



"The Order of the Son of God"

Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

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

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

Podcast Episode Descriptions

Part 1:

How does the Lord measure success when callings and achievements don't come in this life? Dr. Brent Top explores D&C 106-108, highlighting Section 107's foundational teachings on priesthood organization and how the Lord's divine order blesses individuals and strengthens the entire world.

Part 2:

Dr. Brent Top continues an in-depth look at D&C 107, explaining how priesthood organization keys and councils, from the first Presidency to the Seventy, were divinely structured to guide the Church, bless every member, and prepare the world for the Savior's return.

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Part 2 -

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- 57:09 End of Part 2 - Dr. Brent Top

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Biographical Information:



Dr. Brent L. Top is the Richard L. Evans Chair of Religious Understanding and Professor of Church History & Doctrine at Brigham Young University. He is the former dean of Religious Education and also served as department chair and an associate dean. He is retiring this year after 45 years as a religious educator in the Church Educational System, the last 34 years being at BYU. He is the author of more than 20 books and scores of articles and chapters in books. He is

married to his high school sweetheart, the former Wendy Cope. They served a mission together in the Illinois Peoria mission from 2004-2007, when Brent presided over that mission. They and their family have also lived in the Holy Land when Brent taught at the BYU Jerusalem Center. That experience was life-changing for all of the family and career-shaping in many ways for Brent. The spirit of the Holy Land permeates his soul as evidenced by his 20+ trips to the Holy Land and surrounding countries in the Middle East. He has a great love for all of Heavenly Father's children and much of his career has been spent in building bridges and in dialogue with scholars, religious leaders, and people of other faiths.

In addition to serving as a mission president, Brent has served in many capacities in the Church, including bishop and stake president, but his love, both professionally and ecclesiastically, is not in administration but in teaching the restored gospel of Jesus Christ as found in the scriptures and teachings of living prophets. He currently serves as gospel doctrine teacher in his ward and as a sealer in the Mount Timpanogos Temple. He and Wendy are kept busy with their growing family of four children, 24 ½ grandchildren and their first great-grandchild.

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Hank Smith:	00:00:00	Coming up in this episode on followHIM.
Dr. Brent Top:	00:00:03	I asked Elder Joseph Wirthlin one time when I ran into him as we were waiting at an airport and he was coming from an assignment. I said, Elder Wirthlin, how do you brethren make it through all the international travel and all of the assignments that you have? And he kinda laughed and he said, we muddle through. We are the Traveling High Council. And that's really true.
Hank Smith:	00:00:32	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 strengthens his brethren and sisters in all conversation, in all prayers, and in all exhortations, and in all doings. John, that's section 108 verse seven. You do that John, you are a strengthener.
John Bytheway:	00:00:56	That's a high percentage of all, all, all, all. Let's just say some, some, some, some. And then I'll agree with you.
Hank Smith:	00:01:02	Okay. In some of his conversation.
John Bytheway:	00:01:05	Sometimes I strengthen in all my conversations. Sometimes.
Hank Smith:	00:01:08	Sometimes. Sometimes. Hopefully. The Church of Jesus Christ of trying to be Latter-day Saints. Hey John. We are joined by our good friend, Dr. Brent Top. Brent, welcome back.
Dr. Brent Top:	00:01:22	Thank you so much. I guess I'm not totally a has been or else you're really scraping the bottom of the barrel that you have to come and grab me again. I like to say that being a has been means I was a once was.
Hank Smith:	00:01:40	Well, when I saw that, what these sections were about, I texted you immediately and said, are you available? Because I just don't know of anyone who has the experience you have that fits this lesson this well. John, we're talking about sections 106, 107

and 108 today. A lot about priesthood organization. All of a sudden these saints, we think to ourselves oh, they know what we know. No, this is all brand new to them. This idea of two priesthoods, what comes to mind?

- John Bytheway: 00:02:14 Both of you know Carl Anderson, Mr. Kirtland, I remember him saying, people say the church was organized in Fayette, but really it was established because the organization all came later and there's a tremendous amount of organization, orderliness and the order of things and the order of the priesthood in 107's. That's what I was thinking about of this is where things really get put into place.
- Hank Smith: 00:02:43 Yeah, I've heard him say that exact thing. The church was born in New York. It was restored in Kirtland.
- John Bytheway: 00:02:49 Yeah, in Kirtland.
- Hank Smith: 00:02:52 Brent, as you've looked over these sections, what are we going to do today? What are you looking forward to?
- Dr. Brent Top: 00:02:56 As I teach these sections, I like to take 106 and 108. First, they're kind of standalone to individuals. Very, very short personal revelations. Let's deal with those and then set those on the shelf. Then we have all the time to deal with section 107. I'd add one more thing to what John said about Carl Anderson. Now I know he has a bias for Kirtland, Ohio and rightfully so. He should.
- John Bytheway: 00:03:29 Yeah.
- Dr. Brent Top: 00:03:29 We've all had that privilege of sitting there in the school of the prophets and have Carl teach us about the Restoration, but I think section 107 also is a testimony to us of the ongoing restoration as [President Nelson](#) calls it, not only was the church not like section 107 in the early days, in some respects, there are parts of section 107 that are not like the church in 2025, and we need to understand that ongoing restoration and there will yet be many more remarkable things revealed. Section 107 is a classic pattern of how the Lord reveals things line upon line, precept upon precept, circumstance by circumstance. We're going to see marvelous things taking place.
- Hank Smith: 00:04:26 John, I don't know if you remember last year we brought Brent on for Korihor, because we thought, well, here's a powerful antichrist.

Dr. Brent Top:	00:04:34	He's the expert on Antichristism.
Hank Smith:	00:04:39	This is our opportunity to say, not only is he an expert in Korihor, but he's also an expert in priesthood authority. John, one of the reasons I invited him on is all of this experience in working in church administration. Can you tell us all about it?
John Bytheway:	00:04:56	Oh yeah. In fact, I think everybody would love to hear about these multiple missions. I first was introduced to Brent when the four volumes see mine, hardbound. They don't even have the same cover anymore.
Dr. Brent Top:	00:05:08	No.
John Bytheway:	00:05:09	Because these are different colors and I know which colors are to which books, you know, in the Book of Mormon. We've had your son Justin on the podcast.
Dr. Brent Top:	00:05:19	Like I always say to people when they hear that I have a son that's a professor at BYU and his office is just down the hall from where I used to have my last office. Yeah, he's the good professor, but I'm the good looking Professor Top.
Hank Smith:	00:05:37	We'll have to have Justin back on and let him give a rebuttal. Yeah.
John Bytheway:	00:05:41	Yeah. Welcome to Point Counterpoint. Yeah. Would you tell us about your multiple missions?
Dr. Brent Top:	00:05:47	I served as a young missionary in Denmark, but then 21 years ago I was called to be mission president in the Illinois Peoria mission. Served there for three years. Came home from that remarkable experience. Then fast forward almost 20 years, I was getting ready to retire from BYU. Wendy and I get called into the church administration building. We thought it might be a committee assignment. I was serving on the church's correlation committee at the time. Elder Quentin Cook and Elder Dale Renlund were sitting in the office. We didn't know for sure who we were meeting with. They said, we'd like to see if you'd, a good time for you to be able to go and preside over the Mormon Battalion historic site mission in San Diego. The historic sites used to be part of the regular proselyting mission, but about five or six years ago, they were separated out and they became their own entity.
	00:06:49	They said it's just like being a mission president, but instead of 150 plus elders, you have no young elders and you have all

young sisters and senior couples, so it's different kinds of challenges. Instead of going out and being with missionaries every transfer, my office and Wendy and I were there in the historic site and the sisters were there with us all the time. That was from 22 to 24. Those were the two much different kind of experience of being mission presidents. I didn't know it was physically, emotionally, or spiritually possible, but the love that we have for our missionaries and the remarkable changes that we saw in our missionaries made it worth it. No doubt about it.

- Hank Smith: 00:07:39 That's incredible.
- Dr. Brent Top: 00:07:41 We were so taken back by that when he talked to us and Elder Cook chuckled and he said, Brother and Sister Top, we could send you to lots worse places than San Diego, California.
- Hank Smith: 00:07:54 So go enjoy it.
- Dr. Brent Top: 00:07:55 Yes, we have wonderful, wonderful missionary friends. Our missionaries in Illinois were like sons and daughters to us. Our missionary sisters are like granddaughters to us. Somebody once said, when you're called to be a mission president, the first little while you say, what did I do to deserve this? And then by the end of your mission you ask, what did I do to deserve this? It's truly a privilege. When I served as Stake President, I would always say to the people that we worked with, it's a privilege to serve the Lord in whatever capacity because the pay is much greater than the efforts however great they are that we give.
- Hank Smith: 00:08:42 That's absolutely true because it applies to this section so well. Can you tell us where else you've served in the church?
- Dr. Brent Top: 00:08:52 I was a scout master twice, which was probably harder than Mission President. I mostly taught, but I served as a bishop in bishopric, Bishop, Stake President, and now I have the privilege of being a ward mission leader in my ward here in Ivans, Utah.
- Hank Smith: 00:09:11 Then John as dean in the religion department, Brent had a lot of communication and interaction with different priesthood leaders in the general councils of the church. I think he's perfect for this section. Let's jump in. [Come, Follow Me manual](#) starts this way. At first glance Doctrine & Covenants 107 seems to be only about organizing priesthood offices into a leadership structure for the Lord's Church. By the time this revelation was published, church membership was outgrowing the capacity of the few leaders it had in place outlining the roles and responsibilities of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the

Twelve Apostles, the Seventy, bishops and quorum presidencies was definitely needed and helpful. But there's so much more to the divine instruction in section 107 than just how church leadership should be organized. Here, the Lord teaches us about his power and authority, "the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God". The purpose of the priesthood is to "unlock all the spiritual blessings of the church" so that all of God's children can "have the heavens opened unto them" and "enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus Christ the mediator of the new covenant". In teaching us about His priesthood, the Savior is teaching us about Himself and how we can come unto Him." Beautiful. Okay with that, Brent, you said you wanted to start with putting 106 and 108 together. Do we need any background there?

Dr. Brent Top:

00:10:41

Yeah. Let me just give you a little historical background. Section 106 is given to Warren Cowdery, the brother of Oliver Cowdery, and you see when this revelation is given in Kirtland, but Warren Cowdery joins the church in New York, of course, and establishes a branch in Freedom, New York and having great success, and so the revelation is really focused on Warren Cowdery's great work in sharing the gospel and bringing people into the church in Freedom, New York. Now of course the many of those New York Saints gather to Kirtland then onto Missouri later on. Let me just share a historical and to Warren Cowdery specific then one verse that I think is particularly relevant to us today. The one thing about Warren Cowdery that the Lord says to him there that jumps out at me, there's a lot of great things said about Warren that the Lord gives there.

00:11:43

It says verse seven, blessed is my servant Warren for I will have mercy on him, notwithstanding the vanity of his heart. Holy cow, how would you like that forever more in the standard works for you. There's several passages in the standard works that we see things like that you think, Savior Lord, you didn't have to say that, did you? But this is really significant for the end of Warren Cowdery. He said, I will lift him up inasmuch as he will humble himself I will give him grace and assurance wherewith he may stand, and then here comes these key phrases that we see often throughout the scriptures. If he continue to be a faithful witness and a light unto the church, I have prepared a crown for him in the mansions of the Father. Despite all of the great work that Warren Cowdery did, he did not remain faithful and I think it's a sad, sad comment.

00:12:44

It was at the time when his brother Oliver is excommunicated, so Warren likewise leaves the church. I think that's a sad comment, but the Lord is saying to us, continue, continue to be

faithful regardless of how much good you've done in the kingdom, how righteous you have been in the past, but there's a part there that I'm particularly interested in because of the reference to the Second Coming, President Nelson has been reminding us of how it is getting closer and closer and to use my language, nigher and nigher at the door. Look at this right there with the coming of the Lord draweth nigh and nigher, and it overtaketh the world as a thief in the night. Then the Lord says to Warren Cowdery, this is one of the most beautiful phrases that I think in the scriptures that is given in this revelation. Therefore, gird up your loins that ye may be the children of light.

00:13:53 That is the phrase that I like and I think that has great relevance to all of us, whether in 1834 or 2025 or whenever the Savior comes, be a child of light, be a child of light, that day shall not overtake you, that we may as Doctrine & Covenants Section 50 says, have our eye single to the glory of God and be filled with light until our whole bodies are filled with light. Be a child of light. That's a great passage. Maybe a sad circumstance with Warren Cowdery, but Warren Cowdery did much good. Now you gotta go over to section 108, Lyman Sherman, very interesting individual. Lyman Sherman has been on Zion's camp as has, this is a very unique and interesting thing with regards to section 107 as well. Lyman Sherman was called to be one of the seven presidents of the first council of the seventy there in 1835 as outlined in section 107, but then when it was realized that he had been ordained by the prophet Joseph Smith a high priest earlier at the conference where the high priesthood had been revealed and some of the brethren were ordained as high priest, he was then released from the council of the seventy because of section 107 points out seventy and high priests were distinct offices with distinct responsibilities and callings at that particular time.

00:15:39 Even though today in 2025, the seventies are also high priests, but it has not always been that way. Lyman Sherman was feeling inadequate, as we all do at times in various responsibilities and callings that we have. He went to the prophet Joseph and asked for guidance and direction of the Lord. Section 108 is that he's comforted, counseled by the Lord that he is, I guess you'd say, if I'm going to do the alliteration, comforted, counseled and congratulated by the Lord for coming up and seeking a revelation. He said, verse four, wait patiently Lyman. Lyman's probably feeling a little restless of what's going on with all of the things that are happening with church organization. Wait patiently until the solemn assembly shall be called of my servants. Then you shall be remembered with the

first of mine elder and receive right by ordination with the rest of mine elders whom I have chosen.

00:16:48 Now this is interesting is Lyman Sherman also participated in the Kirtland Temple dedication. He was there when the great pentecostal period is taking place at the Kirtland Temple. The journals recount that Lyman Sherman spoke in tongues, sung in tongues and prophesied great and marvelous things in association with the dedication of the Kirtland temple. Then it says at that time, you're going to take your place with the brethren. It's going to be fulfilled upon you in that day that you shall have-- now, this is I think, interesting-- you shall have right to preach my gospel wheresoever I shall send you and from henceforth from that time. Now you remember at the Kirtland dedications and during meetings in Kirtland, the Lord spoke to the prophet Joseph about sending the Twelve to Great Britain on their mission. So you say, well, what's this got to do with Lyman Sherman, the great passage that you read at the outset, which is one of my all time favorite passages and certainly has application to every member of the church that we have that covenantal responsibility to strengthen our brothers and sisters in conversation, prayers, exhortations, and doings.

00:18:14 What's interesting about this is that when the prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon and the brethren are in Liberty Jail, the Lord reveals to the prophet Joseph Smith and to the First Presidency of the church, if you will, that Lyman Sherman is hereby called to be a member of the Quorum of the Twelve apostles. He was going to replace Orson Hyde who had apostatized or stepped aside or had become disaffected in some way, but 11 days after the prophet Joseph gets the revelation and writes the letter, Lyman Sherman passes away and is never ordained to the office of Quorum of the Twelve. At the same time that George A. Smith was ordained to the Quorum of the Twelve. That's why I like to go back to verse six and say there you shall have right to preach my gospel wherever and to whomever you were called Lyman Sherman worthy to be an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ called if you will. He just didn't know that he had been called until he probably gets in the spirit world and continues his apostolic responsibilities in the spirit world. It's a great touching story and a sad story in that it leaves his wife a widow. Lyman Sherman was 34 years old when he passed away. You got the contrast of Warren Cowdery not remaining faithful and Lyman Sherman remaining faithful and being rewarded with the very blessings that were promised to Warren Cowdery had he remained faithful as well. That's it. So are we done now?

John Bytheway:	00:20:12	Yeah. I've always loved that. 108 verse seven, strengthen your brethren in all your conversation I have in my margin, 1 Timothy 4:12, be an example of believers in conversation. What kind of conversation? I remember somewhere that Lot in the Old Testament was vexed with the conversation of the wicked, and I thought, what interesting use of that same word there that our conversations have a spirit to them that what if our conversations were always like this, strengthening each other, how nice that would be. I've also got in my notes, Stephen Covey says, don't confess each other's faults. We're supposed to confess our own, but gossiping is when we confess each other's faults.
Dr. Brent Top:	00:21:00	John, you brought up Paul's letter to Timothy. The word for conversation in the Greek in that context is anastrophe, which means your whole way of being, so it's not just your speech. You can be vexed by conversation, not just in hearing, but in the whole manner of being. When it says strengthen your brothers and sisters in your conversations, it's not just what you say to them or about them, but everything you do, and that goes back to that being a child of light. That light is exuded in what you say, what you think, what you do, but most of all what you are.
John Bytheway:	00:21:46	Speaking of that Brent, about being children of light, I love verse four, back in 106, the coming of the Lord draweth nigh and it overtakeeth the world as a thief in the night. In my notes I've got, oh, go to first Thessalonians 5, which is footnoted there. Footnote 4B sounds like some of the same words, but ye brethren are not in darkness that the day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light and the children of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. A couple of different metaphors for the Second Coming, one of them is like a thief in the night. It's totally without warning. If you're the children of the light, maybe it's more like a woman in travail. She knows when it's coming. She's known for a long time because she's aware of the signs of the times and that gives me a lot of comfort to think celestial, to be where I ought to be so that it won't overcome me as a thief in the night, but I'll actually be able to recognize the signs of the times.
Dr. Brent Top:	00:22:52	I think that's a beautiful concept as well. That're not going to be shocked and surprised. If we are then we have not been children of light. I had a really interesting discussion with one of the fellow sealers in the St. George Temple, a dear friend and a, an older, I mean older than me, just a wonderful, wonderful man. We were sitting there waiting to be called up to do our sealing sessions. We were talking about the Second Coming and where we stand in relationship to whether we are ready when

the Savior comes. One of the other sealers, not this one, but one of the other sealers said, well, when we die, it is like the Second Coming occurs to us. We will know our standing with the Lord. This a really wise, righteous old sealer said, I am confident in my standing with the Lord right now.

00:23:48 Do you remember [President Nelson](#) last conference talked about having the confidence as children of light we don't have to press forward in the midst of darkness of the world without the confidence that we are pursuing what the Lord would have us do. In fact, the third principle in Lectures on Faith where it talks about having faith unto salvation is one, the knowledge that God exists. Two, the knowledge of the attributes of God, but the third one, we don't emphasize nearly enough, which says the confidence, the belief that the path that we are pursuing is pleasing unto God. If we could understand that and strive to keep our covenants like [President Nelson](#) has asked and stay on the covenant path, we can press forward with greater confidence regardless of what signs of the times are going on around us.

Hank Smith: 00:24:53 I have two things. Four years ago we had a friend of Brent here with us. His name's Bob Millet. I don't know if you know him very well Brent at all. Never heard of him. Bob was here. He said something I wrote down and I just love. This is about section 108. He talks about the Lord saying to Lyman, your sins are forgiven you, and he said this. He said, when you have what you just said, Brent, when the Lord tells you your path is good before me, you're on the right track. He said, it's like earnest money. The Lord is putting down earnest money on you. He intends on saving you. He's serious about saving you. You know earnest money is, Hey, I'm serious about buying this house, so I'm going to put down earnest money on it. When we have the Spirit, when the Lord says, you're on the right track, it's earnest money.

00:25:42 He's serious about this. Sometimes we think, well, I just don't know if he cares or if he's interested. Well, now you know he's put that earnest money down and then this Brent, I want to just ask you a question. I came over to BYU in 2010, so I've known you for 15 years. John brought us back to section 108 verse seven. Strengthen in all your conversation, in all your exhortations and in all your doings. You have that gift, Brent. Now where did you get it? Was it your parents? Did it come naturally to you? I've seen you in stressful situations. Being the dean of the religion department is not an easy job. I've seen you in stressful situations.

Dr. Brent Top:	00:26:23	That's an understatement.
Hank Smith:	00:26:24	But here you are, John, you'll agree with me. When you talk to Brent, you feel like you're the most important person in his life. I feel strengthened in those conversations. Brent, how does someone learn how to do that? How does someone learn to be a strengthener of others?
Dr. Brent Top:	00:26:44	That's a really, really good question. Some people say, oh, Brent's a smart Alec. Well, I do love to joke and I've often said if there's not going to be some good laughter at my funeral, I will rise up and condemn the audience at that moment because I love to laugh. There is so much good cheer in life, but I think there is things that we can learn and it goes a little bit of what John said there of what Stephen Covey said of how we look on other people. We fight the urge to have bad lustful thoughts pop into our head. I think it is the same principle that we can learn to control thoughts and feelings that would actually tear us down and put major dents in that natural cheery temperament. That doesn't mean that I'm cheery all the time. You were probably sitting in meetings when I was maybe less than cheery a time or two.
	00:27:45	For me, the blessings of strengthening and being strengthened by good, cheerful, wonderful people is far, far better than being as President Joseph Fielding Smith used to call being a pickle sucker. To be down as Elder Neal A. Maxwell said to Henry Eyring when Elder Eyring was called to the Quorum of the Twelve, and Elder Maxwell had been one of his mentors and Elder Maxwell said, now Hal, one of the things that we need in this quorum, we all seek to pride ourselves on being problem solvers, not problem spotters. That is what it means to strengthen your brethren in conversations. Let's find a way to say yes. Not always trying to find ways to say no. Let's find ways to strengthen and make people feel good than in criticizing and tearing down. I mean, none of us like to be torn down.
Hank Smith:	00:28:58	John, you're the same way. You strengthen people in conversation. You're going to say, oh, you don't know me all that well, but I've seen you do it many, many times. Does that come from your parents? Is that something that just comes naturally?
John Bytheway:	00:29:12	My mom, we couldn't get her to say a bad word about anybody. We actually tried a couple of times as kids. Well, we don't know what they're going through. My mom was pretty, pretty saintly. The idea of strengthening each other in a conversation. How often have we thought a good thing about somebody, but we

haven't let it get a few extra inches and come out of our mouth and said it or texted, I was thinking about you today and you know what? You inspire me, or you're a great guy or you're a wonderful person. Maybe we just need a, I don't know, a podcast to listen to, to say if you have a good thought about somebody, but why not tell them?

Hank Smith: 00:29:54 Yeah.

Dr. Brent Top: 00:29:54 And if they think you're doing it under the influence of drugs, then you know you haven't been doing it.

Hank Smith: 00:30:01 If they text back, who is this?

Dr. Brent Top: 00:30:03 Yeah, yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:30:03 What have you done with my friends?

Dr. Brent Top: 00:30:04 My kids have done that. Dad, are you okay? Are you dying?

Hank Smith: 00:30:10 Let me read something that I think fits perfectly. I'm sure both of you will remember this talk back in 2007, the Tongue of Angels. This is [Elder Holland](#). He quotes Elder Orson F. Whitney first here. He says, "I love what Elder Orson F. Whitney once said, quote, the spirit of the gospel is optimistic. It trusts in God and looks on the bright side of things. The opposite or pessimistic spirit drags men down and away from God. It looks on the dark side, murmurs, complains and is slow to yield obedience. Now this is back to Elder Holland. We should honor the Savior's declaration to be of good cheer. Indeed, it seems to me we are more guilty of breaking that commandment than almost any other. Speak hopefully, speak encouragingly, including about yourself. Try not to complain and moan incessantly. As someone once said, even in the golden age of civilization, someone undoubtedly grumbled that everything looked too yellow.

00:31:11 I have often thought that Nephi's being bound with cords and beaten by rods must have been more tolerable to him than listening to Laman and Lemuel's constant murmuring. Surely he must have said at least once, hit me one more time. I can still hear you. Yes, life has its problems and yes, there are negative things to face, but please accept one of Elder Holland's maxims for living. No misfortune is so bad that whining about it won't make it worse. The Tongue of Angels. I have a good friend Steve Dalby, seminary teacher. He and I taught together. He came into my room and he said, I gotta tell you what just happened to

me. He said, I was reading my patriarchal blessing and I had a thought to call the patriarch. He said, I don't know the patriarch. You know, I went in when I was a teenager, got my patriarchal blessing, and here he is 20 years later, he's reading it.

00:32:11 He thought I should call him up, so he actually did. He called that patriarch and he said, I just wanted to thank you for this blessing. It has been a strength to me throughout my life. And then he said, in all of these years, giving blessings, what have you learned? And this is what the patriarch said. He said, well, it's good to hear from you brother Dalby. I just finished typing up number 999 of patriarchal blessings. Then he said, this one thing I've learned in all 999, they've all been positive. Now both of you think of what the Lord could say. What could he say to me as a 17-year-old? I think he could have said, oh man, it does not look good.

Dr. Brent Top: 00:33:01 Or like to Warren Cowdery, the vanity of your heart.

Hank Smith: 00:33:04 Yeah. Oh man. I think he could have said, Hank, you have a lot of unearned confidence you know that? Instead it was all positive. You're going to do this, you're going to do that. Great things ahead of you.

Dr. Brent Top: 00:33:17 Can I just share a couple of times where somebody did that to me that made all the difference in the world. I was serving as Mission President in Illinois. It was harder than I expected. It was joyous, but it was harder than I expected. I started to have panic attacks and I was falling apart at the seams. My missionaries didn't know, and Sheri Dew joked one time that she said, well, I don't think we want parents to know that their mission presidents are lying in a fetal position, crying uncontrollably, but they probably all have felt that way at times. But I was just falling apart at the seams and with the panic attacks and two experiences, one from Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf. As we came through, we'd gone to an area mission president seminar, President and Sister Uchtdorf, and then Elder and Sister Uchtdorf. Then Elder and Sister Rasband of the Seventy were at our Area Mission President seminar.

00:34:21 When we got all done with the meetings, then we did a temple session. All of the area mission presidents and companions and our visiting authorities. As we came through, Elder Uchtdorf greeted every one of the mission presidents as they came through with a great big hug and said, I love you. I am so proud of you. You are doing a great job. Elder Uchtdorf didn't know that I was falling apart at the seams, but that made all the difference in my life and changed my mission. Now, fast

forward, I mean the hard parts of the mission didn't change. I mean, it was still hard and still chaotic and busy and relentless. I was feeling so maybe hangry and fatigued and tired and all of those things, and I just stopped at a gas station to fill the mission car up. I was, oh man, thinking I gotta do all this again tomorrow. I get a phone call from one of my counselors over on the other side of the mission and he said, President Top, I just felt prompted to call you and tell you that the Lord is mindful of you and has accepted of your efforts. That made all the difference. Then I could get going the next day and do the same thing again and again and again and just like John's mom said, we don't know where people are and that they are at literally at the end of their rope and just that one thing. You're doing great. I love you. You have been a great influence in my life. What difference it would make for them to face life's challenges.

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| John Bytheway: | 00:36:16 | I think what's so beautiful about that is that you knew the Lord inspired them to do that, so you knew that he was thinking about you. |
| Dr. Brent Top: | 00:36:25 | Even though I maybe didn't believe it at the time, when you're down in the pits. You're absolutely right. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:36:33 | Recently, Sister Elaine Jack passed away. I used to run into her at the Macey's grocery store sometimes and I would always remind her of one of the favorite things I ever heard that she said, this is going back in our conversation a little bit, but she said, have you had a patriarchal blessing? Are you preparing to get one? Think of this. What does a patriarchal blessing say? Have you ever heard of one which says, I'm sorry, you're a loser. I'm sorry for laughing. This is General Conference you guys. I'm sorry, you're a loser. Do the best you can on earth. We'll see you in about 70 years. And she said, of course not, and you never will because of the divine qualities each of God's children has inherited. A patriarchal blessing is like a roadmap, a guide directing you in your walk through life. It identifies your talents and the good things that can be yours. Hank, you brought that up. I thought, yeah, the blessings are so positive. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:37:33 | Positive. That should tell us how we should interact with each other, especially with our children. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:37:40 | Yeah. I think about the nicknames that Jesus gave to people. I'm going to call you two the Sons of Thunder. Wow. Really? Us? Hey, we'll take it. I'm going to call you the Rock. Hey, there's a man in whom there is no guile right there. Whoa. He knew of Peter's ups and downs, how uplifting that must have been to have the Savior give you nicknames like that. |

Hank Smith:	00:38:08	I have to tell you both about our friend Hilary Weeks . You both know Hilary.
John Bytheway:	00:38:13	Oh yeah.
Hank Smith:	00:38:13	A lot of people don't know that Hilary, she would be really anxious in social situations. You know, what are people thinking? Am I doing the right thing? Am I saying the right thing? She said it all changed when she had this thought. I stopped worrying what people thought about me, and I started worrying what others thought about themselves when they're with me, and it said took away her social anxiety and she started strengthening people in her conversation, and it really had impact on me. I've thought about it a lot since. Hilary, we don't know if you're listening, but we love you.
John Bytheway:	00:38:54	Yeah, I think I saw a similar statement. I like myself more when I am with you. Hank I've heard you talk about that awesome Bible Dictionary entry that says that the miracles are the natural result of the presence of the Messiah. And I think you've talked about, what is the natural result of your presence? Is it oh, hi. Dad's home.
Hank Smith:	00:39:18	Yeah. It really is. I like myself more when I am with you. I think that that's important. Alright, Brent, you've told us there's a lot to talk about in section 107.
Dr. Brent Top:	00:39:30	Yep.
Hank Smith:	00:39:34	We've only got a few days.
Dr. Brent Top:	00:39:36	Yeah, I was going to say this is going to be a 20 part episode, 20 episodes of followHIM. If we start right in verse one, I like the idea that they're learning and growing. They have a concept of priesthood because of Peter, James and John. John the Baptist. They have first elder, second elder, but what we're starting to see is now the structure, how it meets the needs of the growing church. This revelation on priesthood is revolutionary and especially when you couple it with other revelations on priesthood such as 84, the oath and covenant of the priesthood, 88, 93, all of those, you're just seeing it unfolding as the Lord is revealing line upon line on that regard, when I was serving as Dean of Religion, or maybe it was when I was the Richard L. Evans chair on religious understanding, I can't remember, but it was an interfaith setting.

- 00:40:48 We had a group of Muslim religious educators from Saudi Arabia had come to BYU. I was asked by the international office of the administration that they wanted to know how our church was organized. I thought, okay, what do they want to do? I put together the PowerPoint presentation of section 107 that had the perfect diagram for how the church is organized. They were all sitting there thinking, wow, that is a great organizational chart. That's a great PowerPoint and lo and behold, the Lord did it. How many hundred almost 90 years ago is an organizational chart, but then gives incredible meat as well as we start right in in verse one that there are two priesthoods. Now, I do not want to edit the Lord's writing, but in reality there's only one priesthood. I'm not trying to edit the Lord. When we recognize that God's power, the priesthood after the order of the Son of God is God's power, it is priesthood power.
- 00:42:10 It is the power that exalts. It is the power that creates. Then in verse five, all other authorities or offices in the church are appendages to this priesthood, this one priesthood, everything else that we have, both priesthood offices, priesthood orders, priesthood structure are appendages. You say, well, what is an appendage? Well, something that's added on. Well, no, that's an addendum. An appendage is something that is attached to, that grows out of the priesthood of the order of the Son of God is the means of salvation for Heavenly Father's children through the atonement of Jesus Christ. It is God's power on earth and in heavens. Everything else we have gets its life and its efficacy through that. It is that overriding umbrella priesthood after the order of the Son of God or then called Melchizedek Priesthood. When I work in the temple, Wendy and I'll be going to the temple this afternoon and I'll go and do an endowment session.
- 00:43:32 We see how things progress. Then you progress to the ordinance of sealing. You go from individual ordinances to a family ordinance, a marriage ordinance. You remember in that sealing ordinance, all of the promises and blessings that the Lord gives to those that are true and faithful to that sealing ordinance and to all the covenants and laws and rights. That becomes the overriding thing. The idea is how it encloses everything else. While it's nice to make a chart to help me understand the differences between the offices of the Aaronic Priesthood and the offices of the Melchizedek Priesthood, in reality, they all get their meaning, their value, their strength, their power from the Priesthood after the order of the Son of God. I like that word appendage. My arm is an appendage, but you sever that arm from my body. It really doesn't have much power. Now you say, well, we're going to put it back on.

00:44:43 Well, the idea is an appendage is something that is useful because it is connected to something that has the life in it. Think in the Book of Mormon, we don't have any really good explicit scriptural evidence that there were deacons, teachers and priests after the Aaronic order, but the priests and teachers that they're talking about from the context of the Book of Mormon, they're clearly functioning in Melchizedek Priesthood and it's because Melchizedek encompasses Aaronic. Just like that certain offices encompasses other offices underneath it. Just to have that in your mind. With that, we'll dive right in and we'll start in verse eight. The Melchizedek priesthood holds the right of presidency and has power and authority over all the offices in the church in all ages of the world to administer in spiritual things. The Melchizedek priesthood, the highest power, God's power in heavens and on earth encompasses all the power and authority of all the offices of the priesthood. Think about this. Could President Nelson give a patriarchal blessing? He's never been a patriarch.

Hank Smith: 00:46:12 Absolutely.

Dr. Brent Top: 00:46:14 Absolutely. Because this verse is really talking about the keys, the rights, as well as offices of the priesthood. It encompasses all and has authority over everything. Now we shift gears and go into verse nine, the presidency of the high priesthood. Now remember this phrase, this office, this body has already been revealed in earlier revelations that we have studied. We started to see it in section 81, so it is the development. You could even go back to 1829 with Oliver Cowdery as a second elder. That was also the beginning of the presidency of the high priesthood, but the presidency of the high priesthood had been given as an office at conferences earlier in Kirtland as early as 1831 and 1832. Much of this has already been revealed, in fact, some of it almost word for word that will then be added to the revelation when it is being prepared for publication in 1835, the presidency of the high priesthood after the order of the Melchizedek have the right to officiate in all the offices of the church.

00:47:38 High priests after the order of the Melchizedek priesthood have a right to officiate in their own standing under the direction of the presidency. The First Presidency has the right, the authority over all presidencies. Now, why this becomes important when they actually name it the Quorum or Council of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, the First Presidency in Missouri and in Ohio, you're having multiple presidencies. You're going to have president of the church in Missouri, David Whitmer. It's going to cause some difficulties. You've got the

president of the church in Kirtland, Joseph Smith. Well, sometimes when you have so many presidents, which we have in the church, we sometimes think that this president has power and authority over that president. No, the First Presidency. That's why it's called the First Presidency. First, not because they were the first organized. It is because they are preeminent.

00:48:47 They have the authority overall. High priests are under and given the power and authority to officiate under the direction of this high priesthood, which we now know as the First Presidency of the church, Melchizedek Priesthood and High Priest and Elder, they administer in all the spiritual ordinances of the church. Even though the First Presidency's over everything, the Melchizedek Priesthood, presidencies in the Melchizedek Priesthood, the President of the High Priest Quorum, the President of the Elders Quorum. They have spiritual responsibilities. They have those of higher ordinances in that regard. They administer in spiritual things. Even though in the 29th section of the Doctrine & Covenants, the Lord says, I've never given you anything that is purely temporal. All things are spiritual to me, but it is to make this distinction between the orders and offices of the priesthood.

Hank Smith: 00:49:55 I have two questions. One, it seems that they have yet to understand or they have yet to receive the idea of a general church leadership versus a local church leadership. That seems to start to show itself here. If I'm at home and I'm listening and I'm going, do I really need to know the organizational structure of the church? Maybe give us a preview of why this matters so much?

Dr. Brent Top: 00:50:27 Yeah, it's a really good question. The answer would be no. There will not be a final exam at the end of this podcast like our students will say to us, do I need to know this for the final? Do I need to know this for the exam? That's not the reason for it. I think what we're going to see is why is it critical that we raise our hands to sustain President Russell M. Nelson, the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve as Prophets, Seers and Revelators. Why is it different when the President of a Stake is counseling and directing us under the direction of an Area Presidency under the direction of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve? What difference does it make to recognize that our Bishop, which holds an Aaronic Priesthood office of Bishop, is also the presiding High Priest in the ward.

00:51:34 The Stake President is the president of the High Priest Quorum in his Stake and the President of the High Priesthood in his

Stake. You're right, I'm not sure in 1835, this is real crystal clear, but as the church expands and expands and the Restoration continues, it is all linked together. We might say it was so much easier when we had a First Elder and a Second Elder. We had outgrown those offices. We had not outgrown the power of the priesthood, but we had outgrown the functions and the practical applications of those. Now, I don't know whether that answers your question, but I see my Bishop differently when I understand the order of High Priest and the Aaronic Priesthood order to administer in the temporal affairs. I see my Bishop differently when I recognize that he had hands laid upon his head by the President of the Melchizedek Priesthood and given keys to administer in all temporal things, but also to be a judge in Israel and administer in spiritual things in his ward.

00:53:03 When I have an Area Seventy come to my stake and I just think, ah, I don't need to go to the Stake Conference because he's an Area Seventy. He's not even really a General Authority Seventy. If they understood section 107 and if they would understand the growth of the church and what Prophets, Seers and Revelators have done to adapt section 107 to modern circumstances, we would recognize that when the Seventy is functioning under the direction of the Twelve, they are empowered with the authority of the Twelve. Those are kinds of things for me, and yes, I geek out with priesthood and church government things. I find it interesting, but the reason why I geek out with an organizational section like this is because when I understand, oh, when I understand the organization, then I'll say, ah, that's why we do the things we do. That's why there's power in this. That's why President Nelson will be the concluding speaker, why he announces temples, administering in all the spiritual blessings of the church.

John Bytheway: 00:54:30 It took me a long time to see the word preside inside the word presidency and to realize that it's the same word. It took me, oh, hey, look at there. We had a former Area Authority Seventy in our ward that would teach Gospel Doctrine and sometimes when I was the bishop, I might slip in at the end of the meeting or something and he would always say, Bishop, did you have anything? I always appreciated his respect for the keys. I love that there's that orderliness there. I don't know. I think there's a safety to that. In the same way in section 88, we were talking about a house of order. I see here an organization of order.

Dr. Brent Top: 00:55:12 No, absolutely. When you mention power, when it talks about powers, rights, there's a reason for the protocol that has its footing in the order of the church and in the power of the church. Let me give you one quick example. Since we brought

up this idea of [presiding](#). One time, we had three apostles come to visit the faculty of religion at BYU. There was Elder Perry, can't remember if it was Elder Ballard. Elder Perry came first. Then I think it was Elder Ballard came in. We were just glad handing and shaking hands of everybody, so we said, Elder Perry, do you want to start? He said, no, President Packer will be here shortly and President Packer presides. While it was protocol and we were showing our deference to him, they understood that this wasn't just an order of seniority of walking in in the order of seniority, but it was the seniority determined presiding and presiding determines keys and power and authority. Man, that was interesting. They were not going in and sitting down in front there in the conference room in the Joseph Smith Building until President Packer led the way and led into the room. Some people might just say, oh, that's way too stuffy for me. Too much protocol. Well, it is the doctrine that gives us the protocol.

Hank Smith: 00:56:51 To someone listening then you might say, look, you're going to run into this structure as an active member of the church all the time, so please try to understand how this works. Second, I hear you saying, how do we meet the needs of the members? This is one way the Lord is showing us that he loves us. I want to meet your needs. If I just kept two elders up there, who's going to take care of the individuals? This structure, in a way, does it make sure every individual has someone?

Dr. Brent Top: 00:57:23 Well, we can think about that. My ward here in Ivans, the Ivans First Ward is comprised of about 500 and some odd individuals. I mean, you can feel for that good bishop of ours with over 500 members of the ward. The bishop is going to be hard pressed to get everything done by virtue of his keys, so when he delegates to counselors to elders, Quorum President to Relief Society President, then you have ministering brothers and sisters. You have friends and neighbors. You have teachers. The church is comprised of individuals. It is comprised of families or family units, which is sometimes individuals. When we talk about the organization of the church, it is indeed to bless individuals because there are greater powers and blessings that are going to come to them through the office of high priests than that the early elders understood in 1831, it is going to raise their sights.

00:58:35 You brethren, you were there fairly recently, but when you're out at the [Morley Farm](#) and you go up to the place where the log cabin stood, the prophet Joseph prophesied to them said, what is it 16 by 16 cabin or something like that? The Prophet Joseph said, this church will fill North and South America and fill the world. They had no idea, but what was being revealed was

preparatory for that, but giving them the power to start to get the vision. The evolution of the organization of the church is empowering men and women to begin to see the destiny of the church beginning to empower them to see what God's loving, omnipresent power can do to not only create worlds, but to bless individual lives. You're absolutely right. The structure and order of the church later in this revelation, even with the principle of membership records, even things like that are to bless individual members. I think that's a good observation. I wish I would've thought of it.

Hank Smith: 00:59:59 Hey, keep going here, Brent, show us the way once I can see, alright, this really does bless me in my interactions. I love what you said about I'm going to see people differently. I'm going to interact differently. I'm going to be a little more respectful or careful about what my bishop, my stake president, my Elders Quorum President in my case teaches me because of section 107.

Dr. Brent Top: 01:00:27 One other way of saying it would be that I'm going to receive from their teachings. When I understand the doctrine, then I should receive things a little differently. When I understand the principle of preside, when I understand the principle of keys, it is evolution. Evolution of the church, but there is personal responsibility to understand what the Lord has revealed because it does in fact affect us such as that rote activity, that protocol of raising our hand to sustain church officers. Well, it's right here in the revelations. Why do the leaders of the church when we sustain in General Conference, well, they'll say, if there are any negative sustaining votes, we extend to you the invitation to talk to your Stake President. I had that on more than one occasion. It has something to do with what the Lord says in this revelation about the power and validity of the decisions that are made by these quorum, dependent upon the votes all throughout this whole revelation gives us so much, but

Hank Smith: 01:01:39 Well, let's keep going. Walk us through it.

Dr. Brent Top: 01:01:41 I'm going to purposely skip over a couple of things because while we're on Melchizedek Priesthood, let's deal with Melchizedek Priesthood things, and then we'll jump back to Aaronic Priesthood and then bring them all together under one head, if you will. As we get to the end of the revelation, coming over to verse 22 of the Melchizedek Priesthood, three Presiding High Priests chosen by the body. Some have advocated that the body that is talked about there is the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and I can certainly see that and that it would certainly fit whether it applied when this revelation came or whether it's

just by understanding an 150 plus years of application. But the three Presiding High Priests, they constitute the Quorum of the Presidency of the Church. They're appointed and ordained to that office and upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church, and they form a quorum of the Presidency of the Church.

01:02:54 We don't always think of the First Presidency being a quorum, but they are the Presiding Quorum of the Church. They have their quorum meetings. They are three Presiding High Priests that have been given the right of presidency. So then you jump back and you look in verse eight and verse nine, but those three Presiding High Priests. Now the next office, the next presiding quorum is in verse 23, the 12 traveling counselors. Now the 12 traveling counselors are the 12 apostles. That word, especially in 2025, traveling is certainly appropriate to those apostles. Man, I asked Elder Joseph Wirthlin one time when I ran into him as we were waiting at an airport and he was coming from an assignment and I said, Elder Wirthlin, how do you brethren make it through all the international travel and all of the assignments that you have? And he kinda laughed and he said, we muddle through.

01:04:09 We are the Traveling High Council, and that's really true. The Quorum of the Twelve, they are traveling different for us today. They are the Presiding Quorum, 1835, a little different, but this revelation is putting them right under the First Presidency. They are called Twelve Apostles or special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world. Then look at that next phrase, thus differing from all other officers in the church in the duties of their calling as special witnesses. That's what makes them different in all the world. Now, I would add something else that goes back to keys and the presidency in verse eight and nine and the quorum of the First Presidency there. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the First Presidency are different from every other Melchizedek or Aaronic Priesthood officer in the church because of the keys that they hold. It is the keys there as a presiding quorum of the church.

01:05:30 Now, this is the part that is really, really interesting there. It says, and they form a quorum equal in authority and power to the three presidents previously mentioned. Now that, whoa, wait a second. This is really, really important to understand and why they sit the way they do, why they exit the Conference Center the way they do, why their pictures appear the way they do in the Liahona. All of these things that we just think are fluffy protocol things have some meaning in that as long as there is a

First Presidency, the Twelve are not exactly equal to the First Presidency. President Eyring presides over President Holland.

Hank Smith: 01:06:28

Even though seniority's different there.

Dr. Brent Top: 01:06:30

Seniority's different there, but as long as the First Presidency, it's the presiding quorum. It presides over all the other offices of the church is what the Lord said there. So they preside. What does it mean when they form a quorum equal in authority to the First Presidency? The answer is found again at the death of the President of the Church. The First Presidency is dissolved and the Quorum of the Twelve then becomes the presiding quorum of the church with power and authority and keys to administer in all the spiritual blessings of the church. Now, of course, one of their first assignments is going to be to determine when and who the new First Presidency will be, but that is what it means to be equal in authority. The Lord has this redundancy system built into place there you've got a First Presidency. The First Presidency is the Presiding Quorum. Under their direction are the Twelve Apostles. Together they all hold the keys of the kingdom as specified in verse eight there, they all hold all those keys, but only the President of the Church actively uses them but when the president of the church dies, the First Presidency is dissolved. The counselors return to their place in the Quorum of the Twelve as the Presiding Quorum that exercises and holds all those keys, and there have been three times in the history of the church where the Quorum of the Twelve was the Presidency of the Church, the Presiding Quorum for extended periods of time.

Hank Smith: 01:08:29

Coming up in part two of this episode.

Dr. Brent Top: 01:08:31

When I was called this most recent time to be Mission President down at the Mormon Battalion historic site, and I was not a happy camper. This was two weeks before I was going to be retiring from BYU and I walked in and they did this and we walked out. We got home and I told Wendy, I was grumbling and I said, I'm not even going to be able to get to enjoy my retirement. Wendy said...



- John Bytheway: 00:00 And now for part two with Dr. Brent Top, Doctrine and Covenants 106 to 108. When I'm looking at these verses 23 and 24, it takes me back, and maybe you were gonna talk about this because you said three cases. This revelation is given when 1835. Boy, that succession in the presidency thing, it sounds like when I read Saints for example, and people are wondering after the death of Joseph Smith, what do we do? And Saints, it says, Brigham Young took his hand down on his knee and where are the keys? They are right here. He seemed to understand, okay, at the death of the President of the Church, verse 24, then the Twelve represent a quorum. Am I getting that right? Was that clear in their minds or did it take a while to go, Hey, wait a minute, Joseph talked about this.
- Dr. Brent Top: 00:57 Yeah, I think that's a very good question. I don't think that it was clear in 1835 when this revelation is given, even though the Lord is spelling it out. We look at it now in hindsight and say, wow, that's the perfect explanation for how it's done. But I think that's why the Prophet Joseph Smith is teaching the Twelve in Nauvoo about what it means to be a Quorum, and when he brings them home from their missions and said, I need you to stay around here. We're gonna do leadership training, and then his great charge when he said, I'm rolling off of my shoulders onto yours, the keys of the kingdom.
- John Bytheway: 01:36 You just mentioned a minute ago, the mission to the British Isles. I have just thought how brilliant and inspired that was to have. It was like you said, the Twelve, but I think there was nine of them, and then Orson Hyde left to go dedicate the Holy Land, the quorum anyway, to go operate independently when they couldn't text or call across the Atlantic Ocean to learn to operate as a quorum. So they had some experience of that when they came back and after the martyrdom in 1844.
- Dr. Brent Top: 02:12 Oh, absolutely. Again, that's another example of the evolution of the structure of the church. You look at not only when the Apostles were there, but when the Apostles go home and you got Joseph Fielding there running the church in Great Britain. He

hasn't been a member of the church all that long himself. I thought about that with missionaries since we started talking about missionaries. I thought, how did they do missionary work where all they had was the Book of Mormon? They didn't have Preach My Gospel. They didn't have zone conferences. Well, they had the Spirit and they had the revelations. The organization of the church is also one of the great leadership training proving grounds that we have. Before I get to the Seventy, our listeners are gonna just say, Top, stick to one thing. We gotta take Dramamine when you're talking here. If you jump over to verse 27 and it's talking about these quorums and the unanimity, that is another brilliant, absolutely brilliant leadership concept.

03:23 If I had to have absolutely unanimous agreement, consent and support when I was Dean, I would've been as old as Methuselah before we could get anybody to agree whether the sun was shining outside. You read accounts in church history where presidents of the church had very, very pressing things in front of them, important decisions to make, but until they had all the First Presidency and all the Twelve on the same page in agreement and ready to move forward, they would not move forward. That is what that revelation is teaching us. Every decision made by these quorums must be by the unanimous voice of the same. That is every member in each quorum must be agreed to its decisions in order to make their decisions of the same power or validity, one with the other. I love that power and validity. The principle of unanimity is not just consensus.

04:37 The principle of unanimity is power. The Lord bestows power when his servants are unified. As we serve in leadership positions, we know how that is. As a bishop, as a Stake President, I relied so much on my counselors. If I had counselors that were not comfortable with something that we were going forward with, even though I held the keys of presidency in that entity, I knew that I was not gonna go forward. I could not pull rank and say, we are going to do this anyway 'cause I am the bishop or I am the Stake President. It was because I wanted the power of heaven to accompany those decisions. That's the principle of unanimity. I think it's a genius or a better way of saying it. It is divine inspiration and then you come down and see in verse 29 what the Lord says. Okay, well now if push comes to shove and you have to do majority in governmental circles, I'm not sure we even get majorities when you think of the natural man institutions of the earth, but when he says, if you have to do majority, just recognize it's not gonna have the same power and validity.

	06:04	This is just an application and may not be that way in every marriage and every family, but for Wendy and me, this principle applies in our marriage. That is one no vote means no. That's just the way we've approached. No pulling rank, no throwing fits. It's just principle of unanimity. If you wanna have the power of heaven with decisions.
John Bytheway:	06:31	You mentioned before, well, because I'm the bishop or I'm the Stake President, when I look at verse 30 and I see the decisions of these quorums or either of them are to be made in all righteousness, in holiness, in lowness of heart meekness and long-suffering, it's different. Can you remember Elder Holland talking about, I think it was at the time when President Hunter was made President of the Church. Elder Holland said, can you imagine if this were a corporation? He talked about the corporate infighting would've been intense, but in the way these quorums work, it's because no, nobody is seeking office. Whoever got up in General Conferences and said, yeah, I'm the right man for the job. Yeah, they should have chosen me. I've got the resume and yeah, I got this.
Dr. Brent Top:	07:20	Uh, unfortunately in 1844, someone did kinda do that.
John Bytheway:	07:27	Going way back. Verse 30 is talking about this doesn't work without Christ-like principles. I like looking at this whole section about what does it teach me about Christ here? There we see meekness, lowly in heart, patient, long-suffering, faith, virtue instead of the corporate infighting you might talk about, look what we're talking about that qualifies us for the work.
Dr. Brent Top:	07:52	I've heard Elder Bednar in leadership training meetings say that the Quorum of the Twelve, the principle of unanimity doesn't mean that there isn't spirited discussion. That there is spirited discussion and there is disagreement, but they allow it to come together. Not that you're giving up your position on something, but that you allow the Lord to work on you till you get to that point. You look at verse 30, but then look at verse 31 because this leadership principle is Christlike leadership. It says because the promise is if these things abound in them, they shall not be unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord. They know God's will. They know God's voice. They've heard the voice, and I know the Apostles will say, we're not perfect. I'm sure they have bad days like mission presidents, but when look at those traits in verse 30, my association with senior brethren of the church, they characterize those traits. They characterize those traits and they seek that humility because they know what they have to have in order to know the mind and will of God.

John Bytheway:	09:14	Amen to the priesthood and authority of that man. If it's the other way where I got this, I'm so good at this. What is the Doctrine and Covenants? It condemns people who are seeking to excel.
Dr. Brent Top:	09:25	Yeah, Well, fortunately the church doesn't adopt my mantra of strive to be mediocre. They have the mantra strive to be Christlike. That's what it is there.
Hank Smith:	09:37	Brent, I have a question. I know we have so many more verses to cover, but I think this is a good point to ask it. We live in a culture in 2025 at least, of distrust of organizations, of bosses, of the man who's running the show, but here I'm seeing 107 verse 22, the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve is upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church. Then the verse John read in verse 30, these are holy men and women in lowness of heart, meekness, long-suffering. What do we do in a culture that is hitting up against the church? Because I trust these church leaders, but I can sense that some of my brothers and sisters don't.
Dr. Brent Top:	10:29	But it's not a blind trust. It is a trust because you've seen how your life has been blessed. There are those by very virtue of their experiences think, well, wait a second there. If there's a bureaucracy, there has to be distrust and there has to be some form of corruption. Well, let me bear testimony to a couple of things here. Yes, there is indeed bureaucracy in the church. I have encountered it head on, but it doesn't demean the fact that God is going to work through his chosen servants according to these principles by virtue of the keys of the priesthood. That's really what it is. When I understand the doctrine of keys, when I understand the doctrine of Presiding Quorums, then I can begin to have that kind of trust when I've held keys and when I recognize that the Lord honors keys more than he honors even competence.
	11:43	Now, First Presidency and the Twelve are pretty competent brethren last I checked. They are excellent, but they will all tell you that their competence in their previous lives as business leaders, lawyers, doctors, educators, all of that pales in comparison to hearing the voice of the Lord and seeing how the Lord honors keys of the priesthood. As a mission president, when I was called, I had a zillion ideas of all the things that I was gonna do, things that I was gonna take, my BYU experience, I was gonna do all those things. It did not take me probably even one transfer until the Lord humbled me and helped me to realize, I don't want you to do it your way. I want you to do it my way. Ready to move on to the Seventy?

Hank Smith:	12:35	Let's keep going. Yes.
Dr. Brent Top:	12:37	I heard President Boyd K. Packer in a leadership conference say, this is the day and age of the Seventy. As the church has become so international and so spread out, when you think of the hundreds of nations that the church is organized in, you're only gonna have Twelve apostles. Rarely do you have more than three in the First Presidency. The Seventy are the hands and arms and legs and feet of the two Presiding Quorums. In a way, we could even go one step further and say this is the day and age of the Area Seventy, that the Area Seventies are carrying so much of the load of the church in building up and regulating the affairs of the church under the direction of the Presidency of the Seventy under the direction of the Twelve. Nobody could have imagined that when section 107 was given, I don't think they envisioned the Seventy the way that we envision the Seventy now, I know they didn't.
	13:57	They were primarily gonna go out as missionaries and until 1986, that was the primary role of Seventies. The first Council of the Seventy was to look after the stake quorums of Seventy that were primarily stake missionaries. It was a revelation given to President Kimball that said, we have reached the point now where the Seventy as a Presiding Quorum must now rise up to take its place as one of the Presiding Quorums of the church. You'll remember that stake quorums of the Seventy were done away with. They then met with their high priest group or the elders quorum. We had stake missionaries. We have ward missionaries. We all do missionary work, but the Seventy are not just responsible for missionary work. They build up and regulate the affairs of the church. The Seventy are a Presiding Quorum of the church. Go down to verse 26. I'm gonna come back to verse 25, but verse 26.
	15:10	As a Presiding Quorum of the church, they form a quorum equal in authority to that of the twelve special witnesses or apostles just named, well, wait a second. This is a question that comes up all the time. Are they a Presiding Quorum? Yes. Are they equal to the Twelve in the same manner as the Twelve is equal to the First Presidency when there is not a First Presidency? Now, think of that. The Seventy quorum equal to the Twelve who are equal to the First Presidency, but when those other Presiding Quorums do not exist, there are things that are done now by delegation and by authority that do not necessarily require keys. For example, it was a Seventy that called me as a Stake President and conferred the keys of presidency upon me. He didn't have any keys, but he received the authority under the keys of the Quorum of the Twelve apostle by assignment.

- 16:22 When I served as a counselor to Bob Millet at a young single adult stake presidency when Bob had a heart attack, I was the first counselor. I had to do the exact same things that a Stake President did for a period of time when I didn't have any keys conferred upon me, but I got a letter from the President of the Quorum of the Twelve authorizing me to be able to function in that capacity as though keys had been conferred upon me. There was a delegation of authority just by word. When the seventies go out to General Conferences or to other assignments, they get a letter of assignment from those who hold the keys. When I was called to be a sealer, when COVID is happening, it used to be the sealers were all given the sealing authority by a member of the First Presidency, and then it went to some with the Twelve.
- 17:19 With COVID nobody was going up to church headquarters. The President of the Church guards the sealing authority really, really tightly. He holds that sealing power. I was stunned when the temple president of the Mount Timpanogos Temple said, I have a letter here in my hand from President Russell M. Nelson authorizing me to set you apart as a sealer in the Mount Timpanogos Temple and to give you the sealing authority, and then he said, I want you to see in this letter that President Nelson had specified exactly what was supposed to be said in that ordinance. That's all the president of the temple gave was what President Nelson had written in that letter, and it said specifically upon the direct authorization and delegation of keys by President Russell M. Nelson, I, thou da da da da. That's just an aside on the Seventy, but then you just see another example of redundancy in the church's succession system.
- 18:31 That's why it is so profound when President Packer says that we're living in the day and age of the Seventy, that the Seventy, and I said earlier, a Seventy is a Seventy is a Seventy. If you have an Area Seventy coming to your stake in conference, we are to give heed to him just as much as a General Authority Seventy and in some respects just as much as a member of the Twelve or the First Presidency because they are now we back up in the verse 25, the Seventy. They're called to preach the gospel too and to build up and regulate the affairs of the church and all the world, but then comes this to be especial witnesses unto the Gentiles. The Seventy are special witnesses of the name of Christ in their assignment. They just don't have apostolic keys. The apostolic keys are what give them the authority and power. You see how these Presiding Quorums and the Presidencies of the High Priesthood are able to administer in all spiritual blessings of the church. It's overwhelming. We've only done a

third of the verses. 33 through 35 also give responsibilities of the Twelve and the Seventy and down into verse 38 as well.

John Bytheway: 20:02

Can you tell us does a mission president have keys and where did those keys come from?

Dr. Brent Top: 20:08

Absolutely positively. In both cases, when I was called and set apart as a mission president the first time 20 plus years ago in Illinois, I was set apart by President Boyd K. Packer. The second time three years ago in 2022, I was set apart by Elder Gerrit Gong. The apostolic keys were exercised so that I was set apart as the Mission President of a particular mission. I was given the keys for that calling. Then I was given specific responsibilities and charges. When you were set apart as a bishop, same thing. You were called. If you hadn't been a bishop before, you were ordained a bishop, you were set apart as a bishop of such and such a ward. Then you have the keys conferred upon you to administer in the temporal and spiritual responsibilities of your ward. Then specific responsibilities of temporal and spiritual are enumerated by the Stake President.

21:26

You were set apart as a judge in Israel. You were given responsibilities over the finances of the church. You were set apart as the president of the Aaronic priesthood. You were set apart as a Presiding High Priest in the ward. All of these specific things. Same thing when a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, he's ordained, set apart, given all of the keys to the kingdom and given a charge and specific responsibilities of what the Lord by revelation has given. This has been a question I've had with my colleagues, so I've asked a lot of seventies and I say, do you get keys and they said, no. We are given delegated authority. We give specific authority as a Seventy to preach the gospel and to be especial witness of Christ in all the world, but they're not given the keys, succession, keys or keys of presidency in the traditional way that we think of, but they are able to exercise all the authority necessary of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, particularly by delegation, by assignment, and they have that same authority.

22:38

The Twelve officiate under the direction of the presidency, the Seventy act in the name of the Lord under the direction of the Twelve. The Twelve have certain responsibilities going out and opening up the nations of the earth. Then you come down to verse 39, 38, you can see the Seventy go out when they're needed. They go out and fill the necessary callings in various places of the world. That's why a Seventy came and called me as a Stake President and set me apart. That's why you have Area Seventies going out to Stake Conferences and doing things, but

then verse 39 is a really interesting one, and that is the duty of the Twelve in all the large branches of the church, which we would then say are stakes to ordain and as the church has grown and evolved, the word ordain might be a little different there.

23:34 Now, we would say maybe approve or sustain the name to have ordained evangelical ministers. If you look down in your footnotes, that is a patriarch. The Quorum of the Twelve apostles has the specific responsibility for patriarchs when a Stake President determines that there is a need for a patriarch in his stake or an additional patriarch. In some cases, he makes a recommendation to the office of the Quorum of the Twelve apostles. Then the Twelve consider that in direct revelation in section 107. They then approve and then authorize. It used to be the Twelve ordained all of the patriarchs. Then it probably was the Seventy ordained patriarchs when they would go to stake conferences. Now, Stake Presidents are authorized to ordain patriarchs in their stake, but they don't hold the office of patriarch, and in a way you would say they don't hold the keys over patriarchs, but when the Twelve sends them a letter saying, you are hereby authorized to call so-and-so to be a patriarch in your stake, you are authorized by their keys.

Hank Smith: 25:01 Right. You brought up section 107 verse 39 about the Twelve ordaining or finding these patriarchs. I'm sure you both remember this story. This is [President Monson](#) telling a story about President Kimball. Not long ago I learned of the passing of James Womack, the patriarch of the Shreveport, Louisiana stake. He had served long and blessed ever so many lives years before President Kimball shared with President Gordon B. Hinkley, Elder McConkie and me, an experience he had in the appointment of a patriarch for the Shreveport, Louisiana stake of the church. President Kimball described how he interviewed, how he searched, how he prayed that he might learn the Lord's will concerning the selection. For some reason, none of the suggested candidates was the man for this assignment at this particular time. The day wore on. The evening meetings began. Suddenly President Kimball turned to the Stake President and asked him to identify a particular man seated perhaps two thirds of the way back from the front of the chapel.

26:07 The Stake President replied that the individual was James Womack, whereupon President Kimball said, he is the man the Lord has selected to be your stake patriarch. Please have him meet with me in the High Council Room. Following the meeting, Stake President Charles Kegel was startled for James Womack did not wear the label of a typical man. He had sustained

terrible injuries while in combat during World War II. He had lost both hands and part of an arm as well as most of his eyesight and part of his hearing. Nobody had wanted to let him into law school when he returned, yet he finished third in his class at Louisiana State University. That evening as President Kimball met with Brother Womack and informed him that the Lord had designated him to be the patriarch, there was a silence in the room. Then Brother Womack said, Brother Kimball, it is my understanding that a patriarch is to place his hands on the head of the person he blesses. As you can see, I have no hands to place on the head of anyone.

27:10 Brother Kimball in his kind and patient manner invited Brother Womack to stand behind the chair on which Brother Kimball was seated. He then said, now Brother Womack, lean forward and see if the stumps of your arms will reach the top of my head. To Brother Womack's joy they touched Brother Kimball's head and the exclamation came forth. I can reach you. Of course you can reach me, responded Brother Kimball, and if you can reach me, you can reach any whom you bless. I will probably be the shortest person you will ever have seated before you. President Kimball reported to us that when the name of James Womack was presented to the Stake Conference, the hands of all the members shot heavenward in an enthusiastic vote of approval. Right there out of verse 39.

John Bytheway: 28:01 Great story.

Dr. Brent Top: 28:02 I think it was John saying that you'd have people that would stand up in General Conference and say, pick me. I wanna be the President of the Church. We can't imagine that. I can't imagine anybody wanting to be a patriarch. I would imagine that there is probably deathly silence in every Stake President's office when that call is conferred. That is an awesome responsibility. Truly awesome. The one thing that I think I wanna mention to you is the duty of the President of the High Priesthood. The Duty of the President of the High Priesthood in verse 91, like I said, I geek out over this stuff. Maybe I'm making definitions where no definition is needed. There are two separate things there. They may be saying the same thing, but I think they're different. Verse 91, the President of the High Priesthood is to preside over the whole church.

29:05 He exercises all the keys in administering the spiritual blessings and all things in the church over all the offices of the church. That's what it means to preside. President, preside. And to be like unto Moses. Be like unto Moses is the great revelator of ancient Israel. He who holds all the authority and holds all the

keys and he who is the Lord's mouthpiece. He who is the revelator. Then that's why in the next verse, you see where the Lord says, here is wisdom, yea to be a seer, a revelator, a translator, and a prophet. Then look at this part right here, having all the gifts of God, which he bestows upon the head of the church. You asked earlier Hank about what would you say to somebody who is distrustful of organizations or bureaucracies or even fallible human leaders? Look at those two verses and you see what has the Lord placed upon the head of President Russell M. Nelson that he has given all the gifts of God to that head.

30:47

That goes back to that question, how does the organization bless the individual? If somebody has all the gifts of God that God has bestowed upon him, he has the responsibility to bestow that power and those gifts, if you will, upon the people that need it. That inculcates trust and reverence that when I raised my arm to the square to sustain him and all of those presiding officers, it's pretty real. I better end geeking out on church and government stuff with Aaronic priesthood. So I'm going to jump back and forth. If we go to the Aaronic priesthood is in verse 20, the power and authority of the lesser or Aaronic priesthood is to hold the keys of the ministering of angels and to administer in outward ordinances, outward ordinances. Those preparation ordinances, it's a preparatory priesthood to prepare them for the temple ordinances of the higher ordinances and to administer in outward ordinances, the letter of the gospel and the baptism of repentance, of the remission of sins agreeable to the covenants and commandments.

32:12

There is a Presiding Bishopric that presides over the Aaronic priesthood in the St. George Temple, in the Kirtland temple, in the Nauvoo temple. I don't know where else if it's in Logan Temple, the assembly hall with the pulpits. All the things that we've seen here in section 107 are visibly manifest in the pulpits, in the assembly hall of those pioneer temples. There's a presidency of the priesthood that cares for the temporal affairs of the church. You think of all of the temporal affairs of the church buildings, acquisition of lands, distribution center, translation, everything spiritual, but you think of all of that is under the direction of the Presiding Bishopric under the direction of the First Presidency. That's another absolutely awesome quorum, a council, if you will. Let me conclude the priesthood church government with this. I'm gonna try to be as reverent as possible without being too explicit, but think about it.

- 33:25 So you go to the temple and you do an endowment session in the temple and you see the progression. If you wanna see the covenants and how they progress from, I hate to say lesser because obedience is certainly, it's the law of heaven, but you see how they progress from being willing to obey the voice of God to being willing to give your all and to sacrifice all for the kingdom of God. You see that progression taking place. The Aaronic priesthood hold the keys of the ministering of angels. Think of in the temple ordinance, I'll be reverential here of how Adam and Eve and their posterity are ministered by those that come to them, but the higher priesthood is preparing us to go into God's presence. You go over to verse 18 and 19. In contrast, the Melchizedek Priesthood holds the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church to have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.
- 34:43 Section 84 tells us the powers of godliness, the fullness of the scriptures, to have the heavens opened unto them to commune with the general assembly and church of the firstborn and enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father and Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant. When we speak of the Aaronic priesthood as a preparatory priesthood, think of it in the context of the temple. We even can go even down further the priesthood down in the baptismal font of the temple. Then you go up to begin the other ordinances of the endowment. Then it gets you to go through the veil into the presence of the Father and the Son and to receive all the blessings that Father has in store for his children. That's section 107 in a nutshell. That's section 84 in a nutshell. That's the oath and covenant of the priesthood to inherit all that the Father has.
- 36:00 I love that ministering of angels to me and the covenants associated with that are preparing me to go to God to receive all the fullness that will come at that point, even though we speak of the patriarchal order, that patriarchal order. Section 132 is going to say, gods and goddesses, priests and priestesses, all of the blessings, women just as men have those preparatory experiences that are going to make it possible for us to receive all of the blessings of heavenly parents plural, and in fact, if we could have anything that would come down to the young women of the Ivans First Ward or anywhere else in the church would be the young women and the young men to understand what the Lord has in store for them. If they will stay on the covenant path, follow the path, keep your covenants, go to the temple, keep your covenants of the temple, be sealed in the temple and to be ordained kings and queens.

	37:23	That's the greatness. Now, I am quite confident that in February of 1835, when section 107 is given to that priesthood body, which applies to all today, I don't think any of them had a clue what it all means, but what they did get is verses 99 and 100 where it said to them, learn your duty. Act in the office that you've been appointed. Be worthy to stand. Your listeners aren't going to remember all of the priesthood and church government stuff that we've talked about, but hopefully they'll have a greater appreciation and reverence for it, but they understand what it means to learn our duties and to act in the office in which we have been called. That most important office may that we have is as a member of the church, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, and if I can be worthy and learn my duty and I want to be counted worthy to stand at the last day.
Hank Smith:	38:37	Brent, one thing that I've taken away from today is, although I will very likely not serve in the callings that have been listed here, the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, the Seventy, these are all outlined and put in place for my benefit, the benefit of my family, my sons, my daughter. Just the fact that you showed me that makes this section so much more interesting to me. Look how careful the Lord is to make sure that everyone is taken care of and like you said, redundancy.
John Bytheway:	39:11	I ran into Barbara Morgan Gardner in Harmony, Pennsylvania at the priesthood restoration site . She grabbed me and held up her phone and said, say something to the young women of the church about how the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood has blessed them. No warning, so I hope I got it right, but I said, because of the Aaronic Priesthood, all of us get to connect with the Savior through our baptism and through the ordinance of the sacrament every single week. I think she said yes, exactly what I was thinking. I was so glad she said that 'cause it made...
Hank Smith:	39:47	Of course.
John Bytheway:	39:47	Love that this is in the ordinances the power of godliness is manifest, right in here is how the Lord blesses all of us. I think of a stake presidency somewhere, none of whom asked to be there, presiding over seven wards, seven bishops, none of whom asked to be there, who meet with the High Council early in the morning, none of whom has to be there but who love the Lord and who want to serve him. This gives order in how we serve each other, as you've just talked about through the temple bring us all back to God again one day, and it's all through the power of the priesthood.

Hank Smith:	40:29	Brent verse 99, let every man learn his duty. See, when I think of learning, I think part of learning is making mistakes and learning from those mistakes. Maybe inherent in verse 99 is the leadership that's outlined here. They're gonna make mistakes as they learn their duty. We can be patient with that. What does the Lord say about Joseph? He says, you'll receive from him in all patience and faith, meaning, hey, it's gonna take some patience and faith to receive.
John Bytheway:	41:05	His language you have known, his imperfections you have known, this you also know, yeah, but you're looking at the wrong thing. Right?
Hank Smith:	41:15	Patience and faith. Yeah. What do you think, Brent? We allow our leaders, especially our local leaders, our bishop, the ones that, like John said, they don't, didn't seek this out. We allow them to learn their duty.
Dr. Brent Top:	41:31	Absolutely. I facetiously but seriously talked about church bureaucracy that people often say, well, why do we need a section 107? Why do we need all of these things? Why didn't the Lord just reveal the whole structure of the church April 6th, 1830, we just move on in perfection. Well, we've talked about how the needs weren't there, but I think the Lord also allows for the fact that, okay, I'm gonna let you grow and learn as you learn your duty. I'm gonna let you go out on a limb once in a while. I did things in my leadership positions that didn't work out nearly as well in real life as they did in my mind when I was thinking about it. Yet I was inspired to do it and I think the Lord was probably inspiring me, saying, well, you've kind of got your own ideas here. Why don't you go ahead and give it a try and see how it works.
	42:33	If it works, good, if it doesn't, I'm here to teach you some more things at every level of the church. I think the Lord allows the same privilege to the organization and to the leaders. The organization has not always been perfect. The organization at times has made mistakes and have caused some challenges for others. You can't help but read the four volumes of Saints and see that, man, there were some challenging, difficult times as the saints were trying to work their way through some things. There were some leaders that probably weren't always as wise or as inspired at one time or another. We want our children to grow up and be wonderful, perfect adults, but we're quite sure they're not gonna do that all at once, and we are sometimes absolutely stunned and shocked when they're not.
Hank Smith:	43:44	What did you do?

Dr. Brent Top:	43:46	We recognize the Lord is working with them. We work with them as parents. The Lord does that with organizations. We've seen the church generally as well as locally make decisions and then have had to backtrack on them at times, and it may have been we weren't ready or it may have been unintended consequences, but I think we need to recognize that the Lord is going to allow individuals to make mistakes. We know institutions make mistakes and the church is not infallible anymore than the President of the Church is, but what is infallible, as the Prophet Joseph said, is the revelations, and I would add the word that we've emphasized and talked about today, the keys. Keys that have been restored. That I think is infallible. By all means we have to recognize that just as we are imperfect and don't always have the desired outcomes of our well-intentioned plans, we need to be patient and long-suffering. I can maybe not agree with a particular decision or how a local leader would do it, or I would maybe do it differently if I were in that position, but I'm not in that position and I don't hold the keys and the Lord is not gonna really care what I have to think about that because I don't hold the keys. That's where understanding keys, understanding the doctrine, understanding the inspired organization gives confidence, also may be a little bit of forbearance of when things are a little less than perfect.
Hank Smith:	45:42	Yeah. Let everyone learn their duty. Let them. Let them learn. The Lord section one of the Doctrine and Covenants called it a true and living church. It's living, it's growing, it's changing. It's adapting. I think it's beautiful.
Dr. Brent Top:	45:58	I've been the beneficiary on the other end as we've talked about missions of how I have seen some of the very best leaders in missionary leadership council that hadn't gone through high council training, bishop's training. They had better meetings than high council meetings. Wendy and I would just sit back there and say, how in the world did they do this? Well, they learned from each other, but they also had the Spirit of the Lord and the spirit of their calling. They had been set apart as ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit taught them what they needed to do. That was one of the greatest blessings of my experience as a mission president, was seeing leadership councils in action. Wow.
Hank Smith:	46:49	Brent, I wanna ask you a last question. We started out with how are we gonna meet the needs of a growing church? You showed us how this priesthood structure is meant to bless every member. As we were looking through the leadership of the church, the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, the

Seventy, other leaders, the Lord mentions other officers of the church in verse 98. This is a huge question. All three of us could go on honestly for days. How has the leadership of the church been a blessing to both of you? When I start to even think about just the individual General Conference talks that have become little personal moments of guidance for me, I could start to list dozens that had significant impact on me, and then local leadership as well. From young men's leaders through bishops, through Stake Presidents. I didn't expect my heart to be filled with gratitude after reading section 107.

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| John Bytheway: | 48:00 | My brother and I when we were young, had taped football cards all over the walls. Some of the football cards had a little foldout of, you know, star players and things like that. I look back now and in the 70's, I can't remember who won the Super Bowl. I can't remember who won any of the World Series. I can't remember who won best picture, but I can remember my young men leaders, I can remember my bishops. I got to go on camping trips and see what it means to be a man when things don't go well, when the car breaks down, when you can't start the fire. I can name every one of them and tell you things they taught me and sacrifices they made. That's how the leadership has affected me from Aaronic priesthood up until now, and I'm so grateful for the outcome of trying to serve in these callings and how my Mission President, another man who affected my life, used to say, the Lord gets the work done through his people, but he gets his people done through the work. The outcome of them serving has blessed me forever. |
| Hank Smith: | 49:10 | Yeah, there's so many people we could list, but for me, I, President Hinckley still deep in my heart. I just needed him at that time in my life. Even when I hear his voice today, my heart leaps. |
| Dr. Brent Top: | 49:29 | We could spend hours and days on this. I have been touched by individual leaders of the church, a bishop that played basketball every Saturday morning with the young men and that same Stake President that got up and he was a Bishop that became the Stake President and got up in a Stake Conference and apologized and asked forgiveness of the Stake because he lost his temper in a church basketball game and asked the Stake to forgive him, and I thought, I got a long ways to go. I have been blessed by women and men. Sister Okazaki will never know what an impact she had on me. As I got to lead her around, she'd hold onto my arm, she just shared things with me. I have been blessed by so many of the women's leaders, and I look back at some of the talks. I look at the women who are the |

wives of the senior leadership of the church and the sacrifices that they have made.

50:32 I look at those leaders who behind the scenes have influenced the mighty men of Zion that we have pictures hanging up in the church buildings. I am grateful for messages of General Conference that have literally changed my life in so many ways. Going all the way back to when I was a freshman at BYU and went to my first General Priesthood Session in the Tabernacle and heard a message from Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone that changed my life. I have great admiration for the senior brethren. When I was called this most recent time to be Mission President down at the Mormon Battalion historic site, and I was not a happy camper. This was two weeks before I was gonna be retiring from BYU and I walked in and they did this, and we walked out. We got home and I told Wendy, I was grumbling and I said, I'm not even gonna be able to get to enjoy my retirement.

51:40 Wendy said, well, you go back to Elder Cook and Elder Renlund and try that out on them. I have had great admiration that they are giving their lives, their livelihoods, their retirement, so much to the Lord, and that inspires me sometimes when I grumble and complain about having to be this position or that position. I think of the inspiration of those prophets and revelators and the general officers and general leaders of the church, general authorities of the church that give up so much, who possess those qualities that we mentioned there in verse 30. I am inspired and I want to do better. I am grateful to be able to pray for them. I am grateful to be able to hold my hand up in symbolic and literal sustaining of them. I'm grateful, and section 107, when you said it gives you greater appreciation, I think that was part of the intent, and again, those men in 1835 had no idea what that would mean, but I think we have a little more glimpse of what it means to preside over a worldwide church.

Hank Smith: 53:04 Brent, thank you for spending your time with us today and giving us of your experience.

Dr. Brent Top: 53:12 I hope I don't have to have too many more experiences to expound some more. I just want my little, little corner of Ivans, Utah. I'll just learn my duty and do the best I can.

Hank Smith: 53:26 Now that you're a Ward Mission Leader. Isn't that wonderful in this church where the Lord says, oh, by the way, I can move you from here to here, and I just want you to keep learning your duty.

Dr. Brent Top:	53:37	Yeah, exactly.
Hank Smith:	53:39	John, what a day.
John Bytheway:	53:41	So good to see Brent. Oh, so good to expand these sections. I really like what Brent taught us about at the time this was given they probably had no idea, but look how beautifully history has unfolded and how we see things in here now that we go, oh, okay. It allows for more growth until there's seventy times seven quorums of the seventy in verse 96. In fact, I wanna say this about my good friend Hank. He just dropped off his son to the MTC at the time of this recording. I got a text from a friend at the MTC that said they broke a record of 1000 missionaries reporting in one day. One day. And that's gonna probably, that number's probably gonna be close next week, and the week after that. Maybe Joseph Smith at that Isaac Morley farm did see that Brent and saw exactly this kind of a day. You brothers have no idea.
Dr. Brent Top:	54:44	At that rate, we may see 490 quorums of seventies right?
Hank Smith:	54:52	It's been just a wonderful day Brent. Section 107 to me means so much more now. Not just the structure, understanding the structure, but also understanding the Lord's purpose behind it.
Dr. Brent Top:	55:05	Thank you for the privilege.
Hank Smith:	55:07	Been wonderful. Well, with that, we want to thank Dr. Brent Top for joining us today. 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. The Kirtland Temple needs to be dedicated. On followHIM. Thank you for joining us on today's episode. Do you or someone you know speak Spanish, Portuguese, or French? You can now watch and listen to our podcast in those languages. Links are in the description below. Today's show notes and transcript are on our website followHIM.co. That's followHIM.co. Of course, none of this could happen without our incredible production crew. David Perry, Lisa Spice, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra, Heather Barlow, Amelia Kabwika, Sydney Smith and Annabelle Sorensen.

followHIM Favorites



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| Hank Smith: | 00:02 | <p>Welcome to followHIM Favorites. This is where John and I are sharing a single story to go with each week's lesson. John, I have a story for you in section 108 of the Doctrine & Covenants. Verse seven. Great verse here. The Lord says, strengthen your brethren in all your conversation, all your prayers, all your exhortations, all your doings. All is a pretty high percentage word. He's saying, I want you lifting people everywhere you go. But what happens when things go wrong? Can you still strengthen people in your conversations, in your prayers and all you're doing? I'm gonna tell you a story, actually it's a series of stories about Thomas Edison. I know you've heard of him, brother Edison of the 70, he invented quite a bit of what we use today. Did you know when he was 12 years old, he lost 90% of his hearing, and his parents were devastated, thought, that's it. His life is over. He said, quote, I like it. It helps me concentrate. When he is in his late thirties, he's trying to create a light bulb that will be available to the general public for pretty cheap. It's not working year after year after year. He's trying this model and this model and this model, and it doesn't work. And some newspaper wrote, Edison has failed. He wrote back, John, he said, I have not failed. I have found over a thousand ways in which it will not work.</p> |
| John Bytheway: | 01:26 | <p>Great outlook.</p> |
| Hank Smith: | 01:27 | <p>Yeah, try that with your math teacher. I didn't get that wrong. I didn't fail. I found a new way to get that wrong. I bet you've never seen that before. When he's in his late sixties, his New Jersey factory burns to the ground. Burns to the ground, \$3 million in damages. Did he have insurance? Yes, he had \$250,000 worth of insurance. He's out \$2.75 million. When his son got to the fire, this is what he said. He said, I saw him. My heart broke for him. He was an old man. He would not live to see this rebuilt, but when he saw me, he shouted, where's your mother? I think his name was Charlie. Charlie. Where's your mother? And he said, father, I don't know. And he said, Charlie, find your mother fast and bring her here. She'll never see a fire like this as long as she lives. He's excited watching this fire. The</p> |

next day when the employees showed up to see the damage, listen to what he says. He says, there is great value in this disaster, my friends, because all of our mistakes are burned up. Now we get to start brand new. This idea of I can take something negative. You know what? There's actually a good thing in this. I'm gonna strengthen you in all my conversation, all my prayers, all my exhortations, all my doing.

John Bytheway: 02:47

I'm not Thomas Edison. You know we had a house fire contained to just our kitchen, very small. My father-in-law said, this is gonna be a big challenge for Three Day Kitchen and Bath. My attitude was, too soon. Too soon, too soon.

Hank Smith: 03:01

Too soon. Don't joke. Too soon. Don't joke about that.

John Bytheway: 03:04

And here's Thomas Edison saying, go get your mother.

Hank Smith: 03:07

Wow. She's gotta see this fire. All of our mistakes are burned up. Now there's a time to accept something went wrong. But I like what the Lord is asking of us here. Use good times as well as bad times to strengthen each other in everything you do. Do you remember when Jesus is giving his great intercessory prayer in John 17, he's just giving compliments left and right about his apostles. They are not of the world. They are wonderful. They are just like me. I'd be in that prayer going, yeah, I like this prayer. Keep going. Maybe we could do that, John. Maybe when we pray for our families, we could say, aren't these people amazing? Aren't I so lucky to have these wonderful children and this wonderful spouse? Strengthen people in prayers.

John Bytheway: 03:50

It doesn't leave us a lot of wiggle room for gossip or tearing people down does it? None. All your doings, comings, goings conversation.

Hank Smith: 03:58

Strengthen your brethren. I love it. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get any podcast. We are with Dr. Brent Top this week. He's really fun. He's been with us before and he walks us through sections 106, 107, 108 teaches us about the history, kind of the structure of the church and the priesthood organization of the church. It's really fun. It's really interesting. And then come back here next week, we'll do another followHIM Favorite.