



"The Lord Looketh on the Heart" **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:

Could God see a king in the most unlikely of people and what happens when a humble leader lets pride take hold? Join Hank and John as they welcome Dr. Geoff Wright to explore 1 Samuel and Israel's shift from judges to monarchy and the tragic rise and fall of King Saul.

Part 2:

Dr. Geoff Wright continues to explore King Saul's impatience, disobedience, and lack of trust that led to his downfall while God looked past outward appearances to anoint David--illustrated by Dr. Wright's dramatic rescue from a collapsed snow cave by his young son.

Timecodes:

Part 1 -

- 0:00 - Part 1 - Dr. Geoff Wright
- 2:06 Israel's move from judges to kings
- 2:40 Teaser
- 5:05 Bio
- 7:40 Come, Follow Me Manual
- 9:09 Anticipatory set—Rosa Parks, Malala, J.K. Rowling
- 10:50 Pretest questions: Seeing potential in the overlooked
- 13:35 Historical context
- 15:29 President Kimball and patriarch James Womack
- 17:15 Coaches and mentors
- 20:30 “Only pass to one guy”
- 22:51 Martin Harris and God’s work goes forth
- 25:00 Wanting a king to fit in
- 29:06 Lunchboxes, big feet, and Dickies pants
- 31:08 Parenting and the PowerPoint pitch
- 35:47 Tying your identity to the Lord
- 38:29 God sends Saul
- 39:00 Greg: The Student who left a gang
- 44:17 Choosing kings vs. letting God prevail
- 47:21 Saul losing his humility
- 49:57 Staying “little in our own sight”
- 52:07 Building skis
- 55:06 Heat, pressure, repentance and drift trikes
- 57:23 Saul hides “among the stuff”
- 58:41 The neighbor who became a best friend
- 1:03:16 The Spirit changes (and hold onto it)
- 1:14:49 End of Part 1 - Professor Geoff Wright

● Part 2 -

- 0:00 - Part 2 - Dr. Geoff Wright
- 0:55 Mason and the gruff stranger on Christmas Eve
- 3:16 Becoming a new creature
- 5:42 Literally sweeping dirt under the rug
- 9:47 Elder Uchtdorf on small errors and staying on course
- 10:50 the miracle FEEL journal
- 13:35 Ellie’s “God is so good to me”
- 14:0 Tithing settlement and full consecration
- 18:46 Why be all in?
- 22:27 Pioneers and bold love
- 24:24 God’s sorrow over Saul and a new king
- 26:46 The Lord looks on the heart

- 28:50 A snow cave and a son digs to his father's face
- 35:28 The youth are capable
- 38:27 David as unlikely choice
- 41:14 Jeff's testimony of Jesus Christ
- 46:51 FREE book
- 48:15 End of Part 2 - Geoff Wright

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Biographical Information:



Geoff Wright, is a professor in the college of engineering at BYU. His area is technology and engineering education. He has been at BYU for 19 years. He married his best friend Leah 25 years ago, they have 3 amazing children: Isaac, Lucy, and Kate. Isaac served a mission in Armenia, and married his HS sweetheart Madelyn. Lucy is on her mission in Tahiti. And Kate is a sophomore at Maple Mountain HS. They love snow skiing, canyoneering, climbing, biking, boating, and watching a good movie together.

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Hank Smith:	00:00:00	Coming up in this episode on followHIM.
Dr. Geoff Wright:	00:00:03	While we were living there that first month, a guy moved into the house next to us. He had just gotten out of prison and he was on his front porch smoking. You know, I looked over and I thought, all right, this is my new neighbor. So I say, hello, how's it going? He's a little gruff. We're about the same age. Little did I know that he would become one of my best friends.
Hank Smith:	00:00:29	Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with my cohost whose name is John Bytheway, a choice young man and a goodly. And there was not among the children of Israel, a goodlier person than he. John, I'm reading 1 Samuel nine. I went, I know exactly what to call you this week.
John Bytheway:	00:00:55	I was born of goodlier parents.
Hank Smith:	00:00:57	They were goodlier.
John Bytheway:	00:00:59	They were the goodlierest. I'd like to be a fly on the wall in the King James translation room when they-
Hank Smith:	00:01:05	They said, let's go with goodlier.
John Bytheway:	00:01:07	Let's go with goodlier.
Hank Smith:	00:01:08	Goodlier. Well, we're going to see how many times we can say it today. John, we are privileged to be joined by my friend, Dr. Geoff Wright. Dr. Wright, if I can call you Geoff.
Dr. Geoff Wright:	00:01:18	Call me Geoff.
Hank Smith:	00:01:19	Thanks for being here. Thanks for taking time for us.

Dr. Geoff Wright:	00:01:22	It's a privilege to be here. Hank, we've been friends for a long time. John Bytheway I've known on cassette tapes for a long time. If listeners know what a cassette tape is.
Hank Smith:	00:01:33	Right. Yeah. You might have to stop the show and, you know, look it up if you were born after 2001. John Bytheway cassette, that's an item that has blessed many lives John.
Dr. Geoff Wright:	00:01:45	All the dating insights he gave us, yeah.
Hank Smith:	00:01:47	Dating 911. I remember that talk.
Dr. Geoff Wright:	00:01:50	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	00:01:50	Dating 911. John, we're talking about Saul today. Israel makes a decision to move away from the Lord and toward kings. What do you think of when you think of this transition?
John Bytheway:	00:02:06	I think of the same stories as the Book of Mormon. It's just kind of, ooh, kings. Ooh. Surely this thing leads to bondage. Sometimes there's good kings like King Benjamin, but it's kind of rare. I kind of have that, ooh, this won't end well type of feeling.
Hank Smith:	00:02:21	There's this heartbreaking moment I'm sure Geoff will talk about, which is the Lord says they haven't rejected you Samuel. They have rejected me. They don't want me to be their king. Geoff, as you've been preparing, what do you want to do today? What are you hoping to walk us through?
Dr. Geoff Wright:	00:02:40	I remember Hank, when you asked me, we were at a missionary homecoming.
Hank Smith:	00:02:44	Yeah.
Dr. Geoff Wright:	00:02:44	You were sitting behind me and it was a kid that I had coached on the football team. I remember sitting there and just being so impressed with this young man. He came up to me and he said, hey, Geoff, would you consider being on the podcast? And my initial response I think to you was, no, like, I teach engineering and technology. I don't study the scriptures like you. I was intimidated. You know, like John introed being born of goodly parents, I really was born of goodly parents. I was raised in a home where the gospel was taught. We had family home evening and my dad was a great teacher. You'd act out the stories in the Book of Mormon with little army men and when he wasn't around, my mom made sure that we were reading

scriptures. I was raised with my agency, but also I was raised in a culture where I knew that I had a loving, heavenly father.

00:03:33 And over these 49 years, my faith roots have gone deep and I know and I can testify that I have a loving, heavenly father that we all do and he's aware of us. I was excited by the challenge to study the Old Testament. I really should say thank you, Hank, for inviting me to dig into these chapters. You know what I find interesting about the Old Testament that I didn't observe before? These first books in the Old Testament are complete stories. It's rare, like later in the Old Testament, you don't have stories of people that flow through their entire life. So I really enjoyed reading it because it was a story. After you get past the story, you start looking for gospel connections and you really see the voice of Christ in these chapters. I can honestly say I know more about the Old Testament, but more importantly, I can see the connection to our life and how God is central to it. I love having these moments in my life where I can feel him wrapping his arms or touching my mind, touching my heart with his spirit.

Hank Smith: 00:04:40 I work over in the JSB at BYU and the name Dennis Wright is an important name there still. Dr. Wright out there, the other Dr. Wright, if you're listening, just know we and the JSB, we still adore you, sir. John, I know Geoff. I've known him for 16 years, but I don't know if our listeners besides those engineering students at BYU are going to know who Geoff is. So what do we know?

John Bytheway: 00:05:05 You're going to hear a phrase in here you have never heard on a bio in almost five years of followHIM. Are you ready? Geoffrey A. Wright is an associate professor of technology and engineering studies. He's been at BYU since 2006, so two decades. His areas of teaching involve media, communications, instructional design, digital prototyping, coding and innovation. His research involves STEM education. Now that means, I think, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, [innovation](#) and entrepreneurship, coding, and wait for it, Hank, underwater robotics.

Hank Smith: 00:05:42 That's so great.

John Bytheway: 00:05:43 How cool is that? This is our first underwater robotics professor that we've had here. Dr. Wright's originally from Vancouver, British Columbia. He's married to his wife, Leah. They have three children, Isaac, Lucy and Kate. As you just mentioned, his father, Dennis Wright, was part of that Saints at War project with Robert Freeman. We've had him on here before and that's

important to me. I remember sending all my dad's stuff over to the archive that Dennis and Robert created, but also in our talking before we started recording, Geoff, you talked a lot about coaching. Tell us all the different sports you have coached.

- Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:06:21 When we were first married, Leah and I, we moved to California. I was teaching [computer science](#) part-time and coaching volleyball as the head varsity volleyball coach in Chino, if you know where Chino is, not too far from Anaheim. I also coached basketball and track. Since then, I've always stayed coaching basketball and done some football. Recently, I was the Maple Mountain High School volleyball coach when volleyball was sanctioned here in Utah. We were state champions. We're defending state champions two times in a row. It's awesome to work with youth however we can. You can be a mentor.
- Hank Smith: 00:06:58 Geoff is the real deal. One of the things I love about Geoff is we both were new in the stake and he came right over, introduced himself, shook my hand, made you feel important, a lot like his dad did, actually, when I got to BYU. Geoff, I've looked up to you for a long time and I'm excited you're here. And Leah, Leah comes from a church education family as well, Leah Sherry.
- Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:07:23 Yeah, Tom, her dad, he was the institute director at Oregon State University for most of his career. He was at Penn State for a little bit at the beginning and he's done a lot of work with JST and Joseph Smith Papers and is just an unbelievable teacher himself. Leah's been raised by goodly parents too.
- Hank Smith: 00:07:42 Oh, fantastic. Well, we set expectations high with two solid CES families. I think we found the right guy. Let's jump into the [Come, Follow Me](#) manual and then Geoff, we're excited to learn from you and your expertise. The lesson this week, the Lord looketh on the heart. We're in 1 Samuel. Saul was a keeper of donkeys. Sounds like my house a little bit. Though tall and handsome, he was little in his own sight and self-conscious about his family heritage. On the day he was presented before Israel as their king, he didn't show up. He was so nervous he hid himself. Looking at Saul, you might not have guessed that he would lead the Israelites to victory over their enemies, or that he would later become prideful and rebel against the Lord. David was a keeper of sheep. He wasn't as physically impressive as his seven older brothers.
- 00:08:34 On the day Samuel came to choose a new king for Israel, it didn't seem worthwhile to include David among the possible candidates. So he's left out in the fields with the sheep. Looking

at David, you might not have guessed that he would have the faith and courage to defeat a giant and become Israel's most successful king. But the Lord sees past our labels. Our physical appearance, our insecurities. He looks instead on the heart. And even when our heart isn't quite right, if we're willing, he will give us another heart. Beautiful. All right. Geoff, with that, how do you want to go about this?

- Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:09:09 I think all good teaching starts with an anticipatory set. So I have a question for you and John. I'm flipping the script here. You probably know who Rosa Parks is and JK Rowling. I'm going to put them in the same sentence. And Malala Yousafzai, do you know who she is?
- Hank Smith: 00:09:28 I think so.
- Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:09:29 She was a young girl who was speaking up for education in Pakistan. She was targeted and attacked and, but she kept advocating for education. In fact, she became the youngest Nobel Prize winner. And Rosa Parks, we all know her story. She was a very quiet seamstress and wasn't a famous leader initially. And then she refused to give up her seat in defiance of the Jim Crow segregation laws and really sparked the bus boycott in Alabama. And then JK Rowling, I don't know if you know her background, but she was struggling financially.
- 00:10:03 She was a single mother. She was rejected many times by publishers. So she'd go and write in cafes whenever she had time and eventually she created one of the most successful books ever. So my question to you, what do these three women have in common that really connect with these chapters? What do you think?
- Hank Smith: 00:10:23 Oh, wow. I love having a wise older cohost who always knows the answer to these type of things.
- John Bytheway: 00:10:35 I don't know if this is what you're thinking, but not what you expected. You would not have seen that coming the success that they had or the impact that they had.
- Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:10:44 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:10:45 I was going to say that same thing. John, now that you've said it, I'm like, oh yeah, yeah, me too. Yeah, totally. Me too. No, but I think when I read the manual, you wouldn't look at that person and think, oh, they're going to change the world.

Dr. Geoff Wright:	00:10:59	That's exactly it. There's probably other descriptors, courage, conviction, trust, effort. They took a lot of effort. I love thinking about this need for courage and conviction and maybe not being the one that's noticed, you know, at first. As the hook, then that kind of leads to a pretest. So in my classes, I really like to always pretest. I think it's a good way to kind of warm up the student thinking. Here are my pretest questions for you guys. Were you or do you know of anyone who didn't immediately get picked for a team because they didn't look impressive? I have kids, they probably tried out for sports or music productions and were they picked right away? But then over the season, they worked hard. They were coachable. They became maybe one of the most reliable players. You know, like I coached a lot, so I'm going to make these kind of connections.
	00:11:52	Obviously it isn't about looks right away. Sometimes kids become very coachable or they grow or they mature at a different rate. So that's the first pretest question. The next one I'll let you answer. Have you ever noticed someone who's chosen to be a leader because they were popular or funny and one of those cool kids or whatever, but turns out they actually weren't that good of a leader. And then maybe a quieter student, if you think of maybe in a class that needs a student leader who was quiet but worked really hard and they kept their promises and were diligent, ended up earning the respect and really made a difference. Have you ever noticed someone like that in your life? And then I have two more questions. Here's another question that I think fits that I came up with. Have you ever been tempted to take a shortcut on a project, shortcut on work to get ahead quickly?
	00:12:45	And at first it might even work, but in the end it kind of backfires. We know later on and for Samuel he's taught to obey is better than to sacrifice and so I thought of that. And then the final one, did you ever have a coach or a teacher who really truly saw you for who you are, who believed in you and therefore helped you grow more than what you thought you could? There's a strong connection in these scriptures about the idea of seeing people for who they really are and investing in them, because God invests in us. We're more than what we could be as husbands, as fathers, as mothers and disciples, right?
Hank Smith:	00:13:29	These are great questions and you're right, they do get students thinking. I'm definitely thinking-
Dr. Geoff Wright:	00:13:35	I think this is interesting how this fits the timeline. This happens late 10th century BC, so they say around 1,000 BC. Moses left

Egypt around 1300. So you have this 300 year [period](#) for [Samuel](#), I guess in the research it says it was written maybe around 1100 BC. So initially what we're studying right now, the Israelites really were under Egyptian rule for 450 years. They're shown all these plagues and the plagues weren't just for Pharaoh. The plagues probably were for the Israelites to convert them to remind them. I think it's interesting for how long they've had these judges. They were born and raised, we have probably 300 years of these judges. Everyone else has kings. They're not necessarily growing stronger. In fact, they have wars and battles, and so I think eventually they're wondering, why don't we try something different? That context is interesting. I also noted that in Greek, the Septuagint, it actually refers to 1st and 2nd Samuel as the books of Kingdoms.

00:14:45 So if the book of Kingdoms, at first God was apprehensive to call these kings, but really it's this path towards training them up, reminding them that they are the children of God. They have divine nature. Their king is He, our Savior Jesus Christ and ultimately our heavenly Father. This book of [Kingdoms](#) is an interesting idea to label it as this training and this growth, this evolution towards accepting He who is our king where Samuel then becomes a kingmaker he's kind of labeled as, or he's inaugurating this Davidic dynasty, if you will, establishing this new flow.

Hank Smith: 00:15:29 I want to come back to your questions here. John, you probably remember the story of President Kimball. He's at a stake. I think he's in Arizona somewhere. He has an assignment there to make some changes in the stake. He's got to choose a stake patriarch. I guess he was struggling asking the Lord. He was interviewing people and nothing was really coming to him. And then he was sitting in a meeting, the evening meeting of a stake conference, I think Saturday evening meeting or something. He sees this man two thirds of the way back and he turns to a stake president and says, that is your stake patriarch. The stake president was pretty startled, I guess. He said, that's James Womack. He had been terribly injured in World War II. He'd lost part of an eye, he'd lost his hearing, he'd lost both hands and one arm.

00:16:27 [President Kimball](#) brings him in and says, you know, you're going to be the stake patriarch. And Brother Womack said, Brother Kimball, it is my understanding that a patriarch is to place his hands on the head of a person he blesses. As you can see, I have no hands to place on the head of anyone. Anyway, President Kimball sat down in a chair. He said, I'm a pretty short guy. Come on over. See if your, the stumps of your arms will

reach the top of my head. And they did. And President Kimball said, if you can reach me, you can reach anyone. I will definitely be the shortest person you'll ever give a blessing to. I thought of that when you said, can you think of someone who didn't look super impressive, didn't look the part, but was chosen anyway? In our hearts, we love stories like that.

- John Bytheway: 00:17:15 Yeah, I love your question, Geoff. I was thinking of [Rudy Ruettiger](#). Everybody loves the movie Rudy that he was much shorter than everybody else, but what's the old saying? It's not the size of the dog in the fight, but the size of the fight in the dog. He's there every day, he works every day. And I've always loved the mentoring stories of Paul with Timothy and I love that Ammaron would find a 10-year-old boy. That's not something you would expect and say something you wouldn't say to a lot of 10-year-old boys. I perceive that thou art a sober child and are quick to observe. I suspect he saw things in Mormon that maybe Mormon didn't see in himself. I mean, I think Ammaron was probably quick to observe. Gave him a, I want you to watch this people when you're 24 years old. That's another one that I think of. You saw this congregation and you chose the 10-year-old to give that assignment to, that's pretty good.
- Hank Smith: 00:18:14 I love it. The names that come into my mind when you said, did you have a coach or a teacher who saw you? It'd almost be a disservice to start to list them because I know I'd miss some, but I had a high school football coach, Coach Jacobson called him Coach Jake. I'd known him since I was just a kid. I'd run through a wall for that man. To this day, I'd do anything for him because he saw something in me I absolutely did not see in myself. I've heard he occasionally listens to the show. If you're out there, coach, sure love you. And there's been many other names I could talk about and it fills your heart to think of those people.
- Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:18:53 Yeah, I think ultimately our Heavenly Father sees something in us too, or we want to be where we are on a more local level. As you guys were giving examples, I mean, I didn't prepare this idea, but our spouses to some effect. We always use that idiom like, you married up. But the reality is I did. I mean, for my wife to be patient with me and to see through a lot of my strange habits or whatever, I'm Canadian. She said she had never dated a Canadian. And now she's married to one. How'd that happen?
- Hank Smith: 00:19:28 Yeah, that probably wasn't on her list of things she's absolutely has to have in a spouse. Geoff, I'm interested in this story because this is so ... Hmm, I don't know exactly how to put this, but they're making a poor decision in choosing a king, but the Lord has not left them. There's a, like, oh, the Lord is helping.

They're also heading in the wrong direction, but who's the guy who's, they're going to go west with the saints or, you know, the trek West. And he said, this is not a good idea to go, but I'll go with you. Who was that?

John Bytheway: 00:20:06 Levi Savage and I'll go with you and I'll die with you and I'll help you all I can. And once I saw that [17 Miracles](#) movie, I thought, okay, I got a new hero in my hero Hall of Fame and it's Levi Savage.

Hank Smith: 00:20:21 That's incredible to me. The Lord is saying, this is a bad idea. I'll walk the road with you. I'll help you along the way. Geoff, let's keep going.

Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:20:30 On that point, I think it's interesting, you know, in chapter eight, God tells Samuel to warn the people what a king will do. I love first, because that testifies that Samuel's communicating with God. He's being trained. It highlights how he is a prophet and then he goes and tells the people, hey, they're going to take your sons in war. They'll take daughters for service, land, crops and all this. He goes, he tells the people he warns them and yet they still want it. This really echoed with me in this one example of my life when I was coaching in California, so I was the varsity head coach for the girls high school volleyball team. The team, they were solid. They were good, but we had this one player who played a lot more club and just was an excellent player and we were playing this team early in the season and the rest of the team wasn't playing well.

00:21:19 I told the girls, okay, time out, we're, the ball's only going to go to Tracy. And so I told the setter, everything goes through Tracy. And the other players were like, well, what about us? What do we do? I said, don't worry, that's my decision. That's way we go. And a couple of girls were like, no, I don't think that's a good idea, coach. I was like, trust me, that's what we're doing. So the setter listened and they only set Tracy. Well, then what does the other team have to do? They only have to block one player. We get destroyed that game. Afterwards, the girls are like, Coach, we told you. And I was like, you're right. You know, I should have listened to you guys. Hindsight's 20/20 and grateful they had it because then with this Maple Mountain team where we won state, again, we had a great player, unbelievable player.

00:22:06 He plays for BYU right now. Trey and we could have just set him the whole time, but instead I remembered that and I thought, okay, you know what? We need to develop some other players. Everyone needs to contribute. This is a team. It's a team sport with this kid, Johan, he's from South Africa and he had never

played volleyball and he came and tried out and he was just this really great athlete, but he could not play volleyball. But Trey took him under his wing and he would come early and stay late and come on days when we didn't have practice and he worked so hard. By the end of the season, he's starting and he's pounding the ball. The team just rallied around that kind of mentoring, having someone to mentor and to build and you see this team come together as a family and then that becomes our motto and the family stands for, forget about me, I love you.

00:22:56 That's what we said in all our cheers and it really changed the dynamic of the team the second half of the year we come together. They just had a lot of trust in each other. You see this in the scriptures where we're warned but we don't listen. Imagine if we did listen, imagine what would have happened to Israel had they listened. What would have Saul's life been like? Yeah, I just share that story because it kind of is similar to Martin Harris. Martin Harris goes to Joseph Smith, hey, I need to show these transcripts to my wife and to some friends. I'm investing heavily in you. Can you go ask God?

Hank Smith: 00:23:34 Right. Help me out.

Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:23:34 Joseph goes and asks God and God gives an answer. No. How many times did he go back and, you know, he's a third time and finally God's like, okay, you're not going to listen, so yeah, I guess do what you want. We know the story. They're lost and it didn't help his relationship one single day in the end anyways, meaning Martin Harris and his wife. There is that kind of buyer's remorse, that cognitive dissonance that we all experience when we're asked to listen and we don't, this idea of pride and humility. When I was thinking about that story, I looked up Doctrine and Covenants 3 and I love this scripture says, "The works and the designs and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated. Neither can they come to naught. Behold, thou art Joseph and thou wast chosen to do the work of the Lord and because of transgression, if thou art not aware, thou wilt fall.

00:24:28 Nevertheless, my work shall go forth." That's not just a testament but a promise. God's work will go forth. In spite of our pride, in spite of our inability to see clearly and be myopic, it goes forward. I love that promise and that testimony that God gives us in the scriptures and it's highlighted again in this book in 1 Samuel.

Hank Smith: 00:24:51 How wonderful. I think that does happen here. They choose kings and John, you can help me with my facts here. They choose kings. It's going to be a long time until Israel's going to

take its place back as the people that will bless the whole earth. In fact, we're still rebuilding from this decision and then the scattering that comes after it and then the millennia, the Lord is waiting and then 1823, it's time to gather Israel. I think a lot of it starts right here. That tells you how patient the Lord is. He's not saying, hey, don't do this. It's going to take me 2,500 years to come back from this. But okay. Okay. I can work with you. I will never force Israel to be Israel. Well, I will walk you along your path. I have a question for both of you. We want a king so that we may be like all the nations.

00:25:48 That desire to fit in or to not stand out. I've been through times in my life where I didn't want to stand out. I wanted to fit right in. I remember there's times where I've told Sara, I don't want to do that. It'll look terrible if I do that thing, you know, at this whatever corporate event. That desire to fit in can blind you to consequences.

John Bytheway: 00:26:11 Yeah, I think you're looking at 1 Samuel 8:5, is it?

Hank Smith: 00:26:15 Yeah, the 8:5 and then 8:20. Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:26:18 Make us a king to judge us like all the nations, kind of a, we want to be like them. Everybody else is doing it right and we're not. Maybe that's the hard part to think, we don't want to stand out that way. I like the way you put it. What did you say? We don't want to stand out or we want to-

Hank Smith: 00:26:38 I want to fit in. Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:26:40 I want to fit in.

Hank Smith: 00:26:41 Kings are trending. Don't you know that, Samuel?

Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:26:44 Yeah. That's a good way to put it. Yeah. I really like the ESV to compliment the King James version, you know? And it reads, "Appoint a king to lead us such as all the other nations have." I've been thinking a lot about this lately, how I was born into the easiest generation that has ever existed to be raised. I think of my dad. My dad, when he was born, they had an outhouse. They had a pump of water. You compare that to our kids nowadays. They have technology that we couldn't even imagine and the temptations and the rewiring that happens because of it. And then you have us, these kids that were born in the 70s, raised 80s and 90s, we had indoor plumbing and no technology. So it was this easy time period and these kids nowadays where

there's so many competing voices, it's not just appoint us a king, it's, whoa, this is really important.

00:27:42 This is really important. This is really important. So when you think about a generation being saved, this generation had to be saved for these latter days. They're way more talented and capable than we are. They have to be because they have to decipher what is important. They have to decipher what is truth. With all the AI, they have to be able to dig deep and find what is truth and say, I don't need a king appointed for me. I know who my king is. My king is my father in heaven. My king and my prince is Jesus Christ. This is an amazing generation where they can clearly state, I don't need a king appointed. He's been appointed and he's saved me.

Hank Smith: 00:28:28 Yeah. That's beautiful. Geoff, I don't know if you ever went through this as someone in Canada. I'll have students who say that there was a time in their lives where they got tired of waking up at dark 30 in the morning when no one else was doing that. I'm tired of looking for modest clothes when no one else has to do that. I'm tired of being the odd one where everybody kind of looks at me sideways. I'm tired. I'm tired of that. I come back to this story. I'm tired of being different. Let me be like everybody else. And this was the beginning of the end or a part of the end, I should say, for Israel.

John Bytheway: 00:29:06 Yeah. I can't remember who this was. It was either Brad Wilcox or Randal Wright that talked about showing up at school one day. I think it was Brad with a lunchbox, like in high school. Saying, no, you can't sit at this table unless you have a lunchbox. Somebody did something funny like that. And just completely changed the trend with the whole school because what people perceive as cool.

Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:29:33 I remember kindergarten. This was a big moment. For some reason it was important to have big feet in my kindergarten class. People were always comparing shoe sizes because you'd take off your shoes to sit on the red carpet and have a story read to you. I was just normal stature, I guess, and other kids had bigger feet than me at the time. And so I remember, going home and coming up with a plan and my plan was I put a little bit of masking tape on my toes, pull on multiple pairs of socks and show up with big feet. Somehow I managed to get my shoe on at home, but then when it was red carpet time, I was all proud. I pulled off my kangaroo, my roo shoes and my Velcro and pulled them off and just flaunted my big feet, my fake big feet and sitting there just with those dogs hanging out and it was time to go out to recess and I tried to get my feet back in

those shoes I could not get them in. So ultimately my teacher said, well, you're going to have to stay inside for recess. So it backfired. Which it backfired for the Israelites, right?

Hank Smith: 00:30:39 Yeah. That's funny. I might have to use that on you next time I see you.

Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:30:46 Yeah, yeah. Normal shoe size here.

Hank Smith: 00:30:50 Yeah, yeah. It happens to all of us. And when it does happen to our kids, because it will, I think it's a very normal thing for a young person to think, I don't want to be different. I want to fit in to come back to this story where the Lord says, let me be your king.

Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:31:08 On that point, Hank, I'm glad you brought up kids because, you know, if you look at Come, Follow Me for our youth and how it's been redesigned to help us be better parents. I remember my daughter coming to me several years ago. She's assigned to Tahiti. She's in the Provo MTC right now and she really wanted social media. Since I teach technology, I was very apprehensive. It wasn't something that I was excited about giving her access to Instagram, you know? I kept putting it off. I was like, well, wait till you're 16. And then when she turned 16, she's like, well, what about now? I said, you know, maybe 17 would be a good time, right? Eventually she came to me and my wife with a PowerPoint, like a Google slide presentation with an argument of why it would help her life.

00:31:55 Slide one, slide two, slide three, slide four. I think about what God tells Samuel to do. He says, go back to the people and warn them and say, okay, you want a king? Here's what's going to happen. I remember this exact thing happened with my daughter. I said, okay, you really want social media. Here are the things that I'm worried about, just so you know. The constant comparison, the endless scrolling. And so I made a list too. I think it was a good list. I don't think I did it the right way. I think I needed to maybe spend some more time thinking about it and talking with Heavenly Father and going to for the strength of youth and then having a better, honest conversation with her. But I did appreciate that she listened and I think that's really what the strength of youth brochure booklet training invites us to do as parents is to have a conversation with your youth and to involve God in that conversation. And in the end, it worked out.

Hank Smith: 00:32:51 As our teenagers are going towards young adulthood, there has to be that conversation where maybe when you were younger it

was your brain's not fully developed and so until it is, I'm your brain. But as your daughter, 16, 17, 18, you're saying, okay, here's what I'm worried about and here's what I'd hope you would do. I see the wisdom of that here.

- John Bytheway: 00:33:17 There's a certain amount of because I said so that, and that works for a while. And then you have to start developing PowerPoint. I've never thought of that before, but boy, does the Lord get out a PowerPoint right here. Okay, slide one. This is going to be the manner of your king. All right. He's right. He lets them know. I guess the humility of knowing, I think maybe God knows stuff that we don't know.
- Hank Smith: 00:33:45 Right.
- John Bytheway: 00:33:45 He also is going to say, okay, I will let you learn this for yourself. And they do. And we get to talk about it and act like we're smarter than they were.
- Hank Smith: 00:33:56 Yeah. That's funny is my kids are much better than I ever was and I find myself being critical. I think Sara sometimes leans over and says, they're five times the people we ever were.
- John Bytheway: 00:34:11 I served my mission in the Philippines and this is the 80s, this is a long time ago and things have just grown there tremendously and I love the Filipinos so much, but people would come to church with a beer T-shirt on or something like that. Guess what we said? Thank you for coming. Because that's all they had. And maybe we have a different expectation for someone else and maybe the Lord has a different expectation for us, but boy, can we start with acknowledging all the good as you've talked about, Hank, with your kids? I mean, I need to do that too. You guys might remember brother Randal Wright. He taught seminary forever down in Texas and he taught at especially for youth and things like that. He talked about I think it was a challenge he gave to a kid in his seminary class to wear these pants called Dickies.
- 00:35:01 It's a brand. I've seen it before. So he had to wear these pants. They were not cool. They were not fashionable. And if I remember Brother Wright's story correctly, Randal Wright, if anybody said anything to him about his pants, like why are you wearing those? he had to turn to them and say, because I like them. That was the deal, because I like them. And there's a couple of things I remember about the story and one of them was how, man, it taught him something about this be like the nations as far as fashion goes that was really surprising and

sobering to this kid, how much there was a force of, you got to look this way or dress this way.

Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:35:47 That's all we wore on our mission. It was our mission pant because they were so hardy.

John Bytheway: 00:35:52 They're so tough. Yeah, they're like mailman pants or something.

Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:35:55 We were, yeah, a biking mission. He set the trend.

John Bytheway: 00:36:01 And yeah, there was a force to that and you wanted to be like the nations or like the other people were dressing so I guess that you wouldn't stand out. Boy, the Lord I guess is asking us, you tie your identity to me, not to the other what everybody else is doing. Easy to understand, harder to do, tie your identity to me, not everybody else what they're doing.

Hank Smith: 00:36:24 Yeah. And then it's hard to do. Even for adults.

John Bytheway: 00:36:28 Easy to say, hard to do. Sure. It was pretty depressing when my wife said, we need to update our kitchen. I was like, well, what does that mean? Well, this, this, these colors are all wrong. Well, look, this cupboard, you open it, it works, you close it, it works. You want to update it? Everything's just fine here. When I learned that kitchens also have to follow fashion. That was a hard day.

Hank Smith: 00:36:50 As a religion teacher, I remember a girl came up to me, it was a few years ago and she said, your ties are way too wide. And I was like, what? They're way too wide. They look, I don't know, you look, it looks kind of frumpy, I think the word was or something. I said, oh, and I remember going home, Sara, I got to change all my ties. You got to redo the ties. I don't want to be the weird religion teacher with the tie that doesn't trend. I think we can all understand this and maybe instead of looking at these people with a judgmental, I can't believe they did that, to I wonder if I'm doing that.

John Bytheway: 00:37:30 Exactly. What's hard for me to believe is it sounds like such a convincing case you read he's going to do this, he's going to take your sons, he's going to appoint for himself, he's going to take your daughters, he's going to make them bakers, he's going to take your seed, your vineyards. And he has this super convincing case, probably some really impressive PowerPoint slides. And what do they say? No, we want a king so we can be

like the nations. It's just in one ear, out the other, picks up speed during the trip and they didn't hear a thing. Amazing.

Hank Smith: 00:37:56 Yeah. I wonder how often I'm like that. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, I get that. Yeah, yeah, I get that. No, I'm not, I'm going to do it my way.

John Bytheway: 00:38:04 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:38:05 Thanks for your help. Thanks for your input, Lord. And I like Geoff, you've taught us that with Martin Harris, with these people and with us, he'll say, okay, I'll go with you and it's going to be a longer journey.

Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:38:17 Yeah, absolutely. If we just show a little more trust.

Hank Smith: 00:38:21 Geoff, this is fantastic. I knew you would be great. You have some Dennis Wright scripture knowledge in you. Let's keep going. Should we move on to chapter nine?

Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:38:29 Yeah, absolutely. It's a great chapter. Chapter nine, one verse that pops out there that I thought was really interesting was, "I will send you a man, anoint him to be captain or ruler over my people, Israel." That verse really jumps out at me because here is God saying, okay, I can see all things, I'm omniscient, you really want a king? All right, well then I'm going to send you somebody. Here is a great person. We've all read Saul, tall, handsome, impressive. Hank, you were saying that about John earlier. He is the Saul goodlier. Saul looked the part of a king that Israel would accept. Even though he was of a tribe that might not have been recognized as the tribe to come from, he was tall and handsome and impressive and he was a hard worker evidently. He was taking care of the donkeys.

00:39:26 He was worried about the donkeys. Had to go find them and he knew where to search and he knew to go to a prophet. There was the prophet Samuel. Why don't you go ask him, his servant says, and he's willing to do it. He had some background of faith and some belief. God sends this great person with lots of potential to him. I love that intro and it did make me think of a personal story. This comes from my time living in California and I was teaching part-time while I was coaching and I was teaching this computer class on the first day of class in walks this taller, handsome, impressive young man, those words that we see in, about Saul. He was a Hispanic kid and he's just one of those kids when you see him, you're like, okay, that is someone that all the kids probably like and respect. And he came up to me and he

gave me this handshake said I couldn't follow along and he's like, my name's Greg. I was like, pleasure to meet you.

00:40:24 I'm so glad to have you in class. He's like, thank you. Thank you for being a teacher. He was just like a really cool kid. He sat down and other kids were coming in and it was time to get class started and they were being loud and usually as a teacher, you try and get their attention. Instead of me doing it, Greg stood up and said, hey, you guys, listen up. All of a sudden I deputize him as my helper here every day, same thing. He'd come on time, he'd give me this handshake that I never quite figured out. And he'd always look me in the eyes like, how you doing, Mr. Wright? I love this kid. He was just impressive and all the other kids respected him and liked him too. About halfway through the semester he disappears and I wondered where he was.

00:41:11 He'd never missed class and I called up his buddy, one of his buddies AC, and I said, AC, come here. I said, hey, where's Greg? And he just shook his head, he's like, don't worry about it. And I said, I am worried about it. And he said, don't worry about it. And he turned and sat down. So a couple days go by and I'm worried. He didn't come back. So I decided to drive to his house, I look up his address, no one's there, I didn't know what to do. And then, you know, the next week rolls around and he shows up and he's got a hoodie on, pulled over his head. He doesn't come up to me. He goes right to his computer, his desk, he sits down and has his head down and I was like, whoa, okay, what's going on?

00:41:57 Little dark cloud coming over him. So I try to go to him and then we had like a no hoodie policy at the school and I said, hey, Greg, you know the rule you got to pull your hood down and he shook his head. Didn't say any words to me. I said, hey, Greg, are you doing all right? You got to, you know, take the hood down.

00:42:15 So he slowly pulls his hood back and he was visibly beaten, bruised. And so I said, hey, are you okay? And he just shook his head and he just said, leave me alone. So I went back, sat down and I called up AC again. I said, AC, what's going on there? And AC said, I told you to leave it alone. I said, hey, you know, what's going on? And he said, can't you see? Can't you see what happened? Are you so blind? And I said, yeah, I guess I am. He said, well, he just jumped in. And I guess, you know, that's the, he got jumped into a gang and he had to get beat up to make it in the gang. He's just infrequent at school then. He would never come and say hi, he didn't help with the class and his grades fell off and I just worried about him and then he disappears

completely and I don't see him again for the rest of the school year.

00:43:17 End of the school year comes and I'm just packing up and all the kids are gone and it's the last day and it's, you know, maybe four o'clock I'm ready to leave and who walks in? Greg walks in and he looks like his old self. He comes in, he gives me the handshake. He says to me, hey, I just want you to know I'm out. I ran away, ran away to Long Beach. I'm living with some cousins and he said that life was not for me. He looked at me and he said, I got to tell you something. Thank you. Thank you for believing in me, knowing that this was not for me. Unlike Saul who really falls into the trap of the world, this young man, he rose above the trials of the day, the temptation to fit in.

Hank Smith: 00:44:17 Wow. Thanks, Geoff. Thank you. I've spent my life with young people. Not a lot of those stories have happy endings. That's beautiful that he comes out of that because Saul doesn't. You said earlier, what could have Saul's life been like? It's so heartbreaking to me that Israel wants to fit in and in their fitting in, they take a good kid out of where he probably would have just lived his whole life. They make him a king and they watch him nose dive and they just get another one. Let's just go pick someone else. John, you've heard me say this before. I think we do this as a culture. We find a singer out of some small town that we love. We raise them up and we watch their life nose dive and we just go get another one. We make them a king basically or we make them a star.

00:45:19 Some stories turn around, but usually we watch them nose dive into drugs and problems and then rehab, and then we go get another one. This is an example of that. What could have his life been like? Saul's almost as much a victim of this as anyone else. So sad.

John Bytheway: 00:45:37 Well, Hank and Geoff, choosing a king for Israel, got [President Nelson](#) in my head. Israel means let God prevail or be willing to let God prevail. Here, they weren't. We want a king. We're not going to let you prevail. We're going to go get a king and look what's happening.

Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:45:55 This is kind of random, but it makes me really think about Article of Faith number five. I don't know if I'll quote it exactly right, but we believe a man must be called of God by prophecy and by the laying of hands, by those who are in authority to preach the gospel and administer in the ordinances. Imagine if that was the method. We not just called people to church callings and so forth, but we looked at, to the world, right,

where we say, okay, God, you are our king. So help us understand.

- Hank Smith: 00:46:26 This scares me when I go to look for other kings and I do it in different ways in my life. I know I go to social media or sports, maybe some influencers. That's who I'm going to follow. I really like this person. I'm going to listen to them. There is an opportunity cost where the Lord says, you have rejected me. You do not want me to reign over you.
- John Bytheway: 00:46:52 What's the theme for the youth this year? Walk with me. It's not walk with social media influencers. It's walk with me.
- Hank Smith: 00:47:04 Yeah, and when we choose an influencer or any other star or athlete, whatever it may be, when we choose them as our king, we automatically reject our heavenly king. Geoff, this is fantastic, so far, let's keep going.
- Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:47:21 When people are selected, sometimes you're a little bit hesitant about accepting the call and we see that with Saul. I think he was a little bit surprised. He knew he was tall, but he also knew he was from the tribe of Benjamin. So he was a little self-conscious about himself. Maybe the family heritage or maybe he just wasn't well spoken at first, who knows? Sometimes that happens when we receive callings in the church. You're called to serve and you think, well, I don't know if I could do this. You feel maybe some of that imposter syndrome, but your idea where, John, that you brought up, let God prevail. Sometimes that show of faith is even in ourselves. And I realize that there's some issues of timing. Sometimes you extend a call and the timing isn't right. But even that, there's some beauty in that.
- 00:48:07 I remember recently we were extending a call and the timing wasn't right for this individual. They wanted to say yes, but their life was really, really busy. They felt bad and I said, don't feel bad. I think a lot of times when we extend calls, it's just so you know that God sees you. And I think that's really important for people to understand is God is aware of you and he wants us to serve and consecrate, but at the same time with, in regards to callings, maybe the timing's not right, but he does still recognize your talents and your abilities and your willingness and people should know that God sees you and he's grateful for your willingness to serve. And in this case of Saul, maybe it was hard to say, I'm going to be the king? Are you...? This is a hard situation. I'm going to be the first king after these judges. Maybe he was pretty knowledgeable and thought, this is going to be disrupting to my life. Maybe he was. We should give him a little more credit in this early part of his life.

Hank Smith:	00:49:06	How do you maintain that type of humility? He says, I'm nobody. Be confident in yourself, move forward, but man, he loses this humility. I sometimes bookend that reference you just read 1 Samuel 9:21. Who am I? Throw a cross reference in there, 1 Samuel 18:18, where you can say, okay, here's how he started. Here's how it ends. He's so upset because women are saying Saul hath slain his thousands but David, his 10,000s. Saul is, it says he was very wroth and saying, and the saying displeased him saying they talk about David and his ten thousands and to me they have ascribed but thousands. What happened to this guy? I'm just a Benjaminite.
John Bytheway:	00:49:57	The fact that we are reading this, this is why it's so nice, like Geoff said, to be raised in the scriptures and seeing this because you've seen this lesson play out so many times before. If I start getting all full of myself, the Lord can do anything he wants and he has a way of humbling people. These scriptures that we all love, how many stories are there of somebody that takes themselves too seriously and here's the Lord saying, you got to consider yourself fools before God in the Book of Mormon. In chapter 15, we're going to hear Samuel say, when thou wast little in thine own sight and somehow he became big in his own sight. One time Hank and Geoff, I'm watching a video called Faith of an Observer about Hugh Nibley that, I can't remember, understood or spoke or could read 33 languages, was it?
	00:50:52	And at the end of the video, I know, he's walking up to these hieroglyphics in Egypt just reading them like we would read a chalkboard. He's like, yeah, the prince of the two lands will come down. And he jumps away from the cameraman. The camera dude's like, where's he going? It's so funny because he didn't care about accolades and stuff. At the end of this video, Hugh Nibley says, you know, none of us is very smart. None of us know very much, but the thing the angels envy us for is we can forgive and we can repent. That was Hugh Nibley. We love these stories, but boy, learn the lesson that stay little in your own sight. If God gives you a gift or if you have gifts, he can take it away. Samuel recognizes that when he said, remember when you were little in your own sight? You were better back then.
Hank Smith:	00:51:38	I liked you more back then. I remember President Uchtdorf said there's a reason that almost every lesson goes back to the 121st section of the Doctrine and Covenants. We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men.
John Bytheway:	00:51:57	As soon as they get a little authority, and I love this, as they suppose.

Hank Smith:	00:52:02	As they suppose they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion.
Dr. Geoff Wright:	00:52:07	Let's move to chapter 10. There's really interesting twist to the story, I think. When we look at chapter 10, as I studied it, Saul is chosen by God, not just the people because he's anointed. I think verse nine is very poignant. In the King James version, we read God changed Saul's heart and all these signs were fulfilled that day. In another way, God gave him another heart, I guess the, we should read it as, and it's a big deal. I teach a material science class where we do plastics and metals, some of the fun projects that we build skis in that class. I love snow skiing and so I wanted to change how the class had been taught traditionally and I decided, well, let's make skis, you know, we're in Utah. That'd be something unique. It brings in design elements and we teach the engineering design process and the students research the perfect ski for them, for their height, their weight, their style of skiing, or for someone that they want to give the ski to.
	00:53:09	When you're working with plastics and metals, when you're making skis, if we use a lot of form and jigs and fixtures and what you're trying to do is you're trying to form the plastic into the shape that you need, right? And so when you're building skis, you'll have a baltic birch core, that's what we use and then you're going to use a lot of fiberglass on top of the ski, you'll have a PTEX, which is like a polyplastic on the bottom. We've created an aluminum jig that you put it in and then we'll have a vacuum that once you put all your layers of resin and fiberglass, it sucks it all together. So you're really molding this to be a certain style that you design to be built. And what we see in chapter 10, what's happening to Saul is that his heart is being changed.
	00:54:00	Saul really has good intention early in his career. He's trying to follow the prophet. I love that we see that his heart was changed. As a good leader, you're looking to the people and I'm sure he was looking to the people. I guess that's kind of my intro is this idea that God, in spite of us, he'll put us in contexts where we can be molded. A lot of times callings do that for us. Was it President Hinckley ? That said every new member needs three things, and one of those three things was a calling. Callings help us do that. And we have callings in all parts of our life. A calling as a father, as a husband, or mother, as a daughter, as a son. These are all callings. You get callings in church too, but if you allow yourself with humility and through humility to be kind of formed, I think you can become better than what you thought you could be. That apprehension that Saul initially had allowing

himself to follow Samuel the prophet, he was starting to be formed into something that was great initially.

Hank Smith: 00:55:06 It was on its way and you have high hopes for him in these chapters.

Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:55:11 Yeah, high hope. One of our other projects actually that you say that Hank is in the metal section we were building drift trikes. We teach the students about different types of welding and then they're given a project and one of the projects we decided to build was drift trikes and then donate them to kids. And a drift trike, if you remember big wheels back in the 80s where you sit low and they would, you know, you could skid out. The students, they're learning to weld and they're bending metal and they're taking apart a bike and using the parts to Frankenstein and weld up this drift trike. I mean, that takes a lot of heat. When you're welding, I mean, you're putting a high volume of heat to break down that initial layer on, and using a MIG welder, for example, you're changing it into something greater.

00:56:00 There's a lot of heat and pressure that you're using to form these materials and certainly there was heat and pressure on Saul as a new king. They just had judges for 300 years at least. So there was heat and pressure put on him. Luckily, he had a prophet that he could follow that he could listen to. I like watching my students put heat and pressure to make these drift trikes or whatever they make and it doesn't always turn out perfect. What's nice about metal is you can go back and you can add heat again and rebend it and reweld it. There's a great parallel to repentance and the grace of God, which you see a little bit of that come up with Saul. He received some grace and he had some opportunity to repent. Did he take all the opportunities? I don't think he took it all, but it was offered. And I think that's a nice parallel that in my classes we do talk about that. We talk about the power of repentance and grace and how that ties into the material science of the materials that we're working with.

Hank Smith: 00:56:59 That's great. At a place like BYU, you can bear your testimony over your plastic fiberglass skis.

Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:57:06 Right. Yeah. You'll have to try them out, Hank. They're good.

Hank Smith: 00:57:11 Ok.

Dr. Geoff Wright: 00:57:11 They're the best skis you can ride.

Hank Smith:	00:57:12	You can come and, you can tell me the best ski for me. Could you make one that I never fall down? Could you, could you do that?
Dr. Geoff Wright:	00:57:21	Yeah. Okay, that might be a sled.
Hank Smith:	00:57:23	Okay. Yeah. All right. I'll take it. One of my favorite moments is 1 Samuel chapter 10, verse 22. Where is the new king?
John Bytheway:	00:57:35	He's hiding.
Hank Smith:	00:57:35	I don't know. Let me go find him. They inquired of the Lord further if the man should yet come through there. And the Lord answered, behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff.
John Bytheway:	00:57:45	Among the stuff.
Hank Smith:	00:57:48	He really does not want to be king. You're going to have to put up with me here. There was a sacred meeting that was about to begin. A mother could not find her son anywhere. She searched and searched, finally located him, sitting outside on the curb with his head in his hands. She said, son, we have to go in now. Sacrament's about to start. He said, Mom, I can't go in there. Nobody likes me. No one will talk to me. She said, son, but you have to go in. You're the bishop. So...
John Bytheway:	00:58:19	I thought that's where you were going.
Hank Smith:	00:58:22	Geoff, I know you're a member of the stake presidency. Did that ever make you want to go hide, right? When they said, hey, by the way.
Dr. Geoff Wright:	00:58:28	Yeah, it was a little overwhelming when you receive the call, right? But I don't think it was any more overwhelming than when you're a deacon and you're first asked to pass the sacrament and you're nervous.
Hank Smith:	00:58:40	Yeah.
Dr. Geoff Wright:	00:58:41	I was thinking about this a little bit about a friend of mine, if I can share a story. He's one of my best friends. His name's Brian Martin. Years ago when we moved from California here to Utah, we moved in. We bought this old house in South Provo and was restoring it while we were living there that first month, a guy moved into the house next to us. Turns out it was, it was his house. He had just gotten out of prison and come home and he was on his front porch and he was smoking. You know, I looked

over and I thought, all right, this is my new neighbor. So I said, hello, how's it going? Little gruff. We're about the same age. Little did I know that he would become one of my best friends. And how it happened, it aligns here with Saul.

00:59:30 We are anointed as sons and daughters of God and this was my chance to be a good friend and to remind this buddy of mine that he was a son of God. Really, it was my son that broke down the bear. He was just a little kid, maybe three or four, and he'd go over every day and say, hey, Brian, you want to mow your lawn? And he'd have his Fisher Price mower and he'd just walk him back and forth on his lawn and Brian then would get out his mower and they'd mow together and then they'd go watch Elf. They must have watched Elf 50 times that year.

01:00:04 He was just such a great guy and we just became good friends. Every day I'd go over and talk to Brian and just talk about life and what he had been through. Eventually I say, hey, do you want to go to church this Sunday with us? Just sit with us? No pressure, but I'm telling you it makes me a better man. He said, sure. And so he came to church. He was born in the church, but he hadn't been back for a long time. He'd lived a rough life, obviously, if he was getting out of prison. It was just this beautiful relationship over the next couple of years. Eventually he received the priesthood and here you have a 40 plus guy going to pass the sacrament for his first time. What I love is in verse six, the Spirit turned him into another man.

01:00:53 He was changed. Brian was changed just as Saul was changed as we talked over the years. I said, well, what's next for you? And he said, I'd love to be married and be sealed in the temple. I know that's important. I'd love to make that covenant. And I think at first he was like Saul. He hid. He was scared of these covenants. He was scared of coming back to church. In fact, passing the sacrament as a 40-year-old, that's a little nerveing maybe. Having this hope to be sealed in the temple, not having any prospects, having a hard time finding a job because of his life up to that point. But he prayed about it and I remember fasting with him. And then he met someone. He taught her the gospel and baptized her. It was just this unbelievable miracle I saw unfolding and then they get married and they get sealed in the temple.

01:01:50 It was just this unbelievable experience and it ends though rather abruptly. He develops cancer, gets a brain tumor. I remember sitting at lunch with him. I said, I'm so sorry. And he said, in some ways I am because I am now who I always wanted to be. But, and I remember he also said this to me, he said, but I

am so happy I can look my Father in heaven in the eyes and say thank you. I can look to my Savior and say thank you. And it's a big deal that I can look him in the eyes and say, I'm better now. I love that verse. The Spirit can change us. We highlight a lot of time about how Saul changes in the negative, but he changed to something great at one time and I think we all experience that.

01:02:49 We have this excitement about the gospel when we join the church or these spikes of spiritual highlights and I think we have to be careful that we don't forget those, that we hold onto them dearly. What happens with Saul is he forgets. He forgets that he was an anointed king. He was set apart to do something great. Spirit did change him, but just as the Spirit can change us, Satan is strong and temptation is strong.

Hank Smith: 01:03:16 John where is it in the Doctrine and Covenants, the wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth. You had it and you can keep it. Saul could have kept it. I love that story. Geoff, you could have just said, he and I don't have a lot in common and then just kind of lived your lives next door neighbors, but not really ever talking. I love that you're like, you know what? This is my neighbor. It's going to be fun. I'm going to go over and say hi. Never knowing that that could be such a story, such a friendship.

Dr. Geoff Wright: 01:03:47 Well, I think there's another verse in there that maybe applies to that. It said something along the lines that the Spirit rushed upon him. That's there for all of us. The Spirit can rush on us. One of it is just trying to be Christian, trying to see your fellow man as God sees them. When we do that, it can rush on us. I just pray that it happens a little more often in my life because it is unbelievable to feel that and just to know that he's there.

Hank Smith: 01:04:16 Coming up in part two.

Dr. Geoff Wright: 01:04:18 I'm digging through, the Spirit comes to me and it says, don't do this. I was like, don't do this? We've been doing this for years and I love doing this. I'm doing this. So I keep digging. The Spirit says clearly to me, and I don't feel the Spirit strongly like this hardly ever. It says, don't do this.



- John Bytheway: 00:01 Welcome back to part two with Dr. Geoff Wright, 1 Samuel 8 through 16.
- Hank Smith: 00:07 You'll both recognize this from [President Uchtdorf](#). He says, "We simply have to stop judging others and replace judgmental thoughts and feelings with a heart full of love for God and his children. God is our father. We are his children. We are all brothers and sisters. I don't know exactly how to articulate this point of not judging others with sufficient eloquence, passion, and persuasion to make it stick. I can quote scripture, I can try to expound doctrine, and I will even quote a bumper sticker I recently saw. It was attached to the back of a car whose driver appeared to be a little rough around the edges, but the words on the sticker taught an insightful lesson. It read, don't judge me because I sin differently than you." And Geoff, I think that's what you're talking about. The spirit of God came upon him. That's great.
- 00:55 And the child does it best, honestly. I remember one Christmas Eve, my son, Mason, he's on a mission now. My son, Mason, we were just taking the train. We went up to see the lights, I think, in Salt Lake and we were going to bring him back down. We were going to take the train back here to Utah County and as we're waiting for the train, there's this gruff looking guy over there by himself. It's late on Christmas Eve. And of course, I thought, I don't know what's going on over there. I was chatting with my wife and she pointed. She said, look, and there's my four-year-old boy walking over. Hi. He says, hi, bud. He says, It's Christmas. I know. He said, what do you want for Christmas? You know, I walked over, Mason, what do you... And he said, no, no. It's nice to have someone to talk to. I love that your son did that same thing. He didn't say anything wrong.
- Dr. Geoff Wright: 01:49 My wife's grandmother, unbelievable lady, Virginia. She joined the church later in life. I think she was in her 80s. She was baptized. When she was baptized, she moved from Toronto to Salt Lake, her and her husband, who also joined the church. They bought an apartment across the street from the temple,

Salt Lake Temple. We'd go up and visit her quite often and every time we would visit her, she'd like to go walk the temple ground, so we'd go down. There was often panhandlers and she had this purse that she would fill up with coins. And every time we went over there, she would empty out her coins to these people. And I told her, I said, hey, you know, Virginia, they probably don't need it. You don't know how they're going to spend it. They're fine. There was some article on the news that said they make a lot of money anyways. So I was trying to explain this all to her.

02:38 I remember her looking at me and she said, who are you to judge? I was really taken back and I was taught that lesson from my son with Brian and now from my grandmother-in-law that she was absolutely right. Why not show love? What does it hurt to show love? In all times, in all places to all people, I love that. It was a great lesson.

Hank Smith: 03:03 You're getting it from below and above, Geoff. You're like, Lord, I'm learning. I promise you don't need to...

Dr. Geoff Wright: 03:11 Yeah, I know.

Hank Smith: 03:12 Yeah.

Dr. Geoff Wright: 03:12 I'm slow. I'm slow to learn.

Hank Smith: 03:14 Yeah, keep sending these teachers.

John Bytheway: 03:16 Those two phrases turned into another man and God gave him another heart. What I like about it, is it doesn't just sound like a slight upgrade. It's, I can actually, I can make you a whole different person. I was looking but I failed to find it. Doesn't Paul talk about becoming a new creature. It's not just a little bit better, but it's like going from caterpillar to butterfly. I'm going to make you completely new and if the creator can create you in the first place, he can create you again differently, which is kind of amazing to think about. Maybe he'll create you under heat and pressure too, which I love that idea.

Hank Smith: 03:58 Thanks, John. Geoff, let's keep going. What's our next chapter? We're, we don't hit every chapter in first Samuel. If we did, we'd be here a long time.

Dr. Geoff Wright: 04:06 We're into chapter 13. This is kind of Saul's first major failure as a king where he kind of reveals his impatience and lack of trust in God. So he had received this new heart, he had changed and

now he has this impatience. He gets caught up a little bit in his leadership role. Maybe some pride starts seeping in. He has this war and he asked his son to go lead Israel and the situation looks pretty overwhelming and there's some fear and Israel starts panicking and they start hiding in caves and wells and rocks, it says. Some even escape across the Jordan River. People are losing courage when things are getting hard. I think there's some parallels to our lives, of course, with that. Then I think it really gets interesting here. So Saul gets impatient. Samuel says, hey, so I'll wait seven days and then I'll be there and we'll have the appropriate sacrifice. But Saul kind of panics because troops are running off.

05:05 He's like, okay, well, why don't I just do it? What difference does it make if I don't have the authority? I'm not the prophet. That's okay. I know how to do it. I've seen it done a million times. Saul chooses to control the situation rather than be obedient. Then we read a key verse in 13 to 14. "Thou hast done foolishly a foolish thing. Thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord, my God, which he commanded thee." And he gives that warning, "Now, thy kingdom shall not continue." It's so interesting that he calls him out and he said, hey, you didn't listen to me. This reminds me of a silly story. In Vancouver it rains a lot. I loved basketball growing up. We had a pretty tall garage and my dad put a basketball hoop up in the garage. But because it rains, he also put down carpet to kind of absorb the water dripping off the cars when you pull in.

06:00 And my job was to keep the garage clean, sweep it up. I was just a kid and I was pretty lazy or thought of I knew a better way. Here's the broom. Here's the dust pan. Sweep it up, put it in the garbage can. Instead, I just did what the cartoons taught me. I'd lift up the carpet and sweep it under the carpet. I just kept doing that week after week after week.

Hank Smith: 06:23 And it's great. It's-

Dr. Geoff Wright: 06:24 Yeah, I mean, you don't see it's out of sight, out of mind. But little mounds started forming. So this is my analogy of this mound of on my basketball court made my dribbling really good or bad. It depends how you look at it. But what's interesting is I know my dad saw the mound. He saw it getting bigger and bigger. He also knew that I knew where to put the dirt, but I didn't do it. And so it's an interesting thing and eventually I came inside and my dad's like, why aren't you playing basketball? And I said, the floor isn't flat. I made the floor not flat. Thou hast done a foolish thing. I was the fool. And he said, oh, that's interesting. Why do you think that's the case? Maybe

you should go fix that. He knew, but he let it play out and then I had to go fix the error that I made.

07:17 This is another perfect example. Saul did something foolish. God said, hey, you did something foolish. Could he have changed, right? Could have this been a pivotal moment to change, to repentance. And he chose the latter, you know, he did not choose to repent at this moment right away.

Hank Smith: 07:36 You know what's interesting about this too is Saul says, what have you done? And immediately goes to, it was them. I saw the people were scattered from me and the Philistines. It was them and I forced myself or I had no other choice than to make this foolish decision. And I've done that same thing countless times in my life. Why'd you do that? Well, it was someone else's fault. It was them. I had no choice. Samuel says, oh, you have done foolishly. My wife frequently uses this when teaching our kids, she says, don't defend a poor decision. If it's a poor decision, it's a poor decision. Let's admit it and move forward because it's the same way I think my children take after their father, which is, it wasn't my fault.

John Bytheway: 08:26 These kind of stories scare me because it sounds like he's trying to do the right thing. He just did the right thing the wrong way, you know?

Hank Smith: 08:34 Geoff, I love your story. Your dad's going, man, this is... I'm going to let these consequences play out. Because he could've stepped in. What are you doing?

Dr. Geoff Wright: 08:44 And I was like Saul, I blamed it on the floor. I was like, yeah, the floor is just not level, you know? I don't- It's not my fault. He let it play out, you know?

Hank Smith: 08:55 And that's a perfect analogy for life. We think, I'm fine. Look at this. It's working out. They told me that this wouldn't work out. Look, it's working out just fine. Until it doesn't.

Dr. Geoff Wright: 09:06 Yeah, I think it's interesting in that verse 12, it's almost like he did two things wrong. He didn't follow God's counsel and he knew it. It's one thing to be disobedient but to know that you're being disobedient. That's what puts him over the edge. That's why he starts blaming others, right? He tries to defer.

Hank Smith: 09:25 My kids do it all the time. It was not me. It was not my fault. I was going to bring up the parable of the talents where the guy, you know, doesn't do anything with the talent and he blames

the Lord. Does he blame Samuel? He says, you didn't show up. I started without you, so I did nothing. I knew you were a hard grader so I didn't do any homework.

- John Bytheway: 09:47 You've already mentioned [President Uchtdorf](#), but I think in his talk about being off course by a small degree about that, he said the prophet Samuel recognized a critical weakness in Saul's character. When pressured by outside influences, Saul did not have the self-discipline to stay on course, trust the Lord and his prophets and follow the pattern God had established. Saul's failure to hold fast to the council of the prophet just a little longer may seem minor, but even small errors over time can make a dramatic difference in our lives. Man, I worry about trying to do the right thing and going a little bit off.
- Dr. Geoff Wright: 10:27 What's interesting I think there is he gives an anecdote. He says, because Samuel calls the people together and then he thus says the Lord, thy God, I'm just reading out of here. I brought Israel out of Egypt. I delivered you from the hand of the Egypt. So he goes down this line of examples like, I've done it before. Why don't you trust me? That's another call to remember. We've had so many miracles in our lives and all through the scriptures they have these examples yet people still have a hard time trusting. We talk about if someone leaves the church or, you know, loses faith or whatever, they let go of the rod. The reason they let go is they've forgotten something. They forgot the miracles. We had a missionary reporting last year from their mission and I loved what they said they did on their mission.
- 11:22 They talked about a miracle journal and they said, I wasn't very good at journaling, but I ended up writing almost every day the miracles I saw. And I thought, that is so brilliant to identify those miracles that happen. And then I think the next step, which this missionary said that he was going to do is, I want to use this. I want to keep this the rest of my life where I can reflect on seeing God's hand in my life. Because as we do that, I think it's easier to have trust, to have confidence, to face the battles that come, just like the Philistines where the Israelites are battling them and they could have said, well, God's delivered us before. Let's have some faith.
- Hank Smith: 12:06 Yeah, let's move forward. John, I was really touched a few weeks back. I've been thinking about it ever since you said it. You have a feel journal. Hit that one more time for those who weren't listening.
- John Bytheway: 12:18 Yeah, it's a Google Doc so that I can access it wherever I have wifi. The feel is an acronym for feelings, experiences, evidences,

and logic or reason. I was going to call it just reason, but that would've spelled fear. So, so it's logic or reason. Sometimes you have an exalted or a wonderful or powerful feeling to boy, record it. Sometimes it's an experience that happens over years or months. Record it. Sometimes it's an evidence you learn about as we often do in the scriptures that are fun or other evidences and sometimes there's things that just make sense. I mean, think of how, how much sense it makes. Love God and love your neighbor. Imagine that world.

13:04 I want to live there where everybody loves God and loves the neighbors. As Geoff just reminded us, that's a great idea. The miracle journal President Eyring, I think it was, said a journal is to document the hand of the Lord in your life. That's what a miracle journal is. Then do what King Benjamin said, keep it before your eyes so that you don't forget. You remind yourself of, wait, the Lord's been with us before so many times he'll be with us again. And it's exactly what you were talking about, Geoff.

Hank Smith: 13:35 I have to do a little shout out here to my student. Her name's Ellie Johnson. I had a, this conversation with her just today. She said, you know, on the 4,000th time you've told me to have a record of my experiences with God. She said, I finally decided to do it. Takes me a while to learn. She said, Brother Smith, it's only been, you know, a couple of weeks and I have 150 of these. And they're not long entries. They're a couple sentences. She looked at me and she said, God is so good to me. And I said, Ellie, and when you take him seriously, he's going to give you more. When you write them down, it's something he teaches often. Be faithful over a few things. I will give you many things. She just bore testimony to me of something I finally convinced her to do. It was fantastic. The way she looked at me and she had tears in her eyes, God is so good to me. That is a life-changing, small and simple thing.

Dr. Geoff Wright: 14:37 I agree. Well, should we move on?

Hank Smith: 14:41 Let's keep going. Where do we go next?

Dr. Geoff Wright: 14:43 Let's go to chapter 15, if you don't mind.

Hank Smith: 14:46 You're hurting my heart here. I like Saul.

Dr. Geoff Wright: 14:50 I know.

Hank Smith: 14:50 Don't do this.

Dr. Geoff Wright:	14:52	Yeah, this is his biggest act of disobedience to this moment and it's sad because this is the moment that God rejects him as king. Even though God tells Saul to completely destroy the Amalekites, he disobeys. This is kind of a clear test of obedience and he failed it. What's interesting is he tried to pass it off that he was doing it for the right reasons and then we get to that key verse in 22. "To obey is better than sacrifice." This is serious consequences in his life, this rejection that happens. When we were first married, we were living in California, as I mentioned. It was our first year there and it was, it was tithing declaration time. We go in and we didn't have kids at the time. We were both working. We were the richest we've ever been, but we were saving for our future.
	15:47	And we went in with the bishop, he said, are you full tithe payers? And we said, yes, we're full tithe payers. We were happy to say that. He followed up with an interesting question. We said, okay, well, are you fully consecrated in all your financial offerings? And I was taken off guard by that. We kind of looked at each other and we said, yeah, I think, I think we are. Yes. We'll answer yes. The answer's yes. And then he said, I don't think you are. I was like, wait, who's this guy calling me out? How does he know? I said, oh, okay, thanks. And we left. We went home and I had a hard heart. I became like Saul and I said to Leah, who's that guy that he could tell us that we're not fully consecrated? I mean, pay my tithing, paying some fast offerings. And she didn't say anything at first, which was good for her.
	16:51	And then kind of the next day she noticed I was still kind of bugged, a little stewing on it. And then she said something that was pretty powerful to me and she said, you know when you asked, who's this guy? And I said, yeah. She said, guess what? He's your bishop. He's our bishop. He has some insight that we don't have. Whoa, okay. Now I'm being taught by the bishop and my wife thought about it and then it was interesting. I came across a quote by President Maxwell and I don't have it in front of me. I said, I'm not going to quote exactly, but the idea is you consecrate until it hurts. He was telling it at the end of his life, he was dealing with cancer or something and I was thinking about that and I was like, what does that mean? I don't think it means to have pain, but it means to sacrifice and to consecrate, to give, to build the kingdom of God however you can where you recognize that you're giving. It's just, you're not just writing a check or like we used to do. So that next month we used to fill out, you know, tithing envelopes and put your fast offerings and so forth in it.

	17:56	My wife reminded me, she said, hey, our bishop represents the Lord. We need to consecrate. And that was a great call to grow, to change. Here we have this idea to obey is better than sacrifice. It's not just writing the check, right? Anybody could sacrifice some money, but obedience to a church leader, I'm not saying blindly follow, but recognize that, you know, in this case, this bishop was receiving some inspiration and we were a young couple and we were both working and sure we were saving for our future, but we needed to learn that lesson early in our marriage that really the law of consecration that we had covenanted to make we need to live more fully and I think that was the invitation.
Hank Smith:	18:46	Yeah. Wow. I don't, I would've responded the same way. Wait, what? Saul does react that way. He's defensive. He's, well, here's all the reasons. Yeah, the people did this. So did it work out, Geoff? Has the, what's happened since then? I mean, obviously you still remember.
Dr. Geoff Wright:	19:11	Yeah, it was a great lesson and I think here's the deal. We make covenants. As a kid, some Disney movie probably taught us a promise is a promise or whatever. I put my arm to the square if you want to use that as a symbol and I'm all in. I've had too many moments in my life that I can't deny God's divine hand. I'm all in. I know men are not perfect, our leaders or whoever, but that's not the point. The point is I made a covenant. Turns out that the other side of the covenant, we have so much to gain. God has promised us so much that it's a privilege to be all in. Some people look at Pascal's Wager as like the algorithm for justifying being in the church or to making a commitment to something because you get more out of it.
	20:06	But the truth is, like, internally I am a, I hope that I am a better man, a better husband, a better disciple because of my commitments and my covenants. I know my family's been blessed. I look at all the people that have invested in my kids' lives, teaching them good principles and to be responsible and kind and being Christian, why wouldn't I be all in? The church is beautifully designed. It teaches us the gospel better than anywhere else. To have these promises that come out of covenants, I love it. I'm grateful for it and I testify that it's changed me and that it's true.
Hank Smith:	20:49	That's beautiful. I love that story. Yeah. I love the direction that it went. Who is that man? Who does he think he is? I love it, Leah. That's our bishop.
John Bytheway:	21:00	He thinks he's the bishop.

Hank Smith:	21:05	In the manual, it says in 1 Samuel 15, you'll read about a commandment from the Lord that Saul did not obey because he thought he had a good reason. To learn from Saul's choices, look at verse 22 and replace the words sacrifice and fat of rams with things that seem good but are not as important as hearing and obeying the Lord. That to me would be an excellent exercise. Samuel said, "Hath the Lord as great delight in..." and then fill in all the things we'd rather do than be obedient. Delight in, fill in the blank, "as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than..." And then you put those back in there. That's a great little replacement application of verse 22. It cuts me to the heart because I do this same thing where I think, well, I'm not going to be obedient, but there's a good reason I'm not obedient, but here's my justification. Verse 22 says, I don't know if the Lord delights in that as much as he just delights in obedience. I'm going to go to the mountains on Sunday. I can feel the Spirit more than going to church. And has the Lord a great delight in going to the mountains? As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than going to the mountains.
Dr. Geoff Wright:	22:27	We know about the pioneers, all the things they were depositing along the way. They thought it was important. They thought they would need it, but really in the end, they didn't. Eventually, they were pulling hand carts and they couldn't take what wagons were taking and they only had their essentials. A lot of times when it comes down to obedience, it is like the essentials. What are these big ticket things that... Well, you look at your temple covenants. You've made five covenants in there. Maybe some of these procedure things don't matter as much, but those things that you covenanted to in the temple are really what make a big difference. To John's point is you're all in or you're not. Are you jumping in the pool or you just dipping your toe? I don't know. There is some stuff that I really like. Well, it's not going to work out in the end. You got to be all in.
Hank Smith:	23:19	I remember Elder Hales saying, stand in holy places, it's both feet. I like to say, burn the boats behind you. I'm here.
John Bytheway:	23:28	Stay by the tree of life and don't go spend the weekend in the great and spacious and come back with that Elder Maxwell talked about weekend trips to Babylon or something.
Dr. Geoff Wright:	23:38	Samuel does the same thing. Eventually, Samuel basically comes out and says to Saul, hey, stop it. Stop the lying. You are disobedient. That's enough. Don't compound it by placing blame or trying to justify. And I think sometimes we do have to be bold. I am appreciative as much as I hate it when someone

calls me out and says, you know, like, that's not the right way to do it. It's important that we are bold and so, and remind people, you made a promise. Let's do what we were asked to do.

Hank Smith:	24:10	There is a love coming from Samuel to Saul. I'm telling you this, I love you. I'm going to show you where the lines are, and you can tell that Samuel loves Saul. He's invested in him.
Dr. Geoff Wright:	24:24	He's invested, yeah, that's a huge point. And I think God is too. God says, I regret. He uses the word regret. And then in this translation that I've been studying from a synonym that's placed in there is, I'm sad. I'm sad what happened to Saul. And I love that we learn that kind of compassion out of the scriptures. I'm sad. This is really too bad what happened. When we're disobedient, yeah, I think God is sad. With our children, man, I wish they didn't make that choice. That really makes me sad. It doesn't say that God stops loving, but he is disappointed.
Hank Smith:	25:02	Verse 35 is pretty touching. Samuel came no more to see Saul. Until the day of his death. Nevertheless, Samuel mourned for Saul.
John Bytheway:	25:12	I love that. Yeah. So am I correct in thinking Samuel's kind of like the prophet. Saul is the political leader, the king. But they interact a lot. It's kind of like Alma and Mosiah. Mosiah is King Mosiah. Alma is over the church and that it's that kind of relationship where they talk and consult.
Hank Smith:	25:34	Yeah. Sounds like Samuel's been a mentor to Saul. He truly wants to see him succeed.
John Bytheway:	25:39	And it mourn, he mourns when things go wrong. Yeah.
Hank Smith:	25:44	It's hard to see that. Geoff, you talked about that young man earlier. It sounds like I'm worried about him. I think Samuel would probably say the same thing. I'm worried about Saul.
Dr. Geoff Wright:	25:54	That is a nice transition to the next chapter because he had a hard time moving on from Saul a little bit. God directs him and says, okay, it's time to choose a new king. Oh, boy. I invested a lot in Saul and it, it just didn't turn out in the end. Are you sure we should do this? Should we not go back to judges or something? You know, maybe he had these kind of conflicts, but then he had to follow the promptings again. That's an interesting moment in his life and we don't know exactly if there was years or months or what, but we do know that David goes in tutelage. Should we go into chapter 16 then?

Hank Smith:	26:30	Yeah, let's do it. You know, I focus so much on Saul, David and Solomon that you forget. Samuel was watching all this going, oh, and the Lord saying, I told you so. I told you kings were not a good idea. I wish you would've listened.
Dr. Geoff Wright:	26:46	Well, we get to chapter 16, God chooses and prepares people based on their heart, not their outward appearance. Right away in verse seven, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. God sends Samuel to Bethlehem. He says, hey, stop mourning about Saul. It's time to move on. And so he sends him to Jesse's family to anoint a new king. Jesse lines up his sons, gets the seven in there. David's out with the sheep. God rejects the older son saying, no, that's not the right one, even though the first was big and strong, kind of looking like Saul maybe, God's looking for the character. He really values character and not the parents. Then eventually the youngest son comes in after tending the sheep and God tells Samuel, yeah, this is the one. So Samuel anoints David.
	27:41	God chooses someone unexpected and often overlooked. Going back to that kind of intro, that question I asked you guys, what's important is he equips the people that he chooses and we know that scripture in Doctrine and Covenants. Eventually, you know, David enters Saul's service. This is just such a beautiful reminder of the two great commandments for me. We all know the first great commandment, love God. And then the second great commandment, I heard another translation of it and I really love this. We've been taught, second great commandment, love your neighbor as you love yourself, basically. But this other way I was taught it was love your neighbor as God loves them and/or as God sees them. That really changed the second great commandment. It's an invitation to look at people as God sees them, as God loves them. For me, it just changed my interactions with people, especially teaching, like a student comes in and you try and see them as God does echoing back to that first question I asked at the beginning.
	28:50	One of my favorite types of movies that I had to be converted to are when kids overpower adults. So if you think about it, there's lots of examples, Harry Potter, Chronicles of Narnia, Percy Jackson. The adults are bigger, yet the kids perform in an unbelievable way. This happened in my own life. My son Isaac, he's my oldest, he was born on Christmas day, December 25th. That's not the most exciting day to be born on perhaps, and so we changed his birthday to January 25th. We celebrate in January. And so a tradition that we had is from an early age, I would take him into the back country in the winter and we'd build a snow cave and we'd sleep in it. We did this from a young

age and it just became something that we both loved to do at the end of January. We had done it for a couple years and then when he was 11 turning 12, we decided to go up and do it again as tradition would hold.

29:53 And it was a gray year. It was a year of tons of snow. And so he came home from school and he had drawn up a plan of what the snowcave should look like and it was going to have a seat and benches and cup holders and it was just going to be this great, great snow cave. And I looked at it, I'm like, yeah, let's build it. This is going to be amazing. We would go up in the evening, we'd get dinner together first, then we'd go in snowshoes and with sleds pulling gear and we'd go up behind Brighton into the back country. My wife knew kinda where we were going but not the precise location necessarily. We were hiking in and the snow was deep. Even with snow shoes we're sinking in pretty deep in our snow boots. So eventually we get to a location that we thought would be good and we start piling snow.

30:44 He's 11 turning 12. I'm shoveling and just piling snow. And what you do, you pile it high, 10 feet in there and then you get on top of it, you stamp it down, you pile it again, you pile it again. We piled until maybe about 10 o'clock at night, maybe nine. It's time to start digging. And so how we would do it is we would both start tunneling in from opposite sides to expedite the clearing out process. I'm digging through and the Spirit comes to me and it says, don't do this. I was like, don't do this? We've been doing this for years and I love doing this. I'm doing this. So I keep digging. The Spirit says clearly to me. And I don't feel the Spirit strongly like this hardly ever. It says, "Don't do this." And I thought, okay, well, maybe this is just me being a dad, being a little paranoid. I call Isaac over and I'm like, Isaac, hey, do you remember the rules when we're building? And he's like, yeah, dad, never two people in the snow cave at one time while we're building to be sure it's safe.

32:00 If something happens cover your face to get a pocket of air, those types of things. I'm like, okay, cool. I feel better. All right, let's finish this up. So we keep digging and what's happening is the snow is settling. It was so much powder and it wasn't compacted. We didn't give it good rest time. We weren't going to be able to build the Shangri-La of snowcaves, right? It's going to more be a tunnel this year. And so I told him, I'm like, hey, buddy, we're just going to have to do a tunnel. Let's block up your sides. We block up his side and so it's time for me to go in and just kind of verify. And so I go in, what you do, you take your glove and you smooth the ceiling so it doesn't have drip

points. I'm in there, he's outside the cave and I'm smoothing out to get the drip points.

32:49 All of a sudden the whole thing collapses on me and it hits my hand to my face and my other arm is pinned behind my back. It collapses my lungs and breaks these ribs and I am immobilized. It was like being stuck in cement. The only thing I could move were these fingers right by my eye and nose. So I pulled the snow out of my eye and out of my nose and that's all I could move. I could just barely move my fingers. Immediately I was trying to breathe. I couldn't breathe because I'm compressed by this, this 12 feet of snow that we had packed down and I thought, okay, I'm in trouble. So immediately I started saying a prayer in my head and I said, "God, send Isaac to the road." He's 11 and 12 and I was thinking, okay, we hiked in about a mile. If he sprints through the snow, he could probably get to the road in 15 minutes, flag someone down coming up late, 15 minutes and then 15 minutes back, that's 45 minutes. I had about this much of air if I breathe, if I kind of relax myself, I should be able to survive. God send him to the road.

34:14 I don't know how long it was, but after a few minutes, two little hands burrowed and hit me right in the face. He clears some snow out of my eyes and out of my mouth. He's screaming, Dad! You found me. I'm like, can you get this arm out? Can you pull my arm out? He pulls my arm out and I'm like, Isaac, careful, don't collapse this on both of us. So he pulls my arm and he just slowly pulls me, rescues me, saves my life by pulling me out of a tunnel that he burrowed. He didn't burrow above me to the left or to the right or below. He burrowed right to my face. He pulls me out of this cave. We embrace, I fall on my knees, together we say a prayer thanking God. And I tell you this story for several reasons.

35:28 There's an obvious one there, but we were just about to go to sleep in this what would have been a tomb. If you've ever slept in a snow cave, you're in a mummy bag, your hands are inside the mummy bag and you're looking up at the ceiling. That cave was coming down no matter what. We would have both been entombed and the worst nightmare would be suffocating knowing your son was suffocating next to you. So first lesson is I didn't listen to the Spirit, but God still prevailed. I didn't listen, but God has a plan. It was fine for it to happen to me knowing that my son could still rescue me. That's an important lesson that I needed to learn. Lesson number two, how in the world did a 11 year old boy who is small of stature at the time, how could he dig right to my face?

	36:31	How could he make a tunnel? My thought was go to the road, get an adult to come rescue me. God's thought was this boy. So the third thing is sometimes we wonder how the atonement or how miracles work. Why, you know, in this story, why didn't the cave collapse on him? How did he know where to go? Our natural eyes will pick the bigger person not realizing God has angels that buoy up these younger people that might not look like they can do it. The angels guided him that day to find me to rescue me. The story's not about me. I'm not trying to say that, but there are three really powerful lessons where God looks at the heart. This is one of those stories where it testifies to me that God is aware of us. He loves us. His plan is perfect. The youth of our day are capable.
	37:37	They can do this. They were saved. I firmly believe they can manage the temptation, the hardship of this life and do it with even a smile because the end of the story is also beautiful. We didn't go home that night. I asked my son, what do you want to do? He said, well, we're here. Why would we leave? We went and found another place to camp and we stayed. He wasn't shook up by it and I think these youth can do it. They can face the temptations of this world and do it with confidence knowing that God has picked them and saved them just as he picked and saved David to rescue the Israelites from a king who had made some mistakes. And I love that. I love David being young and overlooked, but being the one who brought salvation initially to Israel.
Hank Smith:	38:37	That's an incredible moment and what a lesson. The fact that you thought he needs to go find someone who can actually do this. Here Samuel's looking for this next king and he's like, well, that's got to be my guy. And the Lord says, no, that's not him. How could you refuse him? Look, he's... Look how great he looks. That's not my guy. And to have these little 11-year-old hands.
John Bytheway:	39:05	Hands that were guided to know right where you needed to breathe. But I love your testimony of that, that the Lord knows exactly the world he sent these young people to. He knows it's a lot different than my 1970s world as a teenager. They can do it. I love the testimony of that because I believe it too. They're different. I think they can do it. I know they were saying all that stuff to us, but I look at this generation and I go, no, they're different.
Hank Smith:	39:35	John, a few years ago, you did a talk on let no man despise thy youth. You taught me what that verse means.

John Bytheway:	39:45	Yeah. I thought King James English better be careful when you're young because people might remember all the stuff you did. Then I read some different translations as Geoff has done today and it was not that it was more like, don't let others look down on you because of your age. Which is a totally different message. It was don't worry about your age, worry about your calling, worry about your duty, you can do it. When Paul says that to Timothy, you can do this. Don't let people look at your youthfulness. That doesn't disqualify you because I've got you.
Hank Smith:	40:22	Yeah, this is a different translation, same verse. 1 Timothy 4:12, different translation. And I just think of Geoff's story here. You are young, but don't let anyone treat you as if you are not important. Be an example to show the believers how they should live. Show them by what you say, by the way you live, by your love, by your faith and by your pure life. Can you imagine Isaac outside that snow cave saying, What do I do? What do I do? I got to do this. The Lord is guiding me. And our youth have that, that power in them. And we can treat them that way. You know what to do. You know how to follow the Spirit. You can do this. Man, Geoff, that is beautiful. I got to breathe here for a second. I got to... I was holding my breath as I'm listening. And of course he's like, oh, I can't think of any reason to go home. Well, I've got a couple broken ribs that could probably use a going home. How old's Isaac now?
Dr. Geoff Wright:	41:27	Yeah, he's home from a mission and married and he's got a wonderful wife and Madelyn and they're both doing well. She's a nurse and he's at school. He is, gone quick though. He's 21 and already moved on through all that stuff.
Hank Smith:	41:42	Geoff, I've known you a long time. Always been very impressed with you, your intelligence, your attitude, your kindness, and your willingness to serve. Here you are PhD working at BYU. You've been to some good schools, you've gotten a few degrees and you know your way around and you can make your own snow skis. I think our listeners would be interested in why do you believe?
Dr. Geoff Wright:	42:12	Yeah, I love that question, Hank. Hopefully through this kind of discussion we've shared today, you feel a little bit of my testimony and the burning in my heart. Why do I believe? A couple students a few years ago inevitably because they're at that age and dating. They want to know how'd you know that your wife was the one? And I thought about that and I said, well, I loved her. Well, how, but how'd you know? Some people have a list. My list was, okay, well, she needs to like the outdoors because I love the outdoors. I love blackberry pies,

that'd be cool if she could make a blackberry pie. You know, you need to be attracted to them, carry a conversation, but, but how'd you know? Like those are checklist things they would ask me. It's eventually it comes down to this. It's something that I feel.

43:03 And when you talk about the gospel, how do you know? You could logic yourself into the church, you could logic yourself out of the church, but ultimately what it comes down to is what do you feel? I feel and I've felt for a long time that the gospel of Jesus Christ, that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is true. And I could logic it by saying, well, it doesn't teach me anything inappropriate, but it's beyond that. It's something that I feel. I remember I had a buddy one time that said, I can't believe you have faith to believe. That's crazy. There's a God? There's an afterlife? Like, how do you know? Like that's, that's unbelievable, that you have that kind of faith. And I said, actually, I think it's more unbelievable that you don't believe. In fact, this is what I said to him, you have more faith than I do.

43:55 Your faith is unbelievable. You believe that no one is in charge, that we're here by chance, that everything is by accident. That's crazy faith to me. I have faith that there's purpose, that there's reason, that there's harmony. It seems like I have less faith than you. And he looked at me and he smiled and he said, that's interesting. Your question, Hank, is why do I believe? Well, it's something I feel. I just have gratitude to have this knowledge that we have a loving heavenly Father who sent his son. We have a Savior and why is that all in place? Because he wants us back, that we're here to become more like him and that we're preparing for this amazing chapter to our life with him, with our families, with all these friends. Life is about experiences and growth and making friends and that excites me. I'm grateful for that perspective. Without the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I wouldn't have that perspective and that faith. I only have gratitude. Why do I believe? Because I feel it, I know it, and it's amazing.

Hank Smith: 45:15 Thanks, Geoff. Your stories today have been moving.

John Bytheway: 45:21 I remember the movie called [The Rookie](#), where is it Dennis Quaid says to a, you know what we get to do today? We get to play baseball. I love that. Hank, you know what we get to do today? We get to talk about the gospel. I can't believe we get to do this.

Hank Smith: 45:39 Yeah, me too.

John Bytheway:	45:41	It's so fun.
Hank Smith:	45:43	I know, Geoff, what you're talking about with feeling, because I felt it often doing this show where I'm in the scriptures, I'm with people I love and I'm learning. That feeling, I don't want it to end. It's uplifting, it's powerful. We hope our listeners feel that same way. You know, at the end of an episode like this, they think, wow, that was good. That was delicious to me. Geoff, thank you for your time and please thank Leah. And please, will you thank Isaac on behalf of all of our listeners that we have Geoff here?
John Bytheway:	46:18	If I ever go snow camping, I'm inviting Isaac.
Hank Smith:	46:23	Yeah. That moment of those two little hands.
John Bytheway:	46:26	Beautiful. Powerful.
Hank Smith:	46:28	Yeah, it's very powerful.
Dr. Geoff Wright:	46:29	Thank you for inviting me. I was apprehensive, you know, because I'm a nobody. What do I know? But to reflect on one's testimony and interestingly, I didn't know you could feel the Spirit during a podcast. What you're doing is meaningful. I don't think I fully appreciated that until this opportunity. It's just great to immerse ourselves in the gospel. Thank you.
Hank Smith:	46:51	It is. Well, with that, we want to thank Dr. Geoff Wright for spending his time with 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. He would have loved this. I'm sure he does. We hope you'll join us next week. We're going to continue the story of the Kings on followHIM. As a thank you to our wonderful listeners, we'd love to gift you the digital version of our book, Finding Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. It offers short, meaningful insights drawn from our past Old Testament episodes. Visit followhim.co, that's followhim.co to download your free copy today and you'll also find the link to purchase the print edition. Thank you for being part of our followHIM family. 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



Hank Smith:	00:03	Welcome to followHIM Favorites. John and I are sharing a single story to go with each week's Come, Follow Me lesson. John, we're in 1 Samuel 16:7. Do you remember this story?
John Bytheway:	00:12	Oh yeah. It's a great one.
Hank Smith:	00:14	This is where Samuel, the prophet, is looking for the new king. He's looking at all these boys who look like kings, but none of them are the ones the Lord wants. Then they find this young, isn't he a shepherd, John?
John Bytheway:	00:29	Yeah, he's out with the sheep. Well, we got one more over there.
Hank Smith:	00:32	Yeah, we didn't bring him up. He doesn't look the part. And the prophet Samuel basically learns the lesson from the Lord, I look on the heart. Man looks on the outward appearance. I look on the heart. Okay. I want to tell you about a little six-year-old boy that you would look at maybe a six-year-old boy, John, and think that's not a person who's gonna change lives, but he does. January 1998, six-year-old boy, Ryan Hreljac, was sitting in his first grade classroom in Ontario. His teacher said something pretty simple. She said, you know, there's people in Africa who are sick and dying because they don't have clean water. This struck this little boy, apparently John, he was pretty upset. He went and talked to his teacher about it. He decided he was going to do something about it. He thought it would take about \$70 to drill a well.
	01:22	So he did extra chores and he saved up and got \$70 and he was going to bring it to whoever, I don't know how he gets ahold of people who build wells and they said, oh, I'm so sorry. The real cost is about \$2,000. Now, John, I think he might say, well, that is way too big. Way too much. Kind of like a David and Goliath too story. I think what the Lord sees in Ryan, he doesn't yet see in himself, but I guess he thought, why not me? So this little boy starts saving up his money and fundraising and he built his first

well in Uganda when he was seven. It's been over 25 years now, John, and the Ryan's Well Foundation, get this, has completed over 1500 well projects, bringing safe water to more than one million people.

John Bytheway: 02:15

Wow. Just because a teacher said some people don't have water and that struck something in his heart.

Hank Smith: 02:23

His little heart said, I can do something about that. It's pretty fantastic. And John, not only that, but the foundation has raised over a million dollars and also builds now latrines, keeping them a safe distance from water. Pretty incredible story. You might look at that little boy and think, well, that's not the guy that's going to change a million lives and give them fresh water. So the question is what's happening in his heart. Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.

John Bytheway: 02:53

The Lord's like, yeah, I actually have a six-year-old who's going to change the world a little bit in Africa. I'll start working on this. Over 1,500 wells.

Hank Smith: 03:04

We do that. I know, John, you love the verse, "Let no man despise thy youth." That's kind of a similar verse. Don't anybody think, well, you're young, you can't do anything.

John Bytheway: 03:13

Yeah, exactly. And so many examples of those that are young. In fact, in the Old Testament, we looked at Samuel who's only 10 and going to be more examples as we go through all of the standard works.

Hank Smith: 03:23

The next time you see someone and you kind of discount them by their appearance, you might remember the Lord looks on the heart. Hey, we hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcast. We are with Dr. Geoff Wright this week. He does a masterful job with these chapters and John, if you remember, he tells a story about him and his son up in the mountains in the snow that you do not want to miss. And then come back here next week. We'll do another followHIM Favorites.