reproacheth His maker." In Matthew, "The young man saith unto him, 'All these things have I kept from my youth up, what lack I yet? Go and sell. But woe unto the rich who are rich as to the things of the world.'" That's in the Book of Mormon. Alma 4, "Yea, He saw great inequality among the people, some lifting themselves up with their pride, despising others, turning their backs upon the needy and the naked and those who were hungry." It just goes on and on.
	29:45	Doctrine and Covenants. "Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made and impart not his portion according to the law of my gospel unto the poor and the needy, he shall with the wicked lift up his eyes in hell being in torment." They aren't even subtle teachings. It's, "Care for those who are poor and in need because that's how you become like me. They're my children. And if you want to become like me, you're going to do as I do and live as I live. And I meet out the things that are needed."
	30:22	The wonderful discourse from King Benjamin over and over and over talking about the beggar, he's reminding us we were the beggars. We are the beggars. We're coming to Christ saying, "I can't do it without your atoning blood. I have nothing. Please

give me." And he freely gives. He doesn't say, "Well Larry, you brought it on yourself" even though I did. He doesn't withhold because of that. He doesn't say, "Well, if I give you, you're just going to go and squander it. You're just going to go and sin again, so why should I?" He gives. He doesn't say, "Do you know what I did to earn this and you want me to give it to you?" And he doesn't do that. Over and over, He gives to us in a way that is free and loving, and He says, "So if you want to become like me, you've got to do the same." But then after being given so freely by Him when we don't deserve it, when it comes to giving of what we have, we now start putting all these markers.

31:32 And again, in doing as He does to become as He is, we don't have the grace that He has to give. So he simply says, "Take of that which you do have and freely give it to those who don't. It's the only way you will become like me. It's the only way your hearts will become prepared to live in that place where there will be no poor amongst us."

31:56 And it's a family issue. Again, for a people who have been taught that we are to share and defend those things that will protect the family, we have to understand that poverty is a family issue. It is not a political issue, it's a family issue. Study after study after study shows that when a family experiences an economic hardship, and President Nelson in a recent address referred to statistics that show that one in nine people on this planet are malnourished and hungry, when individuals experience economic hardship, they feel pressure. That inability to pay a bill, the financial cutbacks and that pressure leads to interpersonal problems in a marriage, behavior problems, emotional problems, fighting, withdrawing and distancing from each other. And that slowly erodes the relationship, it affects the marriage.

32:59 And then studies continue with that. And as the marital relationship suffers, then children suffer because of the discord in the home and because when parents are under that type of stress, their parenting diminishes. And as their parenting diminishes, more risk factors for children, so children suffer. Poverty. Fighting poverty is defending the family. These are family factors. Fighting poverty is a way in which we defend the family. Because when we're experiencing poverty, economic hardships, it affects the marriage negatively and thereby also affects children negatively. So, fighting poverty is defending the family.

33:51 So whether in our becoming process or in our mortal existence here, in our development, it's needed. And I think that's why

Joseph Smith said so clearly, "To be a member in good standing in the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, one is to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to provide for the widow, to dry up the tear of the orphan, to comfort the afflicted whether in this church or in any other or in no church at all, wherever he finds them."

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| Hank Smith: | 34:21 | Larry, let me ask you something, and I think some of our listeners might be thinking, "I want to do this. I want to help." Maybe this isn't about so much as handing a couple of dollars to a panhandler as much as this supporting programs that are increasing education and making it so someone can get themselves also out of poverty. Have you seen that in the country? Is that something that's happening in the research that there are programs that people can give their treasure to and even their time and their energy? |
| Dr. Larry Nelson: | 34:54 | Yeah, so much of the research shows that when we provide opportunities to get education... I'm cautious here because the moment that we start talking about programs, policy policies, all of a sudden in the political climate of our day, defenses go up, political stances, all these potential political triggers. And so sadly, the adversary has done a fabulous job of turning these things into political issues and blinding us towards the fact that they are becoming issues, they're family issues. Education enables individuals to become, to provide, to protect. |
| Hank Smith: | 35:45 | Maybe I'm a little biased, but I think the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has a lot of programs that people can give their time and treasure to alleviate poverty, from the Humanitarian Aid to the Perpetual Education Fund to BYU Pathways. I mean, there just seems to be very effective programs. |
| Dr. Larry Nelson: | 36:09 | Hank, and so please, I need to hear this. Agreed, agreed, agreed, agreed. Pause. Don't edit the pause, please. |
| Hank Smith: | 36:23 | Okay. |
| Dr. Larry Nelson: | 36:23 | The pause is important. Period. Exclamation mark. Yes. We have to be careful though that in our own lives we don't place the burden of doing these incredible works on- |
| Hank Smith: | 36:41 | On somebody else. |

Dr. Larry Nelson:	36:42	... somebody else. So, in other words, yes, the church is doing so many of these great things, the church is, but if we are doing this is about us-
Hank Smith:	36:54	We're not becoming.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	36:55	... the question is, are we? And to underscore that and just make sure how this is tied to these readings, can we please turn to 2 Corinthians 8:7? I think one verse will help us here.
Hank Smith:	37:12	As we're turning there, it reminds me of something Dan Peterson told us. John, do you remember when he said a guy in his Elders quorum, they were signing up for the meat packing plant and he said, "I'll just hire that out," right? He just said, "I could hire someone and it would cost me less than my time to go there." And Dan kind of laughed and said, "I think you're missing the point a little bit." It's not just about the meat packing plant.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	37:35	Because it's our-
Hank Smith:	37:35	It's about what happens inside of us.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	37:37	Us. It's our becoming. And so from the start of 8, Paul's talking about, "Hey, there's a need in another congregation. There's a need here." And you need to care for them. You need to give to them starting... So we'll do two verses. In verse 7, "Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all diligence and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others and to prove the sincerity of your love." So, you've gone to several translations. Can we go to the Larry Nelson Translation for just a moment?
Hank Smith:	38:26	Could you do the whole Bible, Larry? We would love to.
John Bytheway:	38:29	We want to buy that.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	38:30	No, but I need these two verses for me. And so my translation is, "Larry, you may abound in a lot of good things. You may be attending church and you may be accepting callings. Your faith and your testimony, that's great, and in utterance and your knowledge, the things that you've learned and in all diligence, but I need you to give to those who are poor and in need because it is that through which the sincerity of your love for me, the Savior, will be determined. And to prove the sincerity of your love, all those things are great, but see that you abound in

this grace, that you care for those who are poor and in need. And through that is how you will prove the sincerity of your heart. It'll prove that you have become like me because I love all of my children. So do as I do and live as I live. That's how we'll be proved."

	39:43	And so yes, I agree with all that. And I'm so grateful that to know that my fast offerings and my tithes are going to an organization, that's the church. And again, President Nelson has just given an address that has outlined so many of the good works of the church.
Hank Smith:	40:03	Am I involved? Yeah.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	40:04	But am I involved daily with those who are around me in alleviating the challenges of their circumstances with that which I have to give just as when I was in need, the Savior gave so abundantly and give so abundantly to me.
Hank Smith:	40:22	Yeah, Larry, that leads me to a question here. I'd like to give our listeners some practical things to do. So, what do I do? What do I do? Because it's easy for me to fill out my tithing slip and give more, which I think is a good thing, right? To give more, to give more in fast offerings, to give more in perpetual education, missionary, humanitarian aid. Give more. But what else can I do when those around me say I'm just looking for those who are struggling and finding ways to get them out of that situation?
Dr. Larry Nelson:	40:55	So blessed when we look around us to see the incredible individuals in our neighborhoods, our communities, our wards, and learn from those who are following the charge. I know of somebody who the neighbor girl would come over to pick up my friend's daughter to walk to school. She noticed that this neighbor girl started to come earlier and earlier to pick up her daughter for school and she realized it's because my friend was inviting her for breakfast before they'd leave and she realized...
Hank Smith:	41:33	She's not getting it.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	41:33	She wasn't getting breakfast. She was going to school hungry.
Hank Smith:	41:39	There's one thing.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	41:40	She provided breakfast every day for a little girl that would've sat in her desk listening to her stomach growl instead of paying attention to the teacher.

	41:49	I feel terrible to know that my backyard neighbor, an elderly widow, went months with severe tooth pain because on her fixed income she wasn't able to go in and have anything done. And I didn't know and I didn't alleviate that when I could have. And if I had known would I have proven my love and done it. There's big things that we can be involved in, but there are individuals in our midst who these type of acts can help alleviate the mortal condition of hunger, of need for shelter, clothing, protection that we can strive to help God's children with that which we have by giving.
John Bytheway:	42:47	This is a great discussion. One of the ways I think when we're trying to say, "Okay, this is awesome, what do I do?", one of the ways is go to your bishop, he may have a visibility. The story about a woman with a toothache, that is heartbreaking because so many of us who have had toothaches would really want to help if we only knew. Sometimes a bishop knows, and things like justserve.com.
Hank Smith:	43:11	It's a map, right?
John Bytheway:	43:13	Yeah.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	43:13	To say, think of all of those things that come to your mind, if the Savior were to use those same things as reasons not to give you, you wouldn't get His atoning sacrifice. So, if you don't want Him to use those mindsets and perspectives and judgments towards you, change, become more like Him.
	43:40	Yes, I use the example of the beggar, he's saying, "But I do that to try to get you to think what is your overall attitude about joining with the Savior in His efforts to care for those who are poor and in need." So, when we get away from that scenario that we often reduce these discussions to and see it's about my willingness to become like the Savior by doing as He does and living as He lives, then I am going to try to make this mortal situation better for all those around me. And as I do that, I am changed. I am changed. Trying to get away from that reduction to that simple situation, I think, will help us see what Paul is teaching us, that it's your overall approach to caring for those who are poor and in need is how you will prove the sincerity of your love. We don't prove that by giving a dollar and thinking we're good. It's our daily overall approach and awareness of all those around us who may stand in need of something that we can offer.
Hank Smith:	44:53	There's a great book by CS Lewis. John, I know you've read it. And Larry, you may have read it as well. It's called The

Screwtape Letters where CS Lewis writes from the perspective of a tempting devil who is teaching his apprentice devil how to really get to a human being and keep them away from God. It's a fascinating idea, but this is one of the quotes from that book. And this is again, it's a higher level devil speaking to an apprentice devil, and he says, "The great thing is to direct the malice of the person he's trying to tempt to his immediate neighbors whom he meets every day, and to thrust his benevolence out to the remote circumference to people he does not know. The malice then becomes real and the benevolence largely imaginary."

45:39 I think what CS Lewis is saying here is something you're telling us, Larry, is look around you. Don't think, "Okay, I can donate to this program and it's going to help some person far away from me." Look at the woman who's next door. Look at the widow who's next door or the hungry child that lives down the street.

Dr. Larry Nelson: 45:56 It removes our accountability, which again, it is. If we go back to all the quotes, I just encourage anybody to look up poor and then go in the Topical Guide and the Savior is very direct. It's our responsibility. And when we write a check and send it off and think that removes our accountability and responsibility to care for those in our immediate surroundings, we've missed it. Elder Renlund says, "How we deal with advantages and disadvantages is part of life's test. We will be judged not so much by what we say, but by how we treat the vulnerable and disadvantaged. As Latter-day Saints, we seek to follow the Savior's example to go about doing good. We demonstrate our love for our neighbor by working to ensure the dignity of all heavenly Father's children." Sounds like Paul.

Hank Smith: 46:56 Yeah.

Dr. Larry Nelson: 46:57 Very much. The sincerity of our love will be proven by how we care for God's children. And I think maybe just that part of not reducing anything to that simple practice. What's the principle we're discussing, which is do as Christ does. It's not the practice of giving to a beggar. And you alluded to it. We throw out these phrases like it's better to teach a man to fish than give him a fish. But even that, if we look at it from the Savior's perspective, yeah, that's great, but what if he doesn't have a fishing pole because he can't afford to get one? Or what if the lake that he would fish in is so far away that he can't travel there even though he knows how to fish? What if there's not clean water where fish... It's this broader picture of carrying and alleviating the environment around us that will help all individuals be able to fish as it were, but that anytime we reduce it to phrases or a

particular act of giving to a beggar, boy, we're going to miss the principle.

- John Bytheway: 48:08 I had a guy when I was a bishop come to me who was in a Mariachi band who had one of those guitars with a huge belly in the back and his was broken or stolen, and that was his livelihood. I remember as clear as day getting the impression from the Lord, "Get that man a new guitar so he could go back to that job of supporting-"
- Hank Smith: 48:28 Making money, yeah.
- John Bytheway: 48:30 "... of his family." When you're using the Lord's funds, you want inspiration, but it was very clear. But I'd hate to go around telling people, "Yeah, I spent fast offering funds to buy a guy a guitar." But if they knew the whole story, it was how he could provide for his family.
- Hank Smith: 48:47 Larry, this has been just wonderful. We've learned some very basic principles, but I like learning about things I feel like I've already known about but in new ways, learning about forgiveness and repentance and trials and giving, becoming like Christ. All new ways of looking at these fundamental principles of the gospel. So just to make sure we're covered here, if I'm a listener at home and I'm folding laundry or I'm commuting or I'm doing yard work, what are you hoping someone in that situation is feeling and does? What do you hope they get out of it?
- Dr. Larry Nelson: 49:26 I hope first and foremost is you're not alone, you're not alone. And I hope you feel that this life is a process rather than a list of things you need to do. Be kind to yourself. Offer yourself some grace that at times you're that four-year-old child just learning how to ride a bicycle and we don't scold him or her when they don't get it right the first time. And neither is our heavenly Father scolding you when you don't become like Him on the first try or the second or the third or the fourth. It's a process of becoming. It's not about the things that we are doing, but who we are becoming. And that's like our Savior and our heavenly parents.
- 50:18 And once again, just as kittens grow up to be cats and puppies grow up to be dogs, offspring of deity grow up to be divine adults, and that is a process. He is with us, the Savior, every step of the way because He knows that we're going to experience pains and trials and hardships that come from our own bad choices, the bad choices of others that affect us, and the conditions of mortality. They don't come from God, but they

come from those three sources. But because our Savior was willing to suffer for our bad choices, the pain that we experience from the bad choices of others that affect us and the conditions that we experience here in a mortal fallen world, He's with us. He can help us as we act rather than be acted upon to forgive others. He'll be with us every step of the way as we turn around and repent and get back on the path that'll lead to becoming like Him. And he'll be with us in the midst of our pain and suffering.

51:29 And just like Paul who prayed but did not have the thorn in his flesh removed, it may not take away that which is causing our pain and suffering but will turn it into our benefit for our sake to help us become like our heavenly Father. Instead of just doing honest things, we can become honest. Instead of just hearing talks about being patient, we can become patient. And not just forgive somebody, but via that process become forgiving. And we're not alone in that becoming process.

Hank Smith: 52:10 And I think it can be frustrating if you think, "Okay, I've got to do all of this perfectly today."

Dr. Larry Nelson: 52:14 Right.

Hank Smith: 52:15 "I've got to figure out how to forgive perfectly and repent perfectly and have a perfect understanding of how trials can be blessings. I better go alleviate all the poverty in my town." Just to say, if you came through this discussion and you have a desire to be a little bit better, I remember President Hinckley would say that all the time, and I don't think I quite understood what good advice that is is be a little bit better because of this conversation than you're on your way.

Dr. Larry Nelson: 52:40 Just picture yourself just like that child standing up against the wall as tall as they can to have that mark. The mark doesn't move quickly, but we're still growing. We're still progressing. Give yourself some grace. Give grace to all those around who are in their own becoming process, at their own place in development. Just try in whatever way is presented before you today to do as God does and live as He lives. Be loving. Be kind. Be a little more honest than you were yesterday. Forgive someone today. Help somebody's situation become a little bit better today. And over time, that mark on the wall, we will see increasing until line by line we reach our potential to become like Him.

Hank Smith: 53:33 Beautiful.

John Bytheway:	53:34	I've loved this discussion because I know people, one of them is my wife who simply is charitable, and sometimes I do charitable things but it's so natural to her, and I need to be, to be, more that way. So, I'll keep trying in my personal development to get there. So, thank you for this.
Hank Smith:	53:55	Yeah. Thank you, Larry. Thank you, Dr. Nelson, we should say. Thank you for being here. We have loved having you by the way. You're new to followHIM. We're grateful that you're here.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	54:04	Thanks.
Hank Smith:	54:04	You're now a friend. You're an official friend of the followHIM podcast.
Dr. Larry Nelson:	54:08	And I'm honored by that. I'm honored by that. Thank you.
Hank Smith:	54:12	We want to thank Dr. Larry Nelson for being with us today. We want to thank our executive producer Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen, and we want to remember our founder, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We're going to study the second half of 2 Corinthians on followHIM.
	54:30	Today's transcript, show notes, and additional references are available on our website, followHIM.co. That's followHIM.co. You can watch the podcast on YouTube with additional videos on our Facebook and Instagram accounts. All of this is absolutely free and we'd love for you to share it with your family and friends. We'd like to reach more of those who are searching for help with their Come, Follow Me study. If you could subscribe to, rate, review, and comment on the podcast, that will make us easier to find. Of course, none of this could happen without our incredible production crew, David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra, and Annabelle Sorensen.
President Russell M. Nelson:	55:09	Whatever questions or problems you have, the answer is always found in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Turn to Him. Follow Him.

HOW DO TRIALS BRING BLESSINGS?



- Hank Smith: 00:02 Hello, my friends. Welcome to another followHIM Favorites. My name is Hank Smith. I'm here with the wonderful John Bytheway. Welcome, John.
- John Bytheway: 00:09 Thanks, Hank.
- Hank Smith: 00:10 John, you know how this works. We're going to take on a single question from this week's lesson. We are in 2 Corinthians this week, the first half of the letter, chapters 1 through 7. Right out of the Come, Follow Me manual, there's a statement that says, "My trials can be a blessing." And I thought that is a crazy statement. So, John, can you help me understand how my trials can be blessings?
- John Bytheway: 00:33 Yeah. I remember once someone saying, "Why do I have so many trials?" And before I thought about it too long, this just poured out of my mouth because God loves you too much to let your life be easy. After he hit me... No, I'm just kidding. But it's the kind of thing where they can make us what we are if we let God help us in wonderful ways. Another word for trial is test. Another word for test is prove. I will prove you. God even asks us to prove him. "Test me and see if I'll open you the windows of heaven." So life without trials, as I think Sheri Dew said, would be like a test without questions.
- Hank Smith: 01:18 I like it.
- John Bytheway: 01:19 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 01:20 I like it. If you just look at the story of so many people in the scriptures over and over and over, it's these difficult, difficult-
- John Bytheway: 01:27 Really difficult.
- Hank Smith: 01:29 ... problems and hardships that they face. As you watch the story play out, it often turns into something wonderful, something so good that wouldn't have happened had they not gone through that thing. I remember President Uchtdorf talking about riding his bicycle when he was a kid, and hating the

bicycle, and then finding out later, the bicycle actually saved his life. So something he hated at the time actually became something he's so grateful for later in life.

- John Bytheway: 01:58 Yeah, I remember Emily Watts telling a story at Time Out for Women about a little girl who was walking across the plains and a guy pulled up in a wagon and said, "You want to ride?" And she said, "Yes." And he grabbed her hand and then said, "Giddy up." I don't think it was giddy up. The horse was probably trotting, but she was running with everything she had, and she thought, "This is possibly the meanest man I have ever seen in my life."
- Hank Smith: 02:22 That's just awful.
- John Bytheway: 02:22 She's running. She's out of breath. Then finally, when she's just about done, he grabs her, lifts her up, sits him next to him, scoops her up, wraps her in a blanket, and she said, "It took me a while to realize that he had just saved my feet." Because she was so cold, this got the blood circulating and everything. Then he grabbed her and wrapped her in a blanket. I thought, "Wow. That's a-"
- Hank Smith: 02:46 Had he grabbed her before, the blood wouldn't have been circulating. I'm reminded, John, of a story where the Provo Tabernacle, this building that had been around for over a century, had done so much good as a building, as much good as a building can do for the church. In December of 2010, it burns so heavily that it basically guts the building. I've often thought, if that building had thoughts and feelings, it might say something like,-
- John Bytheway: 03:14 Why are you doing this?
- Hank Smith: 03:16 "Why me? There are other buildings on this street that deserve this. I've tried my hardest to be a good building."
- John Bytheway: 03:24 Building.
- Hank Smith: 03:26 "Why would you do this to me?" And then over the course of the next few years, the building is transformed into what we know is the Provo City Center Temple. And how would the Lord answer that prayer of, "Why would you do this to me? I don't deserve this. I've tried so hard to be good." And he might be saying something like, "I see your future. I see what's coming, so hold on, hold on. This is actually going to end up being the most wonderful thing that's ever happened to you. You're going to

become even more holy and you're going to become even more venerated by people." I try to keep that in mind when going through difficult things.

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| John Bytheway: | 04:05 | I mean, great story that he can take a trial and make it something better. He can take the lost Book of Lehi in the Book of Mormon and say, "Well, actually, I arranged that Nephi to keep a separate record and it has greater views." And so the Book of Mormon becomes greater even though that Book of Lehi was lost |
| Hank Smith: | 04:24 | With God, a mess can become a message I've found. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcasts. We're with Dr. Larry Nelson this week and he does some wonderful things with these chapters we think you're going to love. And then come back next week and we'll do another followHIM Favorites. |