



"Seek for the Things of a Better World"

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 can we live up to our privileges? Sister Morgan Pearson explores the Lord's words to Emma Smith. She instructs her to expound on scripture and how Joseph and Emma's relationship is a blessing to them and an example to modern-day Saints.

Part 2:

Sister Morgan Pearson continues to examine Emma's instruction to be a scribe and compile hymns for the Church. Sister Pearson also explores Emma's experience with plural marriage and the importance of covenants, forgiveness, and the beauty and strength of this complicated person from Church History.

Timecodes:

Part 1 -

- 00:00 - Part 1 - Sister Morgan Pearson
- 01:10 Section is about Emma, not only hymns
- 02:14 *Come, Follow Me Manual* and President Freeman's talk
- 06:11 Redemption of Emma Smith
- 09:30 Emma's great loses
- 12:25 Morgan Pearson's bio
- 16:03 Asking good questions
- 19:04 A healthier approach to Emma
- 24:11 Section 23 and 24 include Emma
- 27:26 D&C 24:8: Be patient in afflictions
- 29:56 Living Up to Your Privileges by President Emily Freeman
- 33:06 The Lord addresses Emma by name
- 37:11 Answered prayers and disappointments
- 43:28 Emma's witness of the plates
- 44:22 An elect lady and Emma called to expound scripture
- 48:39 Catching the spirit of Relief Society
- 51:43 Called to be a comfort to Joseph
- 54:52 Letters from Emma
- 57:33 Joseph's letter from Carthage to Emma
- 01:01:47 President Freeman and living without regret
- 01:04:22 End of Part 1 - Sister Morgan Pearson

Part 2 -

- 00:00 - Part 2 - Sister Morgan Pearson
- 00:15 Why didn't Emma go West?
- 04:56 D&C 25:7 - Expound and exhort
- 07:07 Emma's ministering nature
- 09:47 Keep a journal
- 12:22 D&C 25:9 - Joseph to support Emma
- 14:16 Using your brain vs relying on computer power
- 17:13 BYU Citation Index
- 21:37 The Lord values women in the Church
- 25:11 D&C 25:11-12 - Emma's hymn book
- 29:01 Calee Reed's thoughts on spiritual music
- 32:46 Jesus sings hymns before His Atonement
- 34:36 Answering questions about polygamy
- 39:37 Nephi and trusting God
- 43:08 Brittany Chapman Nash's *Let's Talk About Polygamy*
- 47:47 "An Open Letter to Emma Smith" by Morgan Pearson
- 51:23 Historians and good sources
- 54:19 Elder Maxwell on meekness

- 59:04 Emma’s fingerprints on the Church
- 01:04:52 - End of Part II - Sister Morgan Pearson

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Biographical Information:



Originally from North Carolina, Morgan Pearson is the host of the All In podcast which has collected over 23 million downloads since its launch in October 2018. She previously worked for the Deseret News where she published over 400 stories. She and her husband, Benjamin are the parents of two little girls, Emma and Jane. They currently live in Philadelphia where Benjamin is completing his MBA at the Wharton School. Morgan is happiest when wearing sweatpants and has a serious weakness for dark chocolate.

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Hank Smith:	00:00:00	Coming up in this episode.
Sis. Morgan Pearson:	00:00:02	In preparing this, I felt a lot of pressure to get Emma's story right, and I think it's because she wants it to be right. She wants that redemption. I hope that we can give it to her.
Hank Smith:	00:00:17	Hello everyone. Welcome to another episode of FollowHIM. My name is Hank Smith and I'm your host and I'm here with my co-host John Bytheway, who has laid aside the things of this world. John, that is you.
John Bytheway:	00:00:31	Yeah, I just put them in the safe.
Hank Smith:	00:00:34	Yeah. John, this is an interview I've been looking forward to for a long time. We are joined today by Morgan Pearson. She's all the way out in Philadelphia. Morgan, thank you for being here with us.
Sis. Morgan Pearson:	00:00:49	Thank you so much for having me. I'm really excited for this conversation.
Hank Smith:	00:00:53	This is a special lesson for everyone as we get to focus in on Emma Smith and her life and what the Lord says to her. So John, when you think of sections 23 through 26, especially section 25, what comes to mind?
John Bytheway:	00:01:10	Thanks for asking Hank. I remember somebody once saying, please don't make this a section just about the hymns, make a hymn book. And I thought, yeah, really good point. I love that. It's about Emma. I love that Emma is called by her name. I love that. It seems very directed to Emma, but towards the end it's like what I say to you, I say to all, I mean, there's a lot of great things to see in this one.
Hank Smith:	00:01:34	Yeah, and hearing this in context, we talk about Joseph. He's going through such difficulty, yet he's got a companion here who is going through the same difficulties with him and it's nice

to highlight that. Morgan, what are you looking forward to today? Where are we going to go?

Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:01:51 My goal in our discussion is hopefully to lay the groundwork. John already alluded to this, that at the end of section 25 it says, this is my voice unto all. I want to look at why this matters to all of us, but also why Emma should matter to all of us. That is the goal. We'll see if we get there.

Hank Smith: 00:02:14 That's fantastic. I'm looking forward to this. Let's read from the [Come, Follow Me manual](#). The lesson is called Seek for the Things of a Better World. Hey, that sounds like you, John. Alright, here's what it says. It starts out this way. "For most people, being baptized is a reverent, peaceful experience. The baptism of Emma Smith and others, however, was disrupted by a mob who mocked them, threatened them, and forced them to flee. Later, just as Joseph was about to confirm the new members, he was arrested for upsetting the community with his preaching. In all this opposition, how could Emma find reassurance that she was doing the right thing? The same place we can all find it—through revelation from the Lord. He spoke to Emma about "the things of a better [world]"—His kingdom—and her place in it. He told her not to fear, to "lift up [her] heart and rejoice," and to "cleave unto the covenants [she had] made." And these words of encouragement and counsel are His "voice unto all". Okay with that, Morgan, how do you want to go about this?

Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:03:19 I want to talk a little bit about why Emma matters to us and I thought it might be fun. Hank, you mentioned when you reached out to me that you had just like a feeling that you should reach out. It's interesting because you mentioned [Emily Bell Freeman](#). She just recently gave a general conference talk that talked a lot about Emma Smith. I thought it might be kind of fun to tell you all why I love Emma so much. I have a daughter named Emma. My husband has been dead set since he was 10 years old on naming a daughter Emma. I was not sold on the name. Emily Freeman, we have this long story genetic testing situation when we have babies where our babies have to be tested for a rare form of eye cancer that my husband was born with. So Emily texted me when I was pregnant with my first and said, how are you doing?

00:04:22 And I told her that we were going in for this testing and she said, can I pray for the baby? Do you have a name picked out? And I said, we don't have a name picked out. You can just pray for baby girl Pearson. And then my husband kiddingly said, tell her if she wants to be on my team, she should pray for Emma

Emily, Sister Freeman, I should say, texted me from the western wall. She was in Jerusalem in Israel. She texted me a picture from the western wall of a slip of paper that said, baby girl Pearson. In parentheses, Emma, there's a lot more of the story of why we ended up naming our baby Emma, but I just want to tell you both. It has been such a blessing to me to have this chance to dig into this section, section 25, not only for my girl, but I have another daughter now too.

00:05:18 And I just think this section is so powerful for women in particular. There's so few places in the scriptures where we know that the Lord is speaking directly to women, that he gives us directives for the kind of women that we should be. And so I think as he talks to Emma, he is talking to all of us about what our potential is as a woman. Why does this matter? Especially now, [President Nelson](#) in 2019 invited the women of the church to study Doctrine and Covenants section 25, and he said he wanted us to study it in order to learn how to draw the Savior's power into our lives. He said that accessing the power of God in your life requires the same things that the Lord instructed Emma and each of you to do.

00:06:11 And then he said, your personal spiritual endeavor will bring you joy as you gain, understand and use the power with which you have been endowed. This does matter to each of us. And even if you aren't like a history buff, I think it helps to get to know Emma Smith. I think as we come to know Emma in a way, especially as women, we come to know ourselves a little bit better. In preparation for this conversation. I talked to [Jenny Reeder](#), who is a church historian that I love, and she wrote, I think, one of the best Deseret book publications to come out in the last little bit, which was the book First that was published a few years ago that tells Emma's story. And so I picked Jenny's brain a little bit, and one of the things that she says is that she believes Emma's story is a story of redemption. That I think in many ways as Emma is redeemed, so are we. I think if we judge her or make her unworthy, we also are making the atonement of Jesus Christ insufficient for our lives and our shortcomings and our weaknesses. And women are so hard on ourselves. So I think that it's important for us to be able to, like Jenny says, redeem Emma in our church's history in order to be able to redeem ourselves. Does that make any sense?

Hank Smith: 00:07:34 Yeah. John, we had this great discussion with [Dr. Taunalyn Ford](#) about Redeeming the Dead is not just about ordinances, it's about honoring the dead and finding the good in them. I just thought it was a fantastic thought.

- John Bytheway: 00:07:51 And [Sister Melissa Inouye](#) that we had on the podcast who passed away shortly after that. I will never forget her ideas about redeeming the dead that was, but redeem their reputation. Of all the people I want to be on the right side of, one of them's Emma. You know? Yeah, I know Joseph loves her. And I think what a hard life. There was no, "Okay, now you've found your husband life will be happily ever after." That was not her story. And boy, I respect these people for sticking with it.
- Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:08:21 Yeah. [Jenny Reeder](#) actually recently attended a symposium. I believe they spent days going through Section 25, sent me something that she wrote for this conference. And her article was all about comparing and connecting Eve and Emma along the same lines of what we were just talking about, the redemption. So she said a [Washington Post](#) article affirmed that the story of Eve and the book of Genesis has had a more profoundly negative impact on women throughout history than any other. And then Jenny says this, which kind of blew my mind a little bit. She said, I love how Joseph salvaged Eve's reputation when he translated the Bible. Namely Moses and Genesis from June to December, 1830 with scribes including Emma, the books of Abraham and Moses introduced new insight into the ironically salvific role of Eve as the instigator of God's work and glory to bring to pass the exaltation and eternal life of man and woman.
- 00:09:30 And then Jenny shared that Joseph actually had a couple of visions that included Adam and Eve, which I did not know. But then Jenny writes Emma too multiplied sorrows with lost children and the lost manuscript she had transcribed, which we probably will talk more about. She is a Miriam to Joseph's Moses assisting where he is slow of speech, a prophetess expounding and exhorting to the modern-day female descendants of Israel. She is also every one of us as we maneuver our own ways, laying things down, lifting things up, keeping coming, receiving both warnings and blessings. And she is the church, the community, the band of believers. Emma is every one of us. And now that I have made Emma a giant figure, I wonder how she would feel about this. She is, after all, a person, a very mortal person with very tragic flaws, of which I'm sure she was completely aware.
- 00:10:30 Things didn't turn out well for her as seen through certain eyes. She stayed, she remained, she didn't come. She denied. She protected her children and her home and her possessions. She questioned, she spoke up and then she didn't. She gave in. She married a drunkard and raised his illegitimate child from an adulterous relationship. She saw the committal of her son to a

mental hospital, her eye drooped. She joined another church and collected new hymns. She severed, but in so doing, she remained with Joseph's body. She continued to protect the word she scribed for him. He came for her when he died. And then she tells this story about how in 1892 there was a celebration in the tabernacle. There were these floral representations that turned to women in Nauvoo and life-size portraits of Joseph, Emma, Eliza R Snow and the then Relief Society general President Zina Young. There was some concern about including Emma in this celebration. And Wilford Woodruff said, anyone who opposed it must be very narrow minded indeed. Which I thought was really interesting. And then Jenny just closes and says, today we can redeem Eve and Emma by recognizing their work alongside their troubles. Perhaps this is how God promises to preserve Emma's life. We can remove them from their fallen places and position them crowned in righteousness and we can find ourselves in them.

John Bytheway:	00:12:04	Wow.
Sis. Morgan Pearson:	00:12:05	That's a lot Yeah.
John Bytheway:	00:12:07	So good though.
Sis. Morgan Pearson:	00:12:09	I know. I was like, Jenny, can I quote you? She was like, quote away. I was like, perfect. Thank you. Yeah.
Hank Smith:	00:12:16	Wow. Jenny Reeder. That was absolutely beautiful. Not only is she an incredible writer, but she's a brilliant historian. Some people get all the talent. Now, before we go any further, speaking of talent, let's take a quick time out. John, tell us about Morgan. Someone might say, wow, Morgan knows Emily Bell Freeman. Well, Morgan knows just about everyone. can you tell us a little bit about her?
John Bytheway:	00:12:44	Yeah, I'm sure a lot of her listeners are going, Hey, isn't she the All In podcast host? Yeah, that's what she's been doing since October of 2018, has about 23 million downloads. She's originally from North Carolina. She worked for Deseret News for a long time, wrote about 400 articles for Deseret News. She and her husband Benjamin have two little girls, Emma and Jane, which she has explained a little bit. They live in Philadelphia right now. Benjamin's at Wharton getting his MBA. She is happiest when she's wearing sweatpants and eating dark chocolate. And down the list somewhere is hanging out with Hank and John. So we're down the list, but we're glad you took a minute for us.

Hank Smith:	00:13:27	Yeah.
Sis. Morgan Pearson:	00:13:28	I love any chance to talk the gospel with anybody. I actually think this is so funny because John, I don't know if I told you this when you were on All In. I grew up listening to audio tapes of your voice to go to sleep at night. I mean, I could quote you. Every tape you did growing up. So big fan.
Hank Smith:	00:13:54	Oh wow, Morgan, where do we get All In at? Here at followHIM we love to promote our sister podcasts. If someone wanted to listen, maybe they haven't heard of it, maybe they've been living under a rock. So where would I get it?
Sis. Morgan Pearson:	00:14:08	Literally anywhere that you listen to podcasts, you can find it at Apple, Spotify. But if you also are not great with the podcast app, you can just go online to ldsliving.com/allin .
Hank Smith:	00:14:23	We hope everyone will go check this out. My favorite interview is John Bytheway, finding joy this holiday season. November of 2020.
Sis. Morgan Pearson:	00:14:35	For this conversation. If you're interested in what we've talked about today, I do have an episode with Jenny Reeder when that First book came out, which is a great resource and I didn't pull a ton from that because I figured I've already talked to her about that. If anybody's interested in listening, that is a good one to start with.
Hank Smith:	00:14:56	Beautiful. Well, let's keep going here. So you're a journalist by nature. You've been doing this for a long time. Is that kind of the slant you want to take as we jump in?
Sis. Morgan Pearson:	00:15:08	I had this idea when Hank reached out. I will admit, I was like, I am not a scholar. I'm not a historian. I am a journalist. I know how to ask questions. I love asking questions. I love sitting with someone and being able to pick their brain. As I thought about this in preparation, I had the thought partially because I was thinking about how complex of a human Emma is. And I think that makes for the best kind of interviews. Very complex people make interesting interviews and I had the thought if I could interview anyone who has passed away, Emma Smith might be at the top of the list. One thing that I've always tried to do with All In is I'll think, you know, I have the chance to sit and talk with somebody that in many ways, like I said, I went to bed at night as a kid listening to John Bytheway.

00:16:03 I never ever would have imagined that I would have the chance to talk to John Bytheway. For that reason, because I know that there are a lot of people that would love to have the opportunity to sit in the same rooms as some of these people and to ask them questions, I like to think that I'm like representative of a normal member of the church and try to ask the question that people want answered. One thing that I've tried to do sometimes when trying to get questions for a guest, I'll put a question out on Instagram and say, if you could ask this person any question, what would you ask? So I did that on Instagram in preparation for this discussion and the questions flooded in. As we go through, I'm not going to take them question by question. I will call out like this is one question that came up a lot.

00:16:56 We'll try to answer some of those questions that people seem to have. I think there are some questions that we would never be able to know unless we were able to talk to Emma herself. But I think there are resources out there that give us a sense for Emma. There's even, some people may not be aware of this, you can read [Emma Smith's](#) last will and testament online. So this was an interview that her sons did with her prior to her passing, which was so interesting to me to read because I think in the scriptures, or even reading Joseph and Emma's letters back and forth to each other, it's very poetic if you're going to write something that was intended to be read. But this last will and testament is literally just her sons asking her questions. She talks like you or I would talk.

00:17:50 That gives us interesting insight into Emma as a person. There's also, and we'll get to this later, but there's a blessing. So when Joseph Smith was going to Carthage, Emma asked him for a blessing. He didn't have time to give her that blessing before he left, but he asked her to write down a blessing of what she desired. He said he would sign it. We know Joseph never came back from Carthage, but I think that also gives us a really interesting insight into Emma and her mind. We'll try to give people a little bit of a better idea of who Emma is. We'll see if we're successful or not. But that is my, that's my hope.

Hank Smith: 00:18:37 That's great. And she certainly was all in. I'm certain that you would both say that I think through the years, maybe the church has, and both of you could comment on this, we've come around to a more, like you said, that this woman is very complex and instead of labeling her as, oh, she left the church, we can't listen to her. I think we've come to a much more positive place.

Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:19:04

Yeah. I actually exchanged some messages with a lady that used to work for church public affairs and she said that she, she said, I'm hoping between Jenny Reeder's research and President Freeman's talk from general conference, this generation will grow up with a healthier approach to Emma. Which is sad that it felt unhealthy at some points, but I think we just don't totally understand Emma. I've been friends with Jenny through work for years and when she was writing the book about Emma, she posted a picture on Instagram. She said, working on the Emma Smith project. And I messaged her and I was like, okay, I am so intrigued by this. She messaged me back and said, I think she's speaking to me. Emily Bell Freeman, when she was preparing her general conference talk, she talks about how she ended up going to two different church history sites, one being Harmony, Pennsylvania, where she went to Emma's home and sat in Emma's kitchen for like three hours. She says that she felt like she received so much revelation and I think that the reason women feel drawn to Emma is that we feel a responsibility to get it right. In preparing this, I felt a lot of pressure to get Emma's story right, and I think it's because she wants it to be right. She wants that redemption. I hope that we can give it to her.

Hank Smith: 00:20:43

And before anyone even thinks, well all those people at Utah, they were terrible people as well. No, they're also complex. They also are over there trying to deal with their situation. What's happened, being driven out of Nauvoo. I had just a quick thought. I was teaching the New Testament today at BYU and there's this moment in Luke chapter seven where this sinful woman comes in as Jesus is at a meal with a Pharisee. And the Pharisee quickly labels the woman. I would not let her touch me. She's a sinner. And then Jesus asks a question that I just find interesting. He says, Simon, seest thou this woman. And of course he sees her. They've already been talking about her. She's been in the room for a long time. Everybody's seen her. So I asked my students, well, what does he mean seest thou this woman? They shared such wonderful thoughts of do we actually see people or do we label people and as a way to not see them. So as I came into this interview today and as I've been listening to you Morgan, I think it's a question about everyone from history and today it's Emma and each other. Do you really see them or have you gone with the label that you've put on them for a long time? So it just seemed to fit right. Seest thou this woman today. Do you actually see her?

John Bytheway: 00:22:06

I just think life is so much easier when we figure people were doing the best they could with what they knew at the time and sometimes with things they knew that weren't even right at the

time. And maybe the Utah Saints thought they knew things that weren't even right at the time.

Hank Smith: 00:22:23 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:22:23 We're all just doing the best we can with what we know or what we think we know. That might not even be true. So let's extend some grace to people. And I'm so glad we're talking this way about Emma right now.

Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:22:36 I think it's interesting. This is probably a comment out of left field, but I love the TV show. [This Is Us](#). I don't know if either one of you watch that show. The thing that I love about it is that you see the characters throughout time. Like in the beginning of the show, I didn't like the essentially main character. But then once you see everything that that person has gone through, you develop such a love for every character. I think that that's kind of the way that life is. If we could see everything, we would love everybody so much more. My mother-in-law always says we love best those that we know best. I think that that's true of everybody. And certainly I think as you come to know Emma more, the more you love her. There's a quote from Lucy Smith in her history that was written in 1845 talking about Emma and Lucy definitely would've been somebody that knew Emma really well. She said, I have never seen a woman in my life who would endure every species of fatigue and hardship from month to month and from year to year with that unflinching courage, zeal and patience, which she has always done. She has breasted the storm of persecution and buffeted the rage of men and devils until she has been swallowed up in a sea of trouble, which would've borne down almost any other woman. How can we be hard on somebody that that is what she went through?

Hank Smith: 00:24:11 And that's coming from a woman who went through incredibly difficult things. When I contacted Morgan, I really wanted to spend the vast majority of our time in Section 25, just because this is a great time to talk about Emma. But John, if you look at section 23 and 24, it actually involves Emma even though she's not listed by name. Section 23 is given to Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Samuel Smith, Joseph Sr. And Joseph Knight, Sr. All of whom know Emma personally. She is spending a lot of time with them. And then Section 24 comes in at Harmony, Pennsylvania, which is Emma's hometown. That's where she's born. Even though we're not going to spend a lot of time in these sections. John, do you see anything that we might stop and take a look at?

John Bytheway:	00:25:03	I don't pretend to know the entire backstory of Section 23, but one of the things that I just loved was how often the Lord repeated this phrase. Because like you said, this is five different people who kind of put all together in Section 23, thou art under no condemnation. It just made me think how many of us are thinking I'm just not good enough. It's like the Lord saying, will you stop it? You're not under condemnation. He works with people. He's a Savior. What does that mean? That means he forgives sins. I'm not condemning you. That touched me. Hopefully for all of us that are oh, I just am not sure. You know the Lord's saying, stop it. You're not under any condemnation.
Hank Smith:	00:25:49	I love the way you said that, John, because I think the Lord would say that. Why do you think that? Why do you think that I'm up here looking for ways to condemn you? I'm not. Elder Kearon right?
John Bytheway:	00:26:02	I'm in relentless pursuit of you. Yeah. So that touched me when I read that. Because I thought if a lot of us act that way a lot, like we're, oh, we're never enough. And the Lord's saying, stop that. You're going to get some advice. You're going to get some exhortations, but you're not under condemnation. Just listen up and let me help you. I like that. Yeah. That's beautiful.
Sis. Morgan Pearson:	00:26:23	I do think it's interesting, that idea that John just expressed kind of ties into what we've been talking about. We should tell listeners that I literally have a child in my arms. Because If they hear her cooing, it's like, what in the world is going on? But I think that that idea of not condemning ourselves is also applicable to what we've been talking about with not condemning other people either. I think there is that tie there as well.
Hank Smith:	00:26:54	That's wonderful. Then the section 24 to Oliver, the church is just a baby speaking of a baby, right? It's a whole four months old and the Lord is moving forward saying verse 10. I just, I've always loved it. Don't suppose that you can say enough in my cause, right? I will let you know if you ever get to the point where you're, it's too much. Let's go, let's grow. Which I love. John, anything in 24?
John Bytheway:	00:27:26	Yeah. I'm looking at verse eight. The first part is to Joseph and the second part to Oliver. Be patient in afflictions for thou shalt have many. Okay. Who would really like to hear that? Anybody? We reading it now knowing where this happened in history, we're a little bit acquainted with what's going to happen down the road. And it's like, wow. Those are sobering words for

Joseph, but endure them. I am with you even until the end of thy days. Wow.

- Hank Smith: 00:27:54 There's a little reference to the Book of Mormon in verse 19. And you know how I love Jacob Five John. Thou were called to prune my vineyard with a mighty pruning this last time, right? You go over to Jacob chapter five, and there's this moment where the Lord is frustrated with the vineyard. It's all gone bad. And he thinks, what could I have done more for my vineyard? And then the servant, if you remember John, says, let's try one more time, one more time. And everything turns around. And by the end, the Lord has everything that he was hoping for out of his vineyard. So I just like that little Book of Mormon connection.
- John Bytheway: 00:28:33 Absolutely.
- Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:28:35 When you are married to someone, and we'll talk about how Emma was called to be a comfort to her husband, but that was because he was going to go through so many afflictions. So when it says be patient in afflictions for thou shalt have many, I think it's not just Joseph that was in those afflictions. So as we talk throughout, I think we'll get a better idea of what Joseph and Emma went through, which it's just a lot.
- Hank Smith: 00:29:07 It's relentless when you look at their life. It's give them a break almost. Give them a place to settle down. And even says in verse nine to Joseph in temporal labor, thou shalt not have strength, which also says to Emma, temporally, it's going to always be a struggle.
- Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:29:25 And when section 25 was received, Emma and Joseph had just lost their first child. Pretty devastating.
- Hank Smith: 00:29:36 All the hopes. Everything that you're looking forward to and the plans you're making, it's ripped away from you. Now we can spend our time where I asked Morgan to go, which is section 25. Morgan, I love the idea you had. Let's ask questions of Emma and probably get some of our answers from this section. Right?
- Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:29:56 Hopefully that is the hope. I wanted to start, if we can, with a quote from [Sister Freeman's](#) general conference talk, because I think it really sets the stage for the section. She says that Emma and Joseph, they had just lost their first child, a little boy. They had been married for three and a half years at this point. Obviously the church has just been organized. And Sister Freeman says, surely she worried about their finances, about

the increasing persecution that threatened their safety and about their future. And yet the work of God was everywhere around her. Did she also wonder about her place in the plan, her purpose in his kingdom and her potential in the eyes of God? And then she says, but Emma did not just stand at that window and wonder. If we read Section 25 carefully we discover an important progression taking place.

00:30:54 Emma would go from being a daughter in the kingdom to elect lady to Queen. I found as I was trying to prep for this talk that was given in 1984 by [President Gordon B. Hinckley](#), where he essentially walked through this section verse by verse. Then Jenny Reeder also says that she likes to look at Emma through Section 25. She thinks that if we really dig into Section 25, we understand Emma. But President Hinckley said, this, as you know, is a revelation given through Joseph the prophet to his wife Emma. It was given at Harmony, Pennsylvania in July, 1830, only a short time after the church was organized. And so far as I know, this is the only revelation given specifically to a woman. And in concluding it, the Lord said, this is my voice unto all. Therefore, the council given by the Lord on this occasion is applicable to each of you. I thought if we go through verse by verse and pull out the interesting things, and as we go, we'll answer some of those questions.

Hank Smith: 00:32:03 Yeah, I love it. One thing that I think is helpful that I've been shown through our time together on followHIM is that sometimes we make the mistake of thinking, okay, here's a male figure in the scriptures. Both men and women can learn from this figure. And then we'll get to a female in the scriptures and go, all women can learn from this woman. It's just been a couple of times John, that we've gone through and I've said, wait, wait, wait. Why do we all of a sudden think, oh, here's a woman. Men can't learn from this section. So I, if there's anybody listening who thinks, oh, I guess this is for the women. No, no, no, no, no. This is do the same thing we do with any male figure in the scripture. Say, I can draw out principles for me.

Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:32:44 And the principles are applicable. Yeah. So in verse one, I think one of the most significant things for anyone is that the Lord calls Emma by name, just like he called Joseph by name in the first vision. That was the biggest thing that stood out to me in that verse.

John Bytheway: 00:33:06 Do you know what else about that verse? Originally it said, I speak unto you, Emma, my daughter and Smith was added in 1835 for clarity for our day for a growing church. So it's even

more close. Joseph, this is my beloved. Emma, my daughter. You're my daughter Emma. I don't need your last name. We maybe need it in future generations, but originally it was Emma, my daughter. I like that.

Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:33:32

I love that too.

Hank Smith: 00:33:34

We talk about the first vision that Joseph, the first thing he learns, the very first word of the restoration is his name. And here, same thing, Emma, I know you, you are known to me. I know more about you than you do.

Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:33:53

Absolutely. So then in verse two, it talks about walking in the paths of virtue. As I was preparing, I looked in the BYU citation index, which I'm sure you all use. I think it's an underutilized tool. [Sister Elaine Dalton](#), who we know as the young women general president that introduced the value of virtue into the personal progress program, which is no longer, she has talked about this verse multiple times in general conference. She said, virtue is a pattern of thought and behavior based on high moral standards. It includes chastity and moral purity. And my mom, when that value of virtue was brought in to the young women's program, my mom pointed out something that I've thought about over and over again in the years since, which is that they didn't introduce it as here's a new young women value, live it. They introduced it as a return to virtue. My mom said, you know, to me that says we recognize that you may have made mistakes. We recognize that we can be better in this regard. So we're calling for a return to virtue. It's okay if you have not been perfect in this in the past, but it's something to work at. That was what came to mind for me with that verse.

John Bytheway: 00:35:28

I've heard [Sister Freeman](#) also talk about when the Savior's garment was touched and he said, who touched me? And the apostles are like, there's a thousand people here, and you say who touched me? And virtue has gone out of me. And the footnote says, power. I love putting those together. Virtue is power.

Hank Smith: 00:35:48

One thing that caught my eye this time around was, I will preserve thy life. I wonder if that's a worry for her. I mean, just at her baptism, there's people yelling and taunting and Joseph is getting hauled away as he's going to end up. It's going to happen many times. So I wonder if that's been a concern on her mind. And the Lord lets her know I'm overseeing this.

John Bytheway: 00:36:11

Help me out with the backstory here. Didn't they make a little dam in the creek so that they could have a baptism and people

kept destroying it? And that's why [Emma](#) hasn't been confirmed yet. That's why verse eight says future tense. He will lay hands on thee to get the Holy Ghost. And the crazy ironic thing, there's people that are disrupting them, breaking the damn they've made in the river. And then Joseph is arrested as a disorderly person. Oh, *he's* the disorderly one?

- Hank Smith: 00:36:40 You built this baptismal font for people to tear down. How dare you.
- John Bytheway: 00:36:44 How disorderly of you.
- Hank Smith: 00:36:46 Yeah, I mean ever since, we could talk about this Morgan, ever since she's really met Joseph Smith, her life has been, it's almost like, who did I marry? I'm constantly having to move because people are threatening my life.
- John Bytheway: 00:37:00 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:37:00 I think we heard that Martin Harris's wife, Lucy, ransacks Emma's house at one point. I will preserve thy life. No wonder she might feel that way.
- Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:37:11 I think that that's an interesting thing to dig into with, we already this year in Doctrine and Covenants studied that story of Martin Harris and the lost manuscript. One thing that was interesting that I learned is that Martin Harris, in many ways to Emma, was an answer to prayer. She knew that they needed somebody to help them. He had come along at just the right time. Then he asks if he can take those pages. We know the story. Joseph asked three times. Finally, the Lord says, you can do as you please. And Joseph gives him the manuscript. Martin leaves with that manuscript. And while he's gone, we learned that Emma loses their baby, is incredibly sick, when she is coherent from what she's gone through, and Joseph has been caring for her the entire time, she's like, where is the manuscript? And says, Joseph, you need to go find what Martin has done with this.
- 00:38:18 This is in [Saints](#). This is what it says about that situation with Martin Harris. After two weeks, Emma's health began to improve and her thoughts turned to Martin and the manuscript. "I feel so uneasy" she told Joseph that "I cannot rest and shall not be at ease until I know something about what Mr. Harris is doing with it". She urged Joseph to find Martin, but Joseph did not want to leave her. Send for my mother, she said, and she shall stay with me while you are gone. She knew that they

needed to go find out what was going on with the manuscript. She says, send for my mother and she'll stay with me while you're gone. Joseph took a stage coach north, he ate and slept little during the journey, tells what happened. Martin Harris says, I've lost my soul. But then Joseph says, must I return to my wife with such a tale? Joseph feared the news would kill her. And how shall I appear before the Lord? And I think that tells you how important the Book of Mormon was to Emma. We sometimes maybe underestimate her contribution in terms of being Joseph's first scribe. We'll talk a bit more about that later. I think that that is one more example of the adversity that Joseph and Emma went through together.

Hank Smith: 00:39:41 Yeah, we don't talk about it because we don't have those pages. So we don't see her handwriting. Her contribution is really lost. We talk about Oliver Cowdery. Oh, he's the one that was the scribe. If we lost Oliver Cowdery's portion, we wouldn't talk about him. All that work. All that work.

John Bytheway: 00:40:00 We get Emma talking about how Joseph could dictate for hour after hour and come back without having the previous lines read back to him. I'm so glad we have that, Emma's testimony of how that happened.

Hank Smith: 00:40:14 Yeah. And how excited they must have been. All this information, all this beautiful scripture. Oh Morgan, I like that you pointed it out that he thinks there's two people he's worried about. How am I going to appear before the Lord and what is my wife going to say? I shouldn't joke around, but those are my two questions often.

Sis. Morgan Pearson: What's my wife going to say!

Hank Smith: Oh man, the Lord's going to be mad to me. And what's Sarah going to say? Isn't that true?

Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:40:41 For the purposes of this conversation, maybe we jump to verse four because there, it's alluding to, and some scholars say that it's not necessarily talking about Emma murmuring that she hasn't seen the plates, but multiple prophets have said that that's what the verse is about. I went back to that last will and testament of [Emma](#) and they ask her questions about the manuscript specifically. I thought it was so interesting. Her son said, I should suppose that you would've uncovered the plates and examined them. Emma replied, I did not attempt to handle the plates other than I have told you, nor uncover them to look at them. I was satisfied that it was the work of the Lord and therefore did not feel it to be necessary to do so. And then it

says, Major Bidamon here suggested did Mr. Smith forbid your examining the plates.

00:41:39 And Emma said, I do not think he did. I knew that he had them and was not specially curious about them. I moved them from place to place on the table as it was necessary in doing my work. How disciplined and how faithful did she have to be to just, oh, I'm cooking dinner. Let me move these plates and I'm not going to uncover them. I'm just going to trust that it's not meant for me to see them. And she wasn't murmuring. She followed that council about the murmuring not for the things that she hadn't seen. I think it's also interesting to note she's not the only person that it says something about murmuring. I believe it's Oliver Cowdery also is told not to murmur. But in reference to that particular verse, Joseph Fielding Smith said, Emma Smith was human, possessing many of the characteristics which are found in most of us, being the wife of the man whom the Almighty had blessed.

00:42:39 She felt, as most women would have felt under like circumstances, that she was entitled to some special favors. It was difficult for her to understand why she could not view the plates, the Urim & Thummim and other sacred things, which view had been given to special witnesses. At times, this human thought caused her to murmur and asked the question of the prophet why she was denied the privilege. And then [Gordon B. Hinckley](#) said, she said he was speaking of the plates. And then he said, evidently she complained because Joseph would not show them to her. The Lord is saying to her murmur not, complain not, accept what must be in my eternal wisdom and do not find fault. My takeaway from that was Emma had to be pretty remarkable that that was her answer at the end of her life.

Hank Smith: 00:43:28 I've heard it said that integrity is what you do when no one is watching. I like that you used the word discipline, a disciple of Christ. Same word.

John Bytheway: 00:43:40 It's kind of a witness though. He had plates, she moved them. I mean, that would be pretty cool just to know he's got something and I feel it.

Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:43:49 Yeah. She says in that same [will and testament](#), I once felt of the plates, as they thus lay on the table, tracing their outline and shape. They seemed to be pliable like thick paper and would rustle with the metallic sound when the edges were moved by the thumb.

Hank Smith:	00:44:05	Hmm. It's really remarkable that she never said, oh, accidentally, I'm going to move this cloth over. But she knows, she knows the commandments and she keeps them, which is just beautiful. I hope to be more like that.
Sis. Morgan Pearson:	00:44:22	Let's back up for a second to verse three. So this is where Emma is called an elect lady. It's interesting because you have to understand that it was a call that was made 12 years prior to an official call to serve as Relief Society general president. So this is 1830. The Relief Society would not be organized until 1842. Joseph though, when he organized the Relief Society, he said, I gave much instruction read in the New Testament in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants concerning the elect lady, and showed that the elect means to be elected to a certain work and that the revelation was then fulfilled by Sister Emma's election to the presidency of the society. She having previously been ordained to expound scripture. Sister Freeman has said that the elect lady, and I'm not sure if she was quoting someone when she said this or if this was just her thought, but she said, an elect lady has heavenly privileges with personal responsibilities. I think that Emma took that call so seriously to be an elect lady and waited for that call to officially come to her. A lot of the things that we'll read throughout the rest of this section are things that would be done quietly and kind of in the background. But when that call came to be the Relief Society general president, she took it very seriously and was ready for it.
John Bytheway:	00:46:00	I just love the wording there. It's not I've chosen you to marry Joseph, it's no, you are an elect lady and I called you. Wow. What does that mean exactly? Well, I think that comes about later on, as you just said, with the Relief Society. But those last four words, whom I have called, I like to slow down when I read it, that had to mean something powerful to her.
Hank Smith:	00:46:22	When I read this for the first time, I thought of, look, Emma is not elect because she married Joseph. She is elect long before this. I read a little bit of her history in preparation for this. I didn't know her father Isaac fought in the Revolutionary War and that Methodism, just like Joseph had come through their town in Harmony, that Emma's uncle became an itinerant preacher for Methodism. And then there's this great family tradition. This is an article by Mark Staker says, A family tradition suggests that Isaac Hale overheard his young daughter Emma, praying for him in the woods near their home. And this contributed to his spiritual conversion. It doesn't seem like this whole process started when she meets Joseph Smith.

Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:47:12 And then there's also the story where Joseph is told that he'll know the right person to bring with them to get the plates. He thinks it's going to be Alvin, but then Alvin passes away unexpectedly. He realizes that it's Emma, and at that point they were not even married. I think that's significant as well.

Hank Smith: 00:47:34 Yeah. The restoration is not going to be brought about by one person. It's two. It's a couple.

Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:47:41 And a couple of the questions that came in were related to Emma and Relief Society. One came in from a Relief Society President asking, how can I inspire others to minister with true compassion? One thing that we see with Emma, I went back and read some of the Relief Society minutes from Nauvoo. I was struck by a couple of things. One was when The Relief Society was organized, she said, we are going to do something extraordinary, which we hear, we've heard that quote before, but I had never heard this second sentence. It says, when a boat is stuck on the rapids with a multitude of Mormons on board, we shall consider that loud call for relief. I think she had this ability to inspire people and to help them see what relief society meant. When you catch the vision of Relief Society, it's such a beautiful thing that you want to be a part of it.

00:48:39 It's not something that is a burden to do. It's something that you want to be there. I just had a baby. Exhibit A. When I had her, I was blown away by our little ward. We live here in Philadelphia. It's an inner city ward, mostly supported by students. There were seven of us pregnant in the same building, which is the majority of our ward, and I was so well taken care of by the Relief Society. I just think, do you want to inspire others to be a part of Relief Society? You help them catch the vision. Emma went on in that quote to say, we expect extraordinary occasions and pressing calls, which means you're going to do something that matters. And you may feel like it doesn't matter, but it matters quite a lot. And I think that Emma, she understood that. Another thing that I noticed in those minutes was she talks frequently about unity and how important unity is, which I think means we don't want to talk about each other behind our backs. We don't want to be petty. The interesting thing is, I think this got really complicated for Emma. When polygamy started to become a practice, Jenny Reeder said Emma actually did not attend Relief Society. I believe it was 1843. She didn't attend for an entire year. Jenny thinks that's because it was too hard to go to relief society. I think that just as there are things that make it difficult for us sometimes. Emma was human. There was a big thing that made it hard for her.

Hank Smith:	00:50:21	I've heard multiple stories as I've studied church history of Emma basically having a hospital in her front yard. One is when they cross out of Missouri. We'll talk about this later this year, but I mean it's the middle of the winter and they've got to leave the state. They get into Illinois. Emma's one of these refugees pouring into Illinois, yet she's the one out in the yards taking care of the sick. And then again, John, isn't it Nauvoo where the mosquitoes bring malaria and she's again, out in her front yard where it's become a hospital.
John Bytheway:	00:50:57	Remember that movie, they show you in Nauvoo of Emma just at a quick pace going from tent to tent, administering relief. I love that. The phrase relief society. I used to wonder, where did that come from? And if you go back to Jacob chapter two, you know how he's talking about, I'm worried that you're seeking riches and pride. He says, now, if you seek riches for the intent to do good, what does he say? Hank, to cloth the naked, liberate the captive, administer to their relief. And then King Benjamin picks up the same exact phrases. And I love to say to my classes, administer relief. If only we had some sort of, I don't know, relief society or something, because that's what they do, administer relief. And that's what Emma did. Relieve suffering.
Sis. Morgan Pearson:	00:51:43	We'll move on to verse five. There were a lot of questions related to Joseph and Emma's relationship, which probably doesn't come as a shock. But in verse five, Emma receives a calling to be a comfort to her husband. Jenny Reeder actually was nice enough to share with me a document that she put together, the letters that Joseph and Emma wrote back and forth to one another. And she said that in many ways, that is how Emma provided support, even at a distance to her husband. Obviously she provided support in many ways when they were not able to be together in person. You see Joseph and Emma communicating throughout and the love that they clearly shared for one another. And I think that that call to be a support is significant because Joseph would clearly need that support. But going to that last will and testament of Emma's, she was asked by her sons, what was the condition of feeling between you and Father?
	00:52:50	And she said it was good. And then they said, were you in the habit of quarreling? And she said, no. There was no necessity for any quarreling. He knew that I wished for nothing but what was right. And as he wished for nothing else, we did not disagree. He usually gave some heed to what I had to say. And then this part, this one line breaks my heart. She says it was quite a grievous thing to many that I had any influence with him. I think that that speaks to the time that Emma was in,

which was a time that women didn't have much of a voice. And I think that she did. I think that she was a sharp woman with things to say, but for some reason people didn't like that she had an influence on Joseph. That would be incredibly hard. I don't know if you two have thoughts on that.

- Hank Smith: 00:53:43 I don't know about those people who had that difficulty. To me, I can't see why you would have that. But maybe we live in a different time because the great people I've worked with, their spouse has often had that type of ennobling influence on them. A synergistic influence of they can do more together than they could apart.
- John Bytheway: 00:54:09 Yeah. The word that leaps off the page to me, Hank, is thou shall be a comfort. We talked about this on a previous podcast. I love etymology. Entomology is the study of bugs. So don't get that mixed up with etymology. Because that really bugs me. But no. So comfort means together strong. Well look at that Joseph and Emma together strong. Be a comfort. Be together strong.
- Hank Smith: 00:54:35 Morgan I brought another letter from Emma to Joseph. They're just beautiful to read.
- Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:54:42 They are.
- Hank Smith: 00:54:43 This is back when people wrote beautiful letters. I write emails, right?
- John Bytheway: 00:54:49 You text in code
- Hank Smith: 00:54:52 Yeah. This is 1837. She says, I cannot tell you my feelings when I found I could not see you before you left. Yet I expect you can realize them. The children feel very anxious about you because they don't know where you have gone. I verily feel that if I had no more confidence in God than some I could name, I should be in a sad case indeed. But I still believe that if we humble ourselves and are as faithful as we can be, we shall be delivered from every snare that may be laid at our feet and our lives and property will be saved. And we redeemed from all unreasonable encumbrance. That's just beautiful language. I cannot tell you my feelings when I found I could not see you yet. I think you know, it's an insight into their relationship.
- Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:55:44 Another letter that I love while we're on the topic of their letters in 1839, when Joseph was in Liberty jail, Emma wrote from Quincy, she had visited Joseph three times in the jail. And she says, the walls, bars and bolts, rolling rivers, running

streams, rising hills, sinking valleys, and spreading prairies that separate us. And the cruel injustice that first cast you into prison and still holds you there with many other considerations places my feelings far beyond description. No one but God knows the reflections of my mind and the feelings of my heart when I left our house and home and almost all of everything that we possessed except our little children, and took my journey out of the state of Missouri, leaving you shut up in that lonesome prison. But the reflection is more than human nature ought to bear. And if God does not record our sufferings and avenge our wrongs on them that are guilty, I shall be sadly mistaken. And then she says, I shall live and am yet willing to suffer more if it is the will of kind heaven that I should for your sake.

Hank Smith: 00:56:55 That is beautiful.

Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:56:57 So this is Joseph to her in Liberty Jail says, if you want to know how much I want to see you examine your feelings, how much you want to see me, I would gladly walk from here to you barefoot and bareheaded to see you and think it great pleasure and never count as toil. And Jenny said when he left the jail, his boots didn't fit well and his feet were bleeding inside the boots. He did walk almost barefoot with old tattered clothes to see his wife. So how much did they love each other? I would say quite a lot.

Hank Smith: 00:57:33 I had the privilege a couple of years ago to go to Independence Missouri with Dr. Alex Baugh. Because the Community of Christ just adores Alex so much, we were able to get into the archives. Now this letter is now actually owned by our church, but at the time it was owned by the Community of Christ. It was just a privilege. They let us hold it. And this is the last letter written on June 27th, 1844 from Joseph in Carthage jail to Emma. Willard Richards was the scribe for the letter. But then at the bottom in different handwriting, this from [Joseph](#). This is the last thing she reads from him. "Dear Emma, I am very much resigned to my lot. Knowing that I'm justified and having done the best that could be done, give my love to the children." Morgan, thank you for bringing up the letters. That takes it to a different level, doesn't it?

Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:58:37 While we're on the topic of the last thing that Joseph would've read from Emma, one thing I want to make sure that we talk about today is that Sister Freeman has talked about how the thing that struck her as she prepared her conference talk was the progression of the woman that we read about in Section 25, which was addressed to Emma when she was just 26, which I

loved in general conference that [Sister Freeman](#) pointed that out, that she said she was 26 years old because I'm 35, almost 36. And when she said that, it was like, whoa. I did not appreciate how young Emma was. She said, we see this progression between Section 25 and then this blessing that Emma desired of Joseph before he went to Carthage. There we have this 40-year-old version of Emma. In section 25, the Lord shared with Emma his will for her.

- 00:59:41 And in the blessing that [Emma](#) wrote, I think we see her hopes for herself. I read that blessing this week and I texted Jenny Reeder and I said, do you think that the Lord honored that blessing? Because there are some things that stood out to me. For example, she says that she wants to have a cheerful countenance, is one of the blessings that she says she would like to have. But toward the end of her life, the editor of the Boston Courier, Joseph Buckingham, commented that Emma had a countenance of sadness and her granddaughter commented that she had sad eyes and deep sorrow in her heart. I was like, do you think that the Lord honored the blessing? Jenny said, that's a tough one. She's like, I'm not really sure how that works, but I think Emma tried hard. We always say with All In that our hope is not with the question, what does it mean to you to be all in the gospel of Jesus Christ?
- 01:00:44 Our hope is not a bunch of self-righteous answers about why somebody is all in. But instead, this is how I would like to be. This is what I think being all in would look like. I think in that blessing, we get a taste of what Emma wanted to be. I love this that Joseph wanted her to write that blessing because it reminds me of the scripture in Helaman ten five, where the Lord says to Nephi, and now because thou has done this with such unwearyingness, behold, I will bless thee forever and I will make thee mighty in word, and in deed in faith and in works. Yea, even that all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word, and this is the thing that reminded me of Emma. For thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will, it seems to me that Joseph wouldn't ask her to write a blessing if he thought that she would ask anything that did not align with God's will.
- 01:01:47 Sister Freeman talked about, she said, I don't know what I would've asked for, but listen to some of the things that Emma asked for. In that blessing, she wanted wisdom and the ability to live without regret. She wanted the spirit of God and the gift of discernment. She wanted to raise children who could contribute to the kingdom of God and who would call her blessed. She wanted prudence in caring for an aging body, a cheerful countenance, and she wanted to perform all the work she had

covenanted to perform. She wanted to respect her husband and act in unison with him, and she wanted her loved ones to embrace the gospel so she could rejoice with them. If you Google Emma Smith's Last Blessing, there's a website for the [Joseph Smith and Emma Hale Smith Historical Society](#), and that last blessing is there. It's also printed in Jenny Reeder's book. The final thing that she asks for is she says that whatever her lot in life, she might be enabled to acknowledge the hand of God in all things, and it feels almost as if she knows what's coming that something hard. She had already been through so many hard things. She probably knew more hard was inevitable. When we see what Emma asks for, we get a sense for her heart. Maybe she fell short in some regards with those things, but that is the person that she wanted to be. I love that glimpse into Emma.

Hank Smith:

01:03:21

That's fantastic.



John Bytheway:	00:00:00	Stay tuned for part two with Morgan Pearson, Doctrine and Covenants sections 23 through 26.
Hank Smith:	00:00:07	Morgan, this has been fantastic so far. I've learned so much about Emma. What verse should we go to next?
Sis. Morgan Pearson:	00:00:15	This next verse is an interesting one because it can be interpreted in different ways. The Lord tells Emma, thou shalt go with him at the time of his going. Jenny Reeder talked to me when I called her this week and I was like, let me pick your brain about this. One of the big questions that came up when I put the question out on Instagram was, why didn't Emma go west? That was next to polygamy, the second most asked question. Jenny said that she thinks that Emma took this verse, thou shalt go with him at the time of his going very seriously that throughout his life you see that Emma tried to be with Joseph where possible. Joseph's body was in Nauvoo. Sister Freeman also talked about this on Inklings the podcast she does after her General Conference talk, she was asked this question. It was also the most asked question, I guess to her.
	00:01:18	She said that she had talked to historians in preparation for her conference talk and in talking to them, the main reason Emma stays is because Lucy isn't going to leave. She wasn't in good enough health to leave and Joseph's body was there in Nauvoo. And then Sister Freeman said, one of the things that I think is so beautiful is this is a woman who understood covenant relationship, both covenant relationship with God. And then Sister Freeman says, but I love that her relationship with Lucy and the thought of leaving Joseph was so overwhelming to her that she stayed and what came of that? We'll never know until Emma comes back and teaches us. I think that that's an important thing to keep in mind is that there were things that were keeping Emma in Nauvoo. Scripture Central talks about this desire that she had to take care of Lucy Mack Smith, which we know was Joseph's mother, her mother-in-law, at Brigham's invitation.

- 00:02:21 [Lucy](#) spoke at a General Conference of the church in October, 1845 and she expressed her desire to travel with the Saints West, but she said her health would not permit her to go that in poor health and crippled by arthritis. Lucy depended on the support of Emma and her own daughters, Catherine, Sophronia and Lucy, who also remained in the area for the rest of her life. And I love this that Lucy later spoke of Emma's care for her and said that on one occasion for five nights, Emma never left me, but stood at my bedside all night long. This was not just an excuse to not go west. This was something that actually meant a great deal to Emma. I think about my mom cared for her mother-in-law in the last days of her life, and I think that that is something that daughter-in-laws do fill a responsibility to their mother-in-law.
- 00:03:19 And Joseph wasn't there to take care of her. She felt like she needed to stay then. I love this as well. In First, Jenny Reeder's book, she says Emma was visited a number of times by members of the church from Utah. During one such visit, she told her visitors, you may think I was not a very good saint not to go west, but I had a home here and I did not know what I should have done there. I think sometimes we oversimplify Emma, we think, well, why didn't she go west? Everybody else went west. Emma is a human being and if we take a step back and think, well, how would I feel if I had a home somewhere and I didn't know what I was going to do and my husband's body was in Nauvoo and my mother-in-law was in Nauvoo? I think maybe then it becomes a little bit more complicated and complex. It's important to give her grace in that.
- John Bytheway: 00:04:14 Oh, that helps me a ton to look at verse six. Thou shalt stay with him at the time of his staying. I love that. I can understand even though he was buried wanting to be close there and what's more noble than taking care of your mother-in-law when her health is bad? So I'm going to remember that and extend grace like you said there, Morgan. That's a great way to look at verse six.
- Hank Smith: 00:04:37 I imagine Morgan, don't you think it was probably painful for her to see her friends leave? Mary Fielding, Hyrum's wife. I don't think Emma's saying, well, good riddance to all of you. It's I'm sure it's heartbreaking, probably never to see them again.
- Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:04:56 Yeah, it had to be a lonely thing to then if we go on to verse seven, it talks about that she is called to expound and exhort in teachings of the presidents of the church. It says that Joseph later clarified that all sisters should seek after this gift. Then we look at what does that gift mean? What does it mean to

expound and exhort? In the paper that I talked about, Jenny shared with me from the seminar that she attended about section 25. She wrote "The 1828 Webster Dictionary defines expound as to explain, lay open the meaning, clear of obscurity and interpret, which I think is probably what we would think of expounding meaning. She said, this makes Emma a theologian, a major influence in Joseph's own ministry and development of Latter-day Saint Theology. I wonder how Joseph and Emma work together, theological ideas, ministerial messages, doctrine and restoration.

00:06:03 We have no record of their pillow talk, but could her musings more so than her murmurings have influenced his sermons, especially before she became more publicly involved with the Relief Society? 12 years later, we'll talk more about the hymns later, but I think Emma probably was involved early on in more of our theology than we think. Our hymns obviously influence what we believe, what we sing about is what we believe. I think she was involved in that and then in the Relief Society, she also had an opportunity to publicly expound things to the sisters of the church. Jenny continues on to exhort on the other hand, and this was the definition that I found really interesting, she said is defined as to encourage, to embolden, to cheer, to advise, to incite by words, to animate to a good deed or any laudable conduct or course of action to stimulate in one way.

00:07:07 This seems to compliment her earlier charge to comfort her husband with consoling words of meekness. And then she talks about how a sister in the Relief Society said that Sister Smith, Emma and her counselors had administered to her and that she was healed. I think that Emma went about serving other people. You see her kind of ministering throughout her life in quiet ways. I also think this speaks to what we talked about before with the question that came in about ministering from the Relief Society president that was like, how do I inspire the sisters in my ward to minister? That's what Emma was good at. She was good at causing women to step into their own and do what they could and that maybe is a little bit of a unique quality that she had for her time was to recognize her voice and her influence. And I think that came from section 25. That was something she had been called to do and that empowered her to do it.

John Bytheway: 00:08:13 I love those descriptions. In fact, I wrote in my margin this list, she is to be a comfort, a scribe, an expounder and exhorter. And then on the next page we're going to see a writer, a learner, a compiler. I mean, this is a great list of using her capabilities and telling her what she can become.

Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:08:40

And I love that I mentioned that before that I think section 25 is the Lord telling Emma what she's capable of and what she can become. And then later we see that blessing that Emma writes that she desires of the Lord and that I think is who Emma at that point years later was aspiring to be. If we move on to verse eight, we talked before that Emma was baptized but she was not confirmed yet when section 25 came as revelation. Oh, you have a woman who's been baptized. Her confirmation hasn't happened. So in verse eight it says, for he shall lay his hands upon thee and thou shalt receive the Holy Ghost and thy time shall be given to writing and to learning much. As someone who loves to write, but also has become an absolutely terrible journaler, rereading this felt like a little bit of a nudge from the Lord.

00:09:47

[President Hinckley](#) called out that phrase about learning much and writing. He said she was to devote her time to learning much. She was to write giving expression to her thoughts. To you women of today who are old or young, may I suggest that you write that you keep journals, that you express your thoughts on paper. Writing is a great discipline. It is a tremendous educational effort. It will assist you in various ways and you will bless the lives of many. Your families and others now and in the years to come as you put on paper some of your experiences and some of your musings. I like that he says the word musings, but I think that idea of free writing and making sure that you are taking the time to write, I'm so bad about that and I appreciate that. The Lord says to Emma, this is something that's going to be important is to put down some of your thoughts and your writing. The question that I have though about that is, I don't know, outside of her contribution to the hymns, it doesn't seem like we have a ton of Emma's words. We have the words that she wrote to Joseph. And Jenny does talk about how one thing that's tough with Emma is that it seems like Emma's feelings on some things change over time. And so getting a clear sense of the way she felt can sometimes be tricky, but that's how we all are too.

John Bytheway: 00:11:18

I'm glad that you read that about President Hinckley. And I don't know about you guys, but I find writing is a clarifying thing when my mind is racing, writing gets it out there. Something about the act of putting it down is clarifying and really helpful. You could have chat GPT do a journal for you, but it's probably better to write it yourself, right? I've heard that there's research that writing with your own hand does something different in your brain than even using your word processor. Wow. To write things out. I mean now that our phones can

basically take dictation and even correct our grammar for us a lost art, perhaps.

Hank Smith: 00:12:06

It's hard for me to not rely on some sort of computer help, especially just with spelling, right? If I even get close enough, Google says, did you mean this? You know me so well, that's exactly what you know me so well.

Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:12:22

I love that you said that. So verse nine, I'll just quickly touch on, but then I want to come back to this thought. So in verse nine it says, thy husband shall support thee in the church. People have gone back and forth about whether that is saying Joseph in the church will provide for Emma or whether Joseph will support Emma in her calling. But there's no doubt that both of those things I think are true. Joseph took care of Emma and made sure that she was okay. He also supported Emma in her calling and gave her a voice. I think it was important to him to allow her to have influence and like she said, some people didn't like that. I appreciate that Joseph saw in Emma what she was capable of contributing. But going on to verse 10, I want to touch on this idea of artificial intelligence.

00:13:18

The name of this Come, Follow Me lesson is lay aside the things of this world and seek for the things of a better. I think that this is perhaps one of the parts of this section that may be most applicable to us today. I just had a conversation this last week with a friend and we were talking about Valentine's Day cards for our kids. I was saying I think there's a real tendency, especially within women. And so I'd love to know what Emma thinks about some of the things that we're up against as women today. Because there's quite a difference. But we were talking about Valentine's Day cards. I said the most important thing to me this year in doing Valentine's Day cards for the first time ever with my little girl was what would she think was cool? And so I designed this cheesy thing on Canva and that was it.

00:14:16

It wasn't anything like super fancy. My friend said I was tempted myself to like pull up Pinterest and try to come up with things. Then she said, I just realized I wanted to see what my kids could come up with on their own without me pulling in outside ideas and used their brains. She told me that she recently taught a lesson, her kid's elementary school class, had her come in and share something. And she had come up with this activity and she said, I had been tempted to use chat GPT to come up with something for this lesson. And then she thought, no, I want to see what I can come up with. And she said, this is the part that like kind of stopped me in my tracks. She said, do we even give our brains a chance to work for us? Or are we becoming so

reliant on these tools which are great used under the right circumstance like Elder Bednar recently talked about in his worldwide devotional.

- 00:15:19 These things are intended to be tools. They're not intended to replace us and our brains and our thoughts, right? I think that this verse is particularly important. What are the things of this world and how do we seek for the things of a better? [President Nelson](#) when he invited sisters to study this section, he said, part of this endeavor will require you to put aside many things of this world. Sometimes we speak almost casually about walking away from the world with its contention, pervasive temptations and false philosophies. But truly doing so requires you to examine your life meticulously and regularly. As you do so, the Holy Ghost will prompt you about what is no longer needful, what is no longer worthy of your time and energy. As you shift your focus away from worldly distractions, some things that seem important to you now will recede in priority.
- 00:16:16 You'll need to say no to some things even though they may seem harmless. As harmless as becoming consumed by making your kid look really great as you embark upon and continue this lifelong process of consecrating your life to the Lord, the changes in your perspective, feelings and spiritual strength will amaze you. That's a promise from President Nelson. And the manual invites us to list the things of this world that the Lord may want us to set aside. And so my invitation, I guess to listeners would just be, and it's something that I myself need to do, is think about what matters and what doesn't. And why do I do the things that I do? Am I doing them just because that's what everybody else is doing or am I doing it because I feel like it's important and I feel like it's what the Lord wants me to do?
- 00:17:13 Sometimes our desire starts from a place that is totally pure, but sometimes we get caught up in the comparison game and the social media game. I just think that is so important. And Sister Oscarson, a couple more quotes. Actually there is another verse that was the most quoted in General Conference, but there have been a few other references to this in General Conference. And again, this is the BYU citation index, which I think is such an underutilized tool. So a couple more quotes from General Conferences past that have quoted this verse. [Sister Oscarson](#) said, I suspect we cannot begin to imagine just how magnificent those things of a better world are. Sherri Dew said, Christ provided the pattern declaring prior to Gethsemane, I have overcome the world. The only way that we may overcome the world is by coming unto Christ and coming unto Christ means walking away from the world. It means placing

Christ and Christ only at the center of our lives so that the vanities and philosophies of men lose their addictive appeal. Satan is the God of Babylon or this world. Christ is the God of Israel and his Atonement gives us power to overcome the world. If you expect glory, intelligence and endless lives said [President Joseph F. Smith](#), let the world go. And I love that idea of letting the world go.

- Hank Smith: 00:18:42 Morgan, what was that website you used to get all of that?
- Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:18:47 That was the BYU citation index.
- John Bytheway: 00:18:51 Yeah, I think we talked about it before. It's so fun to explain it. When you explain it to people, they're like, what? Really? That exists out there? So the website is called scriptures.byu.edu. The app is called Citation Index and it has to be updated every time there's a new General Conference. But basically you can go through any verse in any of the standard works and if any church leader has used it in General Conference, it will pop up. And it's really fun to look at that. You go to Moses 1:39, for example, and hundreds other verses you'll find, wow, has anyone ever talked about this? And it's just kind of fun to look at that. But I'm really grateful for the people that do this and that update it every six months. They have a lot of work to do after every General Conference, but you can find the most recent things that have been said about any verse using citation index or scriptures.byu.edu. It doesn't cost anything. It's a remarkable tool. You'll have a lot of fun. Just go look at it.
- Hank Smith: 00:19:56 Yeah. And if you wanted to read every single one from the Doctrine and Covenants, it says there's only 29,136. That's it. You could probably do that in an afternoon.
- Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:20:09 Well, they're actually, I was looking to see, I was like, what is the most quoted verse from this section in General Conference? And it's actually verse 12. We'll get to that. But one last thing I wanted to touch on before we move on from this verse. President Hinckley said, I feel he, the Lord, was not telling Emma that she should not feel concerned about a place to live, food on her table and clothing. He was saying to her that she should not be obsessed with these things as so many of us are wont to be. He was telling her to get her thoughts on the higher things of life, the things of righteousness and goodness. Matters of charity and love for others, the things of eternity in this conversation. We're not saying that things that matter to you don't matter. I think all of those, many of the things that we worry about, especially as a new mom, I find myself more concerned and more playing the comparison game than I

probably should. I love the idea of really boiling things down to what actually matters. It seems in the way that the Lord talks to Emma here, that maybe that's something that women have always struggled with is how do we make sure that in an effort to care for our kids and take care of our husband, that we're not losing focus of the most important things?

- Hank Smith: 00:21:37 I have two quick thoughts. One is, look, the church is what, three months old at this point. You can tell the Lord sees the place for women in this church. Verse seven, you'll be ordained to expound scripture, exhort the church given thee by my spirit, you are going to write and learn. I love the Lord here early on saying, look, you're going to have a big role. Because You told us earlier, Morgan, this is my voice unto all. Verse 16. So I'm assuming that we could all take this on, that a woman in the church is to do all of these things. I just wanted to tell you a little story both of you about verse 10. I taught just in my New Testament class recently, the parable of the sower. John, you can help me out here. You've got the sidewalk and it's hard to plant a garden on the sidewalk.
- John Bytheway: 00:22:33 Mm-Hmm. The Bytheway side...
- Hank Smith: 00:22:35 Right? Yeah. The by the wayside you've got the rocky soil and then you've got this soil with all these weeds. And the weeds take up so much of the nutrients and the all the water and the plant just can't grow. The soil's good, but there's just too many other things competing for our time. So we talked about that in class and one thing the students came up with was deleting apps off your phone. Apps that are kind of weeds, they just take away your time and they don't give anything back. Well, we started talking about it and one girl said, I would delete an app and then I would redownload it. And she said, now I'm seeing myself like pulling out this big weed and then going and finding the weed and bringing it back and planting it back in my soil. It was just a funny moment of, could you picture someone saying, where's that weed? I've got to go grab that and bring it back into the garden.
- Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:23:35 Don't ask me how many times I've done that.
- Hank Smith: 00:23:39 Deleted something and then brought it back.
- Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:23:41 Yeah. Oh yeah. I am a classic delete for like a couple months and then redownload it. I'm an add it. So the first step is admitting you have a problem. So here we are.

Hank Smith:	00:23:56	Lay aside the things of this world.
John Bytheway:	00:24:00	I'm glad you brought that one up because in that parable some people are like, huh? And walk away. And some come up to Jesus and say, Hey, why are you teaching in parables? And after he quotes the calling of Isaiah, he says, here's the interpretation. And notice he names the weeds. The cares of this world right there, things of this world and the deceitfulness of riches. I think in the Mark version it says lusts of other things. They're all weeds. That idea that things of this world reminds me of Elder Patrick Kearon came to our stake to reorganize the stake and he told a story about monkey traps. I think it was they hollow out a coconut or something. They'll stick their hand through a small hole, but then they'll hold onto something and in doing so they'll make a fist and they can't get out. Elder Kearon was so good, he asked all of us to ponder what is it that you need to let go of? The things of this world idea. Everybody sitting there is probably thinking of apps. Yep.
Hank Smith:	00:25:07	Apps. I could just drop. Yep. I could just drop.
Sis. Morgan Pearson:	00:25:11	Moving on to verses 11 and 12, and we'll kind of put these together because they're both about the hymns you mentioned earlier. Please don't let this section just be about the hymn book. Hopefully we have not made it be just about the hymn book, but we would be remiss if we didn't talk about the hymns because of the contribution that Emma made and because of how important this was to Emma, this is one thing that Jenny talked to me about when I called her this week that I thought was so interesting. I had read this elsewhere, so I was asking her, I said, I read somewhere that a lot of the hymns that Emma put in the hymn book are not in our hymn book now. What we have now as the hymn book is very different than what Emma put together. So she put together two editions.
	00:26:02	The first appeared in the Kirtland Hymnal in 1836, and there were only 90 songs in this thin little booklet. Many of them were hymns that Emma was familiar with from the Protestant tradition. However, at least 26 of them were written by WW Phelps who later prepared and assisted in the printing of the hymnal. Only lyrics were written. There were no musical notes that accompanied the words to the song. So what was so interesting to me that Jenny said Brigham Young was over in Europe, he wrote to Joseph and said that these saints in Europe needed the hymns. He said, should I just put together a hymn book to print over here so that they have songs to sing? And Joseph wrote him back and said, no, no, no. Like the hymns are Emma's thing, Emma was assigned to do this by the Lord.

Brigham though because the mail system was so delayed, it took so long for the letter from Joseph to get back that Brigham had already printed a hymn book.

00:27:14 So when the Saints came over from Europe, they had Brigham's hymn book. We know that the hymn book is being redone right now. However, the latest edition of the green Hymn book was published in 1985. Many of the selections that Emma chose, some of them are still included in the hymn book, including I Know That My Redeemer Lives and How Firm A Foundation in the Ensign in September, 1985. It says that 26 of the hymns that were in the 1836 hymn book are included in our current hymnal. This would've meant that Emma and her thoughts on our theology contributed to the hymn book and the hymns contributed to the theology, if that makes sense. Jenny said that there were two hymn books, the one in 1836, and then one that was published in the early 1840s. With that in mind, going into verse 12, this is the most quoted verse in General Conference by a long shot.

00:28:18 And I think the reason that this is so quoted is that it's just a beautiful verse. The song of the righteous is a prayer unto me. This is according to President Oaks. The first presidency has declared that some of the greatest sermons are preached by the singing of hymns. And then President Oaks said, how wonderful when every person in attendance joins in the worship of singing, especially in the hymn that helps us prepare to partake of the sacrament. All sacrament meeting music requires careful planning, always remembering that this music is for worship, not for performance. I love that. Just last week it was announced that this little light of mine is in the new Hymn book. I think that sometimes we underestimate the power of music that is about Christ and music that is of a religious nature, not just in our sacrament meeting, but throughout the week in our homes. And I'll tell you a story of when I was kind of rebuked. You both probably know [Calee Reed](#).

John Bytheway: 00:29:22 Yeah.

Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:29:23 Calee, I interviewed her years ago and I said to her, I love your music. I listened to your music all throughout my mission. I love to listen to it on Sundays now. And she was like, well, why do you only listen on Sunday? I was like, well, because during the rest of the week I listened to other kinds of music. Essentially she said, I think it's really important to listen to music that is uplifting and about Christ throughout the week. It's not just for Sunday. I will tell you that I really took that to heart. Started trying to incorporate Christian music into my life other times of

the week. My mom is a great example of this. She has a playlist that she's created that is full of Christian music, not necessarily just our faith tradition, but other Christian music as well. She listens to it all the time to the point that it's like that is the song of my mom's heart.

00:30:25 It has been transformative for her. She would tell you that it has changed her life. She has playlists for different things, for different times, moods, things that she's going through. She relies a lot on that music. And I have noticed in my home with my little girls, well I'll say this with Emma, my daughter, I have become so appreciative to the people that write primary songs about Christ because I've seen how when we play those songs in our home, it invites a different spirit and it calms Emma down in the car. It's always helped her calm down and be able to sleep. There's so much power in inviting music that testifies of Christ into our homes. And I'm sure you both have seen that in your homes as well.

John Bytheway: 00:31:19 I'm glad you mentioned your mom. I was going to mention mine. My mom and I had a chance to speak at women's conference thanks to Hank's sister. Her talk was a principle and lines from hymn, a principle and lines from hymn, a principle and lines from a hymn. She was one of those that no matter what happened, I mean you stub your toe on a tree. She had a song about it from somewhere. It was amazing. But those were a big part of her life. She sang in the Tabernacle Choir. I love that. That verse actually gives us something that you might not have thought of that. Whoa. Singing is a prayer. Singing is a prayer to God. The song of the righteous is a prayer. When I was on my mission once, I was sitting on the stand with for some reason with my mission president and I was saying something to Elder Broderick about the upcoming meeting, something we had to do, President Smith, who I love and revere and adore Elder Bytheway, you wouldn't think of talking while somebody was praying, would you? No President. Well it says the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me. I was like, okay, thanks President. Okay, I won't talk during the hymns anymore.

Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:32:30 I love that because my dad always is, are you singing? Sing. He's known for handing the hymn book over with the right page open. I think that's a good reminder. Probably shouldn't be chatting it up during the hymns.

Hank Smith: 00:32:46 Morgan, I'm glad you mentioned the sacrament hymn because it made me think of, there's a little verse in Mark chapter 14, verse 26. This is after the last supper, just before the Savior goes to the Garden of Gethsemane. It's very simple. It says, and

when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Here the Savior is approaching his atoning sacrifice and they sang just before. Well look at the sacrament we sing just before we commemorate the atoning sacrifice. Maybe this feels kind of cheesy, but I like to think of us, you know, kind of uniting our voice with that group. Who sang at that last supper?

Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:33:29

That's a really beautiful thought. Moving into verse 13, it talks about cleaving unto covenants. I would tell you if there's one thing that I have come to appreciate in my work, it has been the value of covenants. I think that if we as members of the church truly understood the power that is associated with our covenants, the power that comes through the atonement of Jesus Christ, when we choose to unite ourselves with him in making and keeping covenants, we would recognize just how lucky we are to be members of the church. But there's a footnote in Sister Freeman's General Conference talk that I love. She says that she packed her footnotes full. So everybody should go look at the footnotes for that talk. She said the word covenant is of Latin origin, and I'm probably going to butcher my Latin here, *con veneer*. And it literally means a coming together in the context of the priesthood.

00:34:36

A covenant is a coming together or an agreement between God and man. It presupposes that God and man come together to make a contract to agree on promises, stipulations, privileges and responsibilities. Then she quotes Elder and Sister Renlund in their book, the Melchizedek priesthood, understanding the doctrine, living the principles. They said a covenant made in this manner is immutable and unchangeable. It anchors the soul. It creates a steadfast and sure foundation for future expectations. In those Relief Society minutes, one of the things that she talks about over and over again is unity. When we understand covenants and the idea of coming together, it's our coming together with God. And when we make covenants with another person, with that other person, I think in many ways this is what made polygamy tricky for Emma. And I wanted to ask John and Hank, when you get questions from students about polygamy, how do you approach that?

Hank Smith: 00:35:43

This definitely comes up in a religion class. When I say, Hey, let's ask questions. I think first is validating that this is tough. This is not easy. This isn't something you say, oh, come on, don't have a problem with that. I would be nervous if one of my students said, it's my favorite part. It's totally normal to be uncomfortable with that, don't you think John?

John Bytheway:	00:36:09	Yeah. In fact, I tell my students to own your questions and wrestle with them because wrestling makes you stronger. And this is a wrestle that I've had and continue to have and we all do with this one. Yeah, acknowledge that this is going to be a wrestle. You'll gain something from the wrestle.
Hank Smith:	00:36:31	I remember with our interview on section one hundred and thirty two, three years ago now, three and a half years ago, with Dr. Kate Holbrook . She was just phenomenal. I learned so much from her as we walked through that section, we could link that in our show notes. Unfortunately, Kate has since passed away. It was wonderful. She articulated it so well. You remember John, how she wanted to be just, she was careful in her words, she understood how sensitive this is. She said in the scriptures, can we all agree that the Lord uses monogamous marriages to bring about his purposes? And you and I said yes. She said, does that mean that all monogamous marriages are exactly what God wants? And you and I said, no, definitely not. Then she said that if in the scriptures can we agree that the Lord sometimes uses polygamous marriages to bring about his purposes and you and I said yes. And she said, and does that mean that all polygamous marriages were exactly what God wanted? And we said no. It was a simple comment, but it helped me go, oh, okay. These are principles the Lord uses, however not always used in a way he would appreciate. Does that make sense?
Sis. Morgan Pearson:	00:37:58	Makes complete sense. And I think that's maybe why it's so complex is that it's not a cut and dry easy to understand principle.
John Bytheway:	00:38:11	I'll ask the students, let's talk about it. What are some of the things you have come up with in your wrestle? And that's been helpful because I love to see the faith of students saying, I know God lives, Jesus is my Savior. I'm going to answer those questions first and then I'm going to wrestle with some of these things. And they bring up the verses in the book of Jacob about if the Lord says if I will raise up seed, I'll command my people. Otherwise they'll hearken to these things. You know those verses. And that gives kind of a scriptural purpose. Perhaps the Lord has in mind at times. And it wasn't what he wanted for those in the book of Jacob at the time. Interestingly, we also acknowledge that there were times the old patriarchs like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, plural marriages. Okay, why could that have been, all of that discussion is helpful, but it doesn't mean it still isn't hard. I'm grateful Hank and Morgan, that we can try to be as transparent as possible and talk about it and say what was going on? And I've seen a podcast that Brian Hales does. I think he was on Church History Matters. I would just tell

people, yeah, go find out what faithful scholars are saying about this and I think it'll be helpful.

- Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:39:28 This is something that if people want to gain more knowledge of what was going on at the time, the book first is a great resource and it's meticulously sourced. There are additional resources that you can build off of if you are interested.
- Hank Smith: 00:39:47 Yeah, Jenny is an incredible historian. She is as brilliant as they come. Let me add two more things that just come to mind. One is, I will sometimes take my students to one Nephi. Three. We'll talk about the commandment. Thou shalt not kill and here the Lord says to Nephi, to slay Laban. And you can see how Nephi struggles. Because He's writing this what decades after the fact and he's almost putting himself back there saying, I did not want to do this. This is not something I wanted. He wrestles with back and forth like you said, John. And then I'll ask my students, is Nephi a prophet? Yes. Can he do this and still be a prophet? They grew up reading Nephi. They'll say, yeah. And I'll say why? And oftentimes we get to the idea that the rest of Nephi's life tells us he loves God. He's sincere in keeping the commandments and that he truly believed, and I trust him that this was a commandment from God. And then we can take that pattern and we can apply it here in a way that everything in these people's lives tell us that they love God and that they wholeheartedly believe that this is from God and I trust them.
- John Bytheway: 00:41:16 The whole Christian faith. We also have to, if we believe in those old patriarchs and if we believe they were prophets.
- Hank Smith: 00:41:25 Right? That's what [Kate](#) was saying is can we all agree since we believe in the Bible that sometimes this is the case? John, do you remember when [Dr. Maclane Heward](#) was with us? Not this last time for the first vision, but previously years ago where he talked about when we get offended on behalf of other people. Do you remember that?
- John Bytheway: 00:41:46 What an amazing idea is I think I'll be offended for people 200 years ago.
- Hank Smith: 00:41:52 Yeah. And he said, do you remember he said, be careful. He said, be careful. It's good to go to other people's defense. But he said, are you listening to the people that you are offended on behalf of? You remember that? Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:42:09 What? What are they saying? Yeah.

Hank Smith:	00:42:10	What are they saying? I find it's not common, at least in my experience, for people who are offended by this, which is understandable, they haven't read what these people said. They've just assumed they know how they felt. That's why I appreciate people like Jenny Reeder who have gone and seen what these people said about their experiences.
John Bytheway:	00:42:41	I love what you read earlier, Morgan, that she had written about Emma. Not trying to say she's all this perfection or all this, but we are all complex. I think the phrase I remembered Hank from Maclane was that rather than being offended for them, let's be inspired by them. I'd never forgot that idea. Beautiful.
Sis. Morgan Pearson:	00:43:08	There are a few things I think that it's important to remember when we talk about this in Joseph Smith's time period in particular, I think things changed a bit. When the Saints went to Utah, I did an interview with a lady named Brittany Chapman Nash , who wrote a book for Deseret Book called Let's Talk about Polygamy. In our interview, she said in Joseph Smith's time, they tended to think more horizontally about the sealing ordinance. They would be sealed to a family member to unite those families together. So a husband and wife would be sealed and then other members of other families could be sealed. So you're creating this network of families. Then she went on to talk about a girl who was sealed to Joseph Smith. Jenny talks in her book about how Emma's feelings about this change over time. And so initially you see that she was cognizant of some of these sealings, says that she even selected and witnessed some of the sealings that Joseph was sealed to Emily and Eliza Partridge and Maria and Sarah Lawrence.
	00:44:19	It says both of these were sets of sisters who were orphaned and lived with the Smith family and that Emma may have seen it as extending their family under the Abrahamic covenant. But then there were others that were for Emma, Jenny says, Emma must have experienced great confusion. Joseph's earlier revelations defined marriage between one man and one woman. And on the second floor of the red brick store, she had covenanted with him and to him alone to head their own house of Israel to multiply and replenish the earth. She could accept the idea of extending their family network with Joseph sealings to other women. She understood the continuing role of revelation, but discernment was difficult. Social norms and personal feelings are hard to remove from prophetic instruction. That sentence is really important. Social norms and personal feelings are hard to remove from prophetic instruction. Emma experienced deep emotional trauma due to betrayal, distrust, embarrassment and anger.

00:45:20 I think that it's an important thing to acknowledge that sentence about separating personal feelings from prophetic instruction. We see that in other things today where it's hard when we have a personal tie to something that deals with doctrine or policy. I love Emma because of how hard she tries to understand. Somebody said, did Emma ever accept polygamy? And Jenny talks about how what we do know is that Emma was pregnant with Joseph's child at the time of his passing. And we also know that he never had children with any of these other women. So that's what we do know. It's interesting if people go and read, and I think this would be a question that would come up if people go and read that last will and testament interview with Emma. She's asked directly by her sons if Joseph had ever practiced polygamy. And I asked Jenny, I said, okay.

00:46:31 She says no in that interview, why is she insistent that he never practiced polygamy? And she said that there are three possible reasons. One, everyone who practiced polygamy in Nauvoo was sworn to secrecy. This changed a lot once they went to Utah. But in Nauvoo, everyone was sworn to secrecy. They had made a covenant to never speak of it. And then she said two, she denied it to protect her children and she had done so their whole lives. She said she didn't want them to worry about land and inheritances. Third, she didn't want to get mixed up in a very public practice of polygamy that was then going on out west. She said it was all over the papers and it was embarrassing to some people. For Emma that may have been what the situation was. But I wanted to read, if it's okay with you, Hank, when you reached out to me, I think it was because you read a piece that I wrote for LDS living and this was the last time we studied Doctrine and Covenants 25 in Come, Follow Me. So it was four years ago. I was so struck by Emma's humanity. I feel like I put into words then probably better than I could now the way that I feel about [Emma](#) in regard to this topic. So if it's okay with you, I'd like to read just a little bit of that.

Hank Smith: 00:47:57 Morgan, I have to tell you, you stole my thunder because I was going to quote this great author at the end and to see if you would recognize it. And so I'll have to hang onto my quote and it won't be as much of a surprise.

Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:48:10 You're so sweet. Well, I kind of what we were talking about before that we express ourselves better in writing than we do in speaking. This is a good example of that. I wrote it like it was an open letter to Emma and I said, we know that you struggled to accept that plural marriage was in any way divinely directed and as a result experienced a great deal of anger and feelings of

betrayal. This is something I have known most of my life, but what I didn't know how much you fought those feelings of resentment and how much you wanted to understand. I didn't know how much you took the fall, often blaming these feelings, feelings most of us would feel on your own shortcomings and weaknesses. In First, Jenny Reeder's biography about you, she recounts the fact that you told Maria Jane Johnston, a young woman working in boarding at the mansion house, the principle of plural marriage is right, but I am like other women.

00:49:06 I am naturally jealous hearted according to that statement from Johnson. You also admitted the need to be humble and repent. But I think that that tells us also something about Emma. I think that it gives us insight into, again, the person that Emma wanted to be because she loved Joseph and she believed that he was a prophet. But she says she was naturally jealous hearted and she needed to be humble and repent. But all of those were feelings that likely any wife would've felt. I hope that in looking back at Emma, that we can give her the credit that she deserves for her character.

Hank Smith: 00:49:49 Absolutely no question. I had a conversation with a friend the other day who works in the church history and doctrine department. And so this question comes up a lot. He was there with another faculty member from the same department and in some sort of forum and he said that this other professor who's Steven Harper, he said, he's smarter than me because someone asked about plural marriage. And Emma Smith, my friend, said he kind of hemmed and hawed and offered a couple of thoughts about how Emma felt about plural marriage. And then he said, Steve, do you want to come up? And I love historians like Jenny Reeder and we've had Gerritt Dirkmaat and Steve Harper. Steve stood up and he said, we don't know how Emma felt about polygamy. We only know what others say Emma felt about polygamy. He just went right to the sources that they are very limited. History is harder than we think. Someone can make a webpage and say, look at this, this and this, and come to a certain conclusion that they believe they are absolutely right. But then you talk to a historian, a real historian who's been trained and they say, whoa, we have this piece of information and this piece and this source. And that's about it. Really hard to make certain you're a hundred percent right. Conclusions like that. John, we've talked about this many times.

John Bytheway: 00:51:23 Yeah, that's why I love, as you just said, Hank historians, they have certain rules. They'll let you know, is this a firsthand account? Is this what somebody heard somebody say who heard about this? Where do those accounts fit and which ones

do we give more weight than the others when you back up and are like a careful historian that way. Thank you Steve Harper. We don't know. Maybe we will get to ask her one day, but we can only read what others said right now.

- Hank Smith: 00:51:56 Morgan, is that the sense you get from Jenny that she's careful?
- Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:51:59 For sure. Absolutely. Because I think that's why it's so impressive to me when everything is sourced so well, it's like I'm not just sharing hearsay like here is the note that this comes from, that I'm drawing this from. That is such a skill and that's probably why people are probably like, why does she just keep quoting different people? I am, like I said, I'm not a scholar. I have so much respect for people that have put in that work to understand the best that they can. Like I said at the beginning of this, I am a journalist, what do I do? I try to draw out what I can learn from other people. Hopefully that little bit is worth something.
- Hank Smith: 00:52:45 Morgan, thanks for bringing this up and not shying away from it. That's important. Youth today, young adults today, they want to know, they want to talk about it. John, we will be talking about plural marriage later in the year. It's going to come up in the later sections of the Doctrine & Covenants.
- John Bytheway: 00:53:02 Yeah, we'll be talking about it later probably even with more time. But if we're going to talk about Emma, that is a great question and I think what Morgan brought is what many people would want to ask her about it.
- Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:53:16 It's a tough topic. I'm glad you got more coming on it. Hopefully we at least can drive pupils to some good resources. If we move on gentlemen to verse 14, there's a couple of things that I wanted to basically point people to. Two talks that I love under the same topic. In this verse it talks about beware of pride. The Lord warns Emma to beware of pride. Then it also talks about meekness. And I think that there have been some landmark talks that have been given on these topics that if people are looking to expand their study, one is [President Benson's](#) Beware of Pride talk, which is a classic. He says it better than I could ever say anything here. So I just say, that's a great talk if people want to study that more this week in Come, Follow Me. And then Elder Maxwell has given multiple good talks about meekness.
- 00:54:19 [Elder Maxwell](#) gave a talk called meekly drowned in destiny and he also gave a talk called meek and lowly. And I think those two talks are amazing for people that want to better understand this

idea of meekness. Meekness I think is a Christlike attribute that can be harder to understand. And then we'll just move on to verse 15. We've already talked about verse 16. So this is the last verse that we'll tackle. Sister Freeman in her General Conference talk. She said last, the Lord outlined a process of inward sanctification that would prepare Emma for exaltation except thou do this, the Lord explained to her where I am, you cannot come. And then the footnote there says, [President Dallin H. Oaks](#) taught the ordinance of baptism and its associated covenants are requirements for entrance into the celestial kingdom. The ordinances and associated covenants of the temple are requirements for exaltation in the celestial kingdom, which is eternal life, the greatest of all the gifts of God.

00:55:30 The Lord is saying to Emma, this is how you will make it back to me. Essentially the scriptures say that is the Lord's work and his glory. He spends all of his time thinking about how he can bring us back to him. I think this was him telling Emma, this is how you'll make it back to me. Going back to something that I believe I quoted at the beginning of our conversation, Sister Freeman continues, if we read section 25 carefully, we discover an important progression taking place. Emma would go from being a daughter in the kingdom to elect lady to Queen and Melchisedek priesthood ordinances combined with the keeping of her covenant promises would increase her companionship with the Spirit and with angels empowering her to navigate her life with divine guidance. I think that that progression is important. I think it's important for us to think about ourselves and our own progression, also others around us to allow other people the ability to progress. As we've talked about throughout this discussion, I think we have to allow Emma's progression. We can't judge those around us. And the Lord is telling Emma what he sees in her, which is a queen in his kingdom.

Hank Smith: 00:57:02 Morgan, I have loved this. What you've done is just showed us Emma Smith. Walked us through maybe her life and her feelings. It's just been wonderful. I have a story. I don't know if either of you have heard. There is a story that [Joseph F. Smith](#), the son of Hyrum on his way to a mission to England, stops in Nauvoo. It's the very first time Joseph F. Smith returns to Nauvoo since he had left when he was just a boy. Emma Smith recognizes him right away, says, I would've known you anywhere. She goes on to say that Joseph F. looked just like his father, Hyrum. As Joseph F. was leaving, she said something like, will you be wandering? Which was a phrase for missionary work. And he said quite a lot of that before I return home. And then Emma asks, are you fond of it? And he said, to be truthful,

I would rather be home. That's a missionary moment, right? She says, with tears in her eyes. Someday, I hope all of us will be able to stay home with our families. [Neil L. Andersen](#) said, whether in this life or the next all will be made right.

- Sis. Morgan Pearson: 00:58:17 I love that story, Hank. Because I feel like it gives us wanting to be home with your family. It shouldn't be too big of a thing to ask for. Does that make sense? I feel like that's like such a little thing that is all that Emma wanted. I think that it's important for us to acknowledge the sacrifices that were made by so many people for us to have the gospel that blesses our lives today. Yes, we continue to make sacrifices as members of the church, but I don't know that we will ever truly understand the sacrifices that were made by people of Emma's time period.
- John Bytheway: 00:58:56 This has been really, really beautiful. Hank don't you have a favorite author who said something about this also in a beautiful way?
- Hank Smith: 00:59:04 Yes, and Morgan stole my thunder earlier for this great moment. So this is what I read as I'm thinking about the guest for this very important lesson about Emma, I'd, you know, of course heard of Morgan before, listened to All In. She wrote this. I remember reading it for the first time and I thought this, this is exactly what so many of us would say. So Morgan, I'm going to quote you to you. You said, Emma, your fingerprints are all over this church. They are seen in the Relief Society, the organization for which you were the first president, which is now the largest organization of women in the entire world. They are seen in the hymns of the church, which the Tabernacle Choir, one of the most famous choirs in the world has performed across the globe. Your fingerprints are seen as women exhort and teach something that remains uncommon in many religions and in many parts of the world. We are proud of who we are and proud that you came before us. We thank you for paving a path that at times was without a doubt, treacherous, scary, lonely, and confusing. Emma, we don't know how you did it, but I think I speak for millions worldwide when I say we are so glad you did. Morgan Pearson that's great writing.
- Sis. Morgan Pearson: 01:00:39 You're very sweet. I got emotional listening to you read it, I'm grateful that you asked me to do this because preparing for that podcast and writing that article four years ago was really impactful for me with this section of Doctrine and Covenants. And because you invited me to do this, I feel like I've had a different experience with Emma this time around. I just can't think about her without feeling tender emotions. And this time, four years ago, I was not a mom. So thinking about Emma and

all that she went through with her kids, and as a mom and a wife, I feel a lot more gratitude than I did even then. Jenny talks in the introduction of her book, she says to Emma for being a part of my heavenly host as I have been a part of her earthly host. We were just doing Come, Follow me last night with my little girl and talking about the ministering of angels and trying to put it in words that a 21 month old will understand. I think that we do. We have angels that are on the other side that care about us and our wellbeing. We should care about them and their reputation, the things that are said about them, and we should protect their good name. And so hopefully today we have been part of Emma's earthly host. I think it's a good host to be a part of.

John Bytheway:	01:02:11	And you know, speaking of hymns, millions shall know Sister Emma again, one day too.
Hank Smith:	01:02:21	This has been a great day. So fun to learn from someone who is so passionate about a topic and has paid the price to understand it so well, Morgan, thank you. We hope that all of you listening will go and check out Morgan's podcast, All In. She has the most fascinating people there and she lets them tell their story. It is really fun, really fun to listen to. She was kind of giving us hints as to who she's got coming up and you don't want to miss these. They are going to be fun interviews. And with that, we want to thank Morgan Pearson. And for a while we had Jane Pearson with us. Mm-Hmm. Our youngest guest ever.
John Bytheway:	01:03:09	Ever.
Hank Smith:	01:03:10	Yeah. Ever.
John Bytheway:	01:03:12	Making her debut.
Hank Smith:	01:03:13	Yeah. One day when she comes on and we'll say, we're glad you're back. With that, we want to thank our executive producer Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen. And with every episode we remember our founder Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We are going to continue in these next sections of the Doctrine and Covenants on followHIM. Today's show notes and transcript are on our website. Followhim.co. That's followhim.co. Of course, none of this could happen without our production team. David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra, Amelia Kabwika, and Annabelle Sorensen.

REPLANTING WEEDS



- Hank Smith: 00:03 Hello everyone. Welcome to another FollowHIM Favorites. This is where John and I are sharing a single story to go with each week's lesson. John, we're in sections 23, 24, 25, and 26 of the Doctrine and Covenants, and you've told me you have a story.
- John Bytheway: 00:18 Yeah. Hank, we had a great discussion when we did these sections and one of the little phrases that's here is lay aside the things of this world and seek for the things of a better, and you said something about having apps that you ought to delete. And it reminded me of a story. I have a little book called, I Still Want to Be An Astronaut by James Perry.
- Hank Smith: 00:38 I know James, he's a great guy.
- John Bytheway: 00:40 Yeah, he's great. He said, I know I talk about Matt Meese a lot, usually in a good light, but he suggested a corrupt app to me once. It's called Adventure Capitalist. And you click a button to pretend to start a business, then you click a button to pretend to sell stuff. Then you click a button so the computer clicks the button for you. That is the entire game. And for some evil reason, it is so addicting because you see your money go up and up and you can get upgrades. One upgrade makes you start the whole game over, but this time it goes faster. So you make money faster, but you have to do the whole thing again. That way there's no end in sight and you keep going back to make sure all the buttons are clicked. There is no skill and it is the devil.
- 01:20 My life changed the day I deleted the app. It was the bravest thing I did that day and I was finally free. I couldn't keep going into the app to check it because it wasn't there anymore. You have to actually delete the app. You have to commit, or your suffering will never end. It does not matter how much work you put into the app. If it is bad for you, it is bad for you. You can't say, I put so much work into making this cake out of gunpowder and thorns and sin so I have to eat it now. In economics, it's called sunk cost because you can't get your money back. It's

sunk. But you can decide not to waste the money you still have on it. Don't keep making a decision, you know, it's just bad because you've already spent a ton of time making it. Let it go. It's in the past and move forward with better decisions. Seriously though, delete the app.

Hank Smith:	02:09	That is awesome. that's funny. We need to have Matt and James on the podcast with us.
John Bytheway:	02:16	Oh, we wouldn't get anything done. We'd just sit there and laugh. Yeah.
Hank Smith:	02:19	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	02:20	I love the idea. Lay aside the things of this world. Seek for the things of a better, and Hank, you told me about a student.
Hank Smith:	02:27	Yeah. She said that she deleted an app and we were talking about the parable of the sower and how apps could be like weeds, right? They take all of our time, but don't give anything back. She said, I just realized that I have deleted an app and then redownloaded it. And that's like pulling out a weed and then going and finding it and replanting it back in your garden. We have a good laugh about that. So John, maybe verse 10 would be, lay aside the apps of this world and seek for the things of a better, and that could be the Gospel library app.
John Bytheway:	03:00	There you go.
Hank Smith:	03:01	James, thank you for that awesome story. Hey, come join us on our full podcast. It's called FollowHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcasts. We are with Morgan Pearson this week. She's a podcaster and a journalist. She loves Emma Smith. It shows when she tells her story.
John Bytheway:	03:17	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	03:18	And then come back here next week. We'll do another followHIM Favorites.