



EPISODE 25

GUEST: DR. JASON B. WHITING



“The Lord Requireth the Heart and a Willing Mind”

Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

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

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

Podcast Episode Descriptions

Part 1:

Why is forgiveness a challenge? Dr. Jason Whiting examines how conflict, fault-finding, and differences—even among the early Saints—are not new challenges. Through the lens of the Doctrine and Covenants and human nature, he explores the transformative power of forgiveness and how it builds unity in families, communities, and the Church.

Part 2:

Dr. Jason Whiting continues his discussion on forgiveness, and healing from trauma, highlighting how the Lord helps us forgive ourselves and build stronger relationships through meaningful connection.

Timecodes:

Part 1 -

- 00:00 - Part 1 - Dr. Jason Whiting
- 04:23 Jason Whiting's bio
- 05:58 *Come, Follow Me Manual*
- 07:12 Background on the lesson
- 12:11 Can a teacher row a canoe?
- 14:14 Most discussed verses on forgiveness
- 18:11 The doctrine of reciprocity
- 22:21 Why it is difficult to forgive
- 25:05 Fault-finding is misplaced blame
- 29:41 People are missile-seeking targets
- 32:31 The impulse for revenge
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- 43:31 Using scriptures in our work lives
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- 48:56 Is there a quota on forgiveness?
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- 53:25 Sister Yee's talk on forgiveness, abuse, and domestic violence
- 55:21 When it is time to leave a relationship
- 57:40 Temple wedding vs. celestial marriage
- 1:00:02 Perspective and forgiveness
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- 1:09:56 Two possible traps in marriage
- 1:12:02 - End of Part I - Dr. Jason Whiting

Part 2 -

- 00:00 - Part 2 - Dr. Jason Whiting
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- 05:44 Letting go of defensive mechanisms
- 06:55 Feelings aren't facts
- 08:48 Forgiveness and our own repentance
- 12:23 How reflection and forgiveness bless me
- 14:14 The Atonement helps us forgive
- 18:08 River fight to revelation
- 20:03 Mercy for me, justice for everyone else
- 24:05 Steps to forgiveness

- 28:41 Church as clinical material
- 31:26 It is better to be trusted than loved
- 35:27 Communication Skills isn't in the Topical Guide
- 39:08 The high price of being willing to forgive
- 43:03 Encouragement for the weary
- 48:15 Small things that help relationships
- 50:13 Bids for connection and a wheat grinder
- 54:28 Dr. Whiting's thoughts on scripture and the Restoration
- 01:01:05 End of Part 2 - Dr. Jason Whiting

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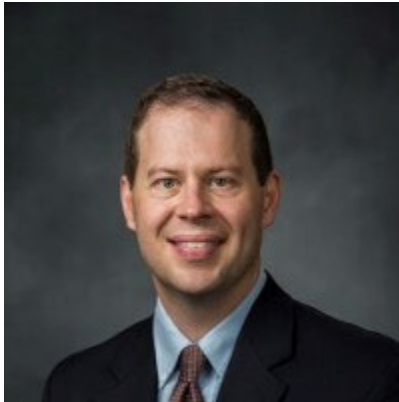
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Biographical Information:



Dr. Jason Whiting is a professor and program director in the Marriage and Family Therapy program at Brigham Young University. His research focuses on unhealthy and abusive relationships. In addition to his research publications, he writes books and blogs for a general audience. He teaches courses on addictions, violence, and research methods.

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Hank Smith:	00:00:00	Coming up in this episode on followHIM.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:00:03	I'll say, how often do you guys apologize after something's happened? Sometimes people say, Hmm, never. That's always a huge concern. If somebody is not saying, you know what? I didn't act in the right way, or I could have handled that better, or, I'm sorry, I said what I said, that's what you want to hear. If you don't hear that and there are people who won't go there, then you're probably not going to be getting much change.
Hank Smith:	00:00:28	Hello everyone. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with my co-host, John Bytheway, who is not weary in well doing. John, I've known you a long time. I have yet to see you weary in well-doing.
John Bytheway:	00:00:43	I'm just generally weary, but thank you all the time.
Hank Smith:	00:00:48	I see you weary in everything else except for well doing.
John Bytheway:	00:00:51	Right?
Hank Smith:	00:00:52	That's funny. John, we are joined by Dr. Jason Whiting today out of BYU. Jason, thanks for being here.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:01:00	It's great to be here with both of you.
Hank Smith:	00:01:02	I've been looking forward to this for a long time. Jason and I actually met on an airplane months ago. I'm excited for the audience to meet Jason. John, when you think of this trip to Missouri and now we're back, a lot has happened. A lot of drama, a lot of change on that trip to Missouri. What do you think Joseph Smith and his associates are feeling when they get back?
John Bytheway:	00:01:27	When you work together with a lot of people I just think of these sections as forgiveness sections, right? You notice things about people and then you can decide whether to harbor that

or hang onto it, whether to try to let that go. I love the message of how forgiving the Lord is in these sections. Therefore, you ought to forgive each other.

- Hank Smith: 00:01:48 Yeah. As we talked about these last few weeks, as we get into the Lord's work together, we start to bump up against each other.
- John Bytheway: 00:01:55 Yeah, exactly.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:56 You get a little human and messy and ornery and snarky a little bit. Jason, as you've looked at these sections, what do you want to do today? Where do we want to go?
- Dr. Jason Whiting: 00:02:05 That's exactly what you're both talking about. We have some challenging situations in the relationships that we have with each other. Well, I actually want to start with an overview quote from [President Nelson](#). He talks about relationships. This is a talk you're all familiar with. I love this. Talk about peacemakers needed. He says, my dear brothers and sisters, how we treat each other really matters. How we speak to and about others at home, at church, at work, and online really matters. Today, I'm asking us to interact with others in a higher holier way. My hope is that we can talk about forgiveness in some depth because I think that's a real key to relationships. It's part of how we treat each other, and it's one of the keys in terms of being Christlike, but it's hard. I'll talk a little bit about that today, why forgiveness is such a challenging thing to do at times, but why it's crucial for our spiritual wellbeing, for our relational wellbeing. We'll talk about how that applies in our relationships and our families, including at times when they're unhealthy, when things are not going well or even becoming damaging, how does forgiveness still apply in those tricky situations, and we'll talk about how the Savior can help us with this challenging but important doctrine.
- Hank Smith: 00:03:21 Oh, that's fantastic. John, do you remember last year we were with [Dr. Rebecca Clark](#). She said, think about heaven. Heaven is relationships. You don't think about the clouds or the streets or the food. Well, occasionally maybe you think about the food. When you think of heaven, you think of relationships. What makes sense that the Lord's saying, well, if this is going to be heaven, we better work on this and get it right.
- John Bytheway: 00:03:44 Talking about church history, this has really helped me Hank a lot to open my mind to this idea. Melissa Inouye helped us with this. What you just said, Jason, about what we say about each other really matters, but I never applied that to living or dead.

Or maybe we could say it better. What we say about each other on both sides of the veil really matters. It's tempting that, well, once somebody's dead, you can say whatever you want, but what if it's true, Hank, that those relationships are going to endure? What if we're going to meet Joseph? What if we're going to meet Emma? What if we're going to meet Brigham? Maybe what we say about them really matters, even right now.

Hank Smith:	00:04:23	Yeah, I love it. Before we can let Jason take the reins and teach John, we better tell our audience who he is. There's many students at BYU who know Dr. Whiting. Let's introduce him.
John Bytheway:	00:04:35	Yes. Jason B. Whiting. He has a PhD. He's a licensed marriage and family therapist and a professor in the Marriage and Family therapy program at Brigham Young University. He researches healthy and unhealthy marriage. He's the author of Love Me True, Overcoming the Surprising Ways We Deceive in Relationships, as well as other books and articles on addiction control and quality communication. Jason and his wife, April, have been married for almost 30 years, and the parents of six children, two daughters-in-law and a son-in-law. In his free time, he enjoys books, being outdoors, playing guitar, oil painting, and folding huge piles of laundry. That is the right attitude to have because that is a first world problem when you have lots of laundry, isn't it?
Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:05:24	That's true.
John Bytheway:	00:05:24	Right?
Hank Smith:	00:05:25	John, do you remember laundry Nirvana? I can't remember which guest that was who said.
John Bytheway:	00:05:28	Oh, Emily Watts talks about you never get to the point because even as we're talking, someone is out there producing new dirty laundry.
Hank Smith:	00:05:37	Right? It's never ending. Never ending. Well, Jason, we are so glad you are here. As hosts of this program, John and I both and our entire team feel who we invite on is important. We're always watching for the hand of the Lord. Jason and I sat down next to each other and we started chatting, found out we both teach at BYU made this connection and I thought the Lord is in this. I hope the Lord is in this. Let's get started. I'm going to read from the Come, Follow Me manual. Then Jason, I want to see where you want to go with this. The lesson begins this way. In the miserable heat of August of 1831, several elders were

traveling back to Kirtland from the land of Zion in Missouri. The travelers were hot and weary. The tensions soon turned into quarrels. It may have seemed like building Zion, a city of love, unity, and peace was going to take a long time.

00:06:33 I don't know about either of you. That never happens in our family when everybody gets hot and weary, quarreling, I love it. Fortunately, building Zion in Missouri in 1831 or in our hearts, families and wards today doesn't require us to be perfect. Instead, quote, of you, it is required to forgive. The Lord said he requires quote, the heart and a willing mind, and he requires patience and diligence. For Zion is built on the foundation of small things accomplished by those who do not become weary in well doing. Like John Bytheway, I love this interaction. I feel like we're going to learn a lot today about our relationships with each other. With that, Jason, how do you want to start this? Do you want to look at the history first?

Dr. Jason Whiting: 00:07:22 Yeah. Let me expand a little bit on what you just described there from that summary, because it was a challenging time, I think it illustrates well what you were just saying, which is that we have normal, human, difficult interactions that bring out our immaturities and our irritability. That then leads to some challenging situations. We have to choose what to do with that. What was happening during this time was in the summer of 1831 leading up to that summer, there had been a conference at Isaac Morley's farm, Spirits were high. People were fired up. They were talking about Missouri. Hey, this is going to be the New Jerusalem. It's a big deal. There's going to be a temple there. Maybe even the Lord is going to come back and meet us there. There's a lot of excitement. There are a bunch of elders who are called to go to Missouri.

00:08:10 It's a series of, of missionaries, 13 different companionships in addition to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon are asked to go. One of those companionships was Ezra Booth and Isaac Morley. They were both converts of recent years. Ezra Booth had in fact been a minister that caused this stir in his congregation. When he said, Hey, I've found this thing and it's the truth. He started really strong, but troubles became a thing for him pretty quickly after this strong start, starting with, they're asked to go to Missouri and Ezra Booth and Isaac Morley are told, you guys are supposed to walk to Missouri. Joseph and Sidney jump in a cart. They take off. That right away bothers Ezra Booth. He is like, wait a minute. We're going to walk and we're going to preach along the way in the heat and the bugs and you guys are getting in a cart.

	00:09:01	When I read that, I thought, that's like on a mission. When the zone leaders take the car and they go to the conference and they say, you guys meet us there, but do knock doors along the way. How fair is that? Exactly. Well, you guys are doing this thing. It's this long tough journey and then they get there. After all this hype, it's really nothing that special. It's a lot of prairie. There are some converts there, but it's not some big glittering center of Zion. Booth feels like Joseph has overpromised. They settle in a little bit. Joseph does receive some more revelations as has been talked about in previous weeks. The location of the temple, for example. They also get a warning that Zion won't be built up until after much tribulation. It's not going to happen instantly. Then the Lord warns them about complaining, which you would think would get their attention.
	00:09:57	He says, I'm giving you a commandment to not do things with a doubtful heart and not be slothful essentially is what he says. Some stay, some settle in, but a lot of the others take off, as you alluded to earlier, and they're heading out to do some other missionary work, but it was hard. They were jumping on a river. Have you ever tried to navigate a river on a canoe with your family members or whatever? You can see how the irritability might be a thing. That's not exactly a serene situation on the Missouri River so they're having petty arguments. At one point, they're rowing on a rough river. Oliver Cowdery refuses to row. They almost capsize, and then they all disembark to talk it over. Now, here's the quote from the church history book Saints. It says, after they set up camp, Joseph, Oliver and Sidney tried to talk to the group and ease tensions. Irritated the men called Joseph and Sidney cowards for getting off the river, mocked the way Oliver paddled his canoe and accused Joseph of acting like a dictator. The quarrel lasted long into the night.
Hank Smith:	00:10:59	Wow.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:11:00	Good times. Good, not easy, right? Even good people get caught up in petty and stressful and irritable situations. That's just life. Sometimes we forget as we kind of get the highlights from these church history events that day to day, there's some pretty tough stuff that happens.
Hank Smith:	00:11:18	I laugh a little bit at things like this, but to be honest, if you wanted to record situations where I have been that person, there would be so many to choose from where I got a little irrational, sorry, what I said when I was hungry, John, I've never seen you, ornery. In all of our time together.

John Bytheway:	00:11:38	We have a family joke about this because we drove to Seattle in our Sequoia. The majority of the passengers were telling me I was driving too slow.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:11:52	Classic.
John Bytheway:	00:11:53	We had to have a rest stop and have a little family meeting. Oh man, I love it. It makes them okay. They're like us. They're doing the best they can. If they write a Saint's book about me, there'd be stuff like this in it.
Hank Smith:	00:12:10	I love it.
John Bytheway:	00:12:11	What was it about Oliver's rowing? Because I know he was is like you. You put the oar in upside down, Oliver, the big end goes in the water. I mean, I'd love to know it was.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:12:22	Yeah. What were they making fun of? I don't know. They had their stop at the rest stop moment like you guys did. We gotta stop and talk about this, so they all got out over the next day or two they did chill out a little bit. They resolved some things and they were doing better. The Lord even says in section 61, he says, I, the Lord was angry with you yesterday, but today my anger is turned away. Then he says, inasmuch as you have humbled yourselves before me, the blessings of the kingdom are yours. I like that phrase. Some of them chose to humble themselves. That's a conscious thing to do and it implies agency. Some did, but some stayed cranky, including Ezra Booth, who at that point leaves his mission and he's heading home. The follow-up to that is after he returns back to Ohio from Missouri, he continues to criticize Joseph.
	00:13:11	He starts to write material in newspapers that's negative about the church. Eventually, his preaching license is revoked and he leaves the church, but interestingly enough, his companion, Isaac Morley takes a different path. He has some struggles in Section 64, which we'll talk about this a little bit. Both of those guys are rebuked by the Lord, but at some point, Isaac Morley softens. He stops complaining and becomes more valiant. He at one point then gives most of his farm to the church. He later becomes a bishop, a patriarch, and he goes west with the saints. Two different paths for those missionary companions. Now we get to section 64, which the Lord reveals in September. It's after many of them are back in Ohio. The first few verses. He tells them to receive his will to overcome the world and that he'll have compassion on them, and he says, some have sinned, but I have forgiven them and that he is merciful, and then he reminds them that Joseph holds the keys.

00:14:14 Then we get to these which are the most discussed verses on forgiveness. Starting in verse six. He says, there are those who have sought occasion against Joseph Smith without cause. I'm going to talk about that phrase, seeking occasion, this sort of choosing to find fault or to be critical, wanting to be offended almost. Verse seven, he says, he has sinned, but verily I say unto you, I the Lord forgives sins unto those who confess their sins before me and ask forgiveness who have not sinned unto death. Joseph did have flaws, but he worked on those with God. Basically, I think the Lord is saying it's not your job to point out and to pick on those flaws. I'm the one that forgives, and then he gives this little aside, which is really interesting and really important. He says, my disciples in days of old sought occasion against one another and forgave not one another in their hearts and for this evil they were afflicted and sorely chastened. Wherefore I say unto you that ye ought to forgive one another for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord for there remaineth in him the greater sin. I the Lord will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you, it is required to forgive all men. We have this really powerful core doctrine about forgiveness that is at times really challenging. My plan is to talk about this general idea about forgiveness, why it's a core doctrine, how we work with God for our own forgiveness, but then particularly how it works as we have relationships with other people, how we forgive others, why it is hard, why it's a blessing, why we sometimes seek occasion or find fault. Then we'll talk about, you know why that's a commandment and it's a sin to not forgive and we'll talk about the blessings of forgiveness and how that applies for our lives

Hank Smith: 00:16:09 Right now, if I'm a listener and I want to turn this off because I know the lessons that's coming and I don't want to hear it, I could be Isaac Morley and I could say, you know what? I'm going to humble myself and do this, or I could be Ezra Booth and say, nope, I'm not interested. Hopefully everybody listening is going to be an Isaac Morley here, and how do I humble myself enough to be open?

Dr. Jason Whiting: 00:16:31 It's a good question. It's hard to do. Let's start with seeking forgiveness from God because I think that's one of the ways that we become softer and more forgiving of others is we're reminded of our own imperfections in our own dependence on being forgiven from our Heavenly Father. In fact, the Come, Follow Me manual starts with a good question that says, think about a time when the Lord forgave you. How did you feel? That's great. It's a beautiful doctrine to be forgiven because we all make mistakes all the time. We always need it. We all have

had that experience where we feel that relief from being forgiven and moving on and starting over. [President Nelson](#), of course, has said a lot about daily repentance, which is this really great reminder that even though we're flawed, we check in with God and he is there and he's merciful.

00:17:18 He said, Jesus stands with open arms hoping and willing to heal, forgive, cleanse, strengthen, purify, and sanctify us. Nothing is more liberating, more ennobling or more crucial to our individual progression than is a regular daily focus on repentance. It's this great reminder how merciful God is. He is loving. He is a supportive parent. When we have a relationship with him daily, then we're blessed. That doctrine from President Nelson has blessed me a lot. When I think about daily repentance, instead of just thinking, oh, I've done something really terrible, I need to repent. It's better to think, oh, it's just another day. I need to check in with God and repent. That has been a blessing for me. I know I don't do it great. In fact, I'm sure I need to repent of not daily repenting, but the effort of doing that really is helpful I think for all of us.

Hank Smith: 00:18:10 It does soften you.

Dr. Jason Whiting: 00:18:11 Yeah, it's a tough world out there. There's a lot of discouragement. There's a lot of people who feel down, who feel hard on themselves. It's a sign of the last days that men's hearts shall fail them. I'm a therapist, so I work with a lot of people who feel discouraged. They feel down and they feel like they're not what they ought to be. I was working with a woman once, this was many years ago. She was a Christian. She was not a member of our faith, but she said, I go to church and I read the Bible and I always just focus on the parts that are saying, you're less than the dust of the earth or you're fallen or you're corrupt. She said, I have a really hard time accepting God's love that I'm worthy of God's love, and we talked about it. I said, that's a great thing to identify.

00:18:56 How can we talk about that in a way that's helpful for you and that you can accept and receive God's love? And then she said this interesting thing. She said, even when I come to therapy, I do this thing where I only go one time and then I think I'm not really deserving of more help. I said, well, I'm glad you told me that as well because how can we make this different and how can we make this a place of safety and of healing. It was a good conversation and she never came back. I was like, wow, that's so sad that she has that feeling of I just am down and God doesn't love me and I need to live in that depression. Even the Old Testament in the Bible where we sometimes think of God as

a pretty strict and demanding God, there's a lot of doctrine of love and mercy in there. In Nehemiah, there's a quote that says, I am a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful. It's just replete throughout the Old Testament, God is merciful, or even though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. This is a God who is generous, who is forgiving and who doesn't hold petty grudges. Of course, the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine & Covenants have a lot of those same scriptures. As often as my people repent, will I forgive them their trespasses. We fall short all the time, but God is really merciful. He's asking us to be more like he is with each other.

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| Hank Smith: | 00:20:17 | Experiencing his forgiveness. One, helps you be grateful to God for forgiveness, but also teaches you how to forgive. He almost shows you how it's done. He's just really good at it. |
| Dr. Jason Whiting: | 00:20:32 | He is the perfect example of it. He doesn't hold grudges. He's not petty. He's not vindictive. Us, not so much like we struggle with those things. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:20:41 | Yeah, hang on to things for too long. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:20:44 | That's what I get from these sections. I forgive. You ought to forgive each other. The thing that's really helpful to me, I heard it called the doctrine of reciprocity once, Hank, do you remember? I don't remember who. The idea of a reciprocal infractions. It's right out of the Lord's Prayer. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. The beatitudes blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. If I need forgiveness, I need to forgive. That's motivating to me to withhold harsh judgment because I want others not to judge me harshly. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:21:20 | Oh man, that's hard. When I'm feeling humble, which is not very often, John knows that I recognize that he is a better judge of the situation than I am. I look at this other person or people and I think I understand the motive. I understand what happened in this way. He's saying, no, I understand the person and the motive. I am the judge here. It doesn't happen very often, but it does happen occasionally where I think, all right, you obviously understand this more than I do. I'll take the direction from you rather than vice versa. I give you the direction. |
| Dr. Jason Whiting: | 00:22:01 | It's a great point. I'm actually going to cite a little psychological study that describes exactly what you just said, which is how we ascribe motives to the other person that are different than our own motives. We're more quick to defend our own motives than we are somebody else's motives, essentially. |

Hank Smith:	00:22:18	Well, I'm excited then, Jason, what do you want to do now?
Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:22:21	Let's talk about the reasons that it is difficult to forgive others. There's a lot of things I think working against us in that regard in our own human frailties. For example, the first thing is that relationships are inherently challenging, and that's just because we all are unique. Everybody's different. You're always going to bump up against another person who has different values, opinions, preferences. Not just that, but everybody has their own blind spots, their own weirdnesses, their biases that they don't even see. Sometimes we are in a relationship where those line up with our spouse. We can see the world the same hopefully, or a great friend or mission companion, but sometimes you bump up against situations where those don't line up very well, and that just reminds us, it's a challenge, but it's actually not a problem. It's not a bug of the plan. It's a feature of the plan. It helps us to grow. We're just different.
Hank Smith:	00:23:14	Yeah, that's okay. I like that you said that it's inherent. You're not broken.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:23:19	Nope. There's nobody else like you, but that's okay. That's even good because you are going to, through life, learn to appreciate differences and other perspectives. Yeah, hopefully. Hopefully, and related to that, we all are naturally self-centered. We just see the world from our own perspective, if that makes sense. We have the natural man within us, but that can become exaggerated. When we become more self-centered, more selfish, we start to run into problems, particularly from a moral or gospel perspective. In fact, Elder Maxwell said that selfishness is the detonator that breaks most of the 10 commandments. In section 56, which I know we've been looking at, the Lord says to Ezra Thayre, he needs to repent of his pride and of his selfishness. There's a lot of public rebukes in the Doctrine & Covenants that I think would be a little tough to swallow. Joseph Smith said this, let every selfish feeling be not only buried but annihilated.
	00:24:17	That's a pretty high standard. I think we often work at burying or pushing aside our selfish feelings, but to actually get rid of them, that's tough. That's a work of a lifetime, but again, that's part of what relationships can help us with. Another thing that we do, we, because we're all different and because we bump into these annoyances like those guys did on the river, we can get caught up in fault finding. Everybody has their faults. We all have them. If you are in a mode of looking at someone else's faults, then you're probably going to find them if you are seeking occasion as the Lord's disciples of old did, but the

problem is sometimes we do this thing where we are finding fault in a place where it doesn't even exist sometimes. For example, I'm getting annoyed with someone else, but the problem is with me.

00:25:05 It's my issue. Maybe I'm irritable, maybe I'm hungry. Maybe I'm defensive about something that I did that I shouldn't have done. It relates to this really interesting verse in section 64, verse 16, where the Lord says, back to our companionship, Ezra Booth and Isaac Morley, he says, they condemned for evil that thing in which there was no evil. That's a really interesting verse to me because I see it happen a lot. They were finding faults or problems with Joseph in which there weren't really any faults or problems to be found. It was their issue. It reminded me of this other verse, which I like. Section 121, verse 17, the Lord says, but those who cry transgression do it because they are the servants of sin and are the children of disobedience themselves. Oftentimes, people who are doing the wrong thing are crying transgression about somebody else. They're finding fault sometimes as a way to justify themselves or just to be picky.

Hank Smith: 00:26:07 Wow. Such an insightful thing to say that or maybe I'm sure that there's an evil there and the Lord's saying there's not.

Dr. Jason Whiting: 00:26:17 It's your issue. It's not the other person's thing. You are just in this mode of seeking occasion or fault finding. Again, people get in that mode sometimes when they're being cranky or judgy or defending their own misbehavior or whatever. I had this situation once where I was meeting with a woman for marriage therapy. This woman and her husband. She said, I've come to really dread Come, Follow Me, and I said, whoa. What do you mean? Like that seems sort of blasphemous, even. What? What are you talking about? You dread Come, Follow Me. She said, well, let me explain. I'm not a morning person and I have a job, so I'm scrambling in the morning to get ready, but my husband insists that we do it his way at his time in the morning when I'm not there, when he thinks I should be. He starts sighing. He's rolling his eyes, he's tapping his fingernails. Even when I sit down to talk about Come, Follow Me and read the scriptures together, he shifts into this pious moralizing, your insights are not as valuable as my insights thing like really a problem. Yeah. That's not what Come, Follow Me is about, but for him, he's in this mode of condemning for evil that thing in which there's no evil. He's judging her based on her style or her preference or her insights. Pretty unhealthy stuff.

Hank Smith: 00:27:38 Wow.

	00:27:39	He's judging for evil that which is not evil. I wonder, often we do that with our children.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:27:44	Right? They're just sometimes kids, we in our own immaturity think they're being evil. They're just being four years old or a teenager or whatever they're being, you know? That's just what happens.
Hank Smith:	00:27:54	Oh man, I'm loving this, John, aren't you? I love when a guest says, okay, here's what the Lord said. Here's what these people are dealing with. Let's talk about you. Let's talk about your life.
John Bytheway:	00:28:07	It's very practical. I love that the Savior said, yeah, this has happened before. My disciples in days of old sought occasion, I think of that phrase, Jason, that you brought up a couple of times. They sought occasion. I mean, sought is the past tense of seek. You're looking for it, but you're actually going out there saying, I'm going to find something wrong with this. I'm going to find something wrong with you so I can hold it over your head and I'm going to keep holding it over your head. I like that. The Savior says, yeah, you guys have the same problem. My disciples did this too. Now we can read it and we can go, yeah, we did this too. In 2025. We're doing it too.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:28:51	You know where else I see people seek occasion or look for faults is online. I don't want to get too far off in the weeds on that, but if you've ever read an article about the church, for example, and you read the comments afterwards, people are seeking occasion. They start with an agenda and they go to cherry pick out, look for a reason to be offended. Of course, it happens with social issues or political issues. There's another phrase that comes to mind here, which is from the Book of Mormon, which is stirring up anger. People want to stir up anger, particularly in those venues because it works. People become outraged. It goes viral. It gets attention. People have this motivation to become offended to cherry pick out problems. It can happen in marriages as well. When they become unhealthy, people start to fault find or look for reasons to be offended.
	00:29:41	Terry Warner , who was a philosophy professor at BYU, said, some people are like missile seeking targets. See what he did there? They're looking for reasons to take shots to be offended. Elder Maxwell also used a similar analogy. He said, some people go around covered in boils when they bump up against something, they're enraged with pain. They have these things to get offended by or to be upset by where there really wasn't a problem. Sometimes it's just differences. People have

differences. People have different views. People have different opinions about a variety of issues. Whether it's how to study your scriptures or whether it's about a social issue. [President Nelson](#) has spoken about this too. He said, I'm greatly concerned that so many people seem to believe that it is completely acceptable to condemn, malign and vilify anyone who does not agree with them. It's so easy to do that if you're looking to do that, because we all have differences, but it doesn't help. That's another reason why we need these commandments to forgive, to let go of things because there will be bumps.

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| Hank Smith: | 00:30:47 | Yeah. I've noticed online, Jason, that anonymity can make it even worse. |
| Dr. Jason Whiting: | 00:30:52 | Makes it a lot worse. People say things they would never say in person. People will do things online that they would not say in person. Yeah. It doesn't help. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:30:59 | No one knows it's me. John, can you help me with this verse where the Lord says every idle word that men shall speak, they'll give an account thereof. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:31:07 | Matthew 12:36, I think, which is the second scariest verse in the standard works, in my opinion. Yeah. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:31:17 | Every single thing you've said, why don't we talk about that. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:31:20 | Every idle word that men shall speak or text or post an idle word. It's not, well, not the words you gave in a talk because you prepared that, but the idle words that slipped out, woo, that's scary. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:31:36 | It won't be anonymous then won't it? That wasn't me. That was somebody. No, actually, I know who the account belongs to. Jason, can I ask you a question? You were probably going to go here, but one of the most difficult things I think for me and maybe for others, is this idea that the remaineth in me the greater sin. I'm going, I'm not the one who did this. I'm not the one who offended. Now I'm worse because I won't forgive. |
| Dr. Jason Whiting: | 00:32:04 | I am going to go there in some detail. When we get to talk about the Atonement, how that is relevant, how we sometimes deny the Atonement when we deny someone else, you know, when we deny forgiveness. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:32:17 | Maybe that's the greater sin. |

Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:32:19	But you're right. That's a tough doctrine in some circumstances.
Hank Smith:	00:32:22	Yeah, especially on something not so-and-so ate my food. My roommate ate my food. Someone really injured me or my family, and you're telling me this is the greater sin.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:32:31	Well, let's keep talking about why it's hard. I study anger and I study aggression and escalation and even abuse. One of the things you see as people become unhealthy and as they escalate is when I'm hurting, I want to lash out, find the cause of that pain. What that means is that turns into an accusation that can sometimes stir this impulse of revenge, which is kind of a misguided sense of justice. If I'm hurting, I'm going to make you hurt too. I've interviewed people who have been very clear about that being their motivation, which is a scary thing to get into, especially in an intimate relationship when people start hurting. But you can see how that becomes cyclical because if I get my feelings hurt and then I lash out and I hurt your feelings, then it becomes this attack defense, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and everybody's blind and toothless, there's a lot of damage is done.
	00:33:26	I often ask couples that. I'll say, tell me about what happens when you argue. People will describe, I get escalated and our tone gets worse when that happens. I'll say, do you come away from those escalated exchanges feeling like that was really great and it was really constructive and you feel closer together? Of course, they say, no, we feel terrible. When things escalate, it becomes damaging. But back to President Nelson , he says, anger never persuades. Hostility builds no one. Contention never leads to inspired solutions. It's just, again, another human impulse that we have. When we're speaking from our own pain or acting from it, we sometimes get in this mode of wanting to cause someone else pain and that can then generate this back and forth war. Hmm. Another piece which makes this challenging is that we struggle sometimes to take accountability for our behavior.
	00:34:22	That's harder than it is to look at your contribution to the problem. I can see your flaws. I can see where you overreacted, but I don't necessarily want to take a look at mine. It's hard. Back to that phrase of humbling ourselves. That's not easy to do. There was a study done by a psychologist named Roy Baumeister where he asked people, think of a time you made someone else angry, and then he said, think of a time someone made you angry and you had people describe those instances. What happened was the descriptions were very different. In theory, you would think it would be the same because it's all

about anger, but of course it's not. When I make someone angry, this is the typical story. I had a good reason to do what I did and it wasn't that bad. They overreacted, they'll get over it, but when someone made me angry, well, they didn't have a good reason.

00:35:11 They were just being mean. I am highly offended. I'm not just going to let that go. The psychologists, they said, the biases are built into the roles like we, that's just what humans do. We kind of describe things to support our respective positions. Accountability is difficult. Again, President Nelson spoke to this in that same peacemakers talk, which is so packed with good stuff. He said, at this point you may be thinking that this message would really help someone you know. I got a big laugh because it is easy to be like, yeah, you need to do this, but he said, perhaps you are hoping that it will help him or her to be nicer to you. I hope it will, but I also hope that you will look deeply into your heart to become a peacemaker.

Hank Smith: 00:35:59 I will be merciful unto you. The Lord says in verse four.

John Bytheway: 00:36:04 I'll bet that Jason probably more than than me and more than you, Hank, have participated in marriage conferences, but I know we all have. We often joke about how many of you wanted to be here or how many of you were dragged here by your spouse? One of the reasons they don't want to come is what? because they're going to be told all the stuff they're doing wrong and here's President Nelson saying, I'll bet you can all think of somebody who really needs this talk. Yeah. Listen up you people, you really need this as if to say, I don't, but you all do. Our bishop asked the entire ward after that to read it again. What was that, 2022.

Dr. Jason Whiting: 00:36:48 Just a few years ago? Yeah. There's a lot packed in there. I've listened to that many times and each time I'm just impressed with how much good stuff is in there. I've had people come and they've been reading marriage books, but they're reading them in order to point out what their spouse needs to do and that's less helpful when they're hauling them into therapy.

John Bytheway: 00:37:06 I just happen to leave a post-it on page 24 for you.

Dr. Jason Whiting: 00:37:10 That's exactly what happened.

Hank Smith: 00:37:13 Jason, I want to make a t-shirt of that. Accountability is hard. Dr. Jason Whiting, why is it so hard?

Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:37:21	It's humbling. We all have our weaknesses. It's sometimes a little painful and embarrassing to admit those weaknesses. In fact, when you think about addiction recovery groups or even abuse recovery groups, they start with breaking through denial, taking accountability because when somebody, for example is in the throngs of addiction, it's easy to make a lot of excuses and say, well, I'm minimizing this or I'm hiding this or embarrassed about it and it is. I mean, we all have our weaknesses and our embarrassments. I would just say even talking to God sometimes can be that humbling experience. If we don't do it, if we're not accountable, we don't change. If we don't repent, we don't change. If we minimize, there are people who, who I talk to in relationships, I'll say, you know, how often do you guys apologize after something's happened? Sometimes people say, Hmm, never. That's always a huge concern. If somebody is not saying, you know what? I didn't act in the right way or I could have handled that better or, I'm sorry, I said what I said, that's what you want to hear. because if you don't hear that and there are people who won't go there, then you're probably not going to be getting much change.
Hank Smith:	00:38:30	John, I know this has never happened to you, but there's been times in my prayers where I've avoided certain topics, where the Holy Ghost says, why don't we talk about this and I'll say, well, we need to bless the missionaries first. Why don't we talk about this? Well, maybe tomorrow we can talk about that. You're right. Being accountable is difficult, but it's freeing. Wouldn't you say, Jason?
Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:38:54	Of course. That's how change and progress happens. That's another reason why repentance is there's a sense of peace and relief when God forgives and when we forgive each other. That's how we grow. In fact, that's what I'll talk about here for the next few minutes. In terms of some family examples, when we're accountable and when we repent and when we forgive, good things happen. What are some good examples from the scriptures related to forgiveness? Several examples came to mind as I was thinking about these. I realized all of them are about brothers. Here's the first one, Joseph in Egypt gets chucked into pit. The brothers decide, actually, I think we can make some money. They sell him. I mean it's a pretty huge betrayal that these brothers did to this brother. I mean, we're talking serious family problems here. Joseph suffers a lot because of it.
	00:39:38	I mean, he has some tough stuff that he goes through. Ultimately though, there's a reunification. He forgives his brothers. He says, I see God's hand in it. That's pretty

impressive. He forgives. There's hopefully growth and reconciliation. Here's another example. The prodigal son, the son wastes his inheritance in riotous living. Ultimately, that is not a fulfilling lifestyle. He comes to himself, he returns to the family. The father rushes out in this Christ-like figure and embraces him and is so happy that the son who was lost is now found. Now he could have said, you are no son of mine. You are not coming back. He could have said, do you have any idea how much your mother and I have suffered because of your choices? A lot of families say things like that. He didn't do it. He forgave him. It was the brother who had the struggle and was like, you're having a celebration and killing the fatted calf for him, and he did all that stuff. That's a little more typical of what a family member might do. He had to work on that.

Hank Smith: 00:40:41 They are all brothers, aren't they?

Dr. Jason Whiting: 00:40:44 Here's another one. Joseph Smith and William Smith. William was kind of a hothead. I know this was a different era and there was more bluntness and rebuke than that kind of relationships, but things were tense at times between Joseph and William and one day things boiled over in a meeting where William was chastised. William attacked his brother. He attacked Joseph and he hurt him. This is a quote. He says, Joseph was left bruised and wounded, unable to sit down or rise up without help and grieved beyond expression at the wickedness of his brother, but within a day or two, William writes him and he says, I feel sorry for what I have done and humbly ask your forgiveness. I feel ashamed and I feel as though all the confessions that I could make verbally or by writing would not be sufficient to atone for the transgression. To his credit, he feels remorse.

00:41:34 He's apologizing. I mean that's important. Joseph, to his credit, writes him back and says, in your letter, you have asked my forgiveness, which I readily grant. Impressive even from a pretty difficult fight, a pretty intense situation. The last story, and this one illustrates not just forgiveness in a tough family situation, but also making some choices about separation, choosing safety. This is Nephi and his brothers. In fact, I will just say one of the ways my testimony is strengthened when I read the Book of Mormon is when I read these family stories, I'm saying that is so on target with what families do. Even in the subtleties as far as what they say, how they accuse each other, how they work through things. It's a very human process. I just read those things. I say, wow, that is exactly what families do. These are interesting stories.

	00:42:24	We all know the stories, right? The brothers had been difficult. They had beat up Nephi with the stick. At one point, they're trying to beat him up again. They're trying to lay hands on him, and some of the wives talk Laman and Lemuel down. They calm him down. They then feel bad and they ask for Nephi's forgiveness and he says, I did frankly forgive them all that they had done and I did exhort them that they would pray unto the Lord their God for forgiveness. Impressive. He could have fought back. He could have resented. He was large in stature and he was probably a physical young guy. He could have gotten into it, but he didn't. He forgave them. But here's the piece that I think is quite interesting. Later, it does get worse. Nephi even says something to the effect like, I'll spare you the details, but suffice it to say they did seek to take away my life. Like it was really serious. Domestic violence kind of stuff. There is a separation. Nephi and his family and the extended family, they go their own way and that's relevant because of all these family stories which show reconciliation. They show growth, they show forgiveness. They also show at times, at least in Nephi's case, where there had to be some boundaries set.
Hank Smith:	00:43:31	I was in a Q and A recently. I was watching a therapist give answers to questions. He didn't use the scriptures at all. It wasn't a religious meeting. You take away those scriptures where you can teach these lessons. It's difficult. It's a difficult thing because when I get asked a question, I automatically think you just did Jason of, well, let's look at this example in the scriptures. Let's look at this example in the scriptures. They're just so useful that way. That was fun to walk through that. I'm sure there's dozens more. Many more.
John Bytheway:	00:44:01	Jason, I'm glad you brought this issue up. That idea of safety. Does forgiving mean I'm going to subject myself to further abuse? Well, of course it doesn't. I love that Nephi gets to a point where, you know what? We gotta go. We have to leave this situation and I can forgive, also know that I have to leave this situation. I think I'm glad you're here because I'd love to hear you talk about that, where that decision has to be made. I can, but I can't stay.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:44:33	That's exactly right. Let's talk a little bit about that. Let's first talk about in more typical situations then we'll talk about in less safe or dangerous situations. When more typical situations through forgiveness, we learn to be less selfish. Remember Joseph Smith talked about how we need to annihilate our selfishness. One of the ways we do that is just by offering each other forgiveness and grace. As I said earlier, we all have differences. A lot of those differences aren't going to go away.

Whether that's how I handle money versus how my wife handles money. I was thinking about this the other day. I thought of a funny thing, which is my wife and I have a difference in how soon we think a dairy product has gone bad.

00:45:15 I'll think it has a little more life in it. She's like, no, we gotta get rid of that. I'll say, no, I think it's okay. I think we're still okay with this yogurt or this cheese or whatever, and I mean a silly example, but that's just a classic difference. So even in healthy relationships, we learn to be cool with that. Couples over time, again, in healthy relationships, learn to give each other grace. They say, that's just his style, that's your style, and it's not a big deal. In less healthy situations, people resent it and they sweep it under the rug, but don't really, and it becomes worse. But I will say even from a secular perspective, I have colleagues who study forgiveness, but it always helps. Again, not even from a religious perspective, but it is linked to greater marital satisfaction and relationship longevity.

00:45:59 Couples who have higher levels of forgiveness in their relationship, it's also linked to lower levels of conflict and higher levels of emotional closeness. Couples just give each other a break. They let go. They allow differences, and that relates to this idea of being accepting, being flexible, which is again, a maturity issue. Some things are never going to be solved. You're never going to change your spouses personality or the way that they leave their socks on the floor or their style when you go to a party. We just all have different styles and that's just how it is. There's some quotes here from Marjorie Pay Hinckley, Gordon B. Hinckley's wife. She said early on, I realized it would be better if we worked harder at getting accustomed to one another than constantly trying to change each other, which I discovered was impossible. There must be a little give and take and a great deal of flexibility to make a happy home.

00:46:51 I love that quote. Let's just get accustomed to each other than trying to change each other. She's not talking about heavy duty, serious issues. She's just talking about the garden variety differences that sometimes couples get hung up on and they start to make big issues when they're not. It's just that maturity of saying, you are you, I'm me. Together we allow each other to be who we are. And there's one more quote, even good people wrestle with this. This is from Wendy Watson Nelson, Wendy Watson. She was a marriage and family therapist. She was actually my professor back in the nineties. I really learned a lot from her. She knows a lot about relationships a really good person. Russell M. Nelson, we all know he is a really good person. They got married later in life, two great people ready to

get married, but she says that this is from President Nelson's biography by Sheri Dew.

	00:47:38	Sister Nelson says, the beginning of our marriage was more difficult and required more from me and more turning to the Lord than anything in my life. Those struggles turned me even more to the Lord, which in turn strengthened our marriage to create the kind of marriage we wanted, required a lot of work, sacrifice, forgiveness and prayer from both of us in the beginning as we intertwined our lives to become one and it was worth it. That's a great reminder that of course their situation was unique and probably really complicated, but good people still work at and adjust to and pray and forgive and have some sacrifice. That's just what relationships are.
Hank Smith:	00:48:15	My wife loves cats. I do not like cats. We compromised and we have three cats.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:48:23	Nice.
John Bytheway:	00:48:23	Teenagers say to you, what?
Hank Smith:	00:48:26	Oh yeah, teenagers say, that's not a compromise. I usually say, Hmm, you're not married. Like, yeah, what did you call it? Like a garden variety type of issue.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:48:39	There's a difference.
Hank Smith:	00:48:40	I'm not going to change my wife's love of animals, so I might as well become accustomed to it. It's okay.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:48:46	It's okay.
Hank Smith:	00:48:46	We have a potbelly pig. We have a lot of strange animals running around this house, including four teenage boys. We have a lot of them.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:48:56	This idea of growing and becoming more Christ-like through forgiveness is one of the reasons God asks us to forgive repeatedly. 70 times seven, it implies that there's not a quota. Sometimes people do say, well, I've already given you three strikes and you're out, but I think in typical relationships, we just work on things and we grow and we improve, and I will say it's easier to forgive when people are humble and when they are repentant. If they're asking for forgiveness, if they're saying they're sorry, if they're trying and research actually confirms that too, that it's easier to forgive when I can see that you

understand my pain, that you understand why this is hurtful to me, that you've shown empathy, you're showing that you're going to try harder. It builds trust. In the best cases, both people are working on things and they're improving. That's what helps relationships grow.

00:49:56 However, if only one person is doing that, you have a different situation and that does happen sometimes where maybe there's not remorse, maybe there is aggression and things become damaging. Only one person is saying, I'm working on it and how can I be better? And they're trying and the other person is not doing that. They're continuing to say, well, I don't need to change. You need to change. That's not a good situation. There are varying degrees of these problems from a mild to moderate to pretty severe. How does forgiveness apply in those situations? Start with a quote from [Elder Holland](#). Back to John's question, it is important for some of you living in real anguish to note what he did not say, meaning the Savior. He did not say, you are not allowed to feel true pain or real sorrow from the shattering experiences you have had at the hand of another, nor did he say, in order to forgive fully, you have to reenter a toxic relationship or return to an abusive destructive circumstance.

00:50:56 Forgiveness is not being forced to continue to feel pain or be blamed for your own mistreatment. Unfortunately, some people who are manipulative or abusive will twist this doctrine. They will say, well, you have to forgive me. They'll say the greater sin is on you. If you don't, they will say, God has forgiven me. Why can't you? That's not a sign of repentance and it's not a healthy sign when somebody is misusing forgiveness like that. [President Nelson](#) has emphasized that as well. This was in one of President Nelson's Easter messages. He said, forgiving others does not mean condoning sinful or criminal behavior, and it certainly does not mean staying in abusive situations. Having said that, we can talk a little more about what forgiveness is and what it isn't. It's easier to forgive someone when they're accountable and they're apologetic, but it's not dependent on that because if it were, a lot of people would be left helpless to forgive because the other person isn't necessarily being accountable.

00:51:59 In fact, I was just talking to a woman about a week and a half ago who's in a toxic relationship. It's quite manipulative. It's quite psychologically abusive. It's really ugly. This is a professional sharp woman who she says, I know better, but I can't bring myself to get out of this situation until he admits that he is doing this to me, until he's being accountable, until he

is apologizing. I said, I understand that impulse that you want justice, but I don't know if he's going to be willing or able to do that. Some are too caught up in their own denial in their own defense mechanisms, and that's a sad situation, but in that situation, if somebody's waiting for that, it may or may not happen. It also doesn't mean to forgive someone doesn't excuse what they've done, if that makes sense. It doesn't mean it was okay.

00:52:52 This is where it starts to become this issue of having faith and trust in God because he's the one that is the judge. We can leave it to him. We can forgive, get out of a bad situation. We can forgive and set boundaries. Forgiveness is about healing and letting go. It's not necessarily about holding the other person accountable. That is something that God will take care of. It's not easy. I don't want to give that impression that you make this decision and you forgive and then you're good to go, and it's a challenging process. That's a main point here too, is that it's probably going to take a lot of help from heaven. We have to talk to our heavenly Father. We have to work with the Savior and his atonement. This relates to this really great talk that's referred to in the Come, Follow Me material for this week from [Sister Yee](#), from Kristen Yee.

00:53:45 It's Beauty for Ashes. It's a really powerful talk. She shares a story of her own struggles growing up in a home that she said was filled with some difficult and unhealthy circumstances. She refers specifically to her father. She talks a lot about the work that it took, and she quotes President Nelson here about how the Savior can help. Here's President Nelson's quote, through his infinite atonement you can forgive those who have hurt you and who may never accept responsibility for their cruelty to you. It is usually easy to forgive one who sincerely and humbly seeks your forgiveness, but the Savior will grant you the ability to forgive anyone who has mistreated you in any way. Then their hurtful acts can no longer canker your soul, and she continues. This is her comment now. She says, the Lord requires us to forgive for our own good, but he does not ask us to do it without his help, his love, his understanding. Through our covenants with the Lord, we can each receive the strengthening power, guidance and the help we need to both forgive and to be forgiven. Please know that forgiving someone does not mean that you put yourself in a position where you will continue to be hurt. We can work toward forgiving someone and still feel prompted by the Spirit to stay away from them.

John Bytheway: 00:55:02 Thank you, Jason. I thought Sister Yee was incredibly courageous to talk about that. There were probably thousands

who were so grateful that she did. Sometimes there's the idea I have to stay at the risk of my own safety. Do you ever encounter that?

- Dr. Jason Whiting: 00:55:21 A lot. Sometimes people feel like because they have entered into a marriage, for example, and made a covenant, made a commitment that they have to stay regardless. I would say when I interviewed at BYU for the job here at BYU, one of the things that happens is you talk to a general authority about the job, and I told this general authority that I study abuse and domestic violence. We talked about this idea that sometimes in the church people either suffer in silence not knowing that things are as unhealthy as they are or that they feel like they are trapped and they have to stay because they made a commitment or they made a covenant in the temple. He said, people don't realize that when abuse is happening, when things have gotten that damaging, that that no longer is a celestial relationship. That's not a covenant relationship.
- 00:56:11 People have broken covenants at that point. I will have that conversation with people at times. One of the things I will talk about is I'm a father of children who are married. I wouldn't want my child to stay in a situation where it was damaging to their dignity, to their, you know, spirituality, to their psyche. I don't think our heavenly Father expects us to stay in damaging situations just because we made a commitment at one point that one person now no longer is keeping that commitment to honor and to cherish and to love. I think it's a complex situation in that every case is different, but as Sister Yee said, and as President Nelson said, as Elder Holland said, forgiveness is about healing and letting go of. It's not about being forced to stay in a bad situation.
- Hank Smith: 00:57:03 Now when someone says, you gotta be more Christ-like, and forgive me, I don't think they've read the New Testament. There are plenty of times where Christ forgives someone but has some pretty firm boundaries like Nazareth. Remember the city of Nazareth, John, this is his hometown that attempts to murder him, at least to what we know He never goes back. Never went back again. He never went back. He refused to speak to Herod. He let Peter know when he had crossed a line a couple of times. The idea that Jesus doesn't have boundaries is not based in scripture.
- John Bytheway: 00:57:40 I like to mention to the young adults, there's kind of a difference I think between a temple wedding and a celestial marriage. You can get married in the temple, then your life is working toward a celestial marriage.

Dr. Jason Whiting:	00:57:56	Yeah. In best case scenarios, both people are working towards that type of celestial relationship. They are apologizing and they're growing and they're repenting and they're trying to listen to each other. In other unhealthy situations one or both are not. They are not taking accountability or they're saying or doing things that are damaging or they're saying the other person needs to change but they're not going to change. In fact, that is a divorce predictor is this idea of not accepting influence from the other person. You see it all the time in abusive relationships. You see people saying, well, I don't really care that your mom is coming over. I'm not changing my plans, or I don't really care that you want to go to that restaurant. I don't want to go. That's this idea that instead of compromise and being open working things back and forth, whether it's around money or housework or intimacy, if one person's saying, it's not my problem, it's your problem, I'm not changing, that's not a healthy sign. It's also related to this idea of defensiveness or blame. Back to the importance of humility and accountability. It takes some difficult deliberation. Each case is different. There's not a blanket recommendation for what to do in difficult circumstances, but at times people need to protect themselves.
Hank Smith:	00:59:15	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	00:59:16	Well, I love this verse where the Lord says, I, the Lord will forgive whom I will forgive. It lets us know he's got better visibility. He knows how to read hearts. He sees the whole situation. He's saying, don't worry about my part of this. Of you it's required to forgive all men. I will forgive whom I'll forgive. He knows what he's doing. I like that we can trust that it's impossible for me to forgive this person. You might say that's right. It's impossible for you to do it, but with God all things are possible. It may require that. It may require the only way you're going to be able to forgive is with God's help. As you said earlier, Jason.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	01:00:02	Yeah, I like how you said God has a different perspective than we do. Sometimes, in fact, a lot of times people do hurtful things because they themselves have had their own hurtful damaging experiences. God can take that into account. He can sort through that in a way that we probably can't. I will say that sometimes is a factor in letting go of and forgiving. For example, when I'm talking to somebody about a parent who was difficult when they were young, we have the conversation about, well, what was your mother's or father's life like growing up? What were the challenges that they faced? It kind of helps put it into a little different perspective and might help them let go of some things. It doesn't excuse the things that happened. It doesn't

take away the damage, but it can help someone soften a little bit and say, you know what? They had their own abuse history. I'm going to let God sort through that with them and I'm going to ask God, help me to let go of those things as part of my forgiveness, even if there's boundaries set.

Hank Smith: 01:01:04 Jason, I have a question that I'm not sure if there is an answer, but I would love to hear your thoughts. I know we want to spend more time in section 64, but I'm fascinated by this. We talked about there's some times where people are people we adjust, we accommodate, and we talked about sometimes there's a time to set a boundary and say, that's not okay. I'm going to remove myself from this situation. Is there a time where we can get those two mixed up? We've talked about the one where we think this is an abusive situation. There's probably a time to set a firm boundary. Is there a time that sometimes it goes the opposite direction, where I'm setting boundaries in places where I need to be a little more accommodating? I bring it up for this reason I post on Instagram frequently about boundaries. I think they're important. I know I'm going to get two responses. One is, thank you so much. This needs to be talked about more. The other is something like this. My daughter has cut me and my husband completely out of her life. We have no contact with our grandchildren. She calls it boundaries. Can you comment on that? Have you seen that?

Dr. Jason Whiting: 01:02:14 Yes. That is such a good question. I've seen the exact thing that you're describing, which is there is a time and place for setting boundaries. There's a lot to be said for safety and that's a carefully considered issue when people choose to do that. However, I hear the same stories that you just mentioned. I've had people come see me saying, my children have cut me off. I can't see them. Or the grandchildren. Obviously, every case is different and you have to be sensitive to that because sometimes things are very damaging. Having said that, I hear a lot of circumstances where I think that to me sounds like a case where there could be reconciliation and discussion and interaction where there could be forgiveness and a relationship, even if maybe some boundaries need to be set to cut off from a family relationship is a huge step.

01:03:09 I have read articles and have heard stories from colleagues about this very issue where I think sometimes people are overstating or over setting boundaries or not forgiving even when there could be healthy relationships or at least functional relationships. One of the things that happens, you know we talked about these phrases of seeking occasions. One of the things that's a little bit problematic about our current online

culture is if somebody is seeking occasion or seeking flaws within their own family and they take that case to the world and they say, I have been abused and this has happened. Other people are likely to pile on and say, that sounds terrible. I don't think that's the place to adjudicate your family problems because we said earlier, people are going to pile on and they're going to see what they, the case they've been presented with. They're not going to see the whole situation.

01:04:03 Sometimes people claim abuse. That's kind of a loaded term. I will say as somebody who studies abuse, it's not always easy to disentangle and some things we know, physical abuse, sexual aggression, but psychological abuse is sometimes psychological abuse and sometimes it's just differences. Sometimes people are saying, you're abusing me when really they're having some differences or maybe they're being held accountable for something that they don't want to be accountable for. Sometimes people are not forgiving situations where forgiveness could apply and relationships could still be functional and be just fine. I think of that phrase of seeking occasion. I also think of the phrase of stirring up anger because people do that when they post online. There's justifying their own behaviors by saying, look how terrible this thing is, and other people will pile on, but there's also another Book of Mormon phrase that might be relevant here, which is they refused to be comforted. Sometimes people are not open to forgiveness or reconciliation or comfort that could happen in a healthy conversation. They're going to hang on to their grudges and they're going to nurture those and they're going to use those or weaponize those. I certainly don't want to be judgemental because there are situations where I think people have cut off from quite dangerous and ugly situations, but I think there's also plenty others that are bumpy and difficult, but certainly could be worked through.

Hank Smith: 01:05:30 You just don't know the situation. I get a comment on Instagram. I obviously have no idea what's going on, and I think if you've got a person who wants to be in your life, who wants to bless your life, that's hard.

Dr. Jason Whiting: 01:05:43 It's really hard. There are professional resources, there's a lot of family therapists out there. There are places that conversations I think could take place in a safe space to work through. If somebody has hard feelings or somebody felt like something was done, families are imperfect. Things are done and said, and feelings are hurt and fights happen. I'm not trying to minimize any of that, but I will also say part of learning to be Christ-like and who we are is learning to forgive and work through stuff

when it's possible. When people want to back to that issue of if people are wanting to have a relationship, if they're wanting to work on it, that's a good sign. Even pretty difficult things can be forgiven in that circumstance, and I work with people who've struggled with addictions or betrayals or affairs. Forgiveness can still happen depending on where people are at with those situations.

Hank Smith: 01:06:37 Jason, do you think that somehow we have created, at least in the last, I don't know, 50, a hundred years, 50 years, a generation of people who are, I don't want to say too offended, but did our grandparents, were they able to work out their differences better than we are because I can't go online and get all the justification I need to cut off a family member. Am I too sensitive?

Dr. Jason Whiting: 01:07:03 That's a great question. Yes. At some level for some of the reasons I've said before, which is that it's easy to get our reasons justified. Like you said, online, it's easy to go and say, can you believe this thing happened? And everyone says, no, I can't believe that thing happened. We do it in our political discussions. It sells and it works, and it also is sort of validating and I mentioned earlier that quote from Terry Warner. He has some discussions about forgiveness where he has talked about how even professional groups or sometimes therapy can reinforce this idea that you have been victimized and you should be indignant and you should be angry again. That's a tricky balance because people genuinely are victimized at times. That's fair to say. People have terrible traumas and victimizations. That is of course true and I never want to minimize that, but it's also true that sometimes then people lean into, how do I say that?

01:07:58 That the victimized, angry, retaliatory role, instead of saying, I've been hurt, now I need to find healing and I need to move on and I even need to forgive and choose healthier boundaries, that's different. I'm going to go talk to other people about how horrible men are or how horrible relationships are families are or grandparents are, or whatever it is. People can get into that kind of mindset. I mean, there's mother blame. People shift into a negative victim mindset. You have to have that conversation with yourself and with God and with those that you'd know and trust to sort through those things because those are difficult conversations. There's genuine victims, but it's also true that from the victimized position, people can do some bad things in return. People almost always, when they're hurting, others say that they're the victim, so makes our jobs tricky, but that's the reality of it.

Hank Smith:	01:08:59	You said earlier, my job isn't necessarily to change my spouse or anybody else. Maybe I'm trying to use my boundaries to get them to change something that they don't need to change.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	01:09:12	Yeah, maybe, but there's better ways to ask for change earlier. You know, we were talking about Sister Hinckley and others who say it's better to be flexible and that is true, but it doesn't mean that you can't have conversations and say, Hey, when you said that thing that hurt my feelings, or when I did this big job and clean the house, then you trash the kitchen, that bothered me. You can have those conversations. You can ask for understanding and even apologies, but that's different than becoming aggressive or setting boundaries and saying, I'm never talking to you again because you did that thing.
Hank Smith:	01:09:47	Wow. Well thanks for that. That's a sensitive topic. I mean, we're getting into relationships, the most intimate parts of people's lives and here we are trying to be helpful.
John Bytheway:	01:09:56	Some people in the day they get married, they say, I want my spouse to stay just the way they are right now. The other one's thinking, okay, now I can mold them into what I really want. I love that we have the opportunity to have a covenant marriage, to have God be part of it. With that covenant relationship, we can grow and improve together. I love the way that gospel gives us that God is part of our marriage. I love that doctrine.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	01:10:28	It's essential, like our relationships are not an impediment that those bumps and those differences, that is what it's all about. You think about the kids you have, it's interesting. You look around at your kids or your siblings and you say, boy, we all have very different personalities. I don't know if I would choose to hang out with this person if we just met at a party, but they're my sibling or they're my kids, so of course we're family. We work that out. It's kind of great. We have those challenging situations that lead to growth. They're not always easy, but it's part of becoming more like the Savior is who has all these virtues of kindness and patience and mercy. We, in our better moments, learn those. A lot of that learning happens in family situations.
Hank Smith:	01:11:17	Coming up in part two of this episode.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	01:11:19	This wasn't that long ago, I said, of all the things you've done to change to get to this better place, because it wasn't looking good and people were saying, you guys gotta get divorced, but here you are doing better. Everything isn't perfect, but you guys are doing way better. I said, what has made the biggest change

for you? Immediately he said, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and I said, really? Tell me more about that. And he said, my relationship with the Savior and he got a little emotional has helped me to soften to see things that I was doing in ways that I was being hurtful that I didn't see before because I was still just in my own pain.



- John Bytheway: 00:00 Welcome to part two with Dr. Jason Whiting Doctrine and Covenants section 64 through 66.
- Hank Smith: 00:07 I've noticed in section 64 verse 17, Satan seeks to destroy souls. I think it's helpful to maybe remember who the actual enemy is.
- John Bytheway: 00:18 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:18 It's not that person. We have a common enemy who wants to destroy souls and families and relationships.
- Dr. Jason Whiting: 00:25 A lot of times when people are coming to therapy because they're hurting and because there's pain, they see each other as the enemy. That is a good reminder to say, you guys aren't each other's enemies. You guys are in the same boat. The problem is the contention or the things that have gotten in the way. It's not you guys. You're on the same team. When people can start working together on the contention or whatever it is, that is a much better situation than seeing the other as the enemy.
- John Bytheway: 00:53 I can't even remember how many years ago this was Hank, but we had some family disagreement that we all had to sit down. I was like, you guys, this isn't mom against you or this isn't dad against you. This is all of us against Satan. To reframe it that way seemed to help a lot, and this is all of us against the adversary. The adversary loves seeing us pitted against each other. He's against all of us.
- Dr. Jason Whiting: 01:21 Again, back to peacemakers needed, President Nelson reminded us of that in that talk, he said, contention is always of Satan. Anger helps no one. It's always a problem. You can just know if you're starting to go down that road, it's going to start causing problems and hurt feelings.
- Hank Smith: 01:37 Yeah. Let's say it's a relationship in which the person is genuinely trying to change. Let's say someone grew up in a manipulative home. They spent 18 years learning that language.

Now they're in a marriage. They've found that their language is manipulative and difficult. They want to change that. What do you do in that case, Jason, because this isn't someone who's malicious. This isn't someone who's refusing to change. This is someone who has years of, I'm sure that you have terms for it, years of unhealthy behavior that now they are going to try to somehow change all of that.

- Dr. Jason Whiting: 02:23 It's a common scenario. There's a lot of people who have grown up where there's intergenerational kinds of traumas and problems. Not just bad skills, but harmful things that were done. It's not even that one that you learn or you see from, you see bad examples and that is a thing. You learn bad examples, but also if it's unhealthy, if you're traumatized, your body learns to, for example, protect itself. It learns to be stressed out all the time because I don't want to get hurt. I mean, I'm in a situation whether that's a anger or a psychological abuse or physical or worse. You're right that that leaves some challenging tendencies that people have, that they have learned through those traumatic experiences.
- Hank Smith: 03:11 Right. Coping skills, whatever.
- Dr. Jason Whiting: 03:13 Yeah. Yeah. They've learned to cope with life as best as they can. Some of those things are by putting up defenses by, we were talking earlier about, you know how somebody is going to be really reactive if they've got some PTSD. Well, that's a real thing, and a person might be oversensitive to somebody's difference. Somebody might say, Hey, do you mind putting your dishes away? That person might feel like, Hey, why are you attacking me or being critical? There may be no criticism. It's just a request. Honestly, that's some of the things that we've been talking about where some people are oversensitive to perceived slights or differences. There's sometimes that kind of thing. There's histories of criticisms or whatever.
- Hank Smith: 03:54 That you had to defend yourself as a kid or something.
- Dr. Jason Whiting: 03:56 That's right. You learned to be in a defensive posture a lot that was adaptive. That made sense, but now you're not in a situation where you have to defend yourself. In the best case scenario, in a healthy relationship, people start to unlearn and to relearn those things. They start to feel safer. They talk those things out. There obviously are a lot of professional resources such as therapy or books or even blogs or church resources. There's a lot of healing that can take place. If somebody seeks that. That's what happens. In the best case scenario, people work on it and they learn together. They overcome things In the

less healthy situations, they kind of dig into and continue to do the things that are a result of their own fears and defenses. That's hard. If there's not an openness, a humility and accountability, things probably won't change, but it always can change.

04:49

Things can always change. I would want to reiterate that message that even in the most difficult of situations in families or with abuse or with addiction or affairs, things can change. It doesn't mean it's going to be easy, but it can change. I've seen situations where I think there is no way these guys are going to turn this around. Sometimes they do. It's really impressive. I think there's a lot of factors that go into that. Sometimes people will say, can this marriage be saved? I will say, yeah, almost always it can, but whether the people are willing to do the work is the next question. It doesn't happen overnight because sometimes people will say, give me another chance. I can change, and that's true. They can change, but unless they're willing to say, I'm going to work on this really hard for a year, then a promise is just a promise.

Hank Smith:

05:44

Dr. Whiting and I, John, have a mutual friend in Amanda Christensen. She's a therapist out in Spanish Fork. She said something interesting. She says, look, you may have this behavior that served you as a teenager or as a child. You can say to that behavior, thank you. You served me well. You helped me survive. I don't need that. We're not in that situation anymore. It's okay to stand down, you know, hate yourself. You don't hate that part of you. You say it was useful. Then it's no longer useful.

Dr. Jason Whiting:

06:16

If you're a little kid and you see two big parents stomping around the house throwing things, you learn, I gotta keep my defenses up or have my adrenaline pumping and I've gotta hide or whatever. I gotta keep those defenses, but that may or may not apply when you're an adult in a healthy relationship, but your body is still saying, well, we better be careful, but that may be now not helping you at all. It may be tricking you into thinking this person is an enemy and a threat and they're going to abandon you, and they probably are not. You can let those defenses go, but you have to work through that. The body really hangs on to stuff. We learn things at a deep level that our body's trying to protect us with that maybe we have to then unlearn.

John Bytheway:

06:55

One of the things I love about my wife of the million things, she will stop and say, why am I feeling this way? She'll step away from herself and evaluate it. I think, wow, that's really cool that

you can go through that and maybe even adjust because you're able to step aside from yourself and say, why do I feel this way right now?

- Dr. Jason Whiting: 07:17 Well, it's a great question because so often our feelings are not accurate, if that makes sense. Like they flare up because of maybe we're tired or maybe we are defensive or, or whatever it is. If we can stop and say, why am I getting irritable ? Maybe it's because my spouse is being difficult, but it might be that I've had a long day and I've still got some stuff in my head from something earlier. My spouse is 12% of the problem, but I'm acting as though they're 90% of the problem. To be reflective like your spouse does, that's a great skill to do that and to stop and say, what's going on here?
- John Bytheway: 07:54 Yeah, I feel rotten. I'm going to make everybody pay.
- Dr. Jason Whiting: 07:58 Yeah, exactly. That's what we often do.
- Hank Smith: 08:00 John, do you remember when [Dr. Doug Benson](#) was with us last year in the book of Ether, and he talked about that. If you can notice that you're feeling angry, that's a huge step. Instead of going on autopilot in anger, you're saying, whoa. I think he called it mindfulness. I'm mindful that I'm feeling angry. Everybody should go back. If you haven't listened to our book of Ether episodes, they were awesome, all three of them, but that one with Dr. Benson was great.
- Dr. Jason Whiting: 08:27 I'm actually related to Dr. Doug Benson. My little brother is married into his family. I listened to that episode. I'm a fan of mindfulness. That idea of being more aware of what's going on for us in our own physical containers is really helpful. We often get really disconnected from it, including with things like anger.
- Hank Smith: 08:46 All right Jason, what do you want to do next?
- Dr. Jason Whiting: 08:48 Okay. Let me talk a little bit about how forgiveness of others sometimes includes our own reflection and our own repentance. I know that's a tricky thing to talk about because often when we are wounded, we feel like the other person is responsible and a lot of times people are. That is fair to say, people are genuinely victimized, but it's also fair to say that sometimes in our pains, in our hurts that we sometimes do things in return that are not helpful. Let me share a quick story. This is from a [book](#) of mine. I told you I teach classes at [BYU](#) about addiction and about violence. This is a story about addiction where a woman and a man were engaged. He was

struggling with an addictive behavior. The relationship was moving towards marriage, but instead... with the understanding that he was going to work on this issue, but he really didn't.

09:37 He became more defensive about it. He said, why are you being so judgemental? He minimized. He didn't really want to take it seriously and work on it, so eventually there was a breakup, so this woman said this left her feeling really inadequate, really anxious, really down on herself, and she didn't trust people after that, here's what she said, this is her story. I realized that I not only needed to forgive that boyfriend, but I also needed to apologize to him. That was really difficult. I finally met with him and simply explained that I had felt resentful towards him and I needed to apologize. The relief and peace I felt was overwhelming. Even though he didn't apologize or express any remorse for anything he had done, I knew I had taken an important step in my own recovery. That's a powerful story because she didn't excuse him.

10:33 He didn't really even take accountability. She just focused on her own forgiveness of him. She also wanted to apologize for the things that she felt angry and resentful about, and again, I'm not trying to suggest ever that somebody who's been victimized is now responsible for repenting themselves. I'm just saying in relationships when there's hard feelings and when things happen, sometimes we do things that we are hanging on to. We are resenting and we are becoming angry. That part of our own repentance can also be freeing and healing. I mean, she said it brought her relief and peace in my mind, again, that's part of the liberating power of forgiveness is that she wasn't dependent on him changing. He had hurt her. He had not apologized for it, but she was still able to find relief and peace through her forgiveness of him as well as her own, just apologizing for whatever role she felt like she carried in that and that's about her work with the Savior and her work with repentance and forgiveness. It's a powerful connection to the Atonement and then just a reminder that we all have that ability to access.

Hank Smith: 11:48 That's really great. Look at section 64, verse 34. The Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind. It sounds like that's what she was offering.

Dr. Jason Whiting: 11:57 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 11:59 Giving her heart to the Lord.

Dr. Jason Whiting: 12:01 Yeah, and she said it was really hard. I bet it was because she could have been justified in saying, he's the one. I didn't do

anything really. He did a lot of stuff, but she also just realized she had done some things, some attitudes or resentment that she didn't want to have. I think that sometimes is powerful for us to apologize for our stuff too.

Hank Smith: 12:23 Jason, why is it that that's good for me? So let's say this person deeply hurt and wounded me. You're saying it's good for me to maybe look at myself or repent myself and apologize myself. Why is that good for me? I know it is, but why is it?

Dr. Jason Whiting: 12:38 We sometimes feel very justified in our anger and our resentment and in many cases it is justified, but I think sometimes we then also take it to the next level and nurture and kind of hang on to those resentments. That's where it starts to become problematic. I would not want to judge somebody for struggling with their hurts. Sometimes we do this thing where we start to build up our own case. I think it's also one of the reasons why it's problematic to gossip, for example, because we are then going to someone else like, wait till you hear what happened to me. You know, wait till you hear what this person did or what this person said, and you know, sometimes colleagues will do that or we'll do it in our wards. People will talk about, wait till you hear this thing happen. That's when it starts to turn in back to seeking occasion.

13:30 It's never helpful for the soul to indulge in self-pity or anger, but it's certainly part of the natural man that I think we're just always constantly working on letting go of. Even when we're justified it sometimes we are angry or feeling bad for ourselves because something genuinely bad happened. That's totally understandable. Jesus is saying, I will help you. I've already paid the price for that. You don't need to pay an additional price, which is relevant for a few quotes here I'll get to in just a second, but it's a resistance of God and of Christ's atonement when we do that.

Hank Smith: 14:06 Alright, Jason, now I promised before that I wouldn't ask questions and I broke my promise, but I promise again, you're going to ask me to work on this. It's to promise. If I'm not.

Dr. Jason Whiting: 14:14 We'll keep forgiving you every time.

Hank Smith: 14:17 Alright, keep going.

Dr. Jason Whiting: 14:18 That just highlights this idea that the Atonement is what helps us forgive. Jesus has paid the price for sins, including other people's sins, so let me come back to Sister Yee's talk. She says,

over the years and in my efforts to find peace and healing on the path of forgiveness, I came to realize in a profound way that the same son of God who atoned for my sins is the same Redeemer who will also save those who have deeply hurt me. I could not truly believe the first truth without the second. As my love for the Savior has grown, so has my desire to replace hurt and anger with his healing balm. It has been a process of many years requiring courage, vulnerability, perseverance, and learning to trust in the Savior's divine power to save and heal.

15:08 I still have work to do, but my heart is no longer on a war path. I have been given a new heart. She's being vulnerable in describing this process, but sharing that change and how the same atonement that blesses her also has blessed and paid the price for others who have hurt her. I have a follow-up quote related to this idea, back to why. Why refusing to forgive is a sin. This is from [James Rasband](#) who used to be the academic vice president at BYU. He's now a general authority. This is from a really good devotional he gave on forgiveness that I'd recommend. He says, this is a very strong statement. If we refuse to forgive there remaineth in us the greater sin, how can this be? Our salvation is conditioned on forgiving others because when we refuse to forgive, what we are really saying is that we reject or don't quite trust the atonement and it is our acceptance of the atonement that ultimately saves us.

Hank Smith: 16:08 That makes sense why it's the greater sin, meaning you're not the worst person in the situation. You're going to be worse off because you're rejecting the very power that can save you.

Dr. Jason Whiting: 16:21 Yeah. Again, it's about us healing and being blessed by the atonement and allowing the atonement to heal and bless others regardless of whether we continue in a relationship with someone else. We can allow and trust in the atonement to do that work. Here's another quote from Terry Warner. He says, the Savior has taken upon himself the sins of those whom you judge and those persons against whom you have caused to anger. Just as he is an advocate pleading your cause at the throne of the Father, he stands before you asking your forgiveness of one who has offended you and offers his sacrifice to satisfy your sense of justice. Is his atonement inadequate? Must you add your own condemnation for the other person to really be healed? Pretty challenging doctrine. I think at times when we feel hurt and angry, but a good reminder for us to say, do we really trust the atonement? Can I give up those burdens to the Savior? We've all seen people who don't do that, who hang on to slights, who resent and are angry for their whole life,

and that's a heavy burden to carry that they don't need to carry because the Savior has already done it.

- John Bytheway: 17:38 Here's all these guys on the Missouri River. They don't like the way Oliver Cowdery is rowing. Joseph Smith is acting like a dictator. What are these guys in their twenties? For me, part of my testimony of the Doctrine and Covenants is look at the beauty and the eloquence of these statements. They're coming out of this situation. There's just a bunch of young guys and they're learning some pretty big lessons right here.
- Dr. Jason Whiting: 18:04 Stuff we all still work on throughout our lives.
- Hank Smith: 18:08 It's amazing to me, John and Jason, that the Lord can take an argument on the river, turn it into this beautiful revelation, life changing. Before we leave this idea, how long could we talk about this relationships, forgiveness, repentance.
- John Bytheway: 18:27 It's so applicable. Yeah.
- Dr. Jason Whiting: 18:29 Yeah. It's the work of a lifetime. Just like with so many principles of the gospel, we need reminders. We need to say, oh yes, I need to work on this. Yes, I need to be more charitable and more forgiving. It's what we're down here to do. The families that we live in, the wards that we live in, we work on this stuff and some people really have a seemingly a disproportionate amount of trials and traumas, but nevertheless, we all work on these things. I think one of the reasons it's a challenging doctrine is because the Savior is asking us to do the challenging work of having faith in his atonement, which it's so easy for us to rely on ourself, do this work and do our relationships as we normally do, but sometimes I think we get pushed to the next level is the way for God to say, you need to be more humble and more trusting in the atonement. That's ultimately where the healing can come.
- Hank Smith: 19:26 One of my students today, Brooklyn Condie, she taught me a little mantra that I love. She said, I don't just believe in Jesus. I believe him, and she says it to herself when she's struggling. I don't just believe in him. I believe him when he says He can fix these things.
- Dr. Jason Whiting: 19:43 Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's a doctrine we have to remind ourselves of on a regular basis at least. I tend to just go throughout my day and trust in the arm of the flesh and do my thing, but sometimes I bump up against these things. I'm like, oh, that's

		hard. I need some help. That's why God lets us struggle with some of this stuff.
John Bytheway:	20:03	I love the ideas of justice and mercy. Sometimes we want, we want mercy for ourselves and justice for others. You know?
Dr. Jason Whiting:	20:11	That's right.
John Bytheway:	20:13	The idea that there's an ultimate justice that ultimately that everyone will be held accountable. Sometimes we like that except for me because I would like mercy for this, this, this, this. We feel like if I'm forgiving too many people, well I, I want there to be some justice out there somewhere. It's interesting how the Savior can hold those perfectly together as the Book of Mormon teaches us that the Lord, he knows how to do this. I think about these five words in section 64, Hank, you know I love to say a sermon in a sentence, verse seven. What do you say, Hank? This should be put in vinyl, on somebody's wall.
Hank Smith:	20:53	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	20:53	I the Lord forgive sins. Just that part. He's a forgiver. We call him a redeemer, but that's kind of the same thing. I'm going to redeem you. I'm going to forgive you. I the Lord forgive sin. Here he is saying, this is what I do, which is a nice relieving thing to hear.
Hank Smith:	21:13	I have written in my scriptures here, John, from four years ago with Dr. S Michael Wilcox . The Lord is a delightful forgiver.
John Bytheway:	21:20	He delights.
Hank Smith:	21:21	I the Lord forgive sins. It's what I do.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	21:27	I have a quote that relates to that and this is from Elder Holland's talk on reconciliation. He says, notwithstanding even the most terrible offenses that might come to us, we can rise above our pain. Only when we put our feet onto the path of true healing, that path is the forgiving one walked by Jesus of Nazareth who calls out to each of us. Come, follow me. I testify that forgiving and forsaking offenses, old or new is central to the grandeur of the atonement of Jesus Christ. I testify that ultimately such spiritual repair can come only from our divine redeemer. He who rushes to our aid with healing in his wings, a future free from old sorrows and past mistakes are not only possible, but they have already been purchased, paid for at an excruciating cost eloquent statement from Elder Holland about

		the Savior who, like you said, delights to forgive. He is rushing to our aid with healing in his wings and has paid for all of those sorrows and mistakes.
Hank Smith:	22:30	Yeah, I've noticed when I'm getting more in tune with the spirit, forgiveness becomes easier.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	22:36	Sure.
Hank Smith:	22:37	But my heart is touched. I think I can do this. I can forgive. John you know this, my mouth has a tendency to offend. There's supposed to be a filter that says, don't say that, and then I say it. I don't know if this is a gift or not, but my ability to offend others and be forgiven has helped me forgive because of how many times I've had to be forgiven.
John Bytheway:	23:00	That's that doctrine of reciprocity.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	23:03	If we want to be forgiven, we need to learn to be forgiving of others. It's said in multiple ways in the scriptures. That's part of our challenge.
Hank Smith:	23:11	It's impressive. John, do you remember a couple weeks ago when Andy Horton was with us and he talked about that woman he asked to speak in stake conference? She sat on the stand and he never had her speak.
John Bytheway:	23:23	That's right.
Hank Smith:	23:24	Then he took her flowers to apologize. It was just so sweet how she said, it's okay. I didn't need to give the talk. I just needed to prepare it. It was so beautiful because she could, she could be deeply offended, but she wasn't.
John Bytheway:	23:39	Good response.
Hank Smith:	23:41	Jason, this is so helpful. Something that John and I and our entire team talk about every week is that we want to help people. I think what we've done so far today, if we decide we're going to implement it, can change the trajectory of a relationship entirely. I just want to say thank you. Keep going. Tell us what to do next.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	24:05	Well, in that spirit, as we wrap up some of our discussions about forgiveness, let me sum up steps we can take as we're working on forgiving. I'm not trying to oversimplify or make this just a top 10 list or whatever, but I want to summarize some of the

things that we can do to forgive. First, I would say if you're working on letting go and forgiving, the first thing you can do is acknowledge that it is hard, that pain is real. Relationships are going to have bumps. We are all going to get hurt sometimes, maybe even in our LDS culture, we, back to John's comment about Elder Hafen's and the marriage, right? The marriages are going to be bliss. It's going to be great, and I'm a return missionary. It's true. All those things are great, but it doesn't mean they're always easy. It's okay to say, I've had my feelings hurt and this is hard.

24:54 Next step I would say, is to then seek guidance from the Lord. Talk to God about it. When you're feeling hurt, when you're feeling frustrated, back to that reflection of John's wife, what's going on with me right now? Why am I feeling what I'm feeling? Can I sort this through? It's one of the reasons prayer is so great. It's naturally therapeutic. We're talking something out with a loving and understanding God. It's a good place to kind of talk through and let go of some of those things. Sometimes that's maybe all that it will take. Third step, I would say, is to understand and trust in the atonement, which as we've talked about, we sometimes forget, but it's really central to what we're about and having faith in the atonement, it's efficacy is going to be pretty important, especially for bigger cases of forgiveness. Related to that, trusting in God's judgment, he is the judge.

25:44 As we were saying earlier. He knows what someone else's history, what their choices are, what they aren't. He can make that call in a way that we can't. It's hard for us to let go of some of that sometimes and to let God be the judge, but it's helpful when we can turn that over to him. Next step I would say, is to recognize imperfection. We all, including the person that hurt us, are imperfect. Sometimes as we think through and as we pray about and as we try to put ourselves in someone else's shoes, that can be helpful in healthy marriages. This actually happens a lot. People say, she's a great person. She was a little snippy, but that's not how she usually is. I'm not going to worry about that. In less healthy situations, people hold onto that stuff and they say, you said this thing.

26:33 They're seeking occasion. They're picking at, but in more healthy situations we say, you know what? We're not perfect. We're going to move on. That relates to the next step, which is to be empathetic, saying, you have your trials. Sometimes I'm the one contributing to some of your trials. That's fair to talk through as well, and I don't know how often I've thought in my own head, maybe after her feeling like my wife and I we're going to talk about this. I know she's going to understand

because I feel so justified in my perspective and I have that conversation. Suddenly realize, oh, she sees it very differently than I do. How can this be? But she doesn't automatically agree with everything that I'm saying. That's okay.

Hank Smith:	27:16	That part about acknowledging that you're someone's big trial, aren't I a gift to you? I'm giving you all these chances to learn how to forgive
Dr. Jason Whiting:	27:28	Someone somewhere is giving a sacrament meeting talk, saying, I had a really difficult missionary companion named Elder Whiting and he was a trial that I learned from.
Hank Smith:	27:38	I learned so much.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	27:39	I had to pray and I had to learn how to forgive. Who knows that could be a thing.
Hank Smith:	27:45	I'm going to tell Sara, I'm giving you so many opportunities to live the gospel. You need to be more grateful.
John Bytheway:	27:51	That's right. Somebody said most of my problems I either married or gave birth to. Remember that?
Hank Smith:	27:57	Yeah. Yeah. Oh yeah. Oh man.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	28:01	Yeah. Our family members, man, they are right there in our interactions, families. We have different personalities, different power levels. We're in proximity. Everybody has their emotions, their opinions. That is a cauldron for learning right there. Especially when you stick them all in a minivan together.
Hank Smith:	28:18	Yeah. Jason, you'll laugh at this. Dr. Melissa Inouye told us, John, we've referred to it so many times. God wants you to love your enemies. He puts them in your ward. He gives you plenty of times.
John Bytheway:	28:29	How convenient.
Hank Smith:	28:30	Yeah. To practice.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	28:31	Yes. That's part of the reason the church is true. It's just an all these laboratories, we are each other's clinical material. As Elder Maxwell used to say, we learn in addition to being empathetic, we have to make that choice. We choose to forgive. We work on that. That is sometimes we do it repeatedly. Research backs that up too. Sometimes after things

like an affair for example, there may be a choice to forgive, but then there might come something else that comes up a few months later and somebody chooses again, as reminders happen, as things bump up, it's an ongoing process and an ongoing choice. Another thing we have to work on is to let go of obsessing and ruminating how when you lay in bed sometimes and you think, I can't believe when I posted that thing on Instagram that this person roasted me in that way and they misunderstood me and that wasn't fair.

29:22 That's probably true. We have a tendency to hang on to and think about somebody falsely accused us or whatever. Those things happen. You have to kinda work at that back to mindfulness or taking a walk or or letting go in whatever ways you let go. That's an ongoing process, which relates to the next tip, which is to be patient with the process. It might take time. You might have to be forgiving of your own self as you are working on forgiving others because it's not going to be just this one time easy process. We're all imperfect at that.

Hank Smith: 29:57 Earlier you told us we might need to repent of not repenting. Now you're telling us we might need to forgive ourselves for not forgiving.

Dr. Jason Whiting: 30:04 Exactly. Boy, that's our life right there. Forgive yourself for not forgiving others adequately. Life is an ongoing series of lessons and schooling, and I just think you have to recognize that we all have our weaknesses and imperfections. It's okay. It's what we're here for. Yeah. The last thing where it applies is to be thoughtful about your boundaries. Forgiveness isn't trust. It isn't even reconciliation necessarily. I hope it is a lot of the times and I hope people build trust and reconcile, but if it's not, then you be thoughtful about that. You can choose to set limits. You can choose, for example, to not hang out with a coworker if they're difficult. You can make choices around friends if they can be negative. That's easier said than done then with family members where those choices become a little more difficult. But I've certainly worked with people who say, we can spend time with you in this way and in this space, but you can't just drop by any time or I'm not okay with you saying that. Trying to set boundaries and negotiate those things, that's part of the process too. Sometimes that's really tricky. It's okay to ask for and to request Christ-like and dignified communication. It's possible to love someone and not trust them.

31:26 My mission president used to say the [David O. McKay](#) saying, it's better to be trusted than to be loved. Trust is another level. You might love somebody but say, I love you, but it's not okay with

what is happening in this relationship that sometimes is a hard choice to make. No, that is.

31:43 Let me sum up our discussion about forgiveness with a story of a couple that I have worked with on and off. This is a couple where they both grew up in really unhealthy, abusive, manipulative homes. It really did leave a mark. These guys got together young. The husband in this situation struggled with some of the things we were talking about earlier of doing the kinds of things he had seen, which was to be manipulative, to use words as pressure to lie, to try to get his way, to try to get other people to do what he wanted. This was really hard on the wife who also struggled with her own self-esteem and feelings of guilt and inadequacy. They had some little kids at one point after a lot of psychological and other kinds of manipulative behaviors there was a separation and she said, this isn't working.

32:36 She was justified in that. A lot of people would say, this is a terrible marriage. You've gotta get out of this marriage. Well, there was a separation, but that instigated what was an interesting, humble, heartfelt effort at change on his part and hers as well. They both had some long conversations. They started going to some professional help. They did therapy. He went to a support group. They read things. Some pretty impressive changes happened. A lot of forgiveness was extended. Their interactions were different in their day-to-day family. There was much more accountability, for example, there was a lot more apologizing. There was a lot of saying, I realize I'm doing that thing that I used to do. I don't want to do that. How can I be different? Some deep seated change. I asked him, this wasn't that long ago. I said, of all the things you've done to change to get to this better place, because it wasn't looking good and people were saying, you guys gotta get divorced, but here you are doing better.

33:39 Everything isn't perfect, but you guys are doing way better. I said, what has made the biggest change for you? Immediately he said, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and I said, really? Tell me more about that, and he said, my relationship with the Savior and he got a little emotional. This has helped me to soften and to see things that I was doing in ways that I was being hurtful that I didn't see before because I was still just in my own pain. We had a conversation about it. It was cool to see that the humility that was helping both of them in their work with professionals also was a big part of their healing with the atonement and with the gospel. I mean, it was changing who they are to where this family history of toxic black water was

now being purified to a pure stream of waters to where they were doing things differently with their kids and it was changing generations.

- 34:29 It's a powerful thing, and I'm not saying it's all going to be easy and it's all perfect, but his relationship with the Savior and their relationship with the Savior, with each other, with forgiving was really a powerful part of what was happening for them. It made me think of the power of the gospel and also made me think of this quote from [President Nelson](#). He gave this on the world forgiveness day a couple of years ago. He said, forgiveness is not just a one-time act, but a continuous process that requires patience, compassion, and understanding. It is not always easy to forgive those who have hurt you. You can receive strength from Jesus Christ. Powerful stuff. What we do, as he said, as well really matters in relationships. When we make these kind of efforts to be forgiving, to be kind, to be loving, to soften it immediately is helpful. It's part of our ongoing learning, part of our journey here throughout life.
- John Bytheway: 35:27 I remember hearing Dr. Doug Brinley speak at BYU . He said, when I got my degree, it told me that the thing, and I'm doing my best to paraphrase here, Dr. Brinley, if I get it wrong, is communication skills, but then he said, I couldn't find communication skills in my topical guide. What I did find was faith, patience, love, forgiveness, and mercy. His talk was that communication skills without Christ-like attributes, he said, just makes us more skilled fighters.
- Dr. Jason Whiting: 36:04 Yeah, that's true.
- John Bytheway: 36:05 He was saying that the Christ-like attributes, that's what that man discovered. This is where it starts, is with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Hank, as I've heard you quote Matthew 26:22, the Lord, is it I? that attitude of, did I do something that hurt your feelings? I'm so sorry.
- Hank Smith: 36:25 Instead of kneeling down at your bed saying, Lord, it's her fix her, Lord, is it I? Jason, I really love that story because it wasn't, okay, we're going to fix this tomorrow. This was, here's a husband who by maybe quite a bit of no fault of his own, maybe some his fault decides that he's going to do the work professionally and spiritually to change. Not just change like, oh, I did something wrong. It's generations of change. I am willing to do that work. That's an act of love.
- Dr. Jason Whiting: 37:07 And it's an ongoing act of love. It's a choosing again and again. Part of it, it's because he's recognizing the importance of his

children and of his family wanting to things to be different for them than what he had. As an aside, this is a couple who is choosing some boundaries with their own parents who have been quite unhealthy and still are in some ways, so that's some of the conversations we are having in therapy is what kind of relationship is safe and healthy. For example, they sometimes say, we don't allow our parents to just stop by anytime. We've limited conversation because of some of the manipulative things that are still going on. We still want our children to have a relationship with their grandparents, but we're going to do that in a safe way. We're going to meet at a restaurant occasionally for an hour and have some time in a way that's got some boundaries and got some structure to it. It's an ongoing thing, but yes, back to your point, it's a spiritual work. It's not just about going and learning some communication skills, which those are great. If you have the underlying attitudes of, I want to be a better communicator. I'm going to use these to bless. It's the virtues that are more fundamental than the skills.

Hank Smith:	38:18	And on the other side is a spouse who is willing to walk that road.
John Bytheway:	38:24	That's most of the battle.
Hank Smith:	38:26	Oh, isn't that beautiful?
John Bytheway:	38:27	A couple where they're both saying, we want to improve our marriage.
Hank Smith:	38:31	I will walk this road with you.
John Bytheway:	38:34	Yeah.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	38:34	Yeah. It's hard. There's been things said and done in the marriage up to this point sometimes that have been really hurtful and really damaging. That's stuff that is still being talked through and worked through. That's an ongoing process, but the attempt is being made. The forgiveness is being worked on as opposed to not being worked on. Growth is happening because of it.
John Bytheway:	38:55	The Lord requireth the heart and the willing mind. That's it. I'm not able, but I'm willing to try and I'm going to try this. Hugely important, the intent.
Hank Smith:	39:08	Jason, when you say how tragic that someone would say, no, I'm not willing. I'm not willing to do that work. I didn't cause this

problem. Well, you didn't cause it, but you're the one who has to fix it.

Dr. Jason Whiting: 39:21 And that takes a willingness and that willingness is sometimes a high price. Although as we read earlier from Elder Holland, that price in some ways has already been paid. But the willingness to let Christ pay that price and to have me not be the one to hang onto it, it's really hard. Some people really have difficult situations. I hope from this conversation that that comes across that I recognize people really have heavy burdens to carry and some traumas and some challenges that I recognize don't get solved from a quick effort or a prayer or a one-time forgiveness effort. This is a lifetime's work. Certainly more hopeful to say, let's engage in this work together with the Savior than to not and to not be willing.

Hank Smith: 40:08 On a side note, Jason, another quick question. Not everyone has access to a Dr. Jason Whiting, a very active, faithful, latter-day saint who wants to help improve their marriages. When it comes to professional help, let's say someone's listening, they're going, okay, I'm open to the fact that I might need professional help. I'm going to work with my priesthood leaders. I'm going to work with the Lord. I want to work with a professional, but I don't want to make it worse. I've talked to people I'm sure you have, who have said so-and-so got burned by going to this therapist, made it worse or didn't really fit. Do you have any advice?

Dr. Jason Whiting: 40:49 It's a good question. There are a lot of resources out there that means there's a whole range of resources out there. Somebody who's living in an area where there is a variety of therapists who are LDS, for example, has a different option if they want to make that connection than somebody who lives in a place where there's not LDS therapists. But having said all that, the connected version of the world we live in today means that there are online therapy options. That there are discussion groups, that there are books. You both have written books, people have written books. There's blogs and resources. That is one of the advantages of the world we live in today, is that there's a lot of discussion. Some of the research I've done, we've occasionally investigated things like online chats or discussion boards around certain topics. For example, recovery from sexual abuse or questions about intimate partner violence.

41:41 We've looked at those discussion groups and analyzed them. They're pretty helpful oftentimes in the sense that somebody who doesn't have access to a therapist might be able to jump in there and say, this thing is going on for me. What do I do?

People jump in with thoughts that can be really validating. It can also be problematic in some ways you have to get a range of opinions, but we do live in a time and place where there's a lot out there. Even back to my earlier comment, it doesn't necessarily mean you have to go to somebody who is of your same faith, for example, to work on forgiveness and to work on professional healing. There's good people that I refer to that are not of my faith, or there are people that refer to me or that come to me who are of other faith. The long story short is that it might take a little time, but there's a lot of things to go look at and to seek.

Hank Smith:	42:29	Yeah, don't give up.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	42:31	If it's not a great fit. When you're checking or meeting with somebody, go meet with someone else. See what happens. There's a variety of therapists. There's a variety of support groups. There's a variety of resources.
Hank Smith:	42:40	Great. Thanks for that, Jason. I'm really glad that we spent the time on this that we did. This was something that you and I had talked about. Let's really talk about this topic because like John said earlier, it is so applicable, so relevant. Jason, can we hit a couple of these other things that you've prepared? We'll come back and let's wrap up.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	43:03	Sure. Just a couple of other things. There's always more that we could dig into, but I'm glad that we spent the time we did on the doctrine of forgiveness, which I think is really relevant and worth the time. There's a lot in section 64 as well as in the sections that follow. This idea that we've mentioned a little, which is that later in section 64, the Lord commends our efforts. He says, this is verse 33. Wherefore be not weary in well-doing for ye are laying the foundation of a great work and out of small things proceedeth that which is great. Behold, the Lord require the heart and a willing mind and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days. I just like that encouragement. Don't be weary in well doing it. We all get weary at times.
	43:52	We don't want to run faster than we have strength. It's good to try back to President Nelson's how we treat each other really matters. Little efforts can sometimes pay off in big ways. Out of small things proceedeth that which is great, and I think again about relationships. Little things can make a big difference. I think we all can think of examples where a little thing was done for us that was really meaningful. Conversely, sometimes little things that are said or done that are negative, that are hurtful

and that stay with us. You may have heard [Coach Kalani Sitake's](#) devotional a few weeks ago where he talked about as a boy, he had struggles because of his difficult family situation where there was a divorce and moving around. He was this fourth grader that felt insecure. He was a huge BYU football fan. When he had a chance to be in the room with some of those guys at his grade school, he wasn't even comfortable approaching them, but one of them, Vai Sikahema came over to him. This is a beautiful story and I'd encourage people to go listen. He came up to him. He said, things will be okay. I love you and the Lord loves you. That small and simple thing changed his life. It's a big deal.

John Bytheway: 45:05

In fact, Kalani said that he gestured to him. Kalani as a little boy kind of went no. Vai left, walked over to him, said those few inspired words. I think if I didn't even remember it later on that he had done that. Wow. Talk about a little revelation, a little intersection there that has meant so much. I loved that story. We watched it twice because we thought that was such a beautiful story. Vai Sikahema that's now Elder Sikahema of the 70.

Hank Smith: 45:39

Yeah. If they're out there listening, thanks to both of you. We have had wonderful joyous moments in sporting events because of you, John, I brought this up a couple of weeks ago, but I want to make sure everybody knows about this. If you go to your gospel library app, you go to come, follow me. There's a new section called [Insights from the Apostles](#). These are brand new videos from the apostles about some of the Come, Follow me sections. There's a new one by Elder Renlund called Be Not Weary in Well Doing. It's about six minutes. It is worth your time. How wonderful that we live in a day where we can be studying the scriptures and say, oh, Elder Renlund recorded this video recently for us to look at. I hope everyone will. Again, gospel library app. Come follow me. Insights from the apostles. When I read this verse, this verse 33 is a beautiful verse.

46:34

Don't be weary and well-doing. You're doing great things. These tiny things that I'm having you do, big things are going to come from that. It's a great keep moving forward verse. It reminds me of [Dr. Frantz Belot](#), who's the mission president now out in Orlando. He's been with us a couple of times on the show. Do you remember John, that he came home? He was Bishop, parked his car in his driveway, said, I'm just going to close my eyes for a minute. Then I think it was three in the morning where his wife, Brandy is knocking on the window. What are you doing? Are you going to come inside? He's just so tired. Being Bishop was a lot for him, emotionally, physically. He said

something that I've never forgotten. It was just off the cuff. He said, I get tired in his work, but I never get tired of his work. Be not weary in well-doing. You're doing great things. You said with Vai Sikahema. That was a very small thing. He could have said, I'm tired of doing all these little nice things, but it proceeded something great.

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| John Bytheway: | 47:39 | Last night I spoke at a fireside. I saw two, not one, two of my former mission friends out there, Elder Comstock and Elder Campbell mentioned to them, my flip chart with its picture of all 16 temples, all 16. Now what are we at guys? I mean, what time is it like 350 plus temples? Had you told me that on my mission. That's a great work. President Nelson has said, can you see what is unfolding right in front of our eyes? |
| Hank Smith: | 48:15 | Jason, you mentioned this just briefly, maybe I'll put you on the spot. You said, in relationships, small things matter. Can you give me some examples of what I could be doing? Small things I could be doing that you've seen say, wow, that's really effective. |
| Dr. Jason Whiting: | 48:30 | Yeah. Let me give you an example of small things in a relationship. Once I was at work and I was busy working on stuff, typing away, and I noticed that my wife texted me and the text said, do you know where the wheat grinder is? It's kind of a funny latter-day saint question. I didn't know where the wheat grinder was. I kept typing away and then about uh, 60 seconds later, I noticed that she's calling. At first, I think, oh, I don't really have time to answer the phone call. I'm busy writing a book about marital communication, but I thought, oh, of course. You know, I'll check. Hello, how's it going? She said, do you know where the wheat grinder is? And I said, I don't know where the wheat grinder is. Sorry. How's it going? What's going on at home? What's happening with the kids? |
| | 49:19 | What's happening? You know, we talked, we connected for a few minutes. Pretty small, simple thing. It took just five minutes, maybe less. Then we were done and then I got thinking about it. Probably thinking about it because I was working on that book. I thought I could have responded in a hundred different ways. In relationships, we always can respond to each other's stuff in different ways. In research, sometimes these are called bids. When one person does something that is a bid for the other person to respond. Sometimes it's a text, sometimes it's a question, sometimes it's a concern. Sometimes it's, you know, it's a nice weather out today. It's just a comment, but those are bids for connection. I thought I could have ignored, which I kind of did at first, or I could have been snippy, been rude, like, why are you bothering me? |

	50:13	I will say, even as somebody who's been practicing as a family therapist for pushing 30 years, it surprises me how often people and families will do that at times, be rude in a way that they would not be with their friends at church. Again. Small thing. No, it's a big thing. It makes a big difference. I could have been sarcastic like, oh yeah, I always throw the wheat grinder in my briefcase when I go to work, or I am using it as an object lesson. Maybe I could have been humorous or something like that. I could have been kind. I hope I was kind. Maybe I could have been kinder. I hope I was at least understanding. Maybe I could have been better, but do you see what I'm saying? We're always having these small and simple interactions and there's actually researchers that have looked at these kinds of interactions.
	51:02	Just as one example, a researcher named John Gottman , who's done a lot of marital research, followed couples right as they got together and got married, he watched what happened every time there was a bid. In other words, some little, Hey, I got promoted at work today or some little, the kids are driving me crazy. The couples who were successful six years later who were thriving responded to those bids about 90% of the time. Those were positive responses just with a, that's great or that's cool, or, oh, that's interesting, and again, sometimes these were silly little things like I used to drive a car like that. Oh, that's cool. Couples who were not doing as well, including the ones that were separating, responded positively about 32% of the time from like 88% in successful to about 32% in the couples, like you think small things, they're small, but they add up over time. They make a big difference. We are wired for connection. We want to connect. Most of us naturally respond to each other in positive ways I hope. It makes a difference if we ignore or if we roll our eyes or if we blow off or worse or are rude. The point is the things we do in a relationship really matters like President Nelson.
Hank Smith:	52:22	And watch for those bids. Those come from kids too. Our children, our friends.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	52:28	It's one of the reasons we don't like being ghosted. We don't like when someone doesn't respond. I tell my kids this sometimes. I'm like, it's worth giving a thumbs up emoji on a text. Take the three seconds, don't ignore it. Be a responder. People like to be responded to. It's just how we're built spiritually and emotionally and physically. We're relational creatures.
John Bytheway:	52:47	I love it.

Hank Smith:	52:49	There's a couple of people I'm excited to have hear this episode, who really need this here, really need this. There's a verse in section 66 that I think you helped us with Jason. He's talking to William McClellan, the Lord is, and he says push many people to Zion with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads. Feel like that's what we did today. You gave us a nice, not a hard shove, but a gentle push towards Zion in our marriages and in our relationship. I'm excited. A song of everlasting joy, right John?
John Bytheway:	53:25	Yeah. We've talked about this. I love the idea that Zion was a place then it was a cause. It's a state of mind. We can even, I guess, have a Zion marriage where we're trying to be of one heart and one mind too love it.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	53:38	Yeah. Hopefully it's an ongoing work, but being of one heart is certainly better than the alternative. It's possible.
Hank Smith:	53:46	We can build Zion at home and friendships. I love it. That's beautiful.
John Bytheway:	53:52	Did you find the wheat grinder? I'm dying.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	53:55	I think it showed up eventually. Probably one of the kids had thrown it in the bathtub or something. Who knows where that wheat grinder.
Hank Smith:	54:04	That's great.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	54:04	I dunno. The mystery of the wheat grinder. Yeah.
John Bytheway:	54:07	When you have kids, look where it shouldn't be and you'll find it.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	54:10	That's right. The funny thing is, I use that example in my book, but the wheat grinder is such a random thing that I changed it in my book to an iPad to be a more generic example. because I'm like, who's going to understand a wheat grinder?
John Bytheway:	54:21	Like what's a...?
Dr. Jason Whiting:	54:22	That's such a Latter-day Saint example. Who is this guy?
Hank Smith:	54:25	Yeah.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	54:26	What? Who has a wheat grinder?

Hank Smith:	54:28	Jason, before we let you go, I've been impressed by something I want to ask you about it. Here you are. You've been trained as a family therapist. You've researched, you're a university professor, you're a father and a husband, and here is this section of the Doctrine & Covenants that's given in 1831 through a farmer that is about 2025. What do you see in these sections of the Doctrine & Covenants, is that impressive to you that you can take the years you've had of expertise, yet this section of the Doctrine & Covenants is impressive to someone with your background.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	55:10	It's one of the amazing things about scripture. When we approach scripture with an open mind and with a searching heart, the things that it yields, these principles, those are eternal. I mean, they might be applying in that instance to a bunch of 20 year olds in some canoes, but they are eternal in the sense that when I read it carefully, when I think about it and we have these conversations, we can say, wow, that still really holds up. That's one of the amazing things about scriptures. You can dismiss them and say, you know, they're just some old writings. Sometimes people do that, but if you give it some work and you give it some time, there are deep troves of treasure in there that help us in our day to day walk and in our relationships. That's one of the great things about scripture is we come away not just enlightened, but motivated. It's an emotional and a spiritual and a practical thing. I love that.
Hank Smith:	56:04	Yeah. When you think of Joseph Smith, there's wisdom in some of these sections that no matter how smart you might be, there's some wisdom that you don't get until you've been around for a while.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	56:17	Yeah. There's no way this, some farm guy sat down and wrote these out just for fun. That doesn't make sense.
Hank Smith:	56:23	And some of the little nuggets you've shown us today, I'm going, that's brilliant, Jason. Wouldn't you say it's so universal?
Dr. Jason Whiting:	56:32	Yeah, absolutely. A good principle is always going to be applicable. It'll be applicable in different ways in your life, whether you are 16 or 45, or whether you live in Boise or Osaka or Peru. That's universal stuff in different ways. In different times the principles of forgiveness. I can't think of anyone that that doesn't apply to. I can't imagine someone where they didn't need this principle. I think we all need it.
Hank Smith:	56:58	Yeah. As I was reading this with you, I thought, man, this is given by someone who understands humanity and understands the

human experience. In my opinion, I can't see a 25-year-old farmer who apparently acts like a dictator on the canoe is the one who understands the human condition the way this section does.

Dr. Jason Whiting:	57:21	Yeah, I totally agree.
John Bytheway:	57:23	I hope we get to see the video one day. I just want to see how Oliver was rowing.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	57:30	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	57:31	I hope they have a sense of humor about it now because boy, it sure gave us a gift, didn't it?
Hank Smith:	57:36	Yeah. He might be like, okay, let's watch some videos of your life now. Right? like, well, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. Oh, I love it. Jason, thanks for spending time with us today and offering us your expertise and your insights.
Dr. Jason Whiting:	57:50	Thanks for inviting me. It's been really a pleasure. It's been fun to be here.
Hank Smith:	57:53	Yeah. We feel like it's been a great blessing, and I think our listeners will feel the same way, right, John?
John Bytheway:	57:59	Absolutely. So blessed to be here. This discussion, I hope, will bless a lot of people.
Hank Smith:	58:05	Wherever you're listening from, from Payson, Utah to Osaka through Norway or Finland or down to Argentina, come on to YouTube. Let us know. It's fun to share with our guests where people are listening from. I've had people say, oh, I'm only in Springville. Well, hang on. I am right around that place. So what are you talking about? Only it's fun for us to share with our guests what you learned and where you're from. I mentioned this before. It can be very helpful for those of you on YouTube to not just watch the videos on YouTube, but actually subscribe to the channel. We're learning about this process, and apparently that's better for all of us. We don't know exactly how that works, but if you'll go ahead and do that, if you don't know how, if you were born in the 19 hundreds, maybe you ask one of your children or grandchildren to help you with that.
	58:54	With that, we want to thank Dr. Jason Whiting for being with us today. It's been an absolute treat. I have some apologies to make right after we're done recording here and some

forgiveness to extend. We want to thank our executive producer Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen. We always remember our founder, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We're going to continue in the Doctrine and Covenants 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. Follow him.co. That's Follow him.co. Of course, none of this could happen without our incredible production crew. David Perry, Lisa Spice, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra, Heather Barlow, Amelia Kabwika, Iride Gonzalez, and Annabelle Sorensen.

NOT UNCLE FRED!



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| Hank Smith: | 00:03 | Welcome to another followHIM Favorites. This is where John and I are sharing a single story to go with each week's lesson. John, Doctrine & Covenants 64 through 66, you've told me you have a story to share. I'm ready for it. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:16 | I do. It makes me laugh. I have kind of a connection to it too. Here we go. This is from Elder Michael J. Teh, T E H. In October, 2007, he said, when I was six years old, Uncle Fred was my worst nightmare. He was our neighbor. He was always drunk. One of his favorite pastimes was to throw rocks at our home. He's kind of an Ernest T. Bass character. Because my mother was a great cook, single adult members from our small branch frequented our home. One day when Uncle Fred was sober, these members befriended him and invited him into our house. This development terrified me. He was no longer just outside. He was inside our house. This happened a few more times until finally they convinced Uncle Fred to listen to the missionaries. He accepted the gospel and was baptized. He served a full-time mission, returned with honor, pursued further education, and was married in the temple. |
| | 01:12 | He's now a righteous husband, father, and priesthood leader. Watching Uncle Fred today, one would find it difficult to believe he once brought nightmares into the life of a 6-year-old boy. My mother was a great example of helping others by giving them a boost. She taught us many important lessons. The one lesson that has had the most lasting effect on my life was her desire to help anyone in need who visited our home. It bothered me to see so many of them leave with our food, our clothing, and even our money. Because I was young and we were poor. I did not like what I saw. How could she give it to others when our family did not even have enough? Was it wrong to attend to our needs first? Didn't we deserve a more comfortable life? For years, I struggled with these questions. Elder Teh says, much later in life, I finally realized what mother was teaching. |
| | 02:04 | Even as she struggled with the effects of a crippling disease, she could not stop giving to those in need. Wherefore, Elder Teh |

quotes scripture, be not weary in well-doing for ye are laying the foundation of a great work and out of small things proceedeth that which is great. Now, Hank, Elder Teh is from the Philippines. One time I was in the Nauvoo Visitor Center and I could hear some people around the corner speaking Tagalog, and I don't speak it very well, but I understand. I could hear it. I walked over there, I said, Hey, is that Tagalog guy here? And they're like, yeah. I started talking. I said, I heard there was a typhoon and everything, and I think Elder Teh talked about it. He goes, I am Elder Teh. You're like, oh, oh, sorry about that. He looked so young, so we had a wonderful conversation. Love the Philippines, but that just made that story even better for yeah, these people, that's our food. That's our clothing, that's our money.

Hank Smith:	03:09	Oh, wouldn't that be funny? There's his mom handing all this stuff and there's this little boy in the car. Is that, that's glaring at you. That was mine. That was mine.
John Bytheway:	03:18	It reminds me of my mom a little bit because she taught in a difficult part of Salt Lake City. She taught elementary school. She would make these cookies we're like, yay, we come walking up to take one. She'd like slap your hand. No, those are for my kids. The burnt misshapen ones over there. Those are for you guys.
Hank Smith:	03:36	You can have some of those. What was that uncle's name? Uncle.
John Bytheway:	03:40	Uncle Fred.
Hank Smith:	03:41	Uncle Fred
John Bytheway:	03:42	My worst nightmare.
Hank Smith:	03:43	Yeah. I wonder if there's anybody in the Nephite times who are like, Alma the younger. He was scary and now look at him. We're supposed to go and listen to him at church. Right.
John Bytheway:	03:54	Good point. Four sons of Mosiah. They ransacked the neighborhood.
Hank Smith:	03:59	Yeah. There's people with PTSD sitting in church. Cowering be not weary in well-doing. Do you remember we had a guest on Frantz Belot made this great statement. I get tired in his work, but I never get tired of his work.

John Bytheway:	04:15	He's a mission leader right now.
Hank Smith:	04:17	Yeah, right. He's probably a little tired in the work.
John Bytheway:	04:20	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	04:21	Out there in Orlando. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get any podcast. We're with Dr. Jason Whiting this week. He talks about forgiveness from his expertise as a marriage and family counselor. It is unbelievable. Then come back here next week we'll do another followHIM Favorite.