



*“Seek Ye Earnestly the Best Gifts”*

## Show Notes & Transcripts

### Podcast General Description:

followHIM: 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 do we seek “the best gifts?” Professor Danny Ricks explores the Saints early days in Kirtland, the nature of spiritual gifts, and the importance of welcoming all to the Restored Church.

#### Part 2:

Professor Danny Ricks continues to discuss spiritual gifts, record keeping, and warns against criticism.

## Timecodes:

### Part 1 -

- 00:00 - Part 1 - Professor Danny Ricks
- 04:10 Bio of Danny Ricks
- 05:53 *Come, Follow Me Manual*
- 09:53 Gifts of the Spirit and persecution
- 12:29 Allowing all to attend
- 13:50 D&C 46:3-6 - Could the Lord be clearer?
- 14:50 D&C 35:17 - Jesus wants smokers, drinkers, and sexists.
- 18:48 You had better follow the Holy Ghost
- 21:34 Satan preys on Imposter Syndrome
- 27:36 A bishop in overalls
- 31:52 Meetings directed by the Spirit
- 35:11 Gratitude is a cure-all
- 39:17 Understanding comes with time
- 42:51 Seeking spiritual gifts
- 47:27 Administrative gifts
- 50:55 Elder Packer "Our Moral Environment"
- 53:15 A spiritual autopsy
- 55:47 The love of a comma
- 59:13 Nodding at Nephi
- 1:01:00 Given to believe
- 1:03:41 Varieties of gifts
- 1:07:17 End of Part I - Professor Danny Ricks

### Part 2 -

- 00:00 - Part 2 - Professor Danny Ricks
- 00:47 The gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues
- 05:06 The value of a mentor
- 07:47 The gift of discernment of spirits
- 09:08 When to correct others
- 12:24 The builder poem
- 14:28 The art of giving and taking criticism
- 15:15 Grandpa wisdom
- 18:20 A list of spiritual gifts
- 23:33 Why we need the gift of ministering
- 25:35 Seeking after spiritual gifts
- 27:52 D&C 47 - The lessons of Church History
- 30:41 Judgment, justification, and journaling
- 34:11 A plug for Family History work
- 36:02 The *Get Involved* app
- 41:08 D&C 48:3 - God encourages action
- 45:15 The myth of soulmates

- 47:38 Testimony from a farm boy
- 53:59 End of Part 2 - Professor Danny Ricks

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## Biographical Information:



Danny Ricks is a devoted husband to his wonderful wife and a proud father to five great kids. With a deep interest in church history and world religions, he is passionate about exploring and understanding the diverse spiritual traditions that shape the world.

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## Seek Ye Earnestly the Best Gifts

### PART 1

GUEST: PROF. DANNY RICKS



- Hank Smith: 00:00:00 Coming up in this episode on followHIM.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:00:03 Look at what Joseph as a prophet is restoring. In five years. It's Dickens, right? It was the best of times. It was the worst of times.
- Hank Smith: 00:00:11 Yeah.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:00:12 Temple is built. The keys are restored. Angelic visitations. People after the Kirtland temple dedication thought they were in the millennium. They're like, is this the millennium? Have we been here? because Christ has come. We have multiple appearances. Maybe we're in the millennium. Within months, members of the 12 apostles have apostatized. Joseph and Sidney have to run for their lives. Their life was in danger. Plots to kill the prophet Joseph. This idea of being like prayer and thanksgiving. What happened to being thankful for everything Joseph had restored through God? They stopped being thankful for the light and knowledge that had been restored from a prophet of God to the point that they were deceived by this evil spirit. Be thankful for what you have. What's better than the plan of salvation? There's not one thing I've ever heard in my life that lights my soul on fire like the plan of salvation.
- 00:01:05 I lived before I was born. I have heavenly parents. There's a plan for this experience here on earth. I can become like my heavenly parents. Are you joking me? There's nothing sweeter but then all of a sudden, yeah but yeah, but he's a bad banker and I lost some money. True. At the same time, be thankful for what's been restored. Families are forever. That doctrine? One stop shopping here. If your heart resonates with that and you know it does. Creedily we're the only religion I know of that believes in families are forever. Yet every love song, every poem is like no forever love. We trail that from the Premortal life. Let's be thankful you got that because of a prophet.

Hank Smith: 00:01:53 Hello everyone. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I am your host. I am here with my co-host John Bytheway. Now John, section 46 has so many descriptors to choose from, so I'm going to use as many as I can here. John Bytheway, who has the gift of the word of wisdom. John Bytheway, who has the gift of knowledge. John Bytheway, who has the faith to be healed. John Bytheway, who has the faith to heal. John Bytheway, who knows the differences of administration, the diversities of operations. John, you have all of these gifts. It's pretty incredible.

John Bytheway: 00:02:33 Well I'm seeking them.

Hank Smith: 00:02:35 John. Speaking of gifts, we are joined by a person with many gifts. This is Danny Ricks. He teaches up in the religion department at BYU Idaho. Welcome Danny.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:02:47 Thank you. Good to be here.

Hank Smith: 00:02:49 Comes highly recommended by many of our guests, John. So both of you, we are in sections 46, 47, and 48 today. Actually not a lot of verses to cover compared with some other lessons we've had. So John, when you think gifts of the spirit, the name of the lesson is seek ye earnestly the best gifts. What comes to mind?

John Bytheway: 00:03:10 I have the gift of guilt. It's not actually here, but that's what I have I feel like every time I study this and I hear that phrase, seek earnestly the best gifts, I think I need to do that and I'm always fired up when I read it and then I forget and I don't do it. So I don't fit your description Hank. I need that reminder that the gifts are available and to seek them more often.

Hank Smith: 00:03:34 Yeah. Danny, as you've been looking at these three sections, what are you looking forward to?

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:03:40 One fun thing about the Doctrine & Covenants, there's not a lot of continuity. Section 46 is unique. Section 47 is unique. Section 48 is unique. There's a lot of individual nuggets I think are really applicable. Everything's enriched when we make sure we understand the context.

Hank Smith: 00:03:55 I remember being a young seminary teacher and they'd say, okay, teach these four sections. Find a common theme. You're like, well there is no common theme in these.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:04:05 Jesus is the theme.

Hank Smith: 00:04:07 Have faith.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:04:08 Get people to Jesus with these sections.

Hank Smith: 00:04:10 Yeah. John, Danny hasn't been with us before, so let's introduce him to our followHIM audience.

John Bytheway: 00:04:19 Danny Ricks we learned is related to the namesake of Ricks College. He's up there teaching at what is now BYU Idaho and one of our friends and my former student Jonathan Heder, wore a Rick's college shirt when he was in Napoleon Dynamite. Sometimes I look at DI if I can find that shirt, that would be really cool. Danny talked to us about being raised on a farm, which I love. The farmer stories and the farm ethic and the farmer habits are are so awesome. Brother Danny Ricks went to BYU Idaho and also has a master's from Northern Arizona University. He's taught for over 20 years as a religious educator. This is what I saw in your bio that I wanted to ask you about on the Navajo and Hopi reservations.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:05:06 I got hired to teach seminaries and institutes as just a young pup and they sent me down there with my family.

Hank Smith: 00:05:11 Wow.

John Bytheway: 00:05:12 Wow.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:05:12 It was wonderful.

Hank Smith: 00:05:13 What was that like? How would you describe that?

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:05:16 Yeah, so when you're young you don't even know that it's anything that anyone else isn't doing. It was wonderful. So I coordinated, I taught release time seminary there five classes. I taught institute classes and then I coordinated seminary institute from Chito to Kaito to Shonto to Tuba City, the works. It was wonderful. Pretty amazing adventure. My wife and I often think that that's kind of where we like grew up because we had our firstborn and literally went down there, found out we got hired the day that we brought Avery home from the hospital. Some of the greatest people I've ever met in my life.

Hank Smith: 00:05:53 Well Danny, we are so happy that you are here. I'm guessing throughout our lesson today we're going to hear a little bit about growing up on a 3000 acre farm. I hope that that comes up. Here's how the [Come, Follow Me Manual](#) starts this lesson. As Parley P. Pratt, Oliver Cowdery, Ziba Peterson and Peter

Whitmer Jr. left Kirtland and moved on to continue preaching the gospel. They left more than a hundred new members of the church who had plenty of zeal but little experience or direction. John, that sounds like us little experience or direction. They had no instructional handbooks, no leadership training meetings, no broadcasts of general conference. In fact, they didn't even have enough copies of the Book of Mormon to go around. Many of these new believers had been drawn to the restored gospel by the promise of marvelous manifestations of the Spirit, especially those described in the New Testament. But many found it hard to identify true manifestations of the Spirit. Seeing the confusion, Joseph Smith prayed for help. The Lord's answer is valuable today when people often deny or ignore the things of the Spirit. He reaffirmed that spiritual manifestations are real. He also clarified what they are. Gifts from a loving heavenly Father given for the benefit of those who love him and keep all his commandments and him that seeketh so to do. Wow. Alright Danny, with that, how should we start this lesson?

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:07:18

Church is small, but a boom in Kirtland that Lamanite mission provides wonderful, wonderful fruit. Ohio's the Wild West It's not the east coast, it's rural, it's agricultural, it's off the beaten path. Joseph's there now Joseph's just a pup himself. He's 25 years old at the time they didn't even realize I'm sure. How could you, how could you realize the amazing things that are going to happen in Kirtland? More experiences of the Father and the Son in Kirtland than anywhere that we have recorded in church history. This is already some fun facts for Joseph and Emma. Yeah, seven moves in four years of marriage so far. Then once they get to Kirtland, this is the span of everywhere that they're going to live there. Seven places in Kirtland, the Whitney home, the Morley farm, that's where the twins died. The Johnson farm for about a year.

00:08:12

The Whitney store was about a year and a half and the school of prophets going on at that time where that was up there. And then they had their own home for four years. And sometimes I think we kind of make Kirtland like an asterisk in church history. We were like the first vision and then we're in Nauvoo and thriving. If you break up everywhere that Joseph lived his adult life the most is in Kirtland, Ohio. This is there, nine recorded appearances of the Savior to the prophet Joseph. Five recorded appearances of the Father and the Son. This is the place and it quickly becomes the bulk of the members of the church are here in Ohio, thus the command to go to the Ohio. So people start congregating. We kind of forget that everybody is a new convert at this time. Everyone is there.

00:08:56 There's no lifelong members, no one's been born into the church and raised to adulthood and this mix of cultures had to be so unique. There's internal diversity in every religion, but then let alone Christianity and you've got people that are super pious. We were viewed as a Pentecostal religion at this time. If you're looking at the culture, we have visitations from God the Father and Jesus. We have angels. We're so comfortable with angels. We put them on our most beautiful buildings. We like own angelic visitations. You mix up all of these people, there isn't that culture that we have now. You take all of these people new converts and you put them into one room. Now you're going to have questions arise. They had some real Pentecostal experiences. I don't know if these are real. How does this happen? Let's ask God, Joseph's superpower, let's ask God.

00:09:53 And then we get this downloaded revelation in section 46 that adds a number of other issues. So gifts of the Spirit certainly are a focus, but also there's persecution. We're already getting experiences in New York, Pennsylvania. They have to move because of persecution. And this is even before we get hard stuff. This is before plural marriage. This is before three kingdoms of glory. This is before we get things. I mean we're already in too many reality TV shows, but we would certainly be a group that would attract some attention at this time. Do we even allow people in? Some missionaries got beat up really bad? Do we even let people come? Do we vet people before they can come to our church meetings? That's kind of a contextual breakdown to see why God delivered what he did to Joseph at this time. At least with section 46.

Hank Smith: 00:10:46 Oh I love it. The church isn't even a year old. March 8th, 1831.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:10:52 Yep. Not even a year old.

Hank Smith: 00:10:53 Yeah, we've moved. The growth is incredible, especially those four missionaries planning to go out past the Mississippi River, which might as well be the moon so far away yet they stop here in Kirtland. Everything changes. I don't know if Joseph Smith thought, yeah, we're going to start this church and we're going to move to Ohio. Danny, I really liked what you said. Ohio is the wild west. There is no one today that I think would be like Ohio, especially those of us in Utah. Ohio is not the wild west. It is the east coast almost for these people. When you're moving this far west, you're getting far away from cities.

John Bytheway: 00:11:34 We're used to a pretty orderly thing. We know what's going to happen. The bishop's going to welcome everybody or a member of the bishopric and then we're going to have an opening hymn

and then we're going to have an opening prayer and then we're going to have ward business and none of that stuff had been figured out. Boy Danny, what you said is like, who do you let in and maybe if people are going to beat us up, Hank, I don't know if this has ever happened to you, but you guys remember that John Whitmer was a historian for a time. I was reading in [Steven Harper's book](#) and he tells this, I wonder if this has ever happened to you. He tells this story, Missionary John Murdock, Murdock twins and his companions were preaching in Cleveland. A deceiver came forward, knelt as if to pray. Actually he was giving quote a sign to the banditry to begin their abuse. Immediately his cohorts blew out the candles and threw ink stands and books at the speaker. So Hank, has that ever happened to you? Ink stands and books.

- Hank Smith: 00:12:28 Oh my word.
- John Bytheway: 00:12:29 Later back in Kirtland, the brethren counseled, some favored excluding from church meetings all who are not firm in the faith. Others opposed the idea citing the Book of Mormon passage in which the Lord commands to quote, not forbid any man from coming unto you, when you shall meet together from Third Nephi 18, both positions seem justified. And that's like when Danny said Joseph Smith has, he says, well let's ask the Lord. I guess this section I go, sounds like seminary days, they're going to chuck ink stands and books at you.
- Hank Smith: 00:13:05 Yeah, well I could say that when I taught freshman in seminary something like that may have happened but that is wild. That'd be terrifying to go to church thinking I don't know him. Is he going to be the one that attacks me today?
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:13:20 The history of persecution is so fascinating to me that it's already prevalent. It's already prevalent. New York it's prevalent, Pennsylvania it's prevalent, in the midst of the translation they have to leave and go to Fayette, to Whitmer farm. Now even in Ohio kicking off so fast already even before the tough stuff.
- Hank Smith: 00:13:37 Because right now what are we Danny? We're a church basically a Protestant church with a new book of scripture and a prophet. You're right. All those things that are going to make us unique today, they're not part of this yet.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:13:50 Yeah. Fascinating. The Lord's pretty clear on what the answer is though. And look at the language. 3, 4, 5 and 6 Never to cast anyone out. Not to cast anyone who belonged to the church out. You shall not cast any out. Verse six. You shall not cast

them out. I think it's pretty crystal clear how Jesus feels about who gets let in. Don't cast anyone out.

- Hank Smith: 00:14:14 Four times, never cast anyone out. That's three. You're commanded not to cast anyone. Verse five, ye shall not cast anyone out of your sacrament meetings. Verse six, if there are any not of the church that are earnestly seeking after the kingdom, ye shall not cast them out.
- John Bytheway: 00:14:32 It seems like the only qualifier I saw was who are earnestly seeking the kingdom.
- Hank Smith: 00:14:36 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:14:37 If they're armed with ink stands.
- Hank Smith: 00:14:40 Yeah. If they come in with an ink stand
- John Bytheway: 00:14:43 and books, then what do you intend to do with that? Their ink stand there. Today what I'm more worried about when I'm giving a talk is people disappearing into their phone. But uh,
- Hank Smith: 00:14:52 Yeah.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:14:53 Back then it was ink stands and books.
- Hank Smith: 00:14:55 Give the signal and they come rip you off the pulpit. Right?
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:14:59 I had a fun conversation with some of my students yesterday. We were in Third Nephi 17,
- Hank Smith: 00:15:05 Okay,
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:15:06 In 3 Nephi 17. Jesus says something so beautiful right after they say, Father, you know, don't leave us Jesus. Don't leave us. In seven He says, if you have any sick that are among you, bring him hither. He goes, lame, blind, halt, maimed, leperous or withered. And then this thought though, or deaf or that are afflicted in any manner bring them. My students beautifully brought up man everybody's welcome. I want everybody, if you have this problem, I want you. If I have this problem, I want you. And I think that we've grown a lot culturally where if someone was smoking outside the church, I don't think anyone would have any problem being like, you come on in here. You sit by me. If you have problems, if you have chastity challenges, pornography challenges, alcohol, whatever it might be, you come and sit by me. I think that we've grown a lot that way. And

I asked my students this, I was like, how many of you would have zero problem wave if like you come sit by me? All of them man, you just even feel us. We're like, we're so good, right?

Hank Smith: 00:16:04

Yeah. Look at us.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:16:06

And then you bring up, okay, so if everybody's really welcome, what about someone that just posted horrible things? What about someone that's sexist? Any of the -ist Bring up any -ist you want. Now do you want them to sit by you? And instantly we start to be like, well ooh, it's interesting that we've shifted a little bit culture like oh man, that's no, no, no. We're so welcoming. We're so welcoming. Does Jesus really want them? And the answer is yes. Jesus wants everybody. Jesus wants everyone regardless of your problems, regardless, yes you have problems, but so do you. Your sins smell different.

Hank Smith: 00:16:42

Right?

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:16:43

Jesus wants smokers, drinkers, carousers. Jesus wants sexist, racist. He wants everybody because he is like you give him time with me and I can work with them.

Hank Smith: 00:16:52

Yeah. Afflicted in any other manner.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:16:56

Yeah, any other manner. Afflicted in any manner I want them. And then you give me time with them. Give me time with them and we'll make them what they need to be. Jesus picks. Look at his original 12. I'm going to take Simon the zealot. I'm going to take Matthew, the publican, opposite ends political spectrums. He goes, no, give them three years with me. Give them three years with me and we're going to see what they can be. Don't cast anyone out. If we think that we should, and I think a lot of times our instant thought is like, oh, I would never do that. Unless it's a sin you really don't like. And don't get me wrong, I'm not justifying, don't be a racist, don't be a sexist. Don't break commandments. Go and sin no more. At the same time, I want you there. I want you rubbing shoulders with people. I want you feeling loved. I want you studying and letting the Spirit work in you. All of us should be grateful that we're not the same person we were 10 years ago.

Hank Smith: 00:17:49

That's wonderful. And that is kind of a gut check. Oh yeah, yeah. You smoke, drink, come on in, come sit by me. But then when we start to say, well not them and not them, we start to sound like the New Testament. Why are you eating with sinners? Why are you sitting with sinners?

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:18:05 Yeah. The sins that we have problems with maybe shifted a little, but we still have this problem. I think that we need to be mindful of. At least we need to be mindful.

Hank Smith: 00:18:14 Yeah. Don't cast anyone out. Danny, I love that you pointed out in these four verses when you say, could the Lord be more clear? And just in case you didn't hear me the first, second, third, here's a fourth time where I'm going to say don't cast anyone out. How can we be better about this? I'll give you an example. What if I am at a youth activity and here comes somebody who's not dressed the way I think they should be dressed for a youth activity. Do I say you gotta go home and change?

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:18:49 You better follow the Holy Ghost is the first thought.

Hank Smith: 00:18:51 Right? Yeah.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:18:51 You better follow the Holy Ghost. I want to share a quote from [President Eyring](#) actually. And this is 1989, November, 1989, President Eyring and he said, gratitude for the remission of sins is the seed of charity the pure love of Christ. Sometimes we think we can like white knuckle this thing like, oh, I'm going to love people more. Oh, it's my goal. I'm going to love more. I'm struggling with roommates, I'm struggling with a kid. Family problems. I'm just going to love more. I'm going to do that. The easiest way I've found to do that is to start realizing that you're not the ripest peach in the batch either. You've got problems. Look in the mirror, right? Look in the mirror, like you're no peach. You have plenty of things that are annoying. You have plenty of things that people have to put up with.

00:19:34 You have plenty of things that I'm sure are frustrating to the people you are around. So why don't you just be grateful that God likes you and grateful that God loves you. And if you gratitude for the remission of sins that I am clean. I'm not what I was. Quoting Shakespeare, right? Twas I, but tis not I. Yeah, that was me, but it's not me anymore. And because he's been so gracious to me, it's easy for me to love others because he's forgiven me. I mean that example you bring up. So this person wore whatever clothes or whatever, right? This person made a comment that's offensive, this person's rude, this person's whatever it is, you stink sometimes too. God loves you and he invites you. And so if I can just keep focused on that, the problem is we keep looking off of away from Jesus.

00:20:24 If I'm dialed in, I can't believe Jesus loves me. I can't believe Jesus saved me, then all of a sudden my love from other people

is I'm going to be naturally patient with people because I know God's patient with me. I can't get over it. It's one of my favorite qualities of God. He's patient with me. That line, gratitude for the remission of sins is the seed of charity. Like your problem is we forget that we're so messy. If you start to forget that you're a mess, you start being unrighteously, judgmental, but you're saved. And if you remember that, I don't even know if you notice things that don't matter and you see souls. I don't see the person that smokes. I don't see the person that's dressed immodestly. I don't see the racist. I see a child of God that needs Jesus and I need Jesus. And so we're bound by our need for Jesus. There's no secret sauce. It's repent. It's the doctrine of Christ. Exercise faith in Jesus. Repent with Jesus. And if I'm like just overwhelmingly grateful that I've been forgiven, then it's easy for me to love. It's easy.

- John Bytheway: 00:21:34 Hank, we did a followHIM story about the kid that showed up to my Sunday school class with the mohawk. You remember that?
- Hank Smith: 00:21:42 Yeah. followHIM Favorites.
- John Bytheway: 00:21:44 Yeah. Well in the story I told, I went back to there is a God and he loves you. Instead of the topic in the manual that day. You know, we never got to dress and grooming and for the strength of youth we stayed on there is a God and he loves you. And I love the idea that God will take us where we're at. He won't leave us where we're at, but he'll take us where we're at.
- Hank Smith: 00:22:04 We have that sign on our church: visitors welcome. And do we mean that? I wonder if it could be more visitors wanted. We want you here. I want to quote from an article here I found online. I wish I knew the author. Said this, countless times as a missionary in New England or helping the missionaries when I lived in South Carolina, I had investigators mournfully say, I want to come to church, but I don't have nice clothes. To that I would always quickly reply If we wanted nice clothes at church, missionaries would be sent to department stores. The Lord wants all of his children there. Dress your best to show respect but his church welcomes visitors regardless of how they look or how they even smell. And then this author shares this story and it is heartbreaking. He said recently [Elder Holland](#) spoke in my stake conference.
- 00:22:54 He shared a story from his youth of a young man from southern Utah who was on a rival sports team. He explained that this man had reached out to Elder Holland 50 years later to share his story. This young man came from an abusive family. His dad was an alcoholic and he beat his wife and children. As the oldest son

he would try to stand up for his mom and siblings. Feeling overwhelmed he remembered that when he was a kid he was baptized, but his family had not been to church since then. He was never ordained to the priesthood. But he thought he could go to the church for help. He gathered the courage and walked into Sacrament meeting, wearing his grungy clothes. And the very first thing someone asked him, what are you doing here? Did you lose your game last night? He left and he never went back.

00:23:41 Over the next 40 years he grew up, got married, became an alcoholic himself, ruined his marriage and hurt his kids. Decades later he has come back to the church and he was informing Elder Holland that he was being ordained a high priest. But he admitted shame and regret for years lost for never being able to talk to his grandsons about missions or about blessing or passing the sacrament. And then Elder Holland says, I don't know if that member was too young or too old to understand, or maybe they just did not get what they were doing. And he then charged us. The author says he literally was shouting, never, never, never, never do anything like this where you will look back with regret. We can't go through all the ways can we, both of you, that we might say something or even look at someone that causes them to think, I don't belong here. I shouldn't be here. What am I doing here?

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:24:38 Satan preys on that imposter syndrome. Like, I didn't grow up like them. I'm not smart like them. Whatever might be divisive, he would have us focus on that rather than having everybody focus on what is in common is that you're a child of God. There's a place. All are welcome. It's a hospital for sinners, right? Not a country club. That beautiful parable from our Savior, right? He scoops up injured people on the road, takes them to the inn, take care of them. [Elder Gong's](#) great talk about we are the inn, the church of Jesus Christ is the inn to minister to each other. It's madness that my arm's broken. Your legs broken. I'm like, man, can you believe they let people in with broken legs? Can't believe they let people in with broken legs. No, everybody's messy. Everyone is messy. Be grateful that you have a spot.

Hank Smith: 00:25:29 A little humility can really help you not say something or do something that would cast someone out. John, what do you think? How can we really get to the heart of this?

John Bytheway: 00:25:41 My mission sure helped me. I saw people come in with t-shirts with beer advertisements on and flip flops, and what was our response? Thank you for coming. We were so thrilled when

anybody came. I think it was [Elder Ballard](#) that said once, what would people think if we were the only ones they ever met at the meeting? I've been guilty of this. When I look around, I don't recognize that person. I hope the bishop finds him. Or I hope the Elders Quorum President finds him but I gotta go. I try if I see a new face to go say hi. You know, we're so glad you're here. If all of us could do that, people could just be gang tackled by kindness.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:26:25 [President Packer's](#) quote comes to my mind, right? Like true doctrine understood changes attitude and behavior. So if this is a challenge and if you see this in your self, let the mirror emerge. Where is this in me? Am I as accepting? Am I as welcoming as I want to be? And welcoming is different. Not everybody's bubbly. I am a child of God. It's in vinyl, in people's houses. It's cross stitched places. Do I really have it in there and in here in my heart? If I do, then this naturally takes care of itself. I see everybody as his if I see everybody as if they're Gods. So it's that doctrine. If I really understand the doctrine, not like pass a test on it. I think members of the church overall, at least I would hope if I gave them true, false. Are you a child of God? I think they would say true. Okay, then how does that look in how you treat people in all people, other sides of the political spectrum people. On social media people. My family, my siblings, my parents. Like I'm really viewing them through this doctrinal lens that is transformative. If I am, then they are children of the Almighty God.

Hank Smith: 00:27:36 What would you do? John and Danny? If a member of the bishopric wore overalls, he just walks in, he's in his overalls because this happened in Cardston Canada. [N. Eldon Tanner](#) was in the Bishopric. He was advisor to the Deacons Quorum. Brother Tanner found that some of the boys were not attending because their families could not afford Sunday clothes. And the boys were embarrassed to wear their overalls. He made an agreement with the boys. And when they showed up at church the next Sunday wearing overalls, there was Brother Tanner also wearing overalls. He won the hearts of those boys and soon they were all active. So instead of judging someone for what they're wearing, go ahead and wear what they're wearing. Say I can dress like that and come on in. Man all of a sudden, Danny, as you brought this up, I know we're only a couple verses in, but my heart is just beating. We've got to do this.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:28:30 I think Jesus is happy because that's what he says he wants to happen. Hank in verse one, they're spoken to you for your profit and you're learning. That's a sweet thing, isn't it?

John Bytheway: 00:28:40 Oh, Hank, Danny. This story is hard for me to tell because it just makes me so sad. But I had picked up something from a rental place. I needed to rent a pump for something in my backyard. And I accidentally left my triple combination and my class roll on the roof when I put it in the trunk and I drove off. I can't remember how many days later I get a call and this guy said, I found this and it looks important. And I go back to the rental place and thanked him profusely for saving this stuff for me. Never did find my triple combination, which was sad. We started talking about the church and the gospel. I told him, you should go. And I went to Deseret Industries with him and we got him some clothes to wear so he felt comfortable basically.

00:29:29 I looked up online where his building was and everything. And I can't remember exactly how long it was when I found him again, maybe back at the rental place, but he said, I went and as I was walking in somebody stopped me and said, Hey, are you just here for food? Because if so, we don't want you. Ugh. To this day I'm so, because I, I talked to him again. I said, come with me. Come to my ward. Come and sit by me. But I never saw him again. Isn't that awful? I mean, it's hard for me to share that because it still hurts. Somebody thought, if you're just here for welfare, whatever, you're not, you're not welcome. Turn around. And he, so he did.

Hank Smith: 00:30:12 When we're talking about adults like this, right? Youth are going to make mistakes. They're going to say things they probably shouldn't say. And adults say, well that youth. I'd rather the adults listening, including the three of us. Let's look at us.

John Bytheway: 00:30:27 Well, I love what Danny said about, look at the true doctrine. Look at the parable of the Great Supper. Well, the normal guests that know how to dress didn't show up. Let's go see who else we can get.

Hank Smith: 00:30:40 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:30:41 And at the end it's like go to the highways

Hank Smith: 00:30:43 everywhere,

John Bytheway: 00:30:44 Invite everybody so that my dinner feast can be filled with guests. I've thought about that when I thought about this guy.

Hank Smith: 00:30:53 Oh man. Oh man.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:30:54 And in the spirit of section 46 though, Jesus is still happy that that man that said that ridiculously stupid thing is that charge.

Hank Smith: 00:31:02 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:31:03 Maybe by now there's some recognition that I probably shouldn't have done that you know?

Hank Smith: 00:31:08 Yeah.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:31:09 No, no, a hundred percent

Hank Smith: 00:31:11 That's true. We would want to turn to that person and say, no, you leave.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:31:14 And Jesus is like, no, I still want him, right? Before we throw hymn books at that guy that said the stupid thing, I want him too. I just want, I want everybody else. Keep him here.

Hank Smith: 00:31:25 Yeah.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:31:25 Keep him here. I'll work with him. Give me some more time. Nothing can't be fixed with a little extra time in Jesus. That can heal a lot of problems. Thank goodness we have a perfect judge. Right?

Hank Smith: 00:31:36 Oh, thanks for that Danny. Thanks for stopping there.

John Bytheway: 00:31:39 I've held that one inside for a long time, because it just hurts to think about it. I just think that's not what was supposed to happen. I was so excited. I wanted to share a different ending on followHIM.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:31:52 There will be. That one's pending John.

John Bytheway: 00:31:54 Yeah.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:31:54 Thank goodness. Well, I want to highlight just one thought on verse two. Especially, remember these early members of the church don't know how they're supposed to run. We've got Pentecostalism, we've got really stoicism. We got Puritan. Like these ideas are really, I think there's 25 or 26 states right now. We are like early. Andy Jackson's president. America's young. Revolutionary War's not that long ago. And so just keep this in mind that we are so young, they're trying to figure it out. But what does the Spirit look like? What does that feel like? Jesus says in the end of verse two, conduct all meetings as they're

directed and guided by the Holy Spirit. No one in the world prays like a missionary taking investigators to a Fast Sunday.

- Hank Smith: 00:32:42 please
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:32:43 Oh please, please don't let anything crazy be said.
- John Bytheway: 00:32:47 You never know what's going to happen in that meeting.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:32:49 You never know. You never know. I remember, and this is embarrassing, but it's true. I remember telling, inviting people like, you should come to church with us in two Sundays. You should come in two Sundays. No, not the first one. Yeah, not the first one. No, no, no. What's the Spirit? [The Renlunds](#). Elder and Sister Renlund made this comment, I can't remember the book. So someone look it up and post it somewhere. But they said this about boundaries. I wrote it in a post-it in my scriptures. Boundaries are set for what we do in the church. And the boundaries are this. Like in a soccer game, basketball, there's borders. And so the Spirit's not going to take you out of these borders. The Spirit won't take you out of the borders. The borders are scriptures, living prophets, the handbook and file leaders. If you stay in there, the Spirit can take you lots of different places. You can wear overalls to church. You can do a number of things in these boundaries, but the Spirit's not going to lead you out here. So before anyone gets too excited about, well the Spirit told me to X, Y, Z. It didn't if it's outside of those boundaries.
- Hank Smith: 00:33:54 I like that.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:33:55 That's what this section's about too. Is the Lord saying, no, you get revelation. Not all revelation's from me. Some revelations from the adversary.
- Hank Smith: 00:34:03 Yeah.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:34:03 Be mindful of that. And the fact if you go to verse seven talks about, and this is a great list. If we're dialed into these things, you won't be tempted by the adversary's temptations and his revelation. You're commanded in all things to one, ask of God. If you're praying a lot, you're probably going to be just fine. And those real heartfelt, right who giveth liberally little beautiful shout out to the Lord. He's so kind and generous. And that which the Spirit testifies unto you. Even so I would, that you should do in holiness of heart. Walking uprightly before me, considering the end of your salvation, doing all things with

prayer and thanksgiving, that you be not seduced by evil spirits. If you want to know what that looks like to have a meeting conducted by the Spirit, do those things, you're going to be fine. I love that being thankful is in there. There's something about if you are thankful, it'll put up your barriers to being deceived by this evil spirit.

- Hank Smith: 00:34:58 Maybe it's okay Danny, if I have an idea that I don't know if is okay, maybe ask around before jumping up and doing that, maybe ask a couple people.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:35:06 Ask those borders, right? You have that border, that file leader border. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:35:09 Yeah. I'm thinking of doing this. What do you think?
- John Bytheway: 00:35:11 Yeah, that prayer and thanksgiving in verse seven, that gratitude thing. I feel like in so many cases gratitude is a cure all. And the place that always struck me is when Moroni says, okay, when you receive these things, before he says pray and ask God in Moroni 10:4 in Moroni 10:3 he says, ponder on how merciful God has been since the creation of Adam down until the time you receive these things. And ponder it in your heart. That fills you with gratitude. So I've heard someone say gratitude is a gateway to revelation because there's a twin sister of gratitude maybe is humility because you're realizing I have things I didn't earn. I have things I didn't deserve. I'm blessed in ways that make me grateful. There's a humility that comes with gratitude, wouldn't you say?
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:36:02 Yeah. Oh yeah. And let's think about these saints here in Kirtland too. And John, you're so good at always bridging the gap here with church history. Joseph, look at what Joseph as a prophet is restoring in five years. It's Dickens, right? It was the best of times. It was the worst of times.
- Hank Smith: 00:36:18 Yeah.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:36:19 Temple is built, the keys are restored. Angelic visitations. People after the Kirtland temple dedication thought they were in the millennium. They're like, is this the millennium? Have we been here? because Christ has come. We have multiple appearances. Maybe we're in the millennium. Within months, members of the 12 apostles have apostatized. Joseph and Sidney have to run for their lives. Their life was in danger. Plots to kill the prophet Joseph. This idea of being like prayer and thanksgiving. What happened to being thankful for everything Joseph had restored

through God? They stopped being thankful for the light and knowledge that had been restored from a prophet of God to the point that they were deceived by this evil spirit. Be thankful for what you have. What's better than the plan of salvation? There's not one thing I've ever heard in my life that lights my soul on fire like the plan of salvation.

00:37:12 I lived before I was born. I have heavenly parents. There's a plan for this experience here on earth. I can become like my heavenly parents. Are you joking me? There's nothing sweeter. But then all of a sudden, yeah but yeah, but he's a bad banker and I lost some money. True. At the same time, be thankful for what's been restored. Families are forever. That doctrine? One stop shopping here. If your heart resonates with that. And you know it does. Creedily we're the only religion I know of that believes in families are forever. Yet every love song, every poem is like no forever love. We trail that from the premortal life. Let's be thankful you got that because of a prophet. These saints that this revelation's given to in five years are it's going to turn on Joseph. They lose everything. One third of the church leaders in Kirtland. But if they'd been thankful, prayer and thanksgiving, it's a sweet combo. It's powerful.

John Bytheway: 00:38:12 That was just beautifully said. Good job.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:38:15 Yeah, I love it. Jesus said it. Do you remember when [Elder Uchtdorf](#) said, we walk a path of diamonds doctrinally, we walk a path of diamonds, but we get so used to it. We are not thankful. We're not thankful for the light and knowledge that we have. We can take it for granted and then start beating up on bishops and oh they did this or the young women's president said this and can you believe they're human?

Hank Smith: 00:38:39 It's shocking.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:38:40 Yeah. Isn't that just the craziest thing? Peter cuts off ears. Jesus calls him Satan. He denies Christ three times. But I have no problem with him being a prophet. Jonah runs away from things and even is sad that God saves the people he wants to see them destroyed. But he's a prophet, but oh mercy. Not Joseph. Not Joseph.

Hank Smith: 00:38:59 Yeah. I show my students where James and John want to burn down a Samaritan village. Hey, let's command fire from heaven. This will be awesome. These are apostles. That's fine. Peter, James and John. Great guys. Yeah, great guys.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:39:15 But you better be a good banker.

Hank Smith: 00:39:17 Yeah. I really like this. Don't be deceived. Beware lest you are deceived because you can be seduced by an evil spirit or a doctrine of the devil. That's all verse seven and eight.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:39:32 And it's an interesting word choice too. That seduced like it's going to, it's going to pick at your weaknesses, your inadequacies, your everything that's going on. And draw you in. So sad. So many people, especially in this era, fell. But the principles are the same. I need to be prayerful, I need to be thankful. I need to be striving to be holy walking uprightly before God. So good.

John Bytheway: 00:40:02 I heard somebody looking at this and saying people think, oh no, so-and-so's having a faith crisis. And you look at the early history of the church and you say somebody was always having a faith crisis. This is, it's not new. It was ever thus. There's faith crises all the time.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:40:18 Yeah. Read the New Testament of Jesus with his 12 and they're the 12. Not unusual.

Hank Smith: 00:40:24 There's that moment of bread of life sermon. People walk away. They don't like what Jesus just taught. I came for the food, maybe the miracles, but I didn't come to be told I'm going to, you know, eat this guy's flesh and drink his blood. So I'm out. Jesus turns to the 12. Are you going to leave me to? Peter has such a great moment. Where am I going to go?

John Bytheway: 00:40:47 And do you know what I love about that story Hank? is I learned on this podcast called followHIM with a really good host, and a so-so co-host.

Hank Smith: 00:40:57 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:40:57 But I learned that who was it that drinking blood was against the law of Moses. That was a moment of augh for Peter. But he knew that eventually Jesus would explain it, which he did. This is like my blood. Do this in remembrance of me. Oh okay. Do you have the words of eternal life? I'm sticking with you even if I don't fully understand it right now.

Hank Smith: 00:41:22 Where am I going to go? Where am I going to go.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:41:26 Peter, considering the end of his salvation. Where am I going to go? You have the words of eternal life. Where am I going to go

that has plan of salvation. Where am I going to go that has priesthood and priesthood keys? Where am I going to go? Where am I going to go that has patriarchal blessings? Where am I going to go that has an organization that helps me bless humanitarian, I could keep going and going, going like the list is innumerable. Nowhere. This is it.

- Hank Smith: 00:41:51 Considering the end of your salvation. What a phrase. Hmm.
- John Bytheway: 00:41:54 Yeah. Consider the outcome of all of this and the author and finisher of it.
- Hank Smith: 00:42:01 Both of you and me, we have questions, but I'm okay waiting to find out when it comes to plural marriage. I'm fine waiting to hear it from the people who were there. When it comes to any other difficult topic, I can consider the end of my salvation and say, you know what, I'm happy to wait to find out. Kind of like Peter, right? John, I don't know what he means by that. I don't know why he would say that, but of course I'm going to stay. How else am I going to find out?
- John Bytheway: 00:42:29 Because he has the words of eternal life. Maybe Peter thought maybe he'll explain this one day and maybe he didn't know if he would, but he did.
- Hank Smith: 00:42:37 Man, I think the power here is how relevant the lessons you're showing us are like, this is stuff we deal with.
- John Bytheway: 00:42:43 1831 or 2025.
- Hank Smith: 00:42:46 Yeah.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:42:47 Jesus knows what he's talking about.
- Hank Smith: 00:42:49 Shocking, right?
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:42:51 Yeah, he's good. He's good. Let's hit spiritual gifts. That's the title that Come, Follow Me. That's certainly their focus. Jesus. Verse eight. Wherefore beware lest ye are deceived, and that you may not be deceived, seek ye earnestly the best gifts, always remembering for what they are given. That's an interesting line. Remember what they're given for. He says in nine, they're given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments and Him that seeketh so to do, that's me. I might not keep them all, but I'm sure trying, seeking to, that all may be benefited. It's not this thing for you. It's not just a thing for you to, oh, look at all those talents. We

sometimes mix spiritual gifts with talents. They are not the same. And we trail things premortally. We're not talking about this. We're talking about a gift of the Spirit.

00:43:38 And look at verse 10 and then we'll hit [President Oaks](#) verse 10. And again, verily I say unto you, I would that you should always remember and always retain in your minds that those gifts are, that are given unto the church. We try to I think sometimes to over apply the spiritual gifts. It's a terminology thing. Yes, people are talented. Yes, God's blessed people. But when we're talking in this context about spiritual gifts, we're talking about gifts. God has given to people that have had hands laid on their heads and received the gift of the Holy Ghost. And it's for the benefit of the church, the benefit of the kingdom of God. So Elder Oaks said this, and this is 1986. So as Elder Oaks at this time, titled Spiritual Gifts, quote, the spirit of Christ is given to all men and women that they may know good from evil.

00:44:27 That's a gift by the way, spirit of Christ given to everybody and manifestations of the Holy Ghost are given to lead earnest seekers to repentance and baptism. Missionaries as we're testifying as we're teaching our families. The Spirit is going to touch our children's hearts, hopefully our friends' hearts, our investigators hearts, the Holy Ghost is going to do that. But he says these are preparatory gifts. A lot of times people might, with this Sunday school lesson, they may be like, everybody put a piece of paper on your back and have everybody write things they see about them. These are gifts that you have and nice things about you. That's still nice. But I don't believe it's what he's talking about. It's what we term spiritual gifts comes next. Spiritual gifts come to those who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost as the prophet Joseph Smith taught. The gifts of the Spirit obtained through that medium, the Holy Ghost and cannot be enjoyed without the gift of the Holy Ghost.

00:45:19 Gifts of the Spirit is a gift. I don't think that we talk about that very often when we are talking to eight year olds and preparing them for baptism. I think it might be a term that we can start using more often. We're like, Hey, God's going to give you the gift of the Holy Ghost to bless you, to lead you, guide you. You're also going to receive gifts of the Spirit that will help you build God's kingdom. Whatever those gifts might be, and then he goes through these amazing gifts. We can compare them to Corinthians, we can compare them to Moroni. Wonderful conference talks about all of the many, many gifts that we have. But they're for the building the kingdom. Brethren, you two have the gift of teaching and you're using it to build the

kingdom. I think that one day we'll meet Jesus and it'll be like, I gave you this gift.

00:46:04 I'm glad that you did something with it. But again, not talents, these gifts are given. So as we look at this list, keep asking yourself, be like, Hey, I have some of these. You don't have time in your lives for false modesty. God's given you gifts. If you've participated in this, God gave you gifts so start using them. Ask yourself ok because I have this, how can I minister better? How can I serve in my calling better? I have a responsibility, a covenantal responsibility to be a husband and a father and to provide and protect. And he's going to help me give these gifts to do this. Now, don't limit. I don't want just to make this thought about church only because [President Nelson's](#) taught us that anytime we do anything that helps anyone living or dead make or keep covenants, then you're gathering Israel. But please remember that this is a special gift given to members of the church to do what God would have him do in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with the entire world. That's why he gives people the knowledge, like you know that you have a testimony of Jesus the Christ. That's why difference of administration, that's why you have this a discernment in 23, prophecy in 22 miracles in 21 faith to heal in 2019. That's to build this kingdom, to build this community of Christ.

Hank Smith: 00:47:29 John, I know you love verse 15. Ever since we looked at it four years ago, and I think you knew it before me, where this differences of administration, does that mean that, look, listen to the Lord and the way you administer these programs because it will change, suiting his mercies according to the conditions of the children of men. John, do you remember [Andy Horton](#) was here with us a month or two ago and he said he was the stake president, woman comes in to confess and thought that he would say, get out of here and never return and he said the Spirit was very clear to him that the Lord wants this woman to take the sacrament today. The Lord suits his mercies according to the conditions of the children of men.

John Bytheway: 00:48:17 I actually wrote an article for the [New Era](#). I wrote this article about coming home from high school one day at okay Hank we're talking in the seventies, stepping across the gutter to go to my house and there was a magazine in the gutter. I didn't know what it was and then I was like, whoa. And every day for two weeks, there was this magazine in the gutter. And I talked in my article about 1 Corinthians 10:13, you'll not be tempted above. Couple of weeks it was gone, yay article that I talked about and a scripture. That was my one encounter with pornography as a teenager. Is our world different today?

Hank Smith:	00:48:58	My goodness.
John Bytheway:	00:48:58	Are we thrilled that this verse says that the Lord will suit his mercies according to the conditions of the children of men. Today these young people are being hit with it. It's popping up on their screen. They didn't ask for it. It's on billboards, it's on shows. Some are struggling with it. But I love knowing that the Lord is not only merciful, but he's good at suiting his mercies according to our conditions. Thanks for giving me a second with that verse because that has given me so much hope and made me try to tell the young people, hey, you're in a different world but God knows the world that he sent you to. He knows what you're dealing with. He knows perfectly how to suit his mercies according to your conditions.
Prof. Danny Ricks:	00:49:45	I think it's an appropriate thing to look at all of these gifts as attributes of Christ. Christ is perfect in all of these things. And as you study Jesus' life, look how he administers differently to so many people. Some people, the man of the Gadarenes comes and he says, I want to follow you. And he is like, actually, you don't get to follow me. You need to go and do this. Other people come and he is like, no, absolutely follow me. And you're like, well, why the difference? Because Jesus knows the conditions of the children of men. Sometimes Jesus flips tables, sometimes Jesus won't even speak. Everything is made conditional on the needs of the people and and who they are. And especially in the church. I as a bishop sometimes if you wrote down, okay, this happened and this happened and this happened, and it looks similar on paper, that person's different than this person. That's different than this person. And as you strive to do what Jesus will have you do, counsel will be different. Time periods are different. How is that possible? Well, because people are different, but Jesus understands that what a gift that is to have.
John Bytheway:	00:50:46	Speaking in this aspect of the conditions of the world. Do you guys remember a talk? It was <a href="#">Elder Packer</a> then in 1992 he gave a talk called Our Moral Environment. And he said, we have physical environmentalists. I want to be a spiritual environmentalist for a minute. It was really interesting. This is what he said. It is a great challenge to raise a family in the darkening mists of our moral environment. We emphasize that the greatest work you will do will be within the walls of your own home and that no other success can compensate for failure in the home. The measure of our success as parents, however, will not rest solely on how our children turn out. That judgment would be just only if we could raise our families in a perfectly moral environment and that is now not possible. It is not

uncommon for responsible parents to lose one of their children for a time to influences over which they have no control. They agonize over rebellious sons or daughters. They're puzzled over why they're so helpless when they've tried so hard to do what they should. It is my conviction that these wicked influences one day will be overruled. And I can't quote the whole talk, but I loved the hope that that gave that look, the Lord knows the kind of world he's sending these young people into. It's not a moral environment.

Hank Smith: 00:52:08

And those are his children. Don't forget.

John Bytheway: 00:52:12

I think he sent them because they're awesome and they're equipped to overcome all of this. They're going to go thrash the nations, right Danny?

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:52:19

Yeah. Can I share with you guys here's a quote from [Chad Webb](#), now in the general Sunday School Presidency, Ensign College devotional, January 22nd, 2019, According to the Conditions of the Children of Men and you guys know Chad, everyone loves Chad. Quote, A friend shared with me an experience he had as a young boy. One day his father was very upset. After reading the newspaper, he had read an article about a body that was found near where they lived in southern California. Certainly the death upset everyone. But another thing that troubled his father was that the report said that although the body had not been identified, they knew for sure that person had lived his entire life in southern California. They knew this because of the condition of his lungs as a result of air pollution. My friend's father was upset and while he was trying to live the word of wisdom in keeping his lungs healthy, the environment he lived in was making that all but impossible.

00:53:15

Apparently, experts can do an autopsy on a person's lungs and tell you where they're from. It has made me wonder if it were possible to do a spiritual autopsy. If someone could say, I can tell from your attitudes about certain ideas and issues that you must have lived on earth in 2019, the year this was given. We may believe we are thinking for ourselves, but it is more difficult than we realize not to breathe the air of the beliefs, attitudes and culture we live in. In a changing world with so many influences and voices, cleaving to our covenants is vital in helping us stay on the covenant path. I love this line. Our covenants help us to keep an eternal perspective, remembering the Lord's teachings and can be a shield against the temptations and influences of the world. So this idea, right, of the conditions the children of men, the mists of darkness when I grew up, different challenges.

00:54:11 Young people today, different challenges. Who knows what the next generation will be? I get to teach for 20 more years, 60 more semesters probably. Who knows what these different challenges are going to end up being? Jesus does and he's going to help people through these gifts of the Spirit know how to adapt. As moms and dads in the kingdom, my kids are all unique. My oldest is different than my second, that's different than my third, fourth. If you want to have a testimony of the Premortal life, have more than one kid.

John Bytheway: 00:54:41 No kidding. no kidding.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:54:43 Truth, right? Truth and yet we can receive this gift of the Spirit through covenants, through making covenants with God that will help us gather Israel. And the most important people to gather are the people that God entrusts us with in our families. Yes, church callings, I love it. A hundred percent applicable and true and aligned contextually, but also the family is the greatest unit in the kingdom of God.

John Bytheway: 00:55:07 And this gift is a great one. Our young men recite the Aaronic priesthood quorum theme and they say, I will use his priesthood to serve others beginning in my own home.

Hank Smith: 00:55:18 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:55:18 Love that line.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:55:19 Yeah. So good. As you study these gifts, please remember how can I use this gift that I have or how can I ask heavenly Father to give me this gift because it's a gift. It is given. That's the definition of a gift from the Holy Ghost, from the Father. I need this gift. You can then pray for this gift. Seek the best gifts. The best gifts is the ones that you need right now for your situation.

Hank Smith: 00:55:45 That's true.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:55:46 Those are the ones.

John Bytheway: 00:55:47 I want to go back to verse nine. I can't even tell you how much I love the comma and the word and in this verse. You already said it, Danny. They are given for the benefit of those who love me. Okay I love God I think, and keep all my commandments. Oh, yikes. You had to say, all right there didn't you? and keep all oh man, comma and him that seeketh so to do or her that seeketh so to do. The intents of our hearts matter, we stumble, but we get back up and the intent of getting back on that

matters. And I'm so glad that extra sentence is there. Sweet the joy this sentence giveth, right? and him that seeketh so to do. Just keep trying everybody.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:56:38 And the beautiful thing about that is that takes one second to do. And if you're listening to this and you're like, oh man, I haven't, then do. Then you're like, I'm going to seek and as soon as you do that, the Lord will bless you and he'll help you gain the things that you need for your life, for your family's life, for the kingdom.

Hank Smith: 00:56:59 As we look through all of these gifts of the Spirit, is there any that you want to highlight and maybe that might be confusing for anyone or any that you're thinking, look, this one is an important idea. Make sure you see this.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:57:12 Yeah, let's just roll through them. I loved John's thoughts already on differences of administration. I think that can be a confusing one. Please note in 11 that every man is given a gift. So you do have one. Go to your patriarchal blessing and see if you can see one that the Lord articulates to you there. Talk to your loved ones that know you well if you struggle with identifying these in yourselves and ask them what they see. And remember, this isn't a comprehensive list. Go to [Elder Ashton's](#) October, 1987 conference talk, the gift of weeping mentioned in there, right? Like so many good ones, the gift of praying 13 to some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus is the son of God and that he was crucified for the sins of the world. To others it is given to believe on their words or maybe an extension of it. Some people believe some of my favorite people in this world say that they're a verse 14. I don't know, but I believe when I hear them say it. Rejoice in that! I think that we can sometimes get a little maybe preoccupied with wishing that we had someone else's gift.

Hank Smith: 00:58:16 Yeah.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:58:16 If only I was like, man, my bishop is this or this person is this. I wish I had that rather than identifying and rejoicing the gift that you have that is given to you to bless people's lives, both of those two, whether you have 13 or 14, you're going to get to heaven if you have knowledge that Jesus Christ is the son of God or you believe John and Hank that when they say that Jesus is the son of God, faith in Jesus Christ, faith in Jesus Christ. And that's that first principle. You could get janky with that so quick and I think out in the weeds and even miss the very intent that Jesus would have a study and understand these. If you want them, seek them. Sure. But rejoice in those that have been

given. Rejoice in it. Like really be grateful. Thank God for it in your prayers. Heavenly Father, I'm so thankful that I believe when I hear [President Nelson](#) witness. When he says it I'm there. That'll lead you to repent, which will lead you to make and keep covenants.

- John Bytheway: 00:59:14 I find myself, my kids think it's funny, I find myself nodding in sacrament meeting and General Conference. To me, I'm believing in their words. Yeah. Yeah. Mm. Yeah. Yeah. See, you nodded there. You've got the. For those of you listening only, Danny just nodded at John. I've got in my margin, Nephi and Sam, I love how the Book of Mormon unfolds. Lehi gets a vision and he knows. Sariah's like, oh man, I don't, so, but then Nephi says, hey, is dad on the right track? And then Nephi gets a direct answer and then he just tells Sam and Sam's like, yep. And then Sariah is like, you're a visionary man and it just makes me sad when you kill the children. Lehi's like, I've obtained a land of promise and just wait and here come the boys over the hill with the plates. Sariah knows and it's kind of fun to watch that unfold. I love that Sam is one of those that is, you're right. I believe you I can see him nodding at Nephi. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 01:00:18 Yeah.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 01:00:19 I've never said a profound word or phrase in my life, but I've quoted a lot of profound prophets and church leaders and my mom was profound and my wife is profound. I've quoted them, it's their words that have instilled Jesus and a love for Jesus Christ in me. In those classes that I've said and where I drew closer to my Savior was because someone was using this gift that they had and I'm grateful for that. But my gift might be to when I hear them say it, I'm in and I have that determination, that resolve increase. That is no small gift, that is no small gift.
- Hank Smith: 01:00:56 Sometimes we think, oh, I'm team B.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 01:00:58 Yeah, you're not jv.
- Hank Smith: 01:01:00 Speaking of quoting someone, [Elder Jeffrey R. Holland](#), April, 2013, he said, A 14-year-old boy recently said to me a little hesitantly Brother Holland I can't say yet that I know the church is true, but I believe it is. I hugged that boy until his eyes bulged out. I told him with all the fervor of my soul that belief is a precious word, an even more precious act and he need never apologize for only believing. I told him that Christ himself said, be not afraid only believe. A phrase, which by the way carried young Gordon B. Hinckley into the mission field. I told this boy the belief was always the first step towards conviction

and that the definitive articles of our collective faith forcefully reiterate the phrase we believe and that's right out of there, 14 to others it is given to believe on their words.

- John Bytheway: 01:01:58 Hank, I guess it was last week we talked about section 45 and here's our advocate standing by our side, spare these my brethren and my sisters that believe on my name. It doesn't say spare these that achieved perfection in life because that's none of us, but spare these that believed on my name.
- Hank Smith: 01:02:19 Danny, what's the difference between administration and the diversity of operations?
- John Bytheway: 01:02:27 I'm just going to listen to this part.
- Hank Smith: 01:02:30 I'm guessing you administer programs and I've met people who are gifted administrators and I think how do you do that? Right? How you do that, how do you do that? My sister Jennifer, she's the administrator of [women's conference](#) at BYU and I just am in awe. How do you even keep all of those things in order? When I would do something, I usually wait till the last possible second. You can't do that as an administrator, what do you think Danny?
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 01:02:58 I'm with you. I don't have these gifts administratively, not my strength. Which makes it so beautiful like in our families, their gifts are spread out so that all are blessed in callings that you serve in. Thank goodness there's people that keep track of things because I just like people. I like teaching in classrooms and if you bring people into my office and I'll talk with people in my office, but just please do everything else.
- Hank Smith: 01:03:20 Yeah.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 01:03:21 I don't want to know. I'm not good at it and I'd prefer to never know. So just make that go away. I asked a friend of mine this question, here's a thought that he had on this. He has this gift. I don't. I think this was interesting. It was his quote. And this is my friend named Dale Stern, if you know Dale, he's brilliant.
- Hank Smith: 01:03:39 He's been on our show. Yeah.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 01:03:41 He's brilliant. I've taken his class multiple times at BYU Idaho. The whole semester I just sit and I'm so annoying, but I don't even care because he's so good. I'll just sit there, take notes. He said, when I look at how Paul uses these exact terms in 1 Corinthians 12, I see that the terms are translations of a Greek

phrases that might be more clearly stated as varieties of service and varieties of activities. Paul adds one at the beginning of his passage, varieties of gifts. So there's varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. Varieties of service, the same Lord. There are varieties of activities, but it's the same God who empowers them and everyone. It seems that Paul is saying that the gifts are varied and they show up in different kinds of service and different kinds of activities, but they all flow from God through the Holy Spirit.

- 01:04:30 Then this checks out with Moroni 10:8. The gifts are many and they come from the same God and they are different ways that these gifts are administered, but it's the same God who worketh all in all, and he goes know the differences of administration and know the diversities of operations as specific. If you want to make them discreet and specific gifts, then I would tend towards seeing the first one as the gift to organize in a way that blesses the members, fulfills the Lord's purposes and the second one as the gift to see God's gifts in others' actions. Subtle difference, but a difference and an important one. One is the gift to see God's gifts and other actions. As a parent you need to see this in your kids, in leadership positions in your ward to be able to see even things and the Spirit will share those things with you that you never would've saw in them.
- 01:05:22 People that when you extend callings to them will be like, I can't do that. Right? Almost like Bishop Whitney when Joseph calls Bishop Whitney, I don't see a bishop in me. Well then you don't believe me. You go ask the Lord because it's there. How does Joseph know? How does a bishop know? How does a stake president know? How does a relief society president? It's like, I need this woman to be the instructor. She doesn't think she can be an instructor. Well, too bad because Jesus sees it and then allows us through the Holy Ghost to discern that and to grow. That's one of the greatest things in the church. God's really good at this and he is like, man, they're going to learn and grow and how am I going to do this? Because you're going to be put in uncomfortable things. I didn't know that I could teach till I was called on a mission.
- 01:06:06 It's a gift of the Spirit and a talent and something that's been developed. Maybe a combination of all three, but I certainly didn't know it was there until it was unearthed through a prophetic call. In that, in my situation, if you're put in those situations, you can trust in that call that God can give me this. Maybe you would be a good ward clerk. Maybe it's coming down the pipe. And God will be like, I'm going to help him learn how to make sure everything runs. Because I'll tell you, one of

the definitions of hell is to not have a good ward clerk, right? And to have all these things falling apart and you're like, realize how much is going on that you had no idea, I'm like, I didn't know I was supposed to fill this out. We're getting audited. Like that word is scary, you know? I'm like, please just make it go away. Gifts everywhere.



## Seek Ye Earnestly the Best Gifts

### PART 2

GUEST: PROF. DANNY RICKS



- John Bytheway: 00:00 Keep listening for part two with Prof. Danny Ricks. Doctrine & Covenants sections 46 through 48.
- Hank Smith: 00:07 Let's keep going here. I remember either it was four years ago or I just did this in my own study here, John, that there's a difference between wisdom and knowledge, right? And do you remember knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit, wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad. There's a difference between knowledge and wisdom.
- John Bytheway: 00:27 Knowledge is knowing how to play the banjo. Wisdom is knowing when in what settings to play the banjo.
- Hank Smith: 00:37 Oh, I love it.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 00:39 And make note too, this isn't the word of wisdom in section 89. This really is wisdom as in wisdom's sake.
- Hank Smith: 00:47 We could spend a lot of time on every one of these, the faith to be healed, the faith to heal, working of miracles, to prophesy, the discerning of spirits, to speak with tongues, the interpretation of tongues. All these gifts come from God for the benefit of his children.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 01:08 Man, I'd like to make a comment on speaking with tongues. I wish I had it. I don't. It's so embarrassing if people have foreign names. It takes me so long to get into this farmer's mind, like how to say their name and I try not to be offensive and I want to get it right. Please help me do this. This is a shiny one. Remember why it's given. None of these gifts are a Letterman's jacket with these pins. Look at all of my gifts that I have and that makes me cool. There's no caste system. These gifts are given so that God can build his kingdom. So that God can come closer to him. And so he freely gives these gifts to the gift of tongues, whether it be Spanish, Portuguese, French, the word, but it also can be the gift of tongues to speak kindly and softly to speak with people that comfort you.

02:01 And I hope all of us have that friend that we know that we can call and they speak in a way that the spirit whispers to us and buoys us up and strengthens us. That's a form of this gift as well. But the purpose is to build the kingdom of God. If Joseph Smith said this quote, the ultimate design of tongues is to speak to foreigners and if persons are very anxious to display their intelligence, let them speak so such in their own tongues. The gifts of God are all useful in their place, but when they're applied to that which God does not intend, they prove an injury, a snare and a curse instead of a blessing. So to remember as we receive these, you have to remember the intent in which they were given.

Hank Smith: 02:46 Danny, I liked what you said there about tongues might not be just languages, it might be the ability to connect with people. And I have seen in my experience, really good teachers who can connect with different age groups. My wife Sara can connect with children in ways that I just can't. I try to play Candy Land with my kids and they just cheat and I get frustrated. And then I've seen John Bytheway teach youth and you're going, how is this possible? They're entranced by this.

John Bytheway: 03:18 That's you Hank.

Hank Smith: 03:19 Danny, I've watched you teach up at BYU Idaho. So maybe that gift of tongues is also the ability to connect or teach certain age groups and maybe the interpretation of tongues is that I can understand what that person is trying to say.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 03:36 Just some thoughts along those lines too. [Elder Holland's](#) talk in 2007, Tongue of Angels. There is no place for physical abuse of course, but verbal abuse he states, I wish to caution us if caution is needed regarding on how we speak to each other and how we speak of ourselves. And it's almost like it's this we feel uncomfortable in a situation. So someone says something kind. No, no, no, I'm the worst. No you're not. You're a child of God. You're wonderful. Like stop. Just say thank you and recognize that you have worth, you don't need to disparage yourself. We certainly never need to disparage anyone ever.

Hank Smith: 04:15 That is such a fantastic talk. I still remember where I was listening to that talk. I was mowing the lawn. I was crying and laughing and crying and laughing as I'm mowing the lawn. Just a life changing talk. So many of them are. The fun part of general conference is thinking this next talk might be a talk that I remember for the rest of my life.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 04:39 Can I read one more excerpt out of Elder Hollands?

Hank Smith:	04:42	Yeah, let's do it.
Prof. Danny Ricks:	04:43	It says today I speak against verbal and emotional abuse of anyone against anyone. These things ought not to be. And he says, in that same spirit we speak, the sin of verbal abuse knows no gender. Bridle your tongue. All of us need to bridle our tongues and no matter what age, every gender, every person, every human, watch your words.
John Bytheway:	05:06	There's one that's not mentioned here. I wonder what you guys think about this. There's some people that they may not be able to talk to young people, but they are incredible mentors. When I think of the story of Ammaron coming to Mormon, Mormon says, I was 10 years of age, he came to me. It wasn't like, hey guys, what should I do with my life? This mentor came to Mormon and said, I perceive that thou were a sober child and are quick to observe. The idea of someone that's older that you respect to come to you and say, I see things in you that you might not see in yourself. I don't know what Mormon's reaction was really me? I don't know. If Mormon was like unaware that he had the gift of being quick to observe and of being a sober child. The fact that a mentor comes to you and says, that must have been so thrilling for Mormon to hear that. And then he gave him an assignment. Well, I want you to be prepared when you're 24 years old. Brother Pay, my priest quorum advisor treated me like he saw things in me I didn't know that I had. I'm so grateful to have a good mentor in my life when I was younger. I had good parents and all that, but I had this young men's leader that just really made me feel like there was more in me than I thought I had. Do you know what I'm talking about?
Hank Smith:	06:35	Didn't you write an article about this?
John Bytheway:	06:37	I did. I wrote for the <a href="#">Church News</a> . I mentioned something like this and Brother Wilcox looked at me and said, I want to see that article Monday. So I wrote it. Our friend Trent Toone over at the church news put it in. I can remember all of my young men leaders and my bishops, I can't remember who won the Super Bowl, who won the NBA championship, who won the World Series. But I remember my mentors, every one of them. What a great gift to have someone like Ammaron who would come and say, I see some things in you. I don't even know if you're aware of this.
Prof. Danny Ricks:	07:13	I met Trent years and years ago, 1999 when I was a freshman at Rick's college and I took a bowling intermurals class because that was the academic rigor I was interested in and Trent and I

we're on the same team and he is a great man and he is a great bowler. He is a great bowler.

- Hank Smith: 07:33 Alright, Trent, if you're listening, we might have to go bowling.
- John Bytheway: 07:36 And that career path took him to a great writer and editor. Does a lot of church news articles for the young men. He helps us.
- Hank Smith: 07:45 We love him. We love him.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 07:47 I think John's example is a perfect idea of this discerning of spirits and absolutely what's of God, what's not of God. It's a gift to be able to see in others your living evidence of men that had this, people that you worked with, young men's leaders and bishops that you worked with that saw in you things that you didn't see in yourself. And look at how that's helped you become what God needed you to become and then also be able to help use those gifts further on. It's amazing to see the connectivity of all of these gifts. You can't help but think about Paul's beautiful analogy of the body of Christ. You have a place in this. The eye doesn't say to the ear, I have no need of the ear, the nose. I mean the ridiculous nature of can you imagine the nose like being like man, the ear, they don't even sniff like what good are they? They don't even smell anything. Like, yeah, you are needed. Every single person is needed. God disperses these gifts as he wills them to be right. Verse 26, all these gifts come from God. You're known by him. He sees good in you. He sees potential in, he sees the good that you can do and how important it is to keep these covenants that we make because we receive these gifts through covenant. We receive these gifts through covenant and then to use those gifts to building the kingdom of God.
- Hank Smith: 09:08 As I'm reading this, I want to combine the two topics. I don't know if the Lord intended that, I hope so. In the beginning we talked about don't cast anyone out, everybody belongs here. And then we talked about gifts of the Spirit. And if you combine those two, sometimes we are jealous of other people's gifts, but then we can also be bothered by other people's gifts. I don't like that person, they do this thing. I've experienced the rough end of that a couple of times as I teach. I'm a touch irreverent, I'm not terrible, right John? Just okay, I'm terrible. I'm pretty terrible.
- John Bytheway: 09:43 You're not.

Hank Smith:	09:44	I feel like the Spirit has told me where the boundaries are. We could probably let the Spirit do that with most people's gifts. Maybe we steady the arc in places we don't need to. Try to correct someone.
Prof. Danny Ricks:	09:57	I think it can be contagious. On my drive down to do this podcast. I've got five kids in the van and my daughter's so excited and she has energy and she's like, oh, I'm so excited for this. We're going to go to a game after this. We're going to this game. One of my other kids kind of mocked her in like her excitement of this. Kid will be anonymous. Why did you do that? Like you just killed the joy. These gifts that people use. But we can get so blinded by like the way that we think it needs to be. Oh, how dare they have this? This is the way that it's supposed to be. How many people in these early days of church as they come in with all their different backgrounds, there's so many things that are preference rather than principle. Preference is not principle. Make sure when we correct which one where we're correcting off of. Whether that be as a parent, as a church leader, even those that come in off the side that have no stewardship and still want to give their opinion. Make sure that this isn't just a your preference thing.
Hank Smith:	10:55	I love that there's times where I've seen the primary chorister doing their best to get these kids involved and someone will shut that down so fast. You shouldn't have done that. You shouldn't have said this. What'd you say? You just killed the joy. Knock the joy out of her. Let's say it again Danny, preference isn't principle. Are you sure that's not the way it's supposed to be done or is it the way you don't like it to be done?
Prof. Danny Ricks:	11:24	Someone once told me this phrase where you can be the ripest juiciest peach in the world and some people just don't like peaches. How you administer, it just might not be people's flavor. And that's okay if you're a bishop right now and you've got a batch of people that you're not their flavor, tell them, they don't worry you've got only five years and you'll get a different flavor.
Hank Smith:	11:47	Yeah.
Prof. Danny Ricks:	11:47	But let people strive.
Hank Smith:	11:49	Yeah.
Prof. Danny Ricks:	11:49	Let people strive.

Hank Smith: 11:51 I occasionally have to tell students who want to come up and correct my way of teaching. They'll say, I feel like I need to tell you this. And I'll say, listen, if the Lord wants me to change, he'll tell me or my wife he's probably not going to tell you. So if so and so needs to do something different and you have no stewardship there, it's probably wise to keep that comment to yourself. John, you've told me before it takes zero, zero intelligence to criticize. John you know the poem.

John Bytheway: 12:24 Oh [the builder poem](#).

Hank Smith: 12:25 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 12:26 I passed one day through a little town and saw them tearing a building down with a ho heave ho and a husky yell, they swung a ball and a side wall fell. I asked the foreman, are these men skilled? The kind you'd hire if you had to build? Oh no, he chuckled. No indeed. The common laborer is all I need. I can destroy in a day or two what builders have taken weeks to do. I thought to myself as I went on my way, which of these roles have I tried to play? Am I a builder who works with care, strengthening others by rule and square, shaping my peers to a well-made plan, helping them do the best they can? Or am I your wrecker who walks around content with the labor of tearing down? Yeah, it's on the hard drive I guess.

Hank Smith: 13:07 Yeah, we criticize each other. Sometimes people then put their gift on the shelf thinking I guess it's not a gift.

John Bytheway: 13:16 Boy, speaking of criticism, [Elder Oaks](#) said the primary reason for the commandment to avoid criticism is to protect the spiritual wellbeing of the criticizer.

Hank Smith: 13:28 Wow.

John Bytheway: 13:28 Not the person we would criticize. Whoa. Yeah. Hurts your own spirit.

Hank Smith: 13:34 We don't realize what spirit we have. You're not critical Danny, I've known you for a little while now and you're not a critical guy. You're going to go, here's what's good about that person.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 13:45 You try to because, you want that for you.

Hank Smith: 13:47 Yeah.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 13:48 I love when mercy is meted out to me and it tastes sweet when I'm forgiven to give people that benefit. To keep going in the Doctrine & Covenants 46 verse 9. These gifts that all may be benefited. That's the purpose, that all are benefited. Remember why they're given. If it's negative, you best check yourself a couple times to see if it was really meant to benefit.

Hank Smith: 14:12 I need to write that down. I really like that. John, you've told me how many times if people are going to change, they're not going to change because you told them to.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 14:20 I've yet to see the social media post that says, wow, you were right. I've changed my mind.

Hank Smith: 14:26 I have, yeah.

John Bytheway: 14:28 John Lund wrote a book about the art of giving and receiving criticism. He said, criticism doesn't change people, people either change themselves or they're changed by the Holy Ghost. And then he went on to say that criticism actually makes people withdraw. I don't want to be around that. We can criticize somebody and it hurts the relationship. They withdraw from it. Like they say, they're not usually going to say, wow, that's really helpful.

Hank Smith: 14:56 Right? Well thank you for that. They might to your face. They might go, oh, okay.

John Bytheway: 15:03 Right. Yeah. And he says, when criticism is invited, that's another thing. Hey, how did you, you know that's a different time, but,

Hank Smith: 15:09 Can you help me out here? Yeah.

John Bytheway: 15:11 We're treading on holy ground when we start telling somebody something's wrong with them.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 15:15 I love how the Savior says in verse 33 though, if we're struggling with this, all of us have our challenges that we struggle with and we seek these best gifts. But 33 interesting word choice. He goes, and you must practice virtue and holiness before me continually. If you're feeling the promptings of the Spirit that there's some areas that you need to grow and progress in this, you're in good shape. Just keep practicing. Everyone else has been there. I remember asking my grandpa once, because my grandpa knew everything. Grandpas know everything. And I said, grandpa, how do you know everything? And this is before

Google. This is before internet. We had grandpas. And he'd be like, Danny, I'm older than you because I'm old. I've experienced these. I've messed up a million more times than you have. I know that if you do that, that's going to be the consequence.

16:05 I don't know because I'm wise. I know because I've done. And then learn from it and become wise. Hopefully keep practicing. If you're a critical person, well ask God to give you the gift of charity. That's a gift. The greatest of all. We could riff off of Corinthians here. If you have not charity, then it's tinkling brass, tinkling symbols. Who cares? Faith to move mountains. Guess what? If they don't know you're loved, who cares? Keep striving, asking God to bless you, rejoicing that Jesus has forgiven you. I think one of the quickest ways to not be critical is to realize how much you've been forgiven and to rejoice in the forgiveness that's been offered you. If you keep that in the forefront of your mind. And what a beautiful thought when we take the sacrament is I take the sacrament and remember I'm like, I'm forgiven.

16:53 I really am. I'm clean, I'm pure. There's not a better feeling in the world than knowing you're a hundred percent clean with God and that's only through Christ. But when we remember we are, it's easy to love, it's easy to forgive. It's easier to not be critical. I've had promptings before and this is so embarrassing, getting frustrated with one of my kids, man, why are you going to do this and that I've heard the Spirit say, quote, they're a way better boy than you ever were. Good point. He's age appropriate. How many times that's come into our minds, man, this is age appropriate. That's exactly what a seven year old's going to do and a two year old's going to do and a teenage girl's going to do and a, you're just fine because of Jesus.

Hank Smith: 17:37 I'll occasionally have a youth Sunday school teacher say they're just out of control. I don't know what to do. And sometimes I'll say, listen, puppies bark and bite and you can't expect a puppy to be a dog and you're trying to help them, but a puppy's a puppy and it's going to do puppy things. And they kind of go, oh, that's true. Sometimes we expect our puppies to act like adult dogs.

John Bytheway: 18:02 Hank, who was it that helped us? The end of the Book of Mormon. Hey, I fear lest the Gentiles shall mock these things and he kind of paraphrased the Lord saying, mockers mock. That's what they do.

Hank Smith: 18:13 Yeah, that's what they do.

John Bytheway: 18:16 No matter what you do, mockers mock. So don't worry about it.

Hank Smith: 18:20 Danny, you quoted this earlier, but I'd like to give the entire quote before we end this section to hear what you think about it. This is [Marvin J. Ashton](#), There are Many Gifts. He gives a list that I think our listeners might think, wait, that's a gift? I didn't know that was a gift. He says, let's review some of these less conspicuous gifts. The gift of asking, the gift of listening, the gift of hearing and using a still small voice. The gift of being able to weep, the gift of avoiding contention, of being agreeable, avoiding vain repetition. The gift of seeking that which is righteous. The gift of not passing judgment, of looking to God for guidance, of being a disciple, caring for others, of being able to ponder, the gift of offering prayer. The gift of bearing testimony. And then he goes on, he says another one, the gift to look to God for direction. The gift to calm. The gift to care. It's a fantastic talk all the way back in 1987, which shouldn't be that long ago, but,

John Bytheway: 19:27 I love that.

Hank Smith: 19:29 Danny, how do we help people see, no, these are gifts. I'll hear people say, they start to weep and they'll say, oh, I just hate that. I cry so easy. And I think that is a gift. I haven't cried since the Jazz lost to the Bulls in 1998. This is a gift.

John Bytheway: 19:46 [97](#)

Prof. Danny Ricks: 19:48 Yeah, it's important to remember that every one of these gifts is an attribute that Christ has. Every good thing is God has in perfection. Jesus is a weeper. Shortest scripture. Jesus wept. If you want to be like Christ, you're on your way if you're a weeper. President Eyring, we can count on it at General Conference. President Eyring will tap his fingers and weep. And there is something about that. I'm with you, Hank. I've prayed for this gift when I've served as bishop because I feel things in here, but it doesn't manifest on my face.

Hank Smith: 20:20 Yeah.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 20:21 And I'm afraid people will think that I'm not sincere or they will think that they won't know that I do feel I want to help. This is a Christlike gift. It's an attribute of Him. Whether it be weeping, yeah rejoice in it! It will help people feel ministered to if someone's cried with you then kept that covenant to mourn with those that mourn, comfort those that stand in need of comfort. There's a bond and a connection that you feel

ministered to in a way that I don't know if it can be replicated. Rejoice in these gifts.

- Hank Smith: 20:56 Danny, how often have you, I bet you're a little like me, have envied the gift of keeping your mouth shut, right? Like I think John has that gift. He knows when to be quiet. I beg the Lord for that gift. My wife has begged the Lord that I would have that gift.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 21:15 We were just studying 3 Nephi 17 in a class and Jesus has that gift. Remember after verse one through three, he's like, I'm actually going to be done talking. It's time for me to stop. It's time for me to stop. There is a time. That's a gift. One of the biggest things that I've heard, when people have doubts, they don't know who to go to because they're scared of being judged. A gift of listening. Jesus listened. Jesus listened. We're striving to become like him. We need these gifts in every setting. Lift where you stand. [Elder Uchtdorf](#) October, 2008. Be content. Alma. O that I were an angel. I just need to be content with what I am. Too many times we want one of the other. Elder Uchtdorf says, however, there are those who sometimes struggle with this concept and when they do, they seem to fall into one of two camps. Either they seek to lead or they seek to hide. They covet a crown or a cave. Those I don't ever want to be a bishop, I want to stay in my cave. Well guess what? God needs some. And those that like the cave sometimes make good ones. And if you're, I want the crown. I want the crown. I'll build and lift where you stand. Lift where you stand and rejoice in it. There are more primary teachers in heaven than prophets. So just rejoice in it.
- Hank Smith: 22:39 Yeah.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 22:39 I'll tell you this. If Jesus were to come to my ward this Sunday, I don't think he's going to go to gospel doctrine, I think he'll go to the Primary. Follow in his footsteps. There's no small things because God loves each of us individually so however you may minister. And it's hard. When we see in ourselves, we want to feel appreciated. Everybody does. Go vertical. He'll help you feel that.
- Hank Smith: 23:03 The primary president in my ward right now, Danny is a friend of yours. Her name is Julie Lewis.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 23:08 Yes. Yes. One of the best humans ever.

Hank Smith: 23:12 Yeah. If you stop and watch, Sister Lewis is racing around administering the primary program. And I wonder if she thinks, am I doing anything that anybody is seeing? Because that looks like a tough job. So I love that Jesus would not go to gospel doctrine, he would go to primary.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 23:33 Well, and to ask ourselves this question too, like why do we want it? Why do we need it? When he who sees the sparrow fall, we do what we do because we've made covenants with God. We've consecrated. One of the covenants that we make in the endowment in the temple is consecration. I'm going to give my time, my talents, my means, my life. What? Like do what you want with it. But how twisted is that when we're like, do what you want with it Lord. But actually I want you to do it this way though.

Hank Smith: 23:58 I need this. Yeah.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 23:59 This is what I need. And he is like, oh, I thought you gave it to me. I thought I could do with it what I needed to do with it. You'll become what he needs you to be and you'll become like him. Keep exercising faith in him. Repent of your sins. Make and keep your covenants. Serve where he asks you to go. Be the best minister in the world. Love your neighbors. You'll receive everything. Remember that parable with Jesus and the talents? Five talent guy makes 10, well done good and faithful servant come now into the rest of thy Lord. Two talent person doubles it but he has four. It's a fascinating thought. He doesn't even have what the other one starts with. He still doesn't even have that. So like, oh, if we're looking in the parable of the slopes with [Elder Gilbert](#) right? That great talk a little while ago, man. But look what you've done. They get the same statement. If you're looking for praise from the world, like you'll get it sometimes, but you just won't other times. So get over that and just feel good that you're serving the master that sees all. God sees it, God sees it and the Spirit can validate to you that he's pleased.

Hank Smith: 25:05 It has a great idea here in the manual it says, your study of spiritual gifts might lead you to ponder what gifts God has given you. How can you use these gifts to bless his children? And this little practice that I often forget, I don't know about both of you, if you have a patriarchal blessing, it likely identifies gifts you have been given. Maybe not every time, but it likely does. So maybe this week is a time to open your patriarchal blessing. I sometimes go a long time without looking at that blessing.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 25:35 As you think about which ones you have or may have or which ones you want. I think that's a healthy thing to do. I think it's an appropriate thing to do. [President George Q. Cannon](#) said this, quote, if any of us are imperfect, it is our duty to pray for the gift that will make us perfect. No man ought to say, why cannot I help this? It's my nature. He's not justified in it for the reason that God has promised to give strength to correct these things and to give gifts that will eradicate them. If a man lack wisdom, it is his duty to ask God for wisdom. The same with everything else. That is the design of God concerning his church. He wants his saints to be perfected in the truth. For this purpose He gives these gifts and bestows them upon those who seek after them in order that they may be a perfect people upon the face of the earth.

26:23 So seek them. He actually shares another thought on this. How many of you are seeking for these gifts that God has promised to bestow? How many of you, when you bow before your Heavenly Father in your family's circle or in your secret places contend for these gifts to be bestowed upon you? Interesting verbiage there. Contend with Him. Give them to me. I need them. I want them. I have this challenge or this situation, this calling or this child that I'm trying to help. I need this gift. Father please. He continues. How many of you ask the Father in the name of Jesus to manifest himself to you through these powers and these gifts? Or do you go along day by day like a door turning on its hinges without having any feeling upon the subject, without exercising any faith whatever. Content to be baptized and to be members of the church and to rest their thinking that your salvation is secure because you have done this.

27:15 I say to you in the name of the Lord as one of his servants, that you have need to repent of this. You have need to repent of the hardness of the heart, of your indifference and of your carelessness. There is not that diligence. There is not that faith. There is not that seeking for the power of God that there should be among a people who have received the precious promises we have. This is call to action. This is how we're going to run our meetings. Everyone's invited and you better get gifts of the Spirit so that we can do what God's kingdom needs to do in these last days. And it's to share this incredible message with the world.

Hank Smith: 27:52 That is wonderful. Danny, this has been fantastic. You have brought section 46 to life for me. It was in black and white, now it's in color. Literally as I was marking along. Let's do these last

two sections. 47 and 48. Same month, same year. March, 1831. So they got a lot going on.

- Prof. Danny Ricks: 28:11 John Whitmer gets a calling he doesn't want. I think all of us could resonate with that a little bit. This is the only time it's happened in this dispensation. I love it. And in the section heading even says, I would rather not do it. Please. I would rather not do it. Is this from the Lord? Please. I want it to be manifest through Joseph the seer, John Whitmer. He's a wonderful soul to study. He does not stay faithful. But be mindful. If you're only going to listen to the people that stayed faithful as you study church history, your list is going to get a little short for a while. Rejoice in the good that they did in the season and let Jesus be the judge. And we don't want to dabble in that oh well, too bad. That I don't know. No, that's not our place. I don't think any of us feel comfortable walking up to Jesus, tapping him on the shoulder at the judgment bar and be like, hey, I have some thoughts on this guy if you're interested.
- 28:59 No, let's let Jesus do Jesus. So as you study church history, be mindful of that. Your job is not to judge the people in church history. Your job is to take the principles, learn from them, and try to live the way that Jesus is teaching them. John Whitmer, maybe not the best historian, but we're all not the best at certain things. In my opinion, Oliver's a better historian. But Oliver gets called on a mission. John gets called, I don't want to do it, but I'll do my best. We actually own the journal. We haven't owned it for a long, long time. But last year when the church purchased all those buildings in Nauvoo and the Kirtland Temple and a number of documents we own. So the book is titled Book of John Whitmer, written by commandment. After he left the church he eventually refused to give it when he got excommunicated from the church.
- 29:50 Let me read you what he wrote in there. I think it's fascinating. We got a lot of access to it with [Joseph Smith papers](#) in 2012. But I love this thought. Whitmer wrote in his history, quote, some temporal movements have not proved satisfactory to all parties, has also terminated in the expulsion of many members, among whom is WW Phelps and myself. Therefore, I close the history of the church of Latter-day Saints, hoping that I may be forgiven of my faults and my sins be blotted out and in the last days be saved in the kingdom of God. Notwithstanding my present situation. That's quite the way to end the journal. He never came back. A lot of the Whitmer's thrived. David, one of the three witnesses is his brother. John Whitmer helped with the translation. He helped write for Joseph. Remember, learn from him but don't judge him.

30:43 Don't judge him. Let Jesus be Jesus. Because there's some wonderful things that we can learn. Verse one in section 47, write and keep a regular history. Let's keep in mind and if this is me justifying my sins, correct me, John and Hank. Okay. But I'm not a good typical journaler. Straight up serious. I have journal entries that are back to back that say quote, I'm dating a girl named Angela. She's wonderful. I'm excited to see where things go. The next entry is, by the way, I married her and we have two kids. So...

Hank Smith: 31:18 It's a good history. One thing led to another. Yeah, it was...

Prof. Danny Ricks: 31:22 One thing led to another. Don't worry about it but it worked out gloriously. It worked out gloriously. But there's other things that you can do too. I add pictures to family search, add pictures to family search that's family history. Some people approach social media as family history. Great. Be open to all the ways that this can manifest. There's apps on your phones now, if it's in your phone is it still a journal? It absolutely is. Photo books don't limit it just to be like, oh, am I writing these things down? I'm sure you can be better than me. But also recognize that I'm, it doesn't have to just look like that. There's a myriad of ways that this can look, that you can follow the Savior's counsel in this. And we're all grateful for this. I'm grateful for John Whitmer's journal, the history that he wrote by commandment. There's crosses out. He like goes through and edits after he leaves the church, he goes back and edits some things. He's like, oh, this is how I feel about it now. Well, I can still learn from that experience too.

32:17 Keep it continually. I love in verse four, this thought. He says, it shall be given him inasmuch as he is faithful. Interesting notation there to John, knowing who's receiving this by the Holy Ghost, by the Comforter. The Spirit will help and write down those things. How much would you guys give? I would love you guys mentioned that I'm a descendant of Thomas E. Ricks. I love Thomas E. Ricks helped found a number of cities, Cardston, Logan, Vegas on a mission and Rexburg. I want to know the details of what did you do every day. If you're like, people would be bored of that. Yeah, they might be, but some won't.

Hank Smith: 32:53 Yeah.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 32:54 And let know them, like now that I love Thomas E. I love all my ancestors. I would love to know what you did every day. Write it down. Sometimes we have a tendency to not think we're very spectacular and we're not. But we have people that love us, that think we are. We have people that love us. My mom, man,

she thought I was amazing. Wonderful. My wife and kids think I'm amazing and they care. So jot down your thoughts as unspectacular as you might be.

Hank Smith: 33:24 John, I know you have some videos of your dad. You like to show your kids because they didn't know him, at least some of them.

John Bytheway: 33:30 Right. Four of my children who were born after my dad passed, we thankfully have his autobiography, which he just started jotting down on a yellow pad one day and we have those pictures. When Danny was talking there, I thought about the Memories app, the family history thing. You just push the button. Plus you can put audio on there. I just recently got to speak at Roots Tech and I mentioned this. I would love to hear my mom as a 16-year-old talking to her future children. Well, any 16-year-old can do that right now. Can push plus on the app and record audio. Hi, one day. It's made family history a lot easier.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 34:11 Let's keep plugging family history. It invites a spirit into our life that cannot be replicated and the promised blessings that come from it cannot be replicated. My mom passed away right after my mission. I was 21. Heartbreaking. My wife never met her. My kids didn't meet her and my brother, this was probably about a year ago, my brother sent me an audio file and I'm embarrassed to say this, I'm saddened to say this. I started listening to the audio file my brother sent and I was like, who is this? I'm like, this is so familiar. Who is this? It was my mom speaking at my brother's either farewell or homecoming talk. Been 20 years that I forgot her voice. Heartbreaking. We have the technology now. Take these moments. It takes moments. It's so easy. And it is in the Memories app, but it's also in the Family Search app. You press the plus button, ask your local temple and family history consultant, help them use and use these gifts that they've been given, like we talked about in section 46 and bless the lives of so many.

Hank Smith: 35:18 If you were born in the 1900s and don't know what an app is, I'm certain you have someone born after 2000 who can show you what an app is and how it works.

John Bytheway: 35:28 When your identity starts stretching to your whole family, I think it gives you a power and a strength. You're part of a legacy. When I feel connected to my dads and my grandpas and my mom and my grandmas and all of them, it feels like I've got more of a mission and a purpose than without knowing, you know that, and that's why I think family history has such a

benefit for every teenager even to say, hey, this is part of me. I love the idea.

- Prof. Danny Ricks: 36:02 I'm teaching a Presidents of the church class this semester. I love with it. And I want to share with you guys some numbers on this. I'm so glad John brought up Family Search and this app. President Kimball, section 138 gets put into the Doctrine & Covenants. In 1977, the Family History Library visitors increased from 2000 a day to 3,500 a day, which is amazing. Extraction work, so what we call indexing, and if you don't have the Get Involved app too, get the Get Involved app. It's one of the most glorious purposes for AI.
- John Bytheway: 36:36 AI does it instead of... Yeah.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 36:39 Yes. Oh, it's easy and slick and it's amazing what's happened. Okay, so for extraction work from 1921 to 2006, think about that number here. 1921 to 2006. 85 years resulted in 900 million names added to a genealogical record. That's amazing. So average 10.5 million a year. Indexing replaces extraction in 2006.
- 37:04 From 2006 to 2013 over 1 billion names were indexed. That's amazing. 900 million in 85 years. And then 2006 to 2013. 1 billion names. A million names per day. That's amazing. Are you ready? I just got the email from Family Search. Family Search if you are listening, some people read the emails and we love them, so keep sending them. We love them because of technology. In 2024, just in 2024, 1.7 billion searchable names were added from historical records.
- John Bytheway: 37:40 Hastening the work.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 37:42 1.7 billion. Remember 2006 to 2013 was 1 billion and that was, that blew the previous 85 years out of the water. Utilize this, utilize this, please. Everybody get the Get Involved app. If you don't have the Family Search app, get the Family Search app and engage in this. Spend some of your time. What if everybody spent 10 minutes of their day before they went to their silly apps?
- 38:04 And I'm not anti apps. You do your apps, do whatever you want. Do your games. I love to play Scrabble with my sister, right? I love it. I lose to her. I'm never happier losing to anybody than I am to my sister. But before I do that, what if I did 10 minutes in one of these apps? I did some tasks. So tasks, if you're interested, these people index the names and then they get AI

again, algorithms start doing what algorithms do and they start checking into those names. They'll flag your ancestors adding these records. That's history too. And the Savior wants us to be engaged in this. Keep the church record in history continually. In verse three it says. Continually. Man, we live in the greatest day that's ever been, ever been. Temples everywhere. You get a temple, you get a temple. 20 temples a conference.

- 38:56 It's amazing.
- John Bytheway: 38:57 Tell us what the Get Involved app does.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 39:01 I've been doing New Zealand names recently. I don't know why because I maybe it's cold in Rexburg and I just want to like think about something somewhere else. I click this and AI starts doing what AI does and I don't get how, I don't know but this document, there's a name. It says Robert. I click match. Reynolds. Match. Lynn. Match. I just indexed the name and now an algorithm will take that name and look through all of the family records that it has and it'll show up as a task. A task on your app. So I'm in my family search app. They have this beautiful little checkbox down there that says tasks. And if I click on that, there's this beautiful, wonderful soul named Jane Henderson. I click on the blue circle. Someone did the Scotland Civil Registration records. I click on it and it says, Hey, is this your person? I click match. Instantly it's attached. It's amazing. Something cool about the Get Involved app too is once you've done this, I did the same thing. I told my daughter if she did 20,000 names, I'd get her Thai food and she did it on the bus. She knocked it out like a week or two. I was like, oh, okay. We're going to get Thai food. Mangoes and sticky rice delivers every time.
- 40:17 Just pop on here in this app that some amazing, it'll show me the temples that the people I've indexed have had worked, done in. I indexed a name named Josh Allen, and on July 21st, his name was taken to Saratoga Springs Utah Temple and did work for, that's amazing. I click, there's people, 370 people that I've indexed has had work done in the temple.
- John Bytheway: 40:44 I'm hearing President Nelson saying, anytime you do anything that helps anyone on either side of the veil take a step closer to receive the essential baptismal covenants and temple covenants you are helping to gather Israel. During followHIM we just watch Danny Gather Israel. There it is.
- Prof. Danny Ricks: 41:05 We live in the best day ever.

Hank Smith:	41:08	Oh, that's fantastic. Danny, we have loved today and we have one section left. What do you want to do with section 48?
Prof. Danny Ricks:	41:18	There's a line in here. Verse three. Inasmuch as you have not lands, let them buy for the present time in those regions roundabout as seemeth them good. He says that line three times in the Doctrine and Covenants. As seemeth them good. Because God really lets you use your agency.
John Bytheway:	41:36	That's an agency line. Yeah.
Prof. Danny Ricks:	41:38	Like do what you want to do. I've blessed you with intelligence. I've blessed you with experience. Sometimes we're paralyzed with fear that we're going to do something that God doesn't want us to do. When really God, like, listen, what do I major in? What do I major in? Major in what you want to major in. God can exalt plumbers. God can exalt teachers. God can exalt doctors. Do what you want. Do whatever seemeth good to you. We get paralyzed. What if I make a mistake? Just do something and really like I can exalt you doing lots of things. Now, if it's going to affect your salvation, then yeah, where should I live? Man, I can exalt you in Boise. I can exalt you in Ghana. I can exalt you in Australia. I can exalt you. All these places go where we feel like, and it's so dangerous when we have this guess the mind of the teacher approach with God. I'm afraid to do anything. Like what if I raise my hand and I don't give what the teacher wants when really he is like, man, do what you want to. As long as it's good, you're aligned with proper principles. You're within those boundaries that we talked about earlier in this section. Man, live your life. Be happy.
Hank Smith:	42:47	Be happy. It's the brother of Jared. Bring me an idea. I'll make it work.
Prof. Danny Ricks:	42:51	Move forward. We're already an anxiety filled generation. Then throw on, oh, don't mess up God's plan for me. Sheesh. It's God's plan. Danny Ricks isn't going to thwart like what standard of truth right now. Like persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, but you make one bad choice when you're 21 and oh, that's what's going to thwart God. Uh, I think he's okay. Learn. Make good choices founded in correct principles. Realize that not as many things are of salvific nature as you think they are. Keep the commandments, keep your covenants. Pray to God
Hank Smith:	43:31	Repent every day.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 43:32 And every day. Be okay as seemeth you good. Which lands should I buy? I don't care. It's dirt. God's like it's dirt. It's all mine. And he has this lens of eternity. We worry about all these things that have such a temporal like that have expiration dates and we're talking to a God that has none. Eternal worlds without end. And we're like, I don't know. Listen, relax as seemeth me good. Elder Bednar. Be a good boy. Be a good girl. Keep commandments. You're fine. Relax.

Hank Smith: 44:03 Move forward. The Lord will guide you. The Lord will bless you. Yep. Yeah, I like that.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 44:07 Yeah. Do the best you can. He says in verse four, save all the money that you can. I love that. It's all that you can. It's like this is it's almost like a casual revelation. Do what you can. I'll compensate. Think about Jesus feeding the 5,000. I'm going to feed everybody. They're like, oh, I can just see them looking in the knapsack being like, what on earth. Do we don't have... feed everybody? We've got a couple loaves, couple fishes. Do we think that Jesus is like, oh, thank goodness you said that many loaves. If there had been one less loaf, I would've only been able to do 4,000.

Hank Smith: 44:37 Yeah.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 44:37 No trust in an omniscient and omnipotent God trust in him. Man.

John Bytheway: 44:48 I feel sick, but, and and, but if I don't go to class today, maybe my wife is in there and I'll mess up my whole eternal...

Hank Smith: 44:55 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 44:56 thing if I don't go to class tonight.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 44:58 Right. The mental gymnastics that we worry about in these, these poor souls, all of them young adults, youth. Oh man, what if I mess this up? Relax. And really it goes back to true doctrine understood.

John Bytheway: 45:11 Mm-hmm.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 45:11 Is Jesus who you're reading in scripture that he is?

John Bytheway: 45:15 Yeah.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 45:15 Is God who God is? Relax. Take a deep breath as seemeth me good. As seemeth them good. Do what you need to. Yeah. You're fine. Jesus says, I am able to do my work. Yeah. And all of these big questions, surprisingly, Elder Uchtdorf talked about like, and [President Kimball](#) soulmates is a garbage thought. What if I miss soulmates? Choose someone that keeps their covenants and you like being around. You'll have a great ride. You'll have a great ride. Elder Uchtdorf, right? If Harriet had chose someone else, he's like, I'd be sad, but she'd be keeping covenants here. I'd be keeping covenants here now. Thank goodness it didn't work. You know, we're grateful that it works out how it works out. Keep those covenants that you have made with God and you're going to be fine.

Hank Smith: 46:00 And repent when you don't.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 46:01 Repent every day and then rejoice in it. Joy of daily repentance. Get used to messing up. You're going to be fine.

Hank Smith: 46:08 I love it. I spend a lot of time with young people. Both of you do as well. That is a prevalent fear. What if I don't do what God wants me to do? What if I go to the wrong college? What if I get the wrong degree, the wrong career? Marry the wrong person? therefore, I will do nothing. That's a Satanic tool. What if you mess it up? What if you mess it up when I love what you're saying, Danny, look who's on your side. You're not going to mess this up. He's not going to go, ah, did not see that one coming. Uhoh. We are in trouble.

Prof. Danny Ricks: 46:39 I wonder how long it'll be in the eternities when I look at my sweetheart and I'll be like, what did I do for a living? I don't know, but I, who cares? Because I've become like Him. Yeah. I'm in the celestial kingdom with my family, with my loved ones, with God. It's all good. Just keep learning. The purpose of this life is to learn and grow.

John Bytheway: 46:57 One of the things that I love about the Restoration is not only, okay, now we know there's a God, the first vision, but now we find out what kind of being he is. We find out predestination. Mm-mm. Determinism. Mm-mm. We find out what he's really like. We find out how merciful he is. We find out how patient he is. We find out how many times he says, Joseph, thy sins are forgiven thee. I'm so grateful that not only he's real and he lives, but what kind of being is he? Oh. We get to explore that through the rest of the Doctrine & Covenants and through the rest, the rest of our lives. You know?

Hank Smith: 47:32 Yeah. [Elder Kearon](#) he wants joy for you.

John Bytheway: 47:34 He's in [relentless pursuit](#) of you too. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 47:38 He's not hiding the right answers in some haystack somewhere. Danny, before we let you go, can I ask you a question? Tell us how a boy who grows up on a big farm in Idaho becomes what you've become. And then second, there may be a narrative out there for some of our listeners that, oh man, if you really get to know the history of the church, you're going to lose your testimony. Yet you're someone who's, you've studied the history of the church quite a bit and it doesn't seem to have hurt your testimony. It seems to have helped it. So just walk us through maybe a little bit of your life and how you feel about the restoration. Also, we need to know the name of your sister that keeps beating you at Scrabble. We want to...

Prof. Danny Ricks: 48:20 Her name is Maria. She is as sweet as she is good at Scrabble. Maria Cottle. Maria Cottle. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 48:29 All right. Maria, thank you for humbling Danny. Danny, what do you think about the restoration and what it's done for you?

Prof. Danny Ricks: 48:37 Everything [President J. Reuben Clark](#), the longitude and latitude of our testimonies of our lives need to be that Jesus is the Christ. His resurrection's real. He is risen. He is risen. Because of that, everything else is an appendage to that. Jesus is the king of kings, Lord of lords. My Redeemer, my Savior, he is the only begotten of the Father. He is the Son of God, and he has redeemed my soul. He's rescued me, so who cares about anything else? For this dispensation he called a boy named Joseph Smith. He talked with him. He is a prophet. I don't have problems with church history. If anything, it makes me feel like I fit in. I'm messy. People will find faults with Joseph. Listen, if Joseph pulls out his resume and I pull out my resume, I know who I'd hire. Like, give me a break. I'm grateful for the restoration.

49:39 Really, truly, like everything good in my life has come because God restored a beautiful doctrine or principle through the prophet Joseph. The peace that I have, the joy that I can feel in good times because of Jesus Christ. All bad times can be okay, and all good times are sweeter because there's an eternal lens to it. But though I only know that because of the restoration of truth through prophet Joseph, that's why we know it. The plan of salvation. Are you kidding me? Heart soars. Do you read Section 76? Mercy. Heart soars. I love the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Hank Smith: 50:22 John, what a great day. I am so happy that I received all these recommendations, starting with Julie Lewis, my primary

president, all the way through a bunch of teachers up at BYU Idaho, and they said, have you not talked to Danny Ricks? What a day. So much.

- John Bytheway: 50:38 What a great day.
- Hank Smith: 50:39 With that, we want to thank brother Danny Ricks for teaching us today. We want to thank our executive producer, Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen, and every episode we remember our founder. He would've loved this, John. He would've. He would've loved Danny's enthusiasm.
- John Bytheway: 50:57 He would've loved the fire. Yeah, he's like that.
- Hank Smith: 50:59 Absolutely like that. We remember our founder, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We're actually going to talk about those shakers Danny mentioned next week on followHIM. Thank you for joining us on today's episode. Do you or someone you know speak Spanish, Portuguese, or French? You can now watch and listen to our podcast in those languages. Links are in the description below. Today's show notes and transcript are on our website. FollowHIM.co. That's followHIM co. Of course, none of this could happen without our incredible production crew. David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra, Heather Barlow, Amelia Kabwika, and Annabelle Sorensen.

## EXPECT "CONCRETE" MIRACLES



- Hank Smith: 00:03 Hello everyone welcome to followHIM Favorites. John and I are sharing a single story to go with each week's lesson. John, we are in Doctrine & Covenants, 46, 47, and 48, and you've told me you have a story. I wanna hear it.
- John Bytheway: 00:16 Yeah. Section 46, as you remember, it has a list of spiritual gifts in there and we had wonderful discussion on our podcast about it four years ago. We have another one this time. One of the verses here says, and again to some is given the working of miracles, and I thought, whoa. How many stories have we heard in church history where there are miracles? You ask your average group, who is it that said that? Was this J. Reuben Clark? How many of you have been the conscious recipient of a miracle in your family? And most people will raise their hand and think, yeah, I can think of something.
- Hank Smith: 00:49 I have.
- John Bytheway: 00:50 Yeah, me too. With my brother and the kidney and every, it was amazing. There's a little book called Everyday Miracles, and I read this story. I just loved it. In June of 1964, I was alive. You weren't. We were pouring concrete floors in the chapel and the recreational hall of the Poverty Bay District of Gisborne, New Zealand second branch chapel. There had been storms in the area for three weeks. The boats had not been able to deliver cement to Gisborne. We had borrowed all the cement there was within 80 miles, and when we quit work for lunch on the last day of pouring, we had just two bags of cement left and needed two and a half yards, cubic yards of concrete, enough to fill an area 15 feet by 13 feet. This would've required 12 bags of concrete to complete the job. As we returned from lunch, everyone was saying, why even start, it wouldn't even be worthwhile.
- 01:43 I told them, start the mixer, that we were not only going to pour, we would complete our floors that day. Then not knowing at the time how it could be done I walked a short distance from

the group and prayed. I simply said, Father, you fed the thousands with five loaves and two fishes, surely you can help us this day. We went to work and mixed two small, one fourth yard batches of concrete with the two bags of cement we had and started pouring. There seemed to be no end to the concrete as it poured from our wheelbarrows. The full pour was not only completed, we had to remove two wheelbarrows full when it was leveled out. There is no physical way this could have been done by men. It was indeed a modern miracle performed for his people of the latter-days.

- Hank Smith: 02:35 Wow, that's biblical.
- John Bytheway: 02:38 Yeah. I just wanted to give you a concrete example, so to speak there. There are miracles in our day, and Hank, that's one story I know that we could both come up with...
- Hank Smith: 02:52 Yeah, hundreds, but that's one I'm floored by.
- John Bytheway: 02:55 Yeah. That's good. That's good.
- Hank Smith: 03:00 John, you're right. That's section 46, verse 21. To some it is given the working of miracles. What a great thing you could focus on in your lesson this week is let's talk about miracles.
- John Bytheway: 03:10 You can imagine those people in that branch every time they met there. I bet they thought of that.
- Hank Smith: 03:16 Yeah, exactly. Every week, a witness of a miracle right under their feet. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it anywhere you get podcasts. We're with Danny Ricks our friend from BYU Idaho this week. You are gonna love him. He is so fun. He takes these sections and he'll show you things you have never seen before. Then come back here next week. We'll do another followHIM Favorites.