



"Where 'Much is Given Much is Required' "

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:

What does it mean to be called and clothed with a spiritual mantle in the service of others? Dr. Eva Witesman explores Doctrine and Covenants 81-83, highlighting priesthood responsibilities, the power of councils and the Law of Consecration.

Part 2:

Dr. Eva Witesman continues to discuss the Law of Consecration and the Lord's command to care for the poor and vulnerable.

Timecodes:

Part 1 -

- 00:00 - Part 1 - Dr. Eva Witesman
- 04:44 Dr. Eva Witesman's bio
- 05:53 *Come, Follow Me Manual*
- 07:09 Roles, callings, and spiritual growth
- 11:25 The reality of God's presence
- 13:04 Keys pass through ordinations
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- 1:15:36 Elder Maxwell "Unto the Rising Generation"
- 1:18:36 What priesthood responsibility does for men and women
- 1:21:36- End of Part I - Dr. Eva Witesman

Part 2 -

- 00:00 - Part 2 - Dr. Eva Witesman
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Biographical Information:



Eva M. Witesman, Ph.D. is Director of the Ballard Center for Social Impact in the BYU Marriott School of Business. An expert in strategic planning and evidence-based innovation, she employs a full range of quantitative and qualitative program evaluation tools, techniques and practices in the service of nonprofit, government, and prosocial for-profit organizations. She currently teaches statistical analysis, with an emphasis on program evaluation applications, in the BYU MPA program.

In her research, Dr. Witesman focuses her work on the public and nonprofit sectors, seeking to improve public outcomes through data-informed management. With her co-editor Curtis Child, she recently published an edited volume entitled "Reimagining Nonprofits: Sector Theory in the 21st Century" through Cambridge University Press.

Dr. Witesman is also a founder of the Corporate Social Strategy initiative at BYU, which focuses on the role of business and markets in elevating humanity. She teaches on this topic in the BYU MBA program.

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Hank Smith:	00:00:00	Coming up in this episode on followHIM.
Dr. Eva Witesman:	00:00:03	Suddenly, the floodgates opened for more personal revelation between my Father in heaven and me in understanding who I am, not just in the world, but in the eternities, what my relationship is to my Father in heaven. As a creator, as someone who was created in his image, it changed everything.
Hank Smith:	00:00:31	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 succors the weak, lifts up the hands which hang down and strengthens the feeble knees. John, section 81, verse five, one of my favorite verses, I really do think it describes you.
John Bytheway:	00:00:51	No, I, I aspire to all that, but sometimes I just sit here and talk about doing that.
Hank Smith:	00:00:57	Yeah, that's what... and we feel good. That's what we do, and then we go back to our lives. John, we are joined today by our friend, Dr. Eva Witesman. Eva, welcome back.
Dr. Eva Witesman:	00:01:08	Hi. It's great to be back. Thanks for having me.
Hank Smith:	00:01:12	Eva. We are lucky to have you. Thankful that you would accept our invitation. Now, John, Eva, we are in sections 81 through 83 today. John, when you think, okay, we've got Missouri and Ohio, they're both established, but not all that old. The church is only two years old at this point. What do you think's happening to these saints?
John Bytheway:	00:01:37	There's some temporal things they're trying to figure out. As we've talked about some higher expectations for what they would find when they went to Missouri. One of the sermons in a sentence is that verse that I think the lesson's named after it. Unto whom much is given, much is required. It's one of those

that's applicable today, applicable then. We get to see how that applied to what they were given right here in these sections.

- Hank Smith: 00:02:05 Right on. Eva, as you've prepared, where do you want to take us?
- Dr. Eva Witesman: 00:02:10 Well, I'm excited to talk a little bit about that evolving structure of the church, the role of covenants in both spiritual and temporal preparation, but I also want to talk about various contexts. I want to talk about not only the context there in the 19th century America, but I also want to talk about our context today, how we read this in a global church. Also, I want to share a little bit of my experience as a woman in the church, how I experience some of the conversations that are happening right now in these early revelations, primarily to male leaders.
- Hank Smith: 00:02:43 Wow, that's wonderful. I love that. To bring that perspective. It's important to remember how new all of this is. We've gone over this many times, John, with our perspective, looking back with 200 years of experience, some of the things they're doing, some of the things they're struggling with, we're wondering, what's the problem? This is going to work out great, but they don't, they don't know that. I can't imagine the stress of having these two church centers so far apart and not be able to communicate with one another, how the Lord is helping them mitigate that. John, Eva joined us last year. I remember reaching out to Eva because I heard her [BYU devotional](#). I listened to the devotional Women and Education, a Future Only God Could See for You. I was so excited about it that I first sent it to my daughter, Madelynn, and then I contacted Eva hoping she would think about joining us, and she was so gracious. She accepted the invitation. Then I think I gave her the hardest lesson maybe to teach in the Book of Mormon the topic that was so heavy. John, do you remember how well she did?
- John Bytheway: 00:03:52 Yes. It was those, ugh, those chapters in Alma. Perhaps one of the most horrific scenes where Alma and Amulek have to witness martyrdom of women and children. Yeah, I totally remember that. That's tough stuff.
- Hank Smith: 00:04:08 I can't tell you how many people that I know personally came up to me and said, Eva Witesman was unbelievable. She just brought those chapters to life for me. Eva, the expectations are high. I don't know what to tell you but...
- Dr. Eva Witesman: 00:04:24 Oh no pressure.

Hank Smith:	00:04:24	Yeah, you did that to yourself.
Dr. Eva Witesman:	00:04:26	Yeah. thanks for that.
Hank Smith:	00:04:28	Yeah,
Dr. Eva Witesman:	00:04:28	Looking forward to it
Hank Smith:	00:04:30	Now. We encourage everybody. We'll link it in our show notes. Go back and listen to Eva's episodes , on Alma 13 through 16, but John, there might be a few people who didn't hear Eva last year. What do we know about her? Is she still a member? Do we know that?
John Bytheway:	00:04:44	Yeah. In good standing. Okay. Eva Witesman , she's the director of the Ballard Center for Social Impact in the BYU Marriott School of Business. This is fun to read. She's an expert in strategic planning and evidence-based innovation. Her work focuses on public and nonprofit sectors seeking to improve public outcomes through data informed management. She and co-editor Curtis Child, they recently published an edited volume called Re-Imagining Nonprofits Sector Theory in the 21st century. That was through Cambridge University Press . We're excited to have her because she's going to bring a perspective to this that I think is perfect.
Hank Smith:	00:05:27	Eva, thanks again for coming. I'm really looking forward to walking through these sections with you. Compared to some of the other lessons we've had, there's not a lot of verses to cover. That might be kind of nice, although I have a feeling they expand.
Dr. Eva Witesman:	00:05:40	They really do. It's 37 total verses across the three chapters. Chapters 81 and 83 are very short with seven and six verses each, but there's a lot to talk about here.
Hank Smith:	00:05:53	Yeah. Let's start with the Come, Follow Me manual . Here's what it says. Like John mentioned, the lesson is entitled, Where Much Is Given, Much is Required. Here's the opening. In March, 1832, the Lord called Jesse Gause to be a counselor to Joseph Smith in the presidency of the high priesthood, now called the First Presidency. Section 81 is a revelation to Brother Gause about his new calling, but Jesse Gause did not serve faithfully, so Frederick G. Williams was called to replace him. Brother Williams' name replaced Brother Gause's name. In the revelation, that may seem like a minor detail, but it implies a significant truth. Most revelations in the Doctrine and

Covenants are addressed to specific people, but we can always seek ways to apply them to ourselves when we read the Lord's counsel to Frederick G. Williams to strengthen the feeble knees. We can think of people we might strengthen when we read the Lord's invitation to members of the United Firm to bind yourselves by this covenant. We can think of our own covenants and we can read his promise. I am bound when you do what I say as if he's speaking to us. We can do this because as the Lord declared, what I say unto one, I say unto all. Eva, let's begin. How do you want to start?

- Dr. Eva Witesman: 00:07:09 I think what you talked about where in section 81, this was originally given to [Jesse Gause](#). When we read it, it's direction to someone else. One of the things I love to think about is the role of priesthood callings and the way that we put on and take off the priesthood authority to carry out certain roles, and that's actually part of what we've seen here. The calling was held by Jesse Gause until it was no longer his to hold for reasons that really I dug into a little bit. There's not a ton of history there, and I know there's sort of this morbid curiosity about what happened there. We don't know a whole lot. We have some records of him interacting with his family. We know that he had come from a few different religious traditions before he joined the church. We know he didn't live a long life after this revelation was given, but we don't actually know more about him.
- 00:08:06 What we do know is that this calling was then passed on to Frederick Williams. One of the things that this makes me think about is the mantle of a calling, and we often talk about that when we refer to a bishop, but I've also experienced that in roles that I've had in the church where my setting apart in a role in the church gives me access to priesthood authority that is different from what I experienced in the rest of my life. That term mantle hearkens back to Elijah and Elijah, this beautiful story in Second Kings where Elijah is about to be carried off into heaven in a chariot of fire, which is like, may we all get carried off in a chariot of fire but he takes his mantle, he strikes the waters and they part for him and Elisha as they're walking, they're having this conversation in this transition of power, and then Elijah is carried off in this chariot of fire, but he leaves this mantle for Elisha.
- 00:09:08 Elisha takes this mantle. Am I going to have powers like the prophet Elijah had? How am I going to be able to carry out this role that he had, and he took that same mantle and he strikes the waters and sure enough they part. I think about this mantle of a counselor in the presidency being passed from one man to

another. I may not have parted any waters by striking them with my coat, but I have experienced miracles that were very clearly because of the priesthood authority that I was operating under when I had those callings. Particularly, there was a time that I was serving as young women's president in my ward. There was this depth of vision that I had about the young women who were within my stewardship. I could see them in ways that I realized after I was released from the calling, that gift was withdrawn from me. It was part of the mantle of that calling, and it was weird because for several weeks I felt like I was walking around and seeing everything in two dimensions because this depth of spiritual knowledge about the people in my care had been removed. It had been given to someone else so that she could carry out that calling. I'm grateful for the reality of the priesthood, the access that we have to it when we carry out these callings. That's the first thing that I think about.

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| John Bytheway: | 00:10:35 | I'm sure a lot of heads are nodding out there going, yeah, when I got released, it was like something went away inside. It's a bittersweet thing. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:10:47 | I think I've told this story before, but when I was serving as an Elders Quorum president, I was working with a member of the Quorum and was really making a lot of progress with him and some struggles he was having. Then I got released and he still wanted to chat and it didn't happen. |
| John Bytheway: | | Wasn't there. |
| Hank Smith: | | Yeah, it wasn't there. I told him, I said, I don't know what's going on. Think you better go talk to the Elders Quorum President, who isn't me. It was a fascinating moment. I had no expectation that that power wouldn't be there. We were still friends and we could still talk, but I wasn't receiving all this I felt like help after that release. |
| Dr. Eva Witesman: | 00:11:25 | All of these are little witnesses of the reality of the priesthood of God. I really want us to always come back to what that means because we are in a place now where in our wards and in our stakes, the priesthood is all around us. We experience it and it's power so regularly that sometimes you don't even notice the blessings. When we have those moments to say, oh, I can actually see and maybe this is the scientist in me. I can see the difference with it and without it. When I can draw that comparison, I think it's really useful to take that moment to witness that. In verse two, there's this recognition of Joseph Smith and the keys of the kingdom that he has. It says, unto |

whom I have given the keys of the kingdom, which belong always unto the presidency of the high priesthood.

00:12:12 Again, this isn't about Joseph Smith, the man. This is about his office and the priesthood and his calling. Just a reminder that when we talk about the keys of the kingdom referring back to Matthew 16:19, we're talking about the ability to bind on earth what is bound in heaven. It's all of this authority to exercise the priesthood of God and the power of God on Earth, which is not a small thing. Here we have the appointment of a counselor to him, and this is still kind of a new idea even much later under Brigham Young, we have records of meetings where people are talking about the counselors in the first presidency and how they're to be selected or appointed. There's still a lot of evolution in trying to figure out what is this order? How are these callings to be made? How is this authority to be distributed?

00:13:04 It's clear that the keys need to be passed through ordination. We know that much. We understand at this point about the sustaining that's necessary for those ordinations. It's all still super new. This is one of the things I love about the Doctrine and Covenants generally. I love getting to watch these records of the slow evolution of our knowledge. I like to watch revelation happening because it isn't this revelation of a perfectly clear plan that everyone knows how to follow right at the beginning. It's repetitive, it's patient. There are mistakes that are made. What I love about getting to witness that in the Doctrine and Covenants is that that's what it looks like in my own life. When I'm receiving revelation and I'm trying to follow God's will and I'm trying to find it, it's not usually revealed as a super clear plan point by point. Sometimes there are real moments of clarity, but most of the time it's me receiving revelation, acting on what I think I've received, receiving correction or reinforcement. I love that it's a pattern. I love that I can see God in my own life and in the Doctrine and Covenants.

Hank Smith: 00:14:17 You're exactly right. I can see the same thing in my own life. It's two steps forward, a step back, a step to the side, that didn't work. Okay, let's come back. Let's revisit that. It's not linear. It's sloppy. It's a little messy.

Dr. Eva Witesman: 00:14:34 It can be a little messy when verse three, again, we're talking about Joseph Smith and his role as prophet. Therefore verily, I acknowledge him and will bless him and also thee inasmuch as thou art faithful in counsel, in the office which I've appointed unto you, in prayer always, I love that, vocally and in thy heart, in public and in private, also in thy ministry and proclaiming the

gospel in the land of the living, and among thy brethren. I love that idea of faithful in a council that I love the pieces about being in prayer always vocally and in your heart, public and private, also in prayer in your ministry, in proclaiming the gospel. I think that's also beautiful, but I think one of the key pieces here is faithful in counsel thinking about what that means. This is not only a counselor now in this presidency to Joseph Smith, the prophet, but also the creation of the first presidency is the creation of a council.

00:15:30 We learned that from basically this point on that [councils](#) are an important part of how the church is governed. I don't know that we fully appreciate that this isn't just an organizational structure that gets the right people in the room to have a meeting. A council is different from a meeting. It serves a different role and it actually has a different structure and purpose. We have a lot of material now in our church handbook of instructions about councils, and I feel like this is one of those places where we are living what it looks like in the D&C when we're trying to figure out what is this structure. In 1979, there are some really cool church-wide revelations about the creation of area councils and some new structures there, but even as recently as the last few years, we've had changes in how we are to engage in councils in [Relief Society](#) and Elders Quorum.

00:16:28 This is a shift from prior approaches that you're going to go and you're going to receive gospel instructions. The way that we've often thought about those meetings when we gather as men or as women in Elders Quorum, Relief Society, we've been invited to sit in council with one another. If you look at the [handbook](#), it talks about spending the first several minutes after prayer in council with one another about the needs of the ward. That's in section four of the general handbook of the church. For anyone who's like super excited about checking out the handbook, I actually highly recommend it because there's a lot of material there about what that means and how to carry out a council. If you're in the electronic version of this, there's this little hyperlink to additional instruction about councils, but also about what that looks like in our lessons. I just want to read this part because I think it's really interesting.

00:17:27 Sunday Elders Quorum and Relief Society meetings should include, this is now in the part after the five minute council should include sufficient time for meaningful gospel instruction and discussion about recent General Conference messages, but an Elder's Quorum or Relief Society is not a class or a lesson. We have a work to do. We do more than just talk about that work. Rather, we sit in council and promote righteous action. Action

that will help us all progress along the covenant path. Well, that's from To Sit in Council, which is referenced in the general handbook. It's not the handbook itself. It's some additional instruction about that. What I get from that is that being faithful in council is not only instruction here to a counselor in the first presidency, but is actually part of this ongoing revelation about the nature of the church and our role in it. As members see that in particular in Relief Society and Elders Quorum, where not only are we supposed to sit in council formally for the first five minutes after the prayer, but then even during what we've traditionally thought of as the lesson we are to be sitting in council about how to take action based on what we're learning in those classes.

- John Bytheway: 00:18:47 That's wonderful. They used the exact phrase, we have a work to do. I think about Moroni God had a work for me to do. I think about the Aaronic priesthood quorum theme. I am a beloved son of God and he has a work for me to do. The work isn't hold meetings. The work of salvation, the way the new handbook articulates it, live, care, invite, unite, which is a great way to say it. Live the gospel of Jesus Christ. Care for those in need. Invite all to come to Christ and unite families for eternity. That's what we counsel about. How do we move the work of salvation forward? Thank you for pointing that out. That's really beautiful.
- Hank Smith: 00:19:27 John, do you remember when Sister Reyna Aburto was with us? I believe it was last Easter. She taught us about the councils she sat in as a member of the General Relief Society Presidency. It was spectacular to hear her stories. Do you remember she was sitting in a meeting. She kept apologizing to Elder Bednar for taking so much time. She said, I had a full page of notes and I just tried to do one or two things. I'm sorry. I'm sorry, and do you remember Elder Bednar stopped her and said, Sister Aburto, you don't need to apologize. I want to hear everything you have to say. Do you remember? She said, okay. She gave it all. It was wonderful to hear how those councils worked. I remember what she said. She said, you're all bringing a piece of the revelation.
- Dr. Eva Witesman: 00:20:17 Yeah. That's really interesting about the instructions that are given in section four because it actually talks about how the leader or the convener of the council should be doing a lot more listening than speaking, and that's actually their role is to facilitate the council rather than to lead the council. It also encourages us to get as much of the business and minutiae done outside of those council meetings. There's time and space for people to really lay out the experiences that they're having. It suggests that you specifically seek the counsel of people who

are maybe being a little bit more quiet, and it explicitly talks about seeking the views of women when women are sitting in council as well, like a ward council. If you think about a global context where women speaking, especially in formal settings isn't necessarily the cultural norm, it's really important that in our church that is to be invited.

00:21:13 If it's not coming out naturally, it's to be specifically invited and sought after. If you're sitting in council with people and someone has been awfully quiet, there are a lot of reasons for that. Part of it might be cultural. Part of it might also be that they're a little bit more introverted or maybe they're not a verbal processor. They like to think internally before they speak and be sure of what they're saying. One of the pieces of advice that I would give is to think about different ways of inviting that input that might better fit with the people and personalities that you're working with. Some of them may actually prefer to send you a text or an email with their thoughts. They may need more time to process than a quick, I'm going to lob you a question during the meeting, and we've got to make a decision by the end of this session. Creating the time and space to really allow people to sit in council and to be faithful in council is an important piece of advice.

Hank Smith: 00:22:07 I've talked to some people before who said, I gave up on the counseling spot. I was never heard. We all know that this president is going to just do what they want to do. Anyway, kind of the standard is we say what we want to do and then we just do what they want to do. Why counsel at all?

Dr. Eva Witesman: 00:22:24 Right. That's actually part of why this phrase faithful in council is so important because this isn't a revelation to the prophet Joseph Smith saying, Hey, listen to the counselor that I've given you. This is actually a revelation given to the person whose role is that of the counselor? What does it mean to be faithful in council? I suspect it means don't give up. I suspect it also means help nurture that leader in their role. If it means pulling out the handbook, if it means pulling up one of the many training materials that we have on leading through councils, that may be helpful. I understand that not everybody is ready to learn every lesson, right? when it's convenient for us to have them understand it, but I do think that's one of the roles that we have because each of us is going to have a turn to sit in some of those positions where we are the ones convening the meeting, making an ultimate call, reporting on what we've determined we're going to do in a larger council. That's the pattern. Typically, don't we want to have people who are faithful in council to help us to fulfill the measure of that calling.

Oftentimes, that calling feels so big and so heavy. It's not all on your shoulders. Not only do you have Jesus Christ in the spirit and the power and authority of the priesthood to help you carry out those roles, but you are also given by divine design, councils to be able to carry out that role.

John Bytheway: 00:23:52 Thank you, Eva, for pointing out faithful in council. One thing I just want to say is that when we have a youth council or ward council, or a Stake Youth Council, we are modeling that. We are showing our young people how it's supposed to work. Let's not sacrifice relationships for efficiency in our councils.

Hank Smith: 00:24:14 This can be a little bit scary for some leaders because you might show me something that I don't see. That's a good thing, but also it's hard to be shown things you don't see, especially about yourself. I've got to read this story. This talk is called Counseling with our councils from [Elder Ballard](#). Recently, a bishop who was concerned about reverence in his ward expressed his concern to the members of the Ward Council and asked for their suggestions. Hesitatingly, the primary president raised her hand. Well, she said, one person consistently does a lot of enthusiastic visiting in the chapel just before and after sacrament meeting, and it can be pretty distracting. The bishop had not noticed anyone being especially noisy in the chapel, but he said he would like to talk to this offending party. He asked the sister who it was. She took a deep breath, it's you Bishop. She said, I know you're just reaching out to people and we all appreciate your desire to greet everyone who comes to the meeting, but when others see you moving around the chapel talking to people during the prelude music, they figure it's okay for them to do the same thing. When the others in the ward council nodded in agreement. Can you imagine that moment if everyone's, yeah, we've all seen it except for you.

John Bytheway: 00:25:36 All in favor? Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:25:39 It said the bishop thanked her and asked for recommendations. The council decided that the bishopric, including the bishop, should be in their places on the stand five minutes before sacrament meeting to set an example of reverence. During a follow-up discussion, the council members indicated unanimously that the simple plan had worked. That reverence in sacrament meeting had improved decidedly. Eva, how do I get to the point where I invite my counselors if I'm a president, to show me things maybe even about me that I'm not seeing? Because that can be pretty vulnerable.

Dr. Eva Witesman:	00:26:10	It can be very vulnerable. I don't think the question is like, how do you get them to say it? Because I think if you invite it and they know you're sincere, they're ready to share with you things that you may not know about yourself. So I think the question is really how do you prepare yourself for that feedback with the humility that that requires, the good humor that that requires. That's probably some preparation that each of us should consider.
Hank Smith:	00:26:37	Yeah. Even in marriage with children. Yeah.
Dr. Eva Witesman:	00:26:40	Yeah. Those can be scary moments. It's also interesting to think about these councils where you've got all these people from a diversity of experiences and backgrounds who are hopefully if they're being faithful in council speaking their minds, we also know that we're to avoid contention. What if we disagree? Shouldn't we all do whatever the leader says so that we don't invite contention? Faithful in council does mean sometimes disagreements with the ultimate goal of finding God's will. Finding that means then being able to align with God's will and then you become unanimous. Each of us is going to come to that with different pieces. As you were talking about from Sister Aburto, different pieces of that revelation. We're going to need everybody's voice to be able to find what God's true will is for us.
Hank Smith:	00:27:31	Hmm. I remember Sister Aburto adding, when you have an idea, don't become emotionally attached to your idea. You put it out on the table. It's no longer yours. I can see that happening, especially with me. This is my idea. It's really good, and then the council doesn't take it. I am now offended. I'm bothered that that wasn't the way the Lord wanted it to go. Maybe I should take it up with him.
Dr. Eva Witesman:	00:27:57	I think that's fantastic advice because a lot of the challenges come when you're like, my way is the one true way, or my way is better, or my way is a reflection of me as a human being or my value. If we can separate from that, then I'm hurt if you don't take my advice, but if we can sort of separate ourselves from that, really be engaged in the work, really be engaged in trying to find the will of God. Councils need to use the tools that we have available to us to do that as well. Are we fasting together? Are we earnestly praying not just to open the meeting, but praying to seek the guidance and the will of God? Is it clear what we're counseling about in our meetings? Sometimes these are sort of a rundown of the ward calendar for the week, and that can be done in an email. What we need each other for is to talk about and counsel about the wellbeing of the

people in our wards. When you are focused on that, when you're focused on the work, the personal ideas are easier to separate from ourself because what we care about is whether we're getting to the wellbeing of the people in our care.

John Bytheway: 00:29:02 Yeah, wonderful. When I was a bishop, we called it virtual ward council, things that were calendaring. We were constantly in a group text, texting each other. Our goal was so that when we actually are sitting in council together, we can talk about, as Eva has put it, the work, we can talk about people, how they're doing.

Dr. Eva Witesman: 00:29:26 It's important for us to remember that these are councils, not meetings. Sometimes when we think in terms of meetings, we think about the efficiency of those meetings, and that means something. It means getting through a lot of material very quickly. Councils have a different standard. I don't think councils are about efficiency in that sense. I think councils are about gaining the richness of the experience that's in the room and the richness of the revelation that's in the room as each individual person is bringing their insight and their revelation that they've received through the Spirit as an offering, the focus is on the people and the work, so an efficient meeting is different from an effective council. We sit in meetings all the time. It's how businesses run, how nonprofits run, how governments run. Efficiency is quick decision making, but what we're looking for is wholly decision making. It's different.

Hank Smith: 00:30:23 Yeah. I just had never even noticed that something that's been there the entire time. Ward council versus sacrament meeting, two different things. What should we do next Eva?

Dr. Eva Witesman: 00:30:35 I lead the Ballard Center for Social impact. Our catch phrase is, do good better. When I see in verse four, in doing these things that will do the greatest good unto thy fellow beings, my ears perk up because that's what we are all about. We want to serve. We want to do the best possible thing. When I even think about my service in government, nonprofit organizations, what we're trying to do is this. It's the greatest good for our fellow beings. That's the goal of all of that. When the Lord says, in doing these things, thou wilt do the greatest good unto thy fellow beings. Again, I pay attention and then also will promote the glory of him who is our Lord. Again, verse four is like, pay attention. What is going on here? We're about to get a formula for doing the greatest good. That leads us right into verse five.

00:31:28 Wherefore, be faithful. Stand in the office which I have appointed unto you, succor the weak. Lift up the hands which

hang down and strengthen the feeble knees. This is a description of what the greatest good is. I want to draw that out for a minute because we're going to talk in a minute about the United Firm. We're going to talk about some of the business holdings of the church at the time, some of the operational things and temporal things that the church is carrying out. We have a lot of institutions in the world right now. We have governments, we have businesses. We have a lot of different goals that those things have. Maybe you're creating a peaceful citizenry that can operate effectively. Governments help with that. Maybe you are in a business. Ostensibly, a business is intended to create profit. We generate wealth. We distribute wealth through these things, but those things are not the greatest good.

00:32:29 That's not what our goal is here. That's not what this institution is built for. This institution is built to succor the weak, to lift up the hands which hang down and strengthen the feeble knees. In verse four when it talks about doing the greatest good, and then it talks about promoting the glory of him. Who is your God? Let's remember that in Moses 1:39. We learn this is my work and my glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. What is that glory again? It's the wellbeing of each of us, our families, our neighbors, and everyone in our communities, so I want to make sure that we keep that front and center even as we move into the United Firm, which we'll quickly learn, even though it's addressing some of the temporal holdings of the church, we'll quickly learn that it's all about this.

00:33:18 It's all about serving one another. I want to step back for a minute, and I want to think about the cultural context that this is being spoken in. If you were to walk around early 19th century America and say, who's job is it to succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down and strengthen the feeble knees? You might have people who say, oh, it's church's responsibility, but if you drill down more specifically, where you would land is that this was traditionally the work of women. It was women who were creating what they called benevolent societies where they would get together and they would do service. Even in a church context. You would hear a sermon on Sunday about how we need to be serving people and caring for the poor and the people who were typically executing on that call were the women. In many ways, this is revolutionary in that it is inviting men into this work of care, this work of taking care of people who are vulnerable or weak or ill. It might include children. That's really interesting and it's not a one-off. We're going to see this over and over and over again that the work of the priesthood is both the work of salvation and this work of

care that is worth noting because it is so different from most default systems in the world, and the fact that it is centered on not just the work of care, but the role of men in the work of care is unquestionably revolutionary at this point.

- Hank Smith: 00:35:05 That's not something you would know without the context.
- Dr. Eva Witesman: 00:35:08 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:35:08 Mm-hmm.
- Dr. Eva Witesman: 00:35:09 This was women's work, but the way that it's talked about here is actually focused specifically on priesthood duties, priesthood, responsibilities, priesthood callings. We often talk about the work of salvation as the work of the priesthood. That is obviously deeply true. There have been in recent years as more information has come out about the holdings of the church. Speaking of the United Firm, which we're going to talk about in section 82, but the holdings of the church and the wealth of the church. Some of that information has been made more public and there's been a little bit of public discussion about that. One of the critiques or questions that people often have is, why does the church have all of this wealth? Why are they not doing more humanitarian work with it. When they have all this money, they could be doing so much more good in the world if they would just spend all of that wealth.
- 00:36:01 I love [Sharon Eubank's](#) response to that. She, of course, is the director of humanitarian services for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She said this in several venues, but one venue where it's beautifully recorded is a devotional that she gave at BYU Idaho and she says, I'm occasionally asked, why doesn't the church spend more money on humanitarian work? Why doesn't it stop building expensive temples and focus its resources on relieving the poor? She says, this is a legitimate question for the Church of Jesus Christ. Like she doesn't criticize the question. She's like, that is a fair question. Here I am the leader of our humanitarian efforts. Let's talk about this for a minute. She goes on to say, but is it money that solves society's ills? The world has poured \$2 trillion into addressing chronic issues in Africa. Why isn't the situation better?
- 00:36:52 Because money isn't really the issue. Lasting progress comes through trusted relationships, infrastructure, reducing corruption and the ability of people to work together. Money doesn't necessarily create those things. They must be developed alongside the resources and frankly, it is a much harder work. I will never discount the one thing this church does

that lifts entire communities in rapid development, it invites men and women of all social classes and backgrounds to enter sacred buildings and make the most binding and important promises of their mortal lives. In those buildings, they promise not to steal or lie. They promise to be faithful to their spouse and children. They vow they will seek the interest of their neighbors and be peacemakers and become devoted to the idea that we are all one family, all valued and alike unto God. If those promises made in holy temples are kept, the greatest charitable development on the planet is for people to bind themselves to their God and mean it. So thank goodness the church builds 335 temples and counting. It is the greatest poverty alleviation system in the world. The most important thing you can do as a humanitarian is to keep your covenants with God.

00:38:11 It's the same work, and this is what we see over and over and over again when we are engaging in our efforts at the Ballard Center to help lift people out of poverty. It's not something that you go in and you pay to do. In most cases, poverty is actually a breakdown of society, social networks and people that you can rely on. It's the absence of family that you can turn to in a hard time and the absence of a community that you can count on to step in when your family can't. That's what poverty is. It's not just about a dollar amount or a wage. It's more about the ability to access a community. When we think about the covenants that we ultimately learn about in the temple, we think about the ways not only that we give of our wealth and our substance, but we think about the ways that we create covenant communities. That's actually what is going to carry out all of the humanitarian aims that we have. So these aren't two separate works. It's not the temporal work of helping the poor and those in need and then the spiritual work of salvation. Those are one and the same.

Hank Smith: 00:39:25 I noticed in Isaiah, this is second Nephi 12 or Isaiah 2 talking about the temple. We would say, Isaiah says, come to the mountain of the Lord's house. We will learn of his ways. We will walk in his path, and then look at the analogy he makes. He says, those who go to the temple beat their swords into plow shares and they're spears into pruning hooks. I think of plows and pruning that's feeding people. I'm growing food. I go in with a sword. I go in with a weapon of destruction and I come out with a plow, a weapon of production. Same with a spear and a pruning hook. I wonder if Isaiah is saying the same thing that Sister Eubank said and that you're saying, Eva is a temple creates, hopefully someone who comes out and wants to bless lives, wants to lift people out of poverty, so in that way, a

temple is a good investment into feeding because people were supposed to come out ready to feed others.

- Dr. Eva Witesman: 00:40:30 It's all centered in ministering. We get these ideas about serving in far-flung places because we see images of the great suffering that's happening around the world. That's true. There is great suffering in the world and it needs work to alleviate. We encourage our students to actually start in their own network to identify the people that they know and love and care about who are struggling with something to minister to them through service, to learn from them what the challenges are that they're experiencing. That's actually where we start. I mean, I can talk about some of the work that we're doing, testing water samples in Bolivia or testing out different programs with people who are experiencing homelessness in our own neighborhood of Provo, but really the revolutionary ideas are that best way to achieve change in the world and to help alleviate suffering is to strengthen our own networks and to use the skills and tools of social impact to improve not only that individual's life, but the systems and programs that are affecting them and other people like them.
- 00:41:42 So we work out from the one. If everybody did that, if everyone really understood the power of ministering to alleviate world hunger and poverty and war, we would not be donating huge amounts of money to organizations that we're hoping will do something in a place that we're not connected with. What we would do is we would make sure that we are connected with people, that we are loving people, that we are in the work with them, allowing them to tell us what they need and build these solutions around them. I can talk about cool projects that our students are involved with and big organizations. We have them, all the big names. We're engaged with those, but that's not the core of what we teach. The core of what we teach is that you solve these problems by beginning with ministering.
- Hank Smith: 00:42:31 Right around you.
- John Bytheway: I was thinking, Alma the Elder at the Waters of Mormon, how much of being baptized was actually about others. Will you mourn with those that mourn? Will you comfort those who stand in need of comfort? It was you're becoming God's people, but you're becoming in a group where you're going to look around, see how you can help or ministering, as you called it.
- Hank Smith: 00:42:53 Wow, Eva, you think like CS Lewis. The Screwtape Letters both of you know is where a devil is actually writing about how to ruin a human being. Take them away from God. Before you

quote the Screwtape Letters, you really have to understand the the context of it or you're...

- John Bytheway: 00:43:11 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:43:13 This is a devil saying to another devil, here's how you're going to take down this guy. Direct the malice in him to his immediate neighbors who he meets every day. Thrust his benevolence out to remote circumference people he does not know. The malice becomes real and the benevolence largely imaginary.
- Dr. Eva Witesman: 00:43:34 Exactly. One of the programs that we run at the [Ballard Center](#) is what we call the Ballard Labs, and this is where we test all of the models that we're teaching to make sure that they actually work. They can really achieve the kind of change that we talk about in uplifting people and serving them in their lives. We had initially assigned the students the issue of hunger. Let's go work on this problem. Let's focus on our new labs are all going to focus on hunger. The students had started in what's a pretty traditional approach. They had started to make relationships with organizations that were engaged in hunger with populations that were experiencing hunger, building that collaboration. Well, we quickly decided that before we got too far with that approach, that what we'd really done was we'd started in the wrong place because our own model teaches us that we should start with one person and it should be someone that is in our own network.
- 00:44:36 We came to the labs and we said, scratch the plan that we had started with because you guys aren't proximate enough to this problem. Most of you students don't know someone who's struggling with hunger. You're connecting in the traditional way, but we're trying to test our own models. Forget the hunger thing for just a minute. In these labs, in this context, what we want you to do for this one week is we want you to go out into your own network and we want you to find someone who is struggling and we want you to identify what their challenge is, what their problem is, and we want you to use all the tools that we've taught you about mapping systems, understanding the logic of a problem, but we want you to apply it to these problems that are within your own network. What was so beautiful was that we had students come back.
- 00:45:23 Some of the students who were the most ardent critics of this pivot came back and would tell stories about people in their own networks, describe the challenges that these people had. Often it was like, I talk to this friend regularly and part of the reason I talk to them regularly is that they often need to process

this problem that they're experiencing and this hard time that they're having, but it never occurred to me to get into that space with them and help them work through that. Using all these tools that I've learned about how to solve social problems, the students who were the greatest critics of this approach of like zooming into your own network, focusing on a much more ministering approach, discovered that they could actually see whole big social problems from the vantage point of this one person that they loved because they loved this person.

00:46:20 They saw the entire problem from a different perspective. One that allowed them not to just come in, say, here's how you should solve your problem, but to co-create with that person because they have that relationship of care and that relationship of love, where now there's agency involved and the person is helping to solve their own problem, but with the perspective of there are other people who are experiencing this problem as well. If we can solve this problem for you in your life, we can actually scale this in our community and help so many other people. I will tell you, it is the only way it will work. It's the only way it will work is if we have individuals in communities working together to solve the problems that they're witnessing in their own communities and then a global network of people doing that kind of ministering is how we solve global problems.

Hank Smith: 00:47:15 Eva, I've been touched by this. This is the work of the Lord. Succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down and strengthen the feeble knees. If you think of the ministry of President Monson, it's constant ministering one at a time. Eva, if you don't mind, I want to illustrate what you've just taught with a story. This is [Mervin Arnold](#), April 2004 General Conference. He tells this story, brother Jose De Souza Marques was the type of leader who truly understood the principle taught by the Savior, and if any man among you be strong in the Spirit, let him take him that is weak, that he may be edified in all meekness, that he may become strong also. That's section 84, coming up soon. As a member of the branch presidency in Fortaleza, Brazil, Brother Marques with other priesthood leaders developed a plan to reactivate those who were less active in his branch.

00:48:16 One of those less active was a young man by the name of Fernando Araujo. Recently I spoke to Fernando and he told me of his experience. This is now coming from Fernando's point of view. I became involved in surfing competitions on Sunday mornings and stopped going to my church meetings. One

Sunday morning, Brother Marques knocked on my door and asked my non-member mother if he could talk to me. When she told me I was sleeping, he asked permission to wake me. He said to me, Fernando, you are late for church, not listening to my excuses. He took me to church. The next Sunday, the same thing happened, so on the third Sunday I decided to leave early to avoid him. As I opened the gate, I found him sitting on his car reading the scriptures. When he saw me, he said, good, you are up early today.

00:49:02 We will go find another young man. I appealed to my agency, but he said, we can talk about that later. After eight Sundays, I could not get rid of him, so I decided to sleep at a friend's house. I was at the beach the next morning when I saw a man dressed in a suit and tie walking toward me. When I saw that it was Brother Marques, I ran into the water. All of a sudden I felt someone's hand on my shoulder. It was Brother Marques in water up to his chest. He's got a shirt and tie on. He took me by the hand and said, you are late. Let's go. When I argued that I didn't have any clothes to wear, he replied, they are in the car. That day as we walked out of the ocean, I was touched by Brother Marques sincere love and worry for me.

00:49:51 He truly understood the Savior's words. I will seek that which is lost and bring again that which was driven away. Will bind up that which is broken and strengthen that which is sick. Brother Marques didn't just give me a ride to church. The Quorum made sure I remained active. They planned activities that made me feel needed and wanted and I received a calling and the Quorum members became my friends. Okay, this is back to Elder Arnold. Following his reactivation, Brother Araujo went on a full-time mission, served as a bishop, stake president, mission president and regional representative. Wow. His widowed mother, three sisters and several cousins have also entered the waters of baptism. I don't think we are condoning the idea of hunting down people, but let the Spirit guide you as you minister one by one.

Dr. Eva Witesman: 00:50:43 You can definitely feel his love in that story.

Hank Smith: 00:50:46 Yeah. Eva, we've had you for a while now and we said these are short sections and we haven't, we haven't lived up to that. What do we do next? That was verse five.

Dr. Eva Witesman: 00:50:57 One thing before we leave section 81, and I want to draw our attention to verse seven. This is a setting apart. Someone's receiving a calling and they're being set apart. This blessing ends with these are the words of Alpha and Omega. That to me is a

real connection with other times when the Lord invokes his role as the author and finisher of the work, that's not a normal thing that I hear when I've just been set apart. The context that that brings in, if you look at all the other places where he talks about himself as Alpha and Omega, this is commissioning prophets. This is establishing Zion. This is warning of judgment. This is offering salvation. Those are the kinds of contexts when he invokes that particular set of names, that invites us to look back at those seven verses one more time and say, what are the big concepts that the Lord is actually sharing with us here? Given that he's invoking this name, he's revealed the purpose of this calling. He's invited his people to be faithful in council. He's also invited us to engage in the work of lifting others who are sorrowing and in pain. That is his work. Before we leave that, I want to take that moment to recognize who it is that's speaking that even though it's just a few short verses, that we don't take it too lightly.

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| Hank Smith: | 00:52:23 | Wow. The author and finisher, I like that. I noticed Eva in section 82, we've moved locations. |
| Dr. Eva Witesman: | 00:52:34 | We have. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:52:35 | Joseph Smith has made a long trip. |
| Dr. Eva Witesman: | 00:52:38 | Yes, and the Saints are really spread across two areas now, and this is where we start to hear the metaphor of the stakes of Zion. You've sort of got Zion in Jackson County, now you've got Kirtland, Ohio, which is starting to be recognized as one of the stakes of Zion. We talk about stakes all the time. Now this seems totally normal, but again, the church is brand new. This is a reference to the idea of Zion being a tent and these stakes being these outer ends as the tent expands. Also giving some structure to that tent. We're across these different geographic locations. Also, the church at this point has several different holdings. They have mercantile operations, publishing operations. Increasingly, they're receiving donations to care for the poor. They have land purchases and storehouses. There's all kinds of stuff at this point that the church owns. |
| | 00:53:37 | In section 82, we're going to see the United Firm take shape. That term firm has real economic connotations, sort of legalistic the idea that we're creating essentially a business to house all of these temporal goods that the church owns. But in section 104, we're going to see that that term united firm is replaced with united order. What's being revealed here isn't a mundane set of business instructions and legal instructions. What's being revealed here is actually information about the order of God, |

the way that we want our temporal affairs to be managed in Zion. This is among the beginnings of this. It's not the very beginnings of it, but it's very early in this process.

- John Bytheway: 00:54:29 I'm really glad we're going to talk about this. What does a church do with its property? Those are really good questions. So the United Firm, now we've got stuff, what do we do with our stuff?
- Hank Smith: 00:54:41 Yeah. We can't forget, John and Eva between section 81 and 82, it's a mere couple of millimeters for us, but it's like a six week journey to get to Missouri. No telephone lines, no texting. You lose the traveling between these sections sometimes because you can jump to the next one.
- Dr. Eva Witesman: 00:55:03 Yeah. It's a whole epic journey that these families are embroiled in as they try to both create and receive revelation and create the church and its structure, but they're also constantly under attack. They're being instructed in really specific ways. Buy this, don't buy that, transfer this property here. But then in other ways it's unclear what's the purpose of all of this Heavenly Father, it's clear you've directed us to acquire these things. Why? What do we do with it? This chapter is really cyclical in that it begins and ends in kind of the same place and it's not really where you expect it to be, especially if we're going to be talking about the property of the church. It begins and ends with the ideas of forgiveness and judgment in particular, forgiveness and judgment as it relates to one another. Not God's judgment of us, but rather the way that we handle one another's shortcomings and our own shortcomings. That's an interesting structural thing. The other thing is that this section is so full of internal textual references. They're almost like footnotes. I'm not talking about the footnotes that are added through the indexing process. A little A, B, C, I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about words or phrases that are connections to other scriptures that deepen our understanding of what is being referenced in these verses. What we'll see is that this constantly leads us back to the teachings of Jesus Christ in the New Testament, especially his parables about stewardship.
- Hank Smith: 00:56:45 Okay, I'm excited. I want to see this.
- Dr. Eva Witesman: 00:56:49 Alright. We begin in verse one. Verily, verily, I say unto you, my servants, that inasmuch as you have forgiven one another your trespasses, even so I the Lord forgive you. This obviously reiterates Christ's precious teachings about being forgiven of our sins and that that is something that he has made possible

for us. But it also refers back to be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven. The, I forgive you, you are forgiven, which reminds us of the story that's told in Matthew, Mark, and Luke about the person who couldn't walk. He is brought to Jesus with the intent of healing his body. What Jesus does instead is forgive him of his sins. Then everybody's like, oh, this is blasphemus. It's the Sabbath. Who are you to forgive sins? So many ways that Christ is ruffling feathers by declaring this forgiveness. I the Lord forgive you.

00:57:49 That's what's being said here as well, but also there's this added piece, inasmuch as you have forgiven one another your trespasses. This isn't necessarily explicit here, but this, and a couple of verses down, it reminds me also of the woman taken in adultery who is brought in judgment by her community basically, and they're all surrounding her and they want to know what Jesus is going to do. We have evidence that she has sinned. What are you going to do? They're all pointing fingers at her and of course he says, essentially, which of you is free of sin? I'll let you engage the punishment, which for that sin was being stoned. You can throw the first stone if you're free of sin. And of course everyone recognizes that they're not perfect and they leave and he looks at her and he says, where are your accusers? Go thy way and sin no more.

00:58:44 And we're going to see that phrase come up in a couple of verses as well. Go thy way and sin no more. But this idea of the relationship between forgiveness of others and letting go of judgment, recognizing that judgment is not ours, it is the Lord's is an important groundwork that he's setting right from verse one. Inasmuch as you have forgiven one another your trespasses even so I the Lord forgive you. I want to remind us that forgiveness isn't about absolving the other person. It doesn't mean that the harm hasn't occurred and it doesn't mean that it's okay that we were hurt, but it's about us cleansing our own vessel through forgiveness. We're going to talk a little bit about consecration and ultimately that is an important part of the temple and there's this moment in the temple when we have the opportunity to pray for others whose names have been listed on the prayer rolls.

00:59:43 You can go on the church website and you can learn about the prayer rolls of the church where people can list and submit names. You can do it electronically. You can also do it inside the temple. You write down people's names that you're concerned about or that you want prayed for. On the church website, it actually says, as members participate in temple ordinances, they come together in a prayer circle and unite their faith in

behalf of those individuals. There's this moment in the temple when you're preparing to participate in one of these prayer circles to pray for these people in need who've been listed on the roles of the church, often by their family members or their friends or their community members. There's this moment where you really have to check in with yourself and say, am I bearing any grudges against anyone else who might be praying here in this circle with me?

01:00:33 Is my heart clear? I actually have started to think about this for myself. Am I prayer circle clear? Where there's something between me and another person that either I need to talk with them and resolve it, or I need to find forgiveness in my heart. Usually it's both. It always involves some level of forgiveness and letting go. That is what's being invited here at the beginning of this set of cyclical verses that as we'll see actually centers on the idea of consecration, which is one of the highest covenants that we make in the temple. It's so interesting that we start there with cleaning our own vessel through forgiveness. That's the first thing is forgiveness of others.

Hank Smith: 01:01:19 Eva, I love prayer circle clear, John, you might have to help me here, but I think that comes almost straight out of the Sermon on the Mount where the Lord says, if you come up to the temple and you're going to give an offering, but there you remember that you have some bad feelings between you and someone. He said, leave that. Go get reconciled. Yeah, go reconcile with thy brother and then come back and offer thy gift. We have it from Jesus and from Eva.

John Bytheway: 01:01:49 Two witnesses.

Hank Smith: 01:01:50 Two witnesses of being prayer circle clear. I love it.

Dr. Eva Witesman: 01:01:56 It does have echoes too of D&C 64 I, the Lord will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men. We usually sort of stop there, but it goes on to say ye ought to say in your hearts, I love this because it's instructions like this is what you do. Instead, you ought to say in your hearts, let God judge between me and thee and reward thee according to thy deeds. Like judgment is not mine, it is the Lord's. I will let that go and it's so interesting that that comes first. That's verse one and then verse two says, nevertheless, there are those among you who have sinned exceedingly yea even all of you have sinned, but verily I say unto you, beware from henceforth and refrain from sin lest sore judgments fall upon your heads. First, you're forgiving, that's part of the cleansing, but then also obviously you need to also focus on yourself and being free of

sin. Work that out with the Lord and make sure that you're clean because forgiveness itself is a necessary cleansing, just like being free of sin and repenting is a necessary cleansing, so we're cleansing ourselves as we prepare for these precursors to the law of consecration in terms of the temple and the covenants that we make there.

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| Hank Smith: | 01:03:11 | That verse made me smile. There are some of you who have sinned. Actually all of you. |
| Dr. Eva Witesman: | 01:03:17 | Actually, it's all of you, and isn't that just true? I mean, it's just true. |
| John Bytheway: | 01:03:22 | I wonder if when they were listening to this perhaps being read, you get to that point, yea even all of you. Is there a list coming? Is this going to get specific? |
| Hank Smith: | 01:03:35 | Eva, do we go to verse three? Now, this one I remember from seminary. |
| Dr. Eva Witesman: | 01:03:40 | There are these amazing one-liners in here, for of him unto whom much is given, much is required, and he who sins against the greater light shall receive the greater condemnation. That's one of those one-liners in here that I think people sort of reduce the section down to of like, all right, where much is given, much is required, but there's also, that's one of those little footnotes. It's not actually a footnote, but it's a reference to another phrase from Luke, which says, this is Luke 12 verse 48. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required. There are a couple of stories in Luke 12 and the immediate context for unto whomsoever much is given of him shall be much required is basically the story about a servant who knew that he was supposed to be taking care of things, didn't because he wasn't sure when his Lord was going to come back, but he was like partying instead, but he knew that he was supposed to be taking care of things and being a good steward because he knew basically he received a larger punishment. |
| | 01:04:47 | The story also talks about how if the servant had not known that that was his responsibility, he wouldn't have received such a bad punishment. That's all fine and good, but if you move earlier into Luke 12, there's this other story about stewardship that leads directly into that. It's a story about a person who is working their fields and their vineyards, and they have a really great harvest, so much abundance that it doesn't fit in the barn. He thinks to himself, well, what am I going to do with all these amazing goods? Now remember, the context for section 82 is we have all these goods. What are we supposed to do with |

them? We're now connected with Jesus Christ's parable, and he's talking about this man who has more goods than he knows what to do with, and he says, oh, I know what I'll do. I'll tear down my barn and I'll build a bigger one.

01:05:42 Then I can basically party. Eat, drink and be merry with all of this abundance that I have created for myself. Then in the parable, the Lord's like, haha, jokes on you because he dies that night. It's over. You couldn't take any of that with him, right? We talk about you can't take it with you. Well, this is one of those circumstances, but in the end, what we learn from Jesus Christ talking about this parable is that he says essentially that you should have used all of these goods to bless the lives of others because you couldn't take it with you, and the idea that you should just store up more goods for yourself is not how to be a good steward of the things that you've been blessed with. The more commandments and covenants that you have available to you, the more accountable you are to those covenants before God, but if you expand out a little bit into this parable that Jesus Christ tells, that's also referenced in that same set of stories. Then you also get this idea that when you're given much in terms of wealth or abundance, as was the steward, that is also required of you, so there's a double meaning there that becomes clear if you look at the direct teachings of Jesus Christ as relates to that particular line, the stories and parables that surround it.

Hank Smith: 01:07:16 That guy talks to his soul. I say to my soul,

Dr. Eva Witesman: 01:07:20 That's my favorite.

Hank Smith: 01:07:20 Soul.

Dr. Eva Witesman: Soul.

Hank Smith: Let's party, right?

Dr. Eva Witesman: 01:07:25 I totally want to do that all the time.

Hank Smith: 01:07:27 Yeah, we do the same thing. When I've hit that story with my students, I'll say, how many of you have, you know, we have too many shoes? You couldn't bring them all with you to BYU. They'll raise their hand. If your problem is you have so much stuff that you need bigger places, then the stories for you, this Luke chapter 12 story.

Dr. Eva Witesman: 01:07:49 Exactly right. Exactly right.

Hank Smith:	01:07:51	I need bigger garages. That's my biggest problem.
Dr. Eva Witesman:	01:07:54	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	01:07:55	Yeah.
Dr. Eva Witesman:	01:07:56	Again, this double meaning is going to carry through some of these other scriptures, both in the D&C and the parables that they refer back to. The double meaning again, being we have spiritual covenants and obligations, but we also have temporal blessings and stewardships. We've got to carry double meaning with us as we continue through these scriptures. We're going to move into verse four. Ye call upon my name for revelations and I give them unto you, and inasmuch as you keep not my sayings, which I give unto you, you become transgressors and justice and judgment of the penalty, which is affixed unto my law. This is referring back to what we just talked about in verse three where it's like you have asked me for these new commandments, these new covenants, you want this revelation, you've asked for it, but these commandments and covenants come with obligations.
	01:08:47	If you don't live up to those obligations, then you're actually under a greater condemnation. I don't know a single person who doesn't have big questions about the gospel or how it works or why things are one way instead of another way, or whether this is a temporary way that the church is going to operate or a forever way that the church is going to operate. There are all kinds of questions that we have and often we're asking for more revelation. There's an invitation here in verse four to really recognize the revelations that we've already received to treasure them, to understand them and live them fully before we are ready to receive additional revelations.
Hank Smith:	01:09:36	I've sometimes wondered when I've asked the Lord a question, if he's saying, you sure you want the answer to this? Because you call upon my name for revelation, I will give it to you, but if you don't follow through, there's penalties affixed to the law. I wonder sometimes if the Lord doesn't hold back revelation not because he doesn't want to give it, but he knows I'm not going to act.
Dr. Eva Witesman:	01:09:59	I also think in some cases the structures that support those covenants and commandments need to be strong enough to maintain them. We talked a little bit about ministering. We talked a little bit about councils. These are things that I wouldn't say that everyone that I know, including myself, is fully living up to those obligations. Am I really ready for the laws that are built

on top of those things? The council and the ministering is a structure on which additional revelation would be built. If I'm not ready to hold up that my end of counseling together or my end of serving others or ministering to others, then higher laws are sort of counting on that almost as a prerequisite for me to be able to receive and endure and carry out any higher laws. Really, we've got to look inward at how diligent we are at maintaining what we have and caring for what we have in terms of the commandments and covenants that have already been revealed. That doesn't mean that I can't be curious or hunger for more things of God. Of course, that's a righteous thing to do, to want more revelation, more understanding, but sometimes the way to get there is actually to focus on what's been laid before us, to be diligent stewards of those covenants and commandments.

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| Hank Smith: | 01:11:21 | Yeah. How often do we see that in scripture? The Lord says, ah, you did really well with what I gave you. I will make thee ruler over many things. John, doesn't he say the same thing to Moroni where he said, I wrote down the vision of the brother of Jared. I was going to send it to you, but the Lord said, no. Let's see what they do with what they have, and then we will give them more. That seems to come up over and over in scripture, Eva, doesn't it? |
| Dr. Eva Witesman: | 01:11:47 | Yeah, it really does. In some of the specific parables that we're going to see referenced as we continue through section 82. |
| Hank Smith: | 01:11:55 | Like the parable of the talents, he's, let's see how you did. I'll give you more if you did well with this gift you already were given. |
| Dr. Eva Witesman: | 01:12:04 | Carol Stevens , who was at the time, the first counselor in the Relief Society presidency. She gave a talk in General Conference in October of 2013, and the title of the talk was, Do We Know What We Have? And at the time, there were a lot of questions, especially in the US around the role of women in the church, access to the priesthood and what that meant, how it was designed, what it looked like, and this is before some of the clarifications about women accessing the authority of the priesthood through callings that they held, that was clarified by President Oaks, some of the other things that have been refined, so there was this real hunger at that point, about 10, 11 years ago. She says, sons of God, do you know who you are? Do you know what you have? Are you worthy to exercise the priesthood and receive the power and blessings of the priesthood? |

01:13:00 Daughters of God. Do we know who we are? Do we know what we have? Are we worthy to receive the power and blessings of the priesthood? She's really inviting that moment of reflection to say, am I stewarding the knowledge and the access that I already have as I ask for, and I'm curious about and hungry for more? Several years later, [President Nelson](#) in April of 2018 talked about priesthood blessings, in particular, the power that has been granted to the men who hold the priesthood to be giving blessings, and he says, some of our brethren act like they did not understand what the priesthood is and what it enables them to do. We know of brethren who sets sisters apart as primary, young women or relief society leaders and teachers, but fail to bless them, to bless them with the power to fulfill their callings. They give only admonitions and instructions, and then he says, priesthood power has been restored to this earth. Stake presidents and bishops, please ensure that every member of the quorums within your stewardship understands how to give a priesthood blessing, including the personal worthiness and spiritual preparation required to call fully upon the power of God. This is now outside of that context of women and their access to priesthood power and authority. This is now also directly to the men saying, do you know what you have and are you using this power that you've been granted?

Hank Smith: 01:14:38 I know John's not. I am. John just struggles, so.

Dr. Eva Witesman: 01:14:42 It's a real problem. We can all see it.

John Bytheway: 01:14:46 I saw a video once of some young people who had been asked, what happened when you were set apart for your calling? Not all of them, but a few of them were like, I don't really, wait, did that happen? Is that a thing?

Dr. Eva Witesman: 01:15:02 Isn't it so funny how just because we do it often, frequently that we sort of forget the gravity, the miraculous nature of this laying on of hands when we're talking about section 81, we talked about the mantle of a calling and the power and authority that's coming with that. Just because it happens frequently doesn't mean that it's not magnificent and glorious taking a moment to really live fully within the blessings that we have, so we're not living beneath our privileges in that way.

John Bytheway: 01:15:36 Particularly with our young people. [Elder Neal A. Maxwell](#) gave a talk called Unto the Rising Generation way back in 1985. He said, if our youth are too underwhelmed by God's work, they're more likely to be overwhelmed by the world. And then he referred specifically to the young men. He said, functionally, how many deacons and teachers quorum presidencies consist

of merely calling on someone to offer a prayer or pass the sacrament? Brethren, these really are special spirits. They can do things of significance if given a chance.

Hank Smith: 01:16:10

I love it. That would apply to,

John Bytheway:

All of us.

Hank Smith:

Yeah, to those bishoprics that are listening,

John Bytheway:

We love you.

Hank Smith:

We love you. We know. We know you're doing everything you can. I remember talking to a bishop once, he said they want us to spend more time with the youth, but everything in the handbook says that needs to go to a member of the bishopric. Every adult thing needs to go to a member of the bishopric. Alright, Eva, what should we do? What should we do next?

Dr. Eva Witesman: 01:16:36

The next verses are a little yikes, so five and six. Therefore, what I say unto one, I say unto all, watch for the adversary spreadeth his dominions and darkness reigneth and the anger of God kindleth against the inhabitants of the earth. So like then continuing verse six, and I want to emphasize this a little bit. None doeth good, for all have gone out of the way. Remember earlier we were going to learn how to do the greatest good. Now it's this condemnation that none doeth good. This really draws out the idea that the earthly frameworks are and were broken. They're broken systems. This system that's being revealed, even though it's being revealed in fits and starts, the early members of the church were trying to figure out how to make sense of the revelation, how to live up to these privileges that were being granted to them.

01:17:30

This restoration is necessary because all of the earthly frameworks are broken. None of them are doing the kind of good that the Lord wants for his people. I would actually get even more personal with that. The earthly frameworks have been, for me, one of the biggest challenges that I have to disentangle when I am perceiving the works of God. Things like internalized misogyny or patriarchy, these worldly systems of power, these worldly economic systems are not what God has in mind for blessing his children. Sometimes we take these other systems, these other programs, whether it's politics, whether it's economics, whether it's other social systems, and we interpret what the Lord is saying using these lenses that we've inherited from the world, and I think we need to be really

careful because none doeth good for all have gone out of the way, and it sort of has echoes of that.

01:18:37 Choose none of them. None of these systems are the ideal consecrated system that the Lord is trying so hard to reveal to his church. He's still trying to reveal that to this day to us and help us grow into this system that he's trying to teach us, and these other systems are going to shape the way that we perceive the word of God and the practices that we're engaged in. Pulling out those other frameworks, setting them aside and being able to really take God at his word, really understand what he's trying to teach us is important. For me in particular, I've had so many questions throughout my life about my role in the priesthood of God. I remember being a 12-year-old sitting in the pews and watching the boys that I'd grown up with passing the sacrament, being ordained to these offices in the priesthood.

01:19:36 I remember the moment that I realized that that was not something that I was going to do. It was this really fascinating, as a 12-year-old, this fascinating sinking feeling of being excluded and being left out and there was a hurt there. That was the seed of so many questions that I carried into my adult life, and when I talk about these other frameworks, one of them was this idea that if men have it, it must be better. That infected the way that I saw the priesthood for a very, very long time. It wasn't until I stepped back and I said, wait a minute, what if I didn't start with the presumption that anything male is superior? What if I set that worldly framework aside for a minute and what if I looked at what I actually have and what I have access to, what it is to be a daughter of God? Suddenly, the floodgates opened for more personal revelation between my father in heaven and me in understanding who I am, not just in the world, but in the eternities, what my relationship is to my father in heaven as a creator, as someone who was created in his image, it changed everything. If I could give one gift, it would be the ability to sort of drop scales from our eyes, these worldly frameworks that taint the way that we see and hear the word of God.

Hank Smith: 01:21:12 Beautiful way to take that verse. Beautifully said.

John Bytheway: 01:21:20 Please join us for part two of this podcast.



- John Bytheway: 00:00 Part two coming up with Dr. Eva Witesman.
- Hank Smith: 00:05 Eva, I want to ask you a follow up question to what you just said because I think it is crucial rather than just assuming that young women are fine. As a young woman, you're seeing all these boys who you grew up with and you're having this internal conflict, probably not sharing it with everyone around you. What would you say to a young women's leader, young men's leader, bishop, anyone? How can we help? I wouldn't say ignore it. What did Sister Eubank say about the temple question? That's a fair question. That's a fair question for a young woman to be asking.
- Eva Witesman: 00:41 Yeah. The advice that I would give goes back to the idea of holding meetings and activities versus counseling together. One of the roles that our youth leadership can fill is really as counseling together. Not to just teach them how to run an activity so that later they're good at running ward activities, not just to lead a meeting, so later they're good at leading meetings, but rather invite them into council. We're instructed that in those councils what we're supposed to be talking about is the wellbeing of the people within our stewardship. We can actually talk about each person or we can talk about even the generation or the group, the cohort, say, how are people? What are the questions that they have? Rather than trying to efficiently get through those conversations, feel like we've done a good job of sort of modeling a meeting, counseling with the young people because they know if they don't themselves have the questions, they know people who do.
- 01:41 They can help provide information and clarity from their perspective to the leaders, whether that's young women's presidencies or bishops, to help them counsel with and guide and create experiences that make it safe for people to talk about their questions so that they can work through it together. I would say that the answers continuously come back to both ministering and counseling together. I think those are really where we want to focus. The measure of a young women's or

young men's program is not how fun the activity was. It's the extent to which we are creating ministering relationships where people can trust one another as they guide one another on this path that Jesus Christ has laid out for us.

- Hank Smith: 02:32 Yeah, because here's this young woman hurting. We're about strengthening the feeble knees. Would it have been helpful if someone would have helped you as a young woman understand that partaking of the sacrament? Would that have been helpful, or do you think that would've been more of a side step to say it's not about who's blessing or passing, it's actually the Lord is mostly concerned with those who are taking the sacrament. Would that have been helpful or more of a you're just trying to sidestep the issue?
- Eva Witesman: 03:07 I got there eventually, but it was decades later as I was praying, trying to understand my role in the priesthood, and it actually came through the experience of having callings, the miraculous access to priesthood power that I had. There was one time I was serving in a stake primary presidency. I was in my early twenties, mid-twenties probably. It was my turn to give a message to a primary that we were visiting. I'd never been in that ward before. We were there sitting up front symbolically and then kind of at the end, it was my turn to deliver a five minute message. The Lord had invited me. The story makes so much more sense, if you understand, I am terrible at remembering names like bad, like really bad. Mnemonics don't help. Like nothing helps me. That's important background information.
- Hank Smith: 04:01 Well, this is John and I'm Hank.
- Eva Witesman: 04:03 Yeah, thank you. It's nice to meet you both. I stood up and the Lord told me that what he needed me to do in this message was to call out each of the children in this room, in this primary by name. I did not have a roll in front of me. The only thing I had was that we had sat through music time. The music leader at some point in the course of leading music time had named each of the children in the room. I want to say there were probably about 15 to 20 of them.
- John Bytheway: 04:36 Oh, oh.
- Eva Witesman: 04:38 I stand up and I said, the Lord knows each of you. He knows you by name. He knows you by name. And then I started naming each of the children. I named every single one of them until there was a girl right in the middle of the primary, and in that moment I couldn't remember her name. I was like, oh, no. Can

you imagine being the one person when the message is the Lord knows you by name? I skipped over her, named all the other children, and then her name came to me and I went back to her named her by name. I was able to name every single one of those children by name. I am telling you right now, that was a blessing that came with the calling both the instruction that this is what the children needed to hear. I thought about why didn't I just get all of them perfectly, and then I was like, well, what if they thought I'd just memorized them in order?

05:32 Now I demonstrated that no, it was actually right that they were known. There's these miracles that I got to participate in. As I experienced the church, as I experienced the power and authority of the priesthood in my own life, I started to understand, oh, I have access to this too, and that's where then the power of the covenants and my access through those covenants started to really make sense, and it was about that same time that this was more commonly spoken about in General Conference by many different leaders. It was so empowering at that point, but when I was a 12-year-old, I didn't have that experience to draw on yet at that point, I wasn't ready for it. All I needed was for it to be safe for me to have those questions, for it to be okay that I had those questions, to continue on, on the path to have faith.

06:27 I'm grateful that I had that. I'm grateful that in my family I had the freedom to talk about how I really was, what I was really thinking and feeling and my questions. It allowed me to continue to be curious and to invite that process of revelation, just like we're seeing in the D&C where it's like it doesn't come all at once. You don't get it all at once, and I would say now, as a leader of the rising generation, I work mostly with students at BYU between the ages of say, 18 and 25. One of the saddest parables in all of scripture is the story of the 10 virgins because I relate to it so deeply that I have this light in this lamp. All I want is to share that oil so that others can have it too. I want to give them my oil.

07:16 I want to say I had the same questions. I had the same struggles, I had the same pain. Look at my light now. Look, I know it's true. It's real. It's tangible. God loves you. That is always the answer. God loves you, but I can't give them all of those experiences. They have to go to them that sell and get it for themselves. I was really grateful when President Johnson talked about how you may not be able to give them your oil, but you can share your light. That's what I try to do, but it's been a journey. It hasn't always been easy. I'm grateful for the gift of faith that has allowed me to struggle and wrestle with these questions, but

also to experience the revelation and the power as it comes. I wish that for everyone who has questions, whatever those questions are, they may not be the same ones I had, but I hope that people can stay on the path, trust long enough that they receive that revelation for themselves.

Hank Smith: 08:17

Hmm, thanks.

Eva Witesman: 08:19

The other piece is that we're not going to be able to create any job that's a parallel to the priesthood of God. I want us to recognize and honor the gift that that is for men. One of the beautiful things that [President Nelson](#) has done that just was so touching is he talks about his holy envy of motherhood. He's done it in a couple of different venues where he talks about, I became a surgeon because I couldn't become a mother, but he's not just talking about people who've had children in this life. He's talking about the eternal role and destiny of God's daughters, and he specifically says that switching the narrative that way was one of the more helpful moments for me because it was like, I'm not going to try to make it okay that this is different. I'm going to honor the difference, the beauty of the difference.

09:14

We've got to lean into that in a way that doesn't diminish it. Now, my adult self is thrilled about that. In fact, my 8-year-old son was having trouble wanting to go to church. He's like, why would I? It's so boring. Like I don't want to be there. It's not fun. I don't like to sing. Sacrament meeting in particular, not awesome. We talk about the sacrament and the beauty of it, but at one point I said, son, I want you to go to church and I want you to look at the men and I want you to look at what they're being taught and what kind of men they're being taught to be. Then I want you to look at what the other messages of the world are teaching men about who they are and what they should be. This is why I want you coming to church.

10:00

I want you accessing the sacrament, but I also want you to see what the priesthood of God is transforming these men into when the rest of the world is teaching them to take and exploit. We are teaching them to give and to serve. I am no longer sad about the role of men in the priesthood. They aren't the priesthood. I have access to priesthood authority and power, but it is transformative in a way that remedies the brokenness of the world's masculine systems. I'm grateful for it, and it wouldn't be the same in our systems now, the way that the worldly systems are built. The priesthood would not have that same effect if it were for both men and women. It is a

corrective, in my view. It is a corrective to these other worldly ways. I'm grateful for it.

John Bytheway: 11:00 Beautiful. Thank you so much for saying that. If our young men are not learning what it means to be a man from their church leaders, where are they going to go? The options are terrible.

Eva Witesman: 11:15 Let's move forward into verse seven. Doctrinally, we're still talking about forgiveness and sin, but there's a new idea here that I think is really important. Now, verily, I say unto you, I the Lord will not lay any sin to your charge. Go your ways and sin no more. There's that reference to the woman taken in adultery, but unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return saith the Lord your God. Well now not only are we invited to forgive others in order to receive our own forgiveness, but now not only do we need to remain pure, but if we now sin, all of the mistakes that have been forgiven are sort of laid back to our charge, which invites constant repentance. Is there any question about why we need the sacrament every week where we have this ability to receive that forgiveness, to engage in repentance where we re-baptize? There are only a few places where we get that sort of cleansing. We have baptism, we have the temple and we have the sacrament, but this idea that by remaining pure we're also keeping all of our prior sins at bay is a new concept.

John Bytheway: 12:35 Yeah. I love what you said, Eva, about inviting constant repentance. That is the way you should take this because I think Satan wants people to take this verse and beat themselves up with it. I can repent, but I know I'm going to make a mistake somewhere. This is hopeless because then everything comes back. I'm a hopeless case. Taking it that way is inviting constant repentance. The consistency of the sacrament table's going to be there every week for all of us and in fact, Hank, I wrote down Mosiah 26:30 next to there. Yea as often as my people repent, will I forgive them their trespasses against me. We see in the Doctrine and Covenants this sort of thing over and over again, these folks are doing the best they can and they have to be forgiven practically every section something else happens. I love that the sacrament table is not on wheels that we wheel out for Easter and Christmas, but that it's bolted to the floor. Every week. You're all going to need this. Come back again. You're invited to come back again to the Lord's table. Let's use this verse just to say, this invites constant repentance. What a blessing that that repentance is available.

Hank Smith: 13:50 This verse has been misused. I will try to keep my emotions in check here, but when you try to shame a youth into obedience

by telling them that if you sin again, it's like you never repented. It's like you never did any of that work. You will lay a foundation of discouragement that they might never recover from if they believe that that is true. John, as you just said, that is not true. Eva, you talked about how a lot of these are highlighting little footnotes to some of Jesus's parables. This is another one, the Lord says, but unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return, it's like you said, inviting constant repentance. It's a parable that not a lot of people understand. When I teach this at BYU, so many of my students raise their hand and say, can you explain this? I have no idea what it means.

14:45

The Lord says, and this is Matthew 12:43. There's an unclean spirit going out of a man and the unclean spirit walks through dry places seeking rest and findeth none. It's this idea that I've kicked this sin out of my life. It's now wandering around somewhere out there and it doesn't have anyone to go to. It says, the sin says verse 44, I will return to the house from whence I came out. He comes to it back to me and he finds it empty, swept and garnished. He's like, look, there's room for me back into my old house. He enters into that house and takes a bunch of other evil spirits with him. Now, they dwell therein and the state of the man is worse than he was in the beginning. In my mind, I'll let you two comment on this. When the Lord says this in verse seven, but unto the soul who sins shall the former sins return, he's saying, Hey, if you don't fill your life with other things and you return to sins, well you're going to get a whole bunch back. The parable would be different if the unclean spirit, if the sin goes back to the house and finds it full, it is full of doing so much good. I would love for our youth to say, I don't have time to sin. I am too exhausted doing good. I've got so much good that I'm doing. I'm begging anyone out there who is listening, please do not use this verse as a sledgehammer, especially with youth who live in a world that as adults we do not comprehend.

Eva Witesman:

16:25

You have to think about Jesus Christ and his entire role. If us messing up once after we'd repented was it, there's no way that this plan even makes any sense. It undercuts and diminishes the entire purpose of the Atonement and the beauty and generosity of Christ's act. Certainly, we want to continuously cleanse ourselves of sin. I mean, you're sort of either progressing in one direction or you're progressing in the other direction, so you want to keep walking forward, but sometimes it starts and stops and I love the idea of the parable of the slope. As long as the overall trajectory is headed in the right direction, like sometimes you're going to make mistakes. We have to remember that Jesus Christ's role was to make it possible for us

to return to God, to coinherit with him. Even though we are not perfect and we're not going to be perfect, we just have to be penitent. We just have to be repenting. We have to be accessing him. We have to be accessing the Atonement. We have to be seeking to improve ourselves. To take this one verse out of context, to think that it means that you get to repent once and that's it is false.

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| Hank Smith: | 17:48 | Eva, as you've taught us here, I'm almost rereading this verse to say, go your way sin no more, but unto that soul who stops repenting, sins return, don't stop repenting. Repentance is a good word. It's a hopeful word. |
| Eva Witesman: | 18:05 | It's a beautiful word. |
| Hank Smith: | 18:06 | The first principle of the gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Second is improve because of your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Keep improving because we don't want sins to return to us. Eva, thanks for letting us stop there in verse seven, letting John and I give an emotional plea, but we got to keep going. We have more to do and not a lot of time to do it. |
| Eva Witesman: | 18:32 | Yeah, so what's exciting about verse eight is that we get wind that later in this section we're going to be receiving a new commandment, which is really exciting. Again, I say unto you, I give unto you a new commandment that you may understand my will concerning you, and in verse nine, or in other words, I give unto you directions how you may act before me that it may turn to you for your salvation. I just want to pause and appreciate that definition of commandment. Verse nine is defining what a commandment is. It's directions about how we may act before God that it may turn to us for salvation. Like what a great definition. I just think that's really cool. |
| Hank Smith: | 19:15 | That's fantastic. |
| Eva Witesman: | 19:17 | Then verse 10, I the Lord am bound when ye do what I say, but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise. This is another one of those section 82 one-liners that we say all the time, but we don't necessarily remember when was that provided. We are about to receive not just a commandment, but a covenant, which is verse 10 is now taking the commandment to a covenant because there's a two-sided promise. There's our behavior by commandment, but then also the Lord providing that benefit back to us and the benefit is our salvation, the opportunity to inherit in kingdoms. Verse 11, there's just one thing that I want to talk about here. It basically lists a bunch of people who are all participating in different roles, but what I |

think is so interesting is the order in which they're listed. Therefore, verily, I say to you that it is expedient for my servants, Edward Partridge and Newel K. Whitney, Sidney Gilbert and Sidney Rigdon, and my servant Joseph Smith and John Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery and W.W. Phelps and Martin Harris to be bound together.

20:26 We're going to talk more about that, but first, like it took me a hot minute looking at this, trying to figure out what on earth order are these men listed? It's not by order of ordination. We don't have the prophet first or last. It almost just sort of looks like a hodgepodge of names. There are a couple things I want to draw out here. Number one is this is again, bringing back that idea of eschewing hierarchy and inviting counsel. If this were a hierarchical ordering, it would be ordered hierarchically in order of ordination or office or certainly the prophet would either be listed first or last as places of honor and sort of a listing, and that's not the case. It's obviously not alphabetical. If you list out in order these men and what they're doing at the time, you actually begin with what could be thought of as sort of an ecclesiastical side.

21:25 You have Edward Partridge, who's the bishop in Zion. You have Newel K. Whitney, who's the bishop in Ohio. You have Sidney Gilbert, Sidney Rigdon first counselor in the first presidency, and then you have the prophet and the whole thing sort of folds in on itself around the prophet Joseph Smith. He's actually at the center of this list. Then you move into John Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery and W.W. Phelps, Martin Harris, where you have some of the more temporal things. You've got John Whitmer, who's a historian and recorder, Oliver Cowdery, who's in church publishing, W.W. Phelps at the time, a printer and publisher. Of course, we know and love him as an author of some of our favorite hymns, and then Martin Harris, who's a benefactor. He provides a lot of financial support for the church. What you actually see is this mirror around Joseph Smith where you have the temporal side and you have the spiritual side. The way that we would sort of talk about it today, the ecclesiastical channels and the more temporal channels, yet we're going to see this pattern play out throughout section 82. It's not actually two different works. It's the same work. I thought that was a fun thing to look at, like why is this list in this order? I don't know that there's some big capital M meaning to it, but I do think it's interesting that it's challenging normal ways that you might list a group of people and order them.

Hank Smith: 22:55 I have a friend, Jonathan Oliver, who owns a very big company in Provo. If you go on the website and you look at about us, he's

just there with everybody else in order. I think they're in alphabetical order. I like that you pointed that out to us. Joseph doesn't list himself first or list himself last or saying, look, here's the order which we came into the church, Joseph, Oliver. I never would've noticed that had you not pointed that out.

Eva Witesman:

23:21

Then they're invited to be bound together by a bond and covenant that cannot be broken by transgression, except that judgment should immediately follow in their several stewardship. Now, we're re-invoking what we started with, which is judgment, which is the Lord's. We need to stay pure. We need to not be broken by transgression, which I think means both, not be broken by our own sin, but also not be broken by the transgression of others, by sinning ourselves, by judging them or questioning them. Transgression can break us because we're participating in it or because we're focusing on the transgression of others. They have this opportunity to create this bond and covenant. We're still eager to find out like, what is the new commandment? What is this new covenant that's coming? It's still coming. We're not there yet. This word stewardship is invoked in verse 11. Stewardship is a beautiful concept.

24:19

There's a lot that's taught by the Savior about stewardship and how to maintain those. We'll talk more about those as we continue through the scriptures, but I just want to take a moment and just appreciate [President Johnson's](#) teachings on stewardship. She gave a worldwide fireside for young adults where she talked a lot about stewardship and the different kinds of stewardship that we have. She talked about how stewardship is the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care. She also talks about how our role is to understand our stewardships as we prepare for the second coming of Jesus Christ. Caring for our stewardships well is part of how we can recognize our standing before God and connect with him and his work. She connected stewardship with stewardship of our neighbor and of the earth, caring for the environment. She talked about communities, helping them to become more sustainable as communities, caring for people in need, people who are hungry, and she also talks about stewardship in terms of other resources, which is how we generally have interpreted it in the context of these verses of the financial stewardships and real property that the church owned at this time.

25:39

In verse 12, we're reminded what we're doing all of this for to manage the affairs of the poor and all things pertaining to the bishopric, both in the land of Zion and the land of Kirtland.

Again, managing the affairs of the poor is a key piece of this. Why do we have all of these goods? Why do we have these full storehouses? It's to serve others. Verse 13, for I've consecrated the land of Kirtland in mine own due time for the benefit of the saints of the most high and for a stake unto Zion and 14, for Zion must increase in beauty and in holiness. Her borders must be enlarged. Her stakes must be strengthened. We're growing the church. Part of why we're growing the church is to bring about access to forgiveness, the beauty of these ordinances and of salvation, but also to care for those who are in need, and that's really as we're talking about the United Firm and we're talking about the stuff and the money, the wealth that the church has accumulated at this point and received the purpose of it is really to care for those who are in need.

26:46 Finally, in verses 17 through 19, we actually receive what the new commandment is that we've been promised. We've been told that it's coming. We have all kinds of lead up to why it's necessary, what the purpose of this is going to be. Finally, in verses 17 through 19, we receive it. The reason we know that this is where the commandment is, is because we get imperative language. It's kind of like a thou shalt is an imperative. You will do this. Verse 17 says, and you are to, this is now the imperative language that tells us this is a commandment. You are to be equal, or in other words, you are to have equal claims on the properties for the benefit of managing the concerns of your stewardships. Every man according to his wants and needs inasmuch as his wants are just all this for the benefit of the church of the living God, that every man may improve upon his talent, that every man may gain other talents.

27:44 Yea, even a hundred fold, to be cast into the Lord's storehouse to become the common property of the whole church. Every man seeking the interest of his neighbor and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God. So it's kind of a lot, but if you're going to shorten it down to like a thou shalt, it's essentially thou shalt have equal claim on this property, and then there's an expansion of what that means. What are you using it for? You're making sure that everyone's basic temporal needs are cared for, and you are going to use this to bless the lives of as many people as you can, everyone who's in the church, and that in doing that, as you are putting things into the storehouse, it's actually going to be multiplied. Every man may improve upon his talent. Talent here has a double meaning like it does when Jesus Christ gives the parable of the talents.

	28:41	Even the early Christians would interpret this in two different ways. The talent is either a unit of money, which is actually like a lot of money, decades of wages, a lot of money, or it can mean spiritual gifts. There's a very intentional reference to that parable of the talents here, but there's also this other little reference in here where it talks about even a hundred fold. Nobody in the parable of the talents gets a hundred fold return on their investment. At most, they're doubling their investment, but here we're promised a hundred fold increase. There's a fun little rabbit hole that you can go down. If you look at all the times that a hundred fold increase shows up in the scriptures you'll see that the pattern is that it's referring to essentially an eternal reward or an eternal increase. It's unlimited. It's essentially infinite.
John Bytheway:	29:41	Interesting.
Eva Witesman:	29:42	It's like the parable of the talents, but with a twist. One of the fun ironies is that the parable of the talents itself comes with a twist. The parable of the talents or a similar parable anyway, is told twice in the scriptures. In the King James version, I think they use the word pounds. In others, it's minas, I think, and then the parable of the talents. They're similar but slightly different stories. Here's where that twist is. In general, we feel like we have a pretty good sense of what's going on in these stories. You have stewards who are given by the person who actually owns the wealth, some amount of money. The amount in Luke 19 is much smaller. It's about three months wages, whereas the talents in Matthew 25 are about 20 years worth of wages, but in both cases, you've got multiple servants who are stewards of this temporal investment in Matthew 25, the parable of the talents.
	30:41	You have one servant that's given five, one that's given two and one that's given one. The two servants with five and two go and invest the money and they double their investment and return that back to the Lord whose money it is. In the Luke 19 version where we're talking about pounds, there are actually 10 servants who get one pound each. Everybody gets the same amount, but there are only three outcomes that are described. One gets a tenfold increase, a really amazing return. Then you have another like in the prior story that doesn't get quite as good a return, but still they invested. They risked and they got a return. Then there's one servant who basically buried their pound, basically just returned what was given to them originally. Here's where the twist comes in. There was a political situation at the time where Herod the Great had a son named Archelaus.

- 31:38 Archelaus traveled to Rome because he wanted to receive the title of King after his father Herod had died. There was a delegation of Jews that opposed him and they appealed to Caesar and said don't make him our king. We do not want this guy to be our king. They essentially came up with like a different title for him. He ended up not being the king. This is happening in the ether. This is in the political ether of these stories. Well, the Luke 19 version of this story starts out, a certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, but his citizens hated him and sent a message after him saying, we will not have this man to reign over us. There are some scholars who in studying these parables say there may actually be a hidden coded message about the systems that were in place at the time and the politics of the time.
- 32:33 Those interpretations actually give almost an opposite interpretation than the one that we typically use. Normally, we think the servants are rewarded with more responsibility over whether it's cities or whether they get more wealth or praise because they've invested and received a return on their investment. There's some interpretations that actually suggest that the purpose of the story was to say that the person who did the right thing was the person who didn't participate in corrupt systems that exploited people in order to get gain. What's so weird is now we have almost opposite interpretations, rotations, but what I would suggest is that we actually think about both of them in parallel. If you think about taking spiritual gifts, trying to magnify those and invest those and get a return, that is consistent with everything that Jesus ever taught, but if you think about financial returns and you think about it in the context of Christ's ministry, the purpose of wealth is not to get returns.
- 33:45 It's about having the opportunity to bless others. There are applications in both the literal money sense where I would tend toward the interpretation that says, actually, we don't participate in corrupt systems. We need to be honest with our dealings. We need to make sure that we're fair, but then also the idea that the ways that we invest spiritually will be added upon us in righteousness. Those two interpretations, if you think of both of them, they can actually exist in parallel. One that's sort of literal and one that's metaphorical. They can exist in that tension. As we come back up on some other scriptures later on, we'll see that that tension continues as we see additional parables that are referred to in these scriptures.

Hank Smith:	34:32	Hmm, I like what you did there. We often want to know which way is correct in interpreting a scripture, and I think the Lord would say what you said, well, all of them.
Eva Witesman:	34:43	Take the right lesson.
Hank Smith:	34:45	Yeah. The scripture, it seems to the Lord is very fluid. He uses pieces of it and shapes it, changes it according to who he's talking to. I love all the New Testament you're drawing out of section 82. I'd never seen it before.
Eva Witesman:	35:01	There's so much there. One of the neat things, again about section 82 is that it's structured in sort of a cycle, a circle. In verse 23, we come back full circle to where we started. Remember, we started with forgiveness and making sure that we weren't judging one another in verse 23, that's reiterated. We have all these instructions. We have this new commandment. Now, verse 23, leave judgment alone with me for it is mine. I will repay. Then peace be with you. My blessings continue with you, which is kind of an echo of peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Again, this voice of Jesus Christ you can recognize here in section 82, but returning back to this concept of judgment and purity, which follows up in verse 24. For even yet, the kingdom is yours and shall be forever if you fall not from your steadfastness, even so, amen.
	35:59	We begin with forgiveness, with not judging, remaining pure ourselves, and then we receive the commandment in the middle and then we come back to that and what I think is important about that is that I think it sets up a pattern because in the middle we're referring back to and forward to the law of consecration. It's being revealed slowly in pieces. This is a piece of that. What do we do with this wealth that we have in our storehouse and how do we be good stewards? If you think about consecration as sort of this pinnacle covenant that we're engaging with this pinnacle way of existing in community with one another, I think it's really interesting how it's connected and here bookended with the idea of remaining pure and repenting, also forgiving one another and leaving judgment with the Lord. That's a pattern for us that we see in the temple as well. I invite us to just ponder that as we move on from section 82.
Hank Smith:	36:57	That was fantastic. I never realized Section 82 was asking us, how well do you know your New Testament? That's really fun.
Eva Witesman:	37:06	Yeah, the teachings of Jesus Christ are constantly referenced throughout that.

Hank Smith:	37:10	Alright, we have another section. What do you want to look at in 83?
Eva Witesman:	37:14	Section 83 is fairly brief and relatively straightforward. There are a couple things to draw out in terms of our global church and also the context at the time that's related to this, but in section 83, the Lord lays out the laws of the church concerning women and children, specifically those who've lost their husbands or fathers. The reason that this is so relevant, we're going to take us right back into 1830s. Again, the laws of the time made it very difficult and in some cases impossible for women to own or maintain property. There was no welfare state, there's no social security, there's no government security net. The social security system was frankly men. That was it. Men were responsible as fathers to care for their children, including their daughters. When daughters got married to a husband, the husband was now responsible for caring for her and their children.
	38:18	In the case of being widowed, typically that meant, although at this point in the law, a widow could inherit some of the estate of her dead husband, but typically she couldn't receive all of that. More often than not the estate was put into male guardianship. The widow in this circumstance would actually not have an inheritance in many of those cases, regardless of what the law was at the time, and this is going to be important later as you cover other sections that are still coming up, but this has parallels to the social structure and the social safety net in ancient Israel as well, where the men were responsible. This is where you have like widows marrying their dead husbands brothers, that sort of thing going on. If you look into the rationale and the reason of that, the law that was in place at the time was really about how men were responsible for caring for women and children.
	39:20	Marriage was essentially how you create this social safety net for people who are otherwise not participating in the paid economy. There are all kinds of economists who will talk about the ways that women contribute to the economy, even when they're not paid to do so, including some of the care work that we talked about earlier. But these systems are set up to care for people and they don't always work because they require the men to be benevolent. They require the men to actually share their wealth, to care for these people who are in need and not advantaged in the economic systems, not advantaged in the political systems. Whenever I read widows and children or widows and orphans in particular, not only do I think about these economic systems and these political systems where men

are sort of the social security net, but I also think about how the Lord is explicitly caring for people who are disenfranchised by the systems of the time.

40:24 Whatever the economic system is of the time, he's going to care for those who are disenfranchised. We can think about that in today's world. There are still systems where you have women who don't have access to property rights globally. I'm not so much talking about in the United States in most cases, but globally, there are women who don't have access to property rights. Women in some places who don't have the right to vote in favor of their own interests and make sure that their needs are represented because it's really important that we're focusing here on widows and children and orphans, but also there's a broader sense in which that's shorthand for the people who are being disadvantaged by the current economic system. What does the Lord say? He gives us six verses. We're going to learn. It's very clear, it's very straightforward. We jump right into it. In verse two, women have claim on their husbands for their maintenance until their husbands are taken, and if they're not found transgressors, they shall have fellowship in the church.

41:25 This is essentially saying, yes, we expect that men will care for women, that they will care for the needs of their wives and their children. We see echoes of this both in the temple recommend questions and in Family: A Proclamation to the World where it's made very clear in both of those cases. In the proclamation it says, fathers are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. There is this claim to be made that's beautiful in that it protects the contributions that women make in ways that are not always paid work. There are a lot of economists. I would point to Marilyn Waring. I would point to Nancy Folber or Bina Agarwal who talk about the contributions of women throughout the world. These are economists who are exploring the role of women in economies where the women aren't always paid for the work that they're doing, so this includes the work of childcare.

42:29 It includes the work of elder care. It includes in many cases the type of farming that women are doing where they're not paid for it, but it's necessary to maintain the wellbeing of their families. In systems where men have access to the economy in a way that's paid that allows them to trade. This provides a protection for the women who are also contributing to the economy, but not being paid in a way that gives them access to things like trade and property. Verse two does that. We have echoes of that in the proclamation on the family. Then if we

jump to verse four, all children have claim upon their parents for their maintenance until they're of age. We're also protecting children. There are so many places in the world, this may seem so foreign to people who are living in the United States of America, although it happens here sometimes too, where you have parents who abandon their children or are in one way or another not capable of caring for their children the way that they need to, but around the world we also see situations where children are abandoned in part because their parents don't want to or can't care for them, can't meet their basic needs.

43:49 One of the beauties of this set of scriptures that says, first of all, you don't abandon your child. You are responsible for your child, which doesn't seem like it should need to be a revolutionary thought, but it actually is in some of the circumstances that people are experiencing. This is a very real question. The next thing is that it creates a system through the bishop storehouse, through the welfare programs of the church that here in 1832 are barely beginning to take place, now are these sophisticated and beautiful systems that can provide the necessities of life for families when they can't do it for themselves to keep these families whole. This is really the beginning of that welfare system that says, first of all, families, you are responsible to one another as a unit. When you can't, you stay together. You maintain those family relationships and responsibilities, and the church will supplement you until you can achieve that level of self-reliance that allows you to meet your family's basic needs.

45:00 That's what's being invited here in this section, especially verses one and four. In verse five it clarifies that last part even more so that they have claim upon the church or in other words, upon the Lord's storehouse, if their parents have not wherewith to give them inheritances. Again, it refers back to what we just learned about in the prior section. The storehouse shall be kept by the consecrations of the church. Widows and orphans shall be provided for as also the poor. There's that piece. I'm not just making it up that when we talk about widows and orphans, we're talking about anyone who's been disenfranchised. You can see it there in verse six, also the poor.

Hank Smith: 45:41 Hmm, good point. That is great. In your work, Eva, do you see this as pretty revolutionary for 1832 that the Lord is saying, we're going to put a system in place?

Eva Witesman: 45:55 Yeah, I absolutely see it as revolutionary. I think it's actually revolutionary in any time and place that the Lord is saying we

actually need to have a system where people give the best that they have. That includes their wealth, but it also includes their talents and their skills to support one another in these beautiful communities. Remember in section 82, we learned that all the worldly systems were broken. None are good. This is a revolutionary approach no matter when or where you do it. Sometimes I hear people talk about this higher law of consecration and that it was removed and replaced with the 10% tithe that we all know and love so well, and that is demonstrably false.

Hank Smith: 46:41

Yeah.

Eva Witesman: 46:42

I'll just be really clear about that. This is given as an everlasting model. It has never been revoked. If you look at the systems of the church, both the welfare program, the office of the presiding bishopric, the humanitarian systems that we have in place, fast offerings, ministering, the entire church, its entire structure is elegant, beautiful, and integrated. It's the evolution of what we're seeing here. The beginnings of in 1832, I would say yes, it was revolutionary for the time, but I would say it's revolutionary for any time. If we really understand how it works and we're able to integrate both the spiritual dimensions where we are loving one another and we're remaining pure, and we're also sharing our temporal wealth to make sure that everyone is cared for. There is no more revolutionary system than that.

Hank Smith: 47:40

Eva, as you've taught us today, especially this piece in section 83, I can see why Paul would say that the love of money is the root of all evil, not money itself. You can see the Lord's direction with money and resources. He's not afraid of it at all, but when you start to love it, look who gets hurt.

Eva Witesman: 48:01

Exactly. This was actually the first director of the Ballard Center. Todd Manwaring was my predecessor in this role. This was his favorite scripture, James 1:27, pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world. It just encapsulates all of it right there.

Hank Smith: 48:24

And I need this constant check on the love of money. I personally need it. I don't know about any of the listeners out there, and I know John doesn't fall for this, but I can fall into the trap of that. None doeth good. This system of take, take, take. You've got to earn more. Don't get me wrong. I do love to give, but I can get caught in that system of I need the latest and greatest in order to be happy when the opposite is true, the exact opposite is true. Giving and serving actually create more

human happiness. That's not religious research. That's research throughout the world.

- John Bytheway: 49:02 It's an interesting balance because, I want to go on a mission with my wife one day. I have to be a wise enough steward to save up and have something so that we can go do that, but am I going to set my heart on that? That's what you're talking about. Make it the love of money.
- Hank Smith: 49:20 Yeah.
- Eva Witesman: 49:21 There's another piece of it too, and I see this sometimes especially with men, students who come through the business school because there's such an emphasis on men being the provider and making sure that they're caring for their families in this financial way. Sometimes I see them almost reduce themselves to nothing but a wage earner,
- John Bytheway: 49:42 Nothing but a provider.
- Eva Witesman: 49:44 Yeah. They derive a sense of value from that. They almost perceive that that's how others value them as well. I do want to offer that careful counterpoint that while it's true that, again, I think the Lord is providing a counterpoint to the economic systems of our day, I think that's what he's doing here. I think if our economic system looked different, so too would the way that we interface with that, but in our system where men have historically been sort of economically advantaged in terms of the ability to work and earn wages, there's a tendency to create that now as their identity and to use these scriptures erroneously to sort of say that's all you are. Again, one of the beautiful parts of this set of scriptures is that it says, no, we invite you into this care work that has traditionally been the work of women.
- 50:42 We are going to balance that identity. You're not just a wage earner. You're not just a paycheck. You're a full partner in our work of caring for the children of God. These scriptures invite that, but to anyone who feels like that, their only value is the number on their paycheck every month. I would just say, you are a son of God and that is so much more than mammon can ever give you, but some of these worldly interpretations when we talk about like bringing those worldly views in some of these worldly interpretations are every bit as harmful for men as they are women. I know we talk a lot about women in the way that we have experienced the world, but those worldly viewpoints are really damaging. Really what we see from these scriptures is that we are all invited into the same work. This work of God

may have at different points in time, different roles in that work, but it is a shared work. We are to do it together. I love that invitation and I hope to live up to it.

- Hank Smith: 51:46 Yeah, beautiful. It reminds me of the phrase, there's a more excellent way. I love what you said there at the end, men and women don't have to be reduced to these base roles. The Lord is, I think throughout all three of these sections, let me invite you to a much better way of living. Eva, you have taken these, what did you say? 37 verses, is that what you told us at first?
- Eva Witesman: 52:12 Yeah, I think that's right.
- Hank Smith: 52:13 You have been able to draw out things I would never have seen on my own. Do we have any more drops left to squeeze out of you for section 83?
- Eva Witesman: 52:23 Since section 83 focuses specifically on women and children, I wanted to quickly shout out the General Relief Society's focus on the nutrition and wellbeing of women and children. [President Johnson](#) has talked about this so beautifully. She says specifically, we want to empower women and families with greater understanding and resources so they're better equipped to make changes that can have a lasting impact in their homes, communities, and nations. Really big thinking, but rooted in serving women and children. She says, when a woman is empowered because she is healthy and educated, families are blessed, communities are lifted and nations strengthened. When you bless a child, you invest in the future, and then she reveals what they're focused on. Our work focuses on nutrition for children under five, maternal and newborn care, immunizations and education. I don't know if you knew that the Relief Society has their own set of initiatives that they're working on.
- 53:25 What I would sort of reiterate, President Johnson has talked about finding ways to engage in that in your own community. This may be a global effort and there are lots of places in the world that you could send money for immunizations and education. I encourage you to do that, but President Johnson also talks about looking for the people in your own community who have needs. Look for the women and children in your ward who need those things, and if there's no one in your ward who has those needs, look for the people in your stake. Make those connections because you can serve more than you think you can. This is a global effort and it's part of what it means to be a member of the Relief Society right now.

Hank Smith:	54:09	Wow. Hmm. Eva, this has been spectacular. I'm looking back over, John, do you have as many notes as I do?
John Bytheway:	54:20	Finding all the New Testament references. Yeah.
Hank Smith:	54:23	So many insights. It's not just about the insights Eva, but the feeling when we're done here that I need to go and do.
John Bytheway:	54:32	Mm-hmm.
Hank Smith:	54:32	John, I don't know about you, but I'm getting all sorts of impressions of who I need to reach out to.
John Bytheway:	54:36	Yeah. I need to repent and be a better minister. Yeah. I'm glad I can repent again. I'm glad we talked about that too. I'm glad we can repent again. Yeah.
Hank Smith:	54:50	Eva, thank you. Thank you for preparing. Thank you for your time.
Eva Witesman:	54:53	It's such a pleasure to be here. It's a real joy. We can all always do better. That's just part of eternal progression.
Hank Smith:	55:01	Everything you've just showed us, the richness of these three sections comes from a, let me look at the date, 1832, a 26-year-old farmer who's great. He's not an idiot, but we just took someone with an expertise in nonprofits, decades of expertise. You're not that old, but decades of expertise. You drew with your expertise, all of this out of the writings of a 26-year-old farmer in the 1830s. What does that say to you?
Eva Witesman:	55:39	Well, Hank, I think you know as well as I do that these aren't just the writings of Joseph Smith. This is the Lord's voice, and that for me is the testimony that I receive when I read these sections. This isn't a young person inventing new systems. This is the process of revelation and we can see the voice of the Lord throughout it. Everything points back to Jesus Christ. I love the experience of reading what I refer to as revelatory documents. I think of scriptures that way. I think of the proclamation that way. These are documents that were revealed and they were revealed in the Spirit. When I read those, when I'm experiencing the Spirit, everything unfolds. I'm able to see much more than I could otherwise. Usually what I'm seeing at that point is direction for my own life. I see these sections of the Doctrine and Covenants as revelatory documents. I see the proclamation to the world on the family as a revelatory document. These are places that I can turn, so that I can receive personal revelation

and direction in my life. I almost never think about Joseph Smith as the author of any of these things because he's not, as we saw in Section 81, Jesus Christ is the author and finisher. He's the Alpha and Omega, and I'm grateful that he is.

Hank Smith: 57:05 Thank you for saying that. You almost forget Joseph even gave it to us as you're going through it, I wonder if Joseph Smith himself, I think he would, I think he'd see what Eva did with this John and go, wow, I didn't see that either.

John Bytheway: 57:19 Stand back and go, wow, I didn't write that.

Hank Smith: 57:23 Yeah. Incredible. Absolutely incredible. Everyone we've studied this year and we've invited someone on, they've seen things that are so deep and so beautiful that they transcend 1830 and 2025. Well, with that, we're sad to see it end, but we need to thank Dr. Eva Witesman for being with us. It has been spectacular. We want to thank our executive producer Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen and every episode we remember, our founder Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. This is a big one, section 84 coming up 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 dot 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.

followHIM Favorites



Hank Smith:	00:03	Welcome to followHIM. Favorites. This is where John and I are sharing a single story to go with each week's lesson. John, we're in sections 81 through 83. Today, I want to point out a verse and share a story. This is section 82, verse 19. Every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, not himself, of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God. That verse made me think of a story, John, I think you'll like it. It's December, 2012. Kenyan athlete Abel Mutai was comfortably in the lead of a cross country race. In the final stages of the race, the seasoned athlete, he's won a medal at the Olympic Games, made a huge error, believing he had already crossed the finish line. He stopped running several meters short. He was confused by the signage around him, and mistakenly thought he had won the race.
John Bytheway:	01:01	Hmm.
Hank Smith:	01:01	In second place John was Ivan Fernandez, who had been some distance behind him in second place. Obviously was now catching up because he had stopped. Realizing what was happening Fernandez started shouting at Mutai for him to continue running and finish the race. Mutai didn't understand what Fernandez was saying, and Fernandez could have easily passed him and taken the win. Instead, Fernandez physically pushed him. He's like, Hey, you gotta keep going.
John Bytheway:	01:30	Wow.
Hank Smith:	01:31	Mutai to victory ahead of him. After the race, here comes the journalist. Why did you do that? Why did you let him win? Fernandez replied, I didn't let him win. He was going to win. The journalist pushed, but you could have won. Fernandez looked at him and replied, this is the part I want you to hear. What would've been the merit in my victory? What would've been the honor of that medal?

	01:57	What would my mom think of that? He says. What would my mom think of that? I didn't deserve to win. I did what I had to do. He was the rightful winner. He created a gap that I couldn't have closed if he hadn't made the mistake. As soon as I saw him stopping, I knew I wasn't going to pass him. I just love the story. I love the integrity. Every man seeking the interest of his neighbor. It's not that he didn't compete hard. He wanted to take first place, and I'm sure he would have had he been faster. Maybe he's saying, look, if I was in that same position, this is what I would want someone to do for me. It's only right.
John Bytheway:	02:38	I love that he pushed him, but another lesson you could take is be the person your mom thinks you are.
Hank Smith:	02:47	That is great. What would my mom think?
John Bytheway:	02:50	What would my mom think? Come on.
Hank Smith:	02:52	Yeah. Yeah. How could I possibly do that? So everybody out there, the next time you're running, push the person in front of you.
John Bytheway:	02:59	In front of you.
Hank Smith:	03:00	Yeah. Make sure that they beat you. Hey, we hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcast. We're with Dr. Eva Witesman this week. She's unbelievable. She walks us through these verses and points out things, John, you and I have never seen before. Then come back here next week. We'll do another followHIM Favorites.