



LEADING SAINTS

From Baptist Preacher to Latter-day Saint | An Interview with Gary Miller

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Welcome back to another episode of the Leading Saints podcast. If you've enjoyed content on this podcast, it's important that I tell you about the Leading Saints newsletter that we send out every week. This newsletter keeps you up to date on all the current Leading Saints content releases including podcasts, articles, online events, and even live events that might be happening in your own area. In this newsletter, we recommend some past episodes and written articles that you don't want to miss. Each week, we include additional leadership perspectives and thoughts that you can only find in the weekly newsletter, so you definitely don't want to miss out. To subscribe to the weekly newsletter, simply text the word lead to 474747 or visit leadingsaints.org/subscribe. Again, text the word lead to 474747, or visit leadingsaints.org/subscribe so you don't miss any future Leading Saints content. Welcome back to the Leading Saints podcast. My name is Kurt Francom; I will be your host and I'm glad that you found us, especially you newbies out there. Maybe somebody sent you this link or you've just listened to a few episodes and you're thinking, "What is this all about?" Well, let me tell you. Leading Saints is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to help Latter-day Saints be better prepared to lead, and we do that through various methods of the podcast where we have fantastic conversations like you're about to hear. We also have a newsletter that goes out every week that you gotta make sure you're on that list, and the website. We have virtual summits; we have just all sorts of content online where you can jump in and discover principles related to leadership. So, it's awesome and we're glad you found us.

Now, you guys, this episode I have Gary Miller on the podcast. I don't know if you're familiar with Gary Miller, but you're about to be, and you're gonna love him. He is the host of the Narrow Gate podcasts, and I love the description that he put for his podcast which is, "The Narrow Gate podcasts is what happens when a hellfire preaching Independent Fundamental Baptist discovers the Book of Mormon and becomes a Latter-day Saint." So yeah, Gary Miller is a former Baptist preacher who stumbled across the Book of Mormon and it captivated him all the

way to the point where he was baptized and became a Latter-day Saint. He tells his story in detail on this interview, then we have just a rich conversation. It's a raw... it's a real conversation, and that's where Gary comes alive. I think you'll realize that pretty quick here and i just...this is how he wanted to approach the interview and I hope you find value in it, but I see Gary as someone who obviously has leadership experience in a former, in a different church. He's preached; he's run an organization, a church organization, and I'm just curious like... "What is a guy like that see when he walks into our church community, right? What does he like? What things have confused him? What suggestions would he have?" And now, some of you may listen to this and be like..."Gary just doesn't have much time in the church; he just doesn't understand," but I think this is a good example of how we can be more self-aware, like, I always talk about self-awareness as one of the strongest leadership principles an individual can have where you just step back and hear someone else's perspective, even if you disagree with it. You begin to learn some things that maybe you weren't aware of; you become more self-aware and you can be...you can approach your leadership or your life in a more productive state of mind, a more productive mindset. Ok, so that's what I wanted to do with Gary. We had a great conversation of just saying, "What do you see? What's been weird? Anything we could improve, or what's been your experience?" and the conversation that falls is phenomenal. You're gonna love it. Let's get into it, enough of me summarizing what you're about to hear. Here's my interview with Gary Miller. The host of the Narrow Gate podcast.

KF: Today, I have the opportunity to sit down with Gary Miller. How are you, Gary?

GM: I'm doing great.

KF: That's awesome, that's awesome. Now, you are a fellow podcaster? Is that right?

GM: I am. We are brothers in the podcast arms.

KF: And... it's you know, it's not for the faint of heart that's for sure.

GM: It is not, and the moment you step behind a mic and decide to start saying something. Yeah, it's not, it's not for the faint of heart for sure.

KF: Nice well, I've actually, you know... leading up this interview, several people reached out to me and said, "Hey, have you heard of this Gary Miller guy? He's got a podcast; you should probably interview him because he's got a unique story." So, for this Latter-day Saint audience, how would you introduce your story, and maybe talk to us about it.

GM: Yeah, so well first of all, thanks for having me on the show. I'm a fan and so it's always good I think what's interesting about the digital world and podcasting, when you you're a listener and you're also a content creator, and then when those worlds merge and you get to meet the people you listen to, it's kind of cool so, but anyway. Yeah, my story is kind of an interesting one.

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GM: I came to the church from definitely a sort of non-traditional pathway. I was a preacher pastor of an Independent Fundamental Baptist church and I started that church in San Antonio with fifteen folding chairs that we ordered off of ebay, in a living room. And it went from the living room to a hotel meeting room when we needed more space, and then it kinda moved from that generic one to the bigger Holiday Inn meeting room, and then it just kinda grew from there right. And so, when I...on paper...I'm not supposed to be here. I say this all the time on my show, like I'm the last guy on the card that should have been like a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It just doesn't make sense.

KF: Yeah.

GM: And so, but you know God's plans are so much better than ours right, so and I was, this was about two years ago now...it's amazing my wife and I were trying to figure out the timeline, to get it a little tighter, but I work in sales and marketing in my regular life, and at the time, pre-Corona, I was making sales calls. And in Houston, Kurt, there's no nice way to drive across Houston, cause it's like, takes you forever. You wanna test your grace...drive in Houston traffic, right. You...you need a reason to repent, go drive; you'll get one. So, I...

KF: Nice.

GM: I would go on these long sales drives and so I would listen to podcasts, right, like you and I, we do.

KF: Yep.

GM: Podcasters tend to be big podcast consumers, right, so I was listening to stuff, and for whatever reason, and I would say off course, it's providential, but for whatever reason, iTunes in the podcast store, they'll give you recommended things based on what you've listened to before. Well, for whatever reason, one of the recommends, Kurt, was the Book of Mormon on audio. Somebody had uploaded it into the iTunes store. Now, I'm not talking about using the regular Church app; this was just the audio.

KF: So, was it like some random guys voice reading it or was it a Church-hired person?

GM: I don't know if it was...I mean it was properly produced....

KF: So, it sounded great.

GM: ...but I don't know if it was Church-sanctioned or not, it sounded great. So, I decide...I'm coming out of a Kroger because I needed to get a snack for the road, because you don't go into sales calls hangry, you know, that's a bad move.

KF: Right.

GM: So, I... I get my snack. I decide, and I don't...and again, I thought like maybe lightning was going to strike me or something for me listening, but I hit play and so I'm driving down the road

for the first time listening to stuff about witnesses, plates, Nephi, Zarahemla...I'm going, "What in the world is happening?" But I just kept listening and...

KF: So, let me, let me interject and ask, like, at this point, like, "What was the Book of Mormon in your mind like?" 'Cause a lotta times, I hear people saying, "Oh, I just knew it was this evil book." Like I...I know some people say, "I...I didn't wanna get close to it because it was evil."

GM: Yeah.

KF: Like from your Baptist background, what was that book to you, at that time?

GM: That's a great question. So, I obviously knew about the Church in the sense that a good portion of the...I mean, if you get any good Independent Fundamental Baptist in a, in a room, and you list certain names, if you said Latter-Day Saint, that would get them hot quick.

KF: Yeah, right.

GM: I mean, it's not...it's not benign hot; it's red hot! I mean it would...

KF: Right.

GM: You know, so that's...that's you know. So, I knew it from that perspective hearing some of my fellow preachers, if they decided to preach on that ever, but I, I came in surprisingly neutral. For my background, Kurt, I probably was more neutral than to be expected, but I've always been kind of an enigma in that regard. I'm a real hard preacher. I'm a scripturalist, like I'm, I'm a letter of the law in that way, but I also tend to... I sat under a lot of great teachers from outside of my own faith background when I was coming up in seminary and everything else, so, it provided me a different degree of width and my scope when I would, you know how open I was to something at least to hear it out. You know I; I go back to those classic sorts of admonitions in scripture. Search scripture daily; find out if these things are so. I wanted to find out if it was, you know, when the Proverbs tell us that "If we answer a matter before we've heard the whole thing out, it's a folly and shame unto us." So, I don't want it to be a folly and shame on me. I wanted to say, "Okay, I want to hear the thing out." And so, to me, it was this text that was clearly important to a group of people that I didn't understand other than what I had heard, and I knew that...listen, even as a good Fundamental preacher myself, I know we can be a little heavy handed at times. So, I thought let me hear it from the source and for whatever reason...

KF: Awesome!

GM: ...yeah, that's how it started.

KF: Nice, and so, was it a, a moment where you're listening to this where you're pricked by the spirit, or were you're just sort of intrigued by the book enough to keep listening?

GM: I was intrigued. I, you know, you and I've talked a little bit. I...I didn't when I was driving around listening to the audio, I did not pass any burning bushes, the skies did not part. You

know, it was none of that. I mean it was, I found it very interesting and then from that...because I'm a, you know, I'm a highlighter, marker-studier guy, and I mean, I've been studying teaching the bible for you know, at this point when I first started listening to it, well over a decade, and in ministry, and so I...I went on ebay and ordered a copy. I needed a big copy that would flop, so I wanted like a big leather bound something I could open up and really tear into.

KF: Oh, really.

GM: So, I...

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mormon dot org or whatever and. I didn't go into any of that yet. Yeah no i wanted to. I wanted a proper one. I'm like look if i'm gonna pay attention to it. And i'm a big fan of this an pete when i teach this about studying scripture general but i wanted something i could touch and feel and really interact with so i get this wonderful copy. Whoever the saint was it had it before me they had written these great notes senate and oh wow get very personal. Had their name in boston on the front and everything and so i. I don't know what happened to them. I need to go preach to them right. But i i got i got a. I got this thing. And i started from the top and read all the way through went back started over and i just kept going through it over and over and over and over again and at this point my wife who's preached wife. I mean she you know she's always in the front row when i'm shopping. Yeah so at this time. You're on sundays. You're going to church preaching and you're baptist preacher right and so i you can't i mean it wasn't like a random book that i was studying like a commentary or something. It's kind of hard to ignore that. It says book of mormon on the outside and so but we started having this conversations and it was through that and through just reading it and then that started reading it around my kids. I said oh this is really interesting. Let me tell you something here. And i would start reading in my very energetic. My youngest daughter. Miriam if anything can slow her down. You got to pay attention to that. So i'll be reading it and she would come over at. She would sit next to me and she'd lean her head right against my chest and just sit there and listen to me read and i thought what in the world is going on and then i from that point another podcast had come up sherry do had interviewed a bunch leaders in the church and the first exposure to a church leader. I hear elder bednarz get to start and so yeah. I hear him talking while i'm driving around and i remember calling my wife. I'll never forget it. And i said i'm on the road sitting in traffic in houston and i said darlan. I'm listening to this guy. I know i've been reading the book. More notes weird. Don't get freaked out. But i'm listening to them. I'm telling you. There is something going on over here. And i and my my phrase i always used to say there's something in the water over here. I'm like there's something in the water. they're drinking. I don't know what's going on but there's something we're talking about the same things but there's something different behind it and i just kept x. Our church while. I think some people would think out. Release a bit stiff. I think we're very technology forward. Our apps are great audiovisuals crate. I mean and so i was porn through that stuff listening to those things and then i finally kurt. That's when i finally did go onto come unto christ and i talked to two missionaries online in checks. I wasn't gonna talk to anybody in person yet. I couldn't like i'd get like well. How am i supposed to do that right. I did it online. We had those first conversations. They were so sweet. I mean you know. I can't imagine

what it was like. Two sister missionaries in handle and chat threads. And i started off by saying look i'm an independent fundamental baptist. But i have some questions i promise. I'm going to be nice. Like i'm not here to start a fight. And they were so sweet and they ultimately you know they were the ones that got us into our first church meeting in person and they were. They were to super quiet like the complete opposite of me. I'm ten pots of coffee. Amped up right and i know for those of you. That don't drink coffee. Don't get nervous. I don't drink but the point is the thing is that they were so the opposite. I mean they were like you would just talk to them and like your blood pressure drops. They were so chill. The everything that i'm asking these aren't lightweight question to ask you and they're just working through it or through it but boy i'll tell you when it was time for them in the bible says compelled them to come. I remember that little sister missionary. She said to me well. You know what church there at. The word is happening at this time. You're going to be there right alright. So wouldn't like a baptist. I like this. So and then. I showed up at my first meeting and everything kind of happened from there. Wow wow and that so. I've just i've just going back to that experience with the book immoral because you know being someone who was born and raised in the church. I mean maybe your experience like this with the bible. i can't. i don't have a moment where i'd like sought as new scripture started out like all. My parents want me to read this. My dad's reading it right. So it's such an intriguing perspective to have to discover additional scripture and then have the opportunity to pour over it with the adult intellect in and the same desire for truth that you had so i bet that was just a remarkable experience. It was in. It is every day that i read it. I mean you. And i talked before. I mean if you if somebody walked in here and said you can't read it every day i would twitch and i think i think a lot of folks to your point. It was the same way where i came from if people have had this kind of in their lap around their shelf all their lives know. Familiarity breeds either apathy and sometimes even breeds contempt right and then people forget what they're holding onto and so. I always have said that between the book of mormon and the bible. What i'm really looking at is now. I'm seeing the gospel sort of in four k. It's like in high def now before you're kind of you've got it all it's all there. I mean the sixty six books of books of king james bob.

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I'm ready to go love it. You can get saved from it. You're good but the point is now. I've got this other piece and it's like somebody literally like putting the whole thing like four k three d. high. Def whatever you wanna call it and now you're seeing this in a whole new way and so as someone from the outside who's now read it more times than i can tell you. It's just a part of our daily study here. Part of what i do for my show but it really is something that yet for me. It was both exciting. Every time i do and still now every time. It's hard for me to go through it. Still not mark something up not highlight something up and just because there's so much there it's such impressive book. So you're you're going through this. You're talking to the sweet sister missionaries. What's happening from the baptist minister perspective. I mean at some point. You realize you're in deep and you can't just pretend you're not like this double life to some extent right. oh absolutely it was cloak-and-dagger for awhile felt like i was like bourne identity spy or something right there were moments. There were moments to be completely frank. I would try to put the. I'm looking across the way here. Outside of my home office. I can see why you put it. I would try to take it and put it on the the book of mormon on top of the top shelf bookshelf. And say okay. Like i'd come to my senses for a minute. Or so. I thought i'd be like a

garrett. Stop okay enough or put it up on the shelf. And that'd make some grand declaration to my wife. I'd be like are you all right. That was fine. We were just you know. We're good and just face to face just past exactly and so about sixty minutes to a couple hours in the holy ghost. Just wear me out. And i'm just like got pulled back all right. Everybody sit on tape. We're gonna read. We're gonna reach and i just i couldn't put it away but yeah it was very strange because i was already feeling some some heat because i'd messed around and slipped up right like i. I would see some great talk. That i'd watched you know from something online and i would share it on my social media and then i remember getting my i d m from somebody that i had actually trained in the ministry. And they're like that was a that was a latter day saints site you just shared like. Yeah the message was great. Did you listen to the message. I just saw that. it was I. dot. Whatever i'm like dude. Listen to the message but yeah it was. It was hard you did feel divided. Forget about what everybody else was thinking. I mean personally. I'm going. I've invested all this time. Energy study started with the fifteen folding chairs. And now i'm playing in something that means i'm going to have to change that dramatically and that's weird because that was inherently part of my identity. Because i've been in it for so many years. Yeah so let me understand. And i don't fully understand how this works Bit naive here but would being a baptist. Preacher like our that. Is that an income source. Because you're doing sales and marketing as well or or is it just a volunteer thing like it is for us or how did that work now i. I was always a bi vocational pastor. Which is quite common in the independent fundamental baptist world. So i had a day job. The whole time i was preaching did did at times the church was able to did they support to a certain degree as they could sure. But i mean. I wasn't like i wasn't paying my mortgage on it. It was it was clearly something that that would that had a supportive element to it but we were so in that regard. I've tried to explain this to folks that you know it's not all that different you know we. We started and we're still working the job the whole time. We just happened. Just happened to prep sermons at night. And then go you know. Stand up thump on wednesdays and sundays. Yeah yeah so. This wasn't a question of if we make a change. Your i'm gonna lose my my income source but no it wasn't it wasn't income. I mean there certainly was some of that there but this was more about good night. I mean this. This is like a major change of jerseys here. So there's say culturally. There was going to be a lot more because this is not a move. That happens like i mean. Southern baptists are much more vanilla regular much more vanilla independent fundamental baptist. Making this kind of jump. Just like and of course as soon as i did and it was clear i mean it was you could count half a drumbeat and it was heretic. Lasted me going to hell the whole night. I mean i yeah. It was so so. Was there a moment where you you're coming out moment where you know you let everybody know that this is happening. I did not have a definitive stand up and put a book of mormon on the podium and say this is where we're going it was really. It was kind of organic. It kind of happened over time. And i think people understood and i kind of phased myself out of what i was doing and and because i thought that was the right thing to do i mean. This was my journey. I think. Everybody's on their own journey. And look i mean. People are listening. To what i was saying and i didn't want to. I didn't want to influence people in a way that was not fair. You know i was going through my thing. You're going through. You're saying. I'm happy to share it but i didn't want that to be out of context and so i step back.

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I was out of that. And then you know then it was still study and everything else. I mean. Look our first baptism date. I call didn't do it. I was like no. I thought at that point is when i thought i'd lost my mind because i thought we'd gotten all the way up. We had it scheduled lamberson in that email to the missionaries. I'm like hard powwows. Like maybe i've had an out of body experience and i totally messed up my whole life so pause let me go rethink this again as i wrestled with for short. And were you working with these online sister missionaries the whole time or did these were these were to now that had become that relocated to our ward. Yeah so and they were super sweet and forever grateful for him and they were very patient and and they understood. I mean there were some of the only ones. Ironically that actually me about my experience and asked me what that meant and what. I was wrestling with their because nobody else did. It was so weird to me like this is something you should probably ask about. And so but they did. He's talking about your when you call called off the baptism they really asked me to be open and ask about what you're going through. That was referring. Yeah that's exactly it. I mean it wasn't archer getting baptized her. Are you having this. Is the devil like yeah. You know it was none of that. I remember like what's in. It was even prefaced. It's interesting. I have found that some of the most sort of emotionally intelligent people have encountered happened to be missionaries. I think as they talk to people a lot and they could pick up even as young as they are and didn't have any of the experience that i did but they kind of got it and i remember them to sort of like you know if you're comfortable talking about it and no this has got to be hard for you so like what's going on if you want to hear and i would text them sometimes at night right and i'd be finishing evening studying. I'd be like you know this is. I'm looking at this from looking at that. And they were very very patient and understood that this wasn't a straight line. I know a lot of people would love all these things to be straight. They're not straight lines. Conversion is messy and nuanced. And so i had to kind of navigate those waters and it wasn't just me i had a. I had a wife that had been on this thing with me for all these years and my kids and so i mean it was a lot to it and just you know okay great. The book of mormons awesome. Let's go and more death so when you call that first baptism that i mean your whole family were was going to be baptized that day. Or is it just so so me and my wife. yeah okay. we're going to be so then. What happened after that. To the point where you did actually go through with it you know. I had multiple meetings with them. And i remembered i was sitting on a park. In the kids are playing and crystalline are talking. And i said you know if if we're just trying to come at this thing head on just the law doctrinal. I'm like i just. I still can't get there like there's too much it's too different right and i think that's important understand. I said but if we're talking about the whole picture framework that incorporates family incorporates you know community incorporates prayer incorporates scripture. If we're looking at a thing that's going to kind of be a framework that we can work in for. It's not just along with our scripture but it impacts the rest of our lives. I'm like this is the only framework that makes sense and we and so we kind of made this analogy. It's kind of like the power strip that you plug a bunch of inputs into you know and so this thing was gonna the church to us represented kind of this power strip know. Our marriage is plugged into this. Our family's plugged into this. Our our businesses plugged into this. All the stuff is plugged into this any and it's a framework that can support that load of all the things that come there and that's what ultimately was like okay. This combination of things makes sense to us. This is a framework and weaken. We could say yes and so. Yeah so so i mean the the model of the church and the gospel and everything made sense but then the type of thing we get hung up on

some doctrinal points would sort of confusion. You sort of need to breathe a little bit. That's that's a really good question. I think part of it was my own identity in this. Because i'm like i'm going to go from. I'm preaching and teaching to sit on a pew. Nobody knows your name. And i was really concerned and i i sometimes still concern but i have a podcast now that i get to do it all the time. But i'm like yeah. I've got a lot to say lot of study a lot of experience. I wanna help people with this. So i worried about. Are we going to have an impact in that matters to me and and it really don't matter to crystal might my wife as well and so there was part of that from a pure doctrinal issue. It's kind of interesting. I didn't run up against anything. That back where i came from. We talked about doctrinal issues that were state borders and national borders case. So you never go to war on a state border issue like there's all kinds of things we can disagree on right and it's okay. You're pretrial on post trip. Whatever it doesn't matter we're not going to go to war of that. There are some national issues that you're ready to throw down on dr leander just fundamentals right. But i didn't have any national issues as it were that i was. I sometimes was concerned about language. That i would hear people say but i don't think they were saying it maliciously i.

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I think they were saying. Because they just weren't studied they had been around but they weren't. They didn't really understand. So i didn't. It wasn't a doctrinal thing that threw me. It was more like. How do we fit into this. Do can we guided. This is even gonna make sense from because we got to sit here and we're going to talk to these folks and and we didn't know how that was going to be. You know what i mean. That's what it is now. I love how you touch on the concept of identity. Because that's really where. I can see how that would throw you because in my life right now i identify in so many ways. And you know the fact that i have in you know in the past been a bishop and in a stake presidency like that gives me some level identity where i feel like i have i sort of know the boundaries. I have in this community like i feel comfortable raising my hand in a sunday school class in stating something and everybody in in the room knows well. He's a former bishop so he can't be too much off his rocker. So okay i see what he's saying right where you're coming in as i'm like in your just i'm gary aunt and here i am again where you had you had so much identity. That sort of That you're able to. I mean it was like just a warm blanket and these other news right. Like i feel like i i have a place here and now i don't and that's scary. It really is perfectly said. I mean i. I i think we sort of felt and maybe sometimes still will join the church at the wrong time i mean we came up out of baptism a week later lockdown so we we spent more time. I was just telling this to one of our friends in church over over his snapchat or something. I said we went. We were in the church building. Moore's investigators than we have been as members because we went we visited and we're in the church for what six months seven months before we finally got in if you will and so then we got locked down and so we still kind of to some degree and i think probably a lot of people in this pandemic. you sort of feel like no matt's you're like well we're kind of there were kind of not. I don't know what's going on. And so i'm yeah. Identity was a big thing. I mean you know look where we came from. And you've been doing that for so long. You know the lingo the culture. You know the the 'isms and here we got it because we were. I mean we spent a lot of time studying. We spent a lot of time asking questions. And but still your. It's clear you know a lot of the time you know. There's there's there's guys like you with all this experience and have been around it which is awesome

and there's guys like me who are from the outside right so i'm always i'm always battling in my own teaching and whatever we do. I'm really not interested in an us versus them conversation. But it's hard not to have that sometimes when you're coming from the outside yeah 'cause if you're in my word i could. I could say every week every day. You gary don't worry like i know i've been a bishop and i've been in the church my life but hey you're part of like no matter. How many times you say that it does not get an magically say. Okay i until i mean it's a process and it's messy and so i want to get in touch on a few topics i want to jump into but anything else as far as your story. Semaine highlights are mile markers that would be important to to say before we launch into. Yeah you know. I i would just say that my story is i. Think what it demonstrates. I've always been a searcher right when i first someone. I presented a bible to me. And i started reach reading it. I was. I was reaching and searching for this person of jesus that i was hearing about and so my journey has been about that. The ironic super ironic thing that. What was right before me. Discovering that podcast. Kurt was actually. And i think this is what charged up the algorithm to lead me to that book of mormon conversation. This is my theory probably wrong. Who knows but. I had somebody that had me. Listen to an audio and it was actually from a jehovah's witness because they were talking about the trinity and so i listened to it because i'm always happens if someone said i want your opinion on this deal but god can use all kinds of pathways that otherwise we would look out on paper and go. That doesn't make sense by definition. This conversation started with a guy doing a video that was a jehovah's witness cry and and so which led to the independent fundamental baptist. Listening to a talk which hit play on a book of mormon which play on sherri do which it play on elder bedar an ebay in a book of mormon and online missionaries and. I mean what's but all this thing ended in where we are now. And i mean i spend my time when i'm not working thumping on a podcast. Mike telling people about a precious. This book of mormon is a precious. The bible is how to work this stuff into our faith. And so i mean. It's just a journey where god can use all kinds of elements to bring about toss. Yeah right and and i've met with many friends who are baptist or evangelical whatever and they have such a deep burning of christ in their heart and i'm just like you know sure if you're asking me if i would love you were baptized.

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A latter day. Saint yeah would be but man. God bless ya you know like. You're you're finding your finding christ in that journey in. Its whom i say will your journey is not over yet. Or you know it's like i hope it's not but let's just rejoice in christ you know i love that you say that some of the weirdest things i heard early on was when folks would kind of talk to us like well the meta communication was. Hey you were lost before. But you've found it now and i'm like I'm not quite sure about that. So i get what you're saying. Yes all right. So i want to. I want to launch into to an adult conversation here. You're we're both mature adults. We both at facts as they are and We're not making any indictment of certain faith points in our tradition or the baptist tradition. But here's what intrigued me so much about. What about talking with you having this conversation. Is that at this point you are. You're a newly baptized member of the church for know all no definitions or purposes or whatever and and also you you bring with you a certain perspective with that. I don't have with my decades in the church being raised in it. And you know hearing all the vernacular and everything from a young age and also your experience as a leader is a is a pastor preacher in the baptist church you there's some leadership principles and things you're

bringing into and so you're at this point where you've probably seen things obviously the world's upside down but coming in just as you investigate the church. You probably saw some things that we do as a church in thought. That's really cool. Like i hadn't even thought of that and you know i'll churches should do that and then i'm sure there's other things where he thought okay. You people are crazy like why do you do that. And as doesn't matter how many times people there's this handbook and this and that and then this doctor and yet i still get a man like why. Why are you doing that right. And so i just want to see you as like a hired consultant coming into our church saying okay. You have a little understanding of our church now. Now help us understand what we're missing by being too close to it so tell me like being a leader a baptist leader coming into a latter day saint culture. Like what comes to mind when you're just looking at us as a leadership organization as a as a church and so forth. Is that the help. Yeah i think so. Let me take the first swing at that. We might foul off. These first couple pitches. Get one always for those listed against the editor. Good so as an outsider. Looking at if you're asking me from just a perspective of looking at how it's led and how that feels with a new person coming in. Here's what i would say in a general sense when we were investigating which is found that phrase interesting but when when we were investigating. What would you call somebody. Investing in the baptist. What's what would you say how to say someone was visiting the visit. I mean is he this type stuff i want to get. I mean and so when we were doing that it was full court press. I mean it was you or for for for them for them so so so they will tell us they were. They were our. You'd get text messages. You get calls. There were cookies at the door. There was they came by a member last christmas. And we're caroline at the front door. They i mean it was it was it was really and i would say all wonderful things. Great connection not heavy theology. Because that you know the and i think some of them were nervous to talk about that stuff so they kind of kept which is fine. But but i think that it was. There was a real warmth than a real connection and it was like i remember crystalline. I often going again. There's something in the water. This is amazing. Like everybody's so like this is cool and only if you know in the beginning that that a wonderful thing as we got closer. It kind of started feeling. I walked out of church one day. And i thought i remember saying to crystal on the drive home. I thought well. If it's i know that they mean being this nice really do but it's so sort of glossy that it concerns me because it i'm looking for some edges or like some you know like it's just you write a little bit worried about that but when we came we we get baptized and we come up that full court press kind of dramatically changes and not that the world should center around the millers ship. Right i get it. But there's a real dramatic difference right so there's kind of like we've got you on the lot with gotcha full court. Press to make the deal with closed the sale. But then where's the follow up right. And where i come from its discipleship. It's the it's that connection post you know. Someone's in and so that's where it felt like. There was a real disconnect now in fairness we did this in the middle of the pandemic right so there wasn't a manual on that. But and i know we love manuals but i i think that it's so that impacted it no one really knew what to do with that so it was easy for for folks to kind of get lost in the cracks.

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But you know for my thing and i think from a leadership perspective i think about if we're going to pay attention to this stuff on the front end learning about a family learning about where they're coming from in that kind of stuff. There's a lot of nuance again. That impacts conversion. I

wasn't conversion to getting to know. Jesus we knew Jesus this was switching. The framework was again changing. Jerseys if you will and so if all those things are at play where we were where we came from all that stuff. I think that needs to be paid attention to my biggest word of encouragement for leaders would be like once that person's in now. The answer isn't to apply the checklist on what we do with every new member. Now each member comes. New member comes with their own set of things that led them their gifts. Talents potential struggle ability environment. All those things we need to be looking at that in the post you know. Baptism world post. They're in now. Because those are going to be the buttons and the connection points to really I think create genuine fellowship discipleship and connection and so that would be the the one general observation from our point that we saw. I hope that makes sense. Yeah so it sounds like you know. Just the after joke like if sometimes our church can feel like Walmart started a church and we're just a very large bureaucracy with manuals and training manuals in this thing. And oh that checklist do this when that happens right and so when a new member comes in. It's like okay. Well you need the new member discussions. I don't think we do that anymore. But you need you need to go to this class at this and then and sometimes it's like I just want to be me and sort of just have maybe explore for miniature I I don't know like maybe just somehow see people as an individual coming into the church rather than okay we need to. We need to orient. This new member. Doubt these things is that makes a lot of sense. I was just having a conversation. I've got a good friend of mine. Pastor still in San Antonio and I told him I said one of the things that you guys have figured out his nondenominational evangelical. I said you know what you guys have. Figured out in. Discipleship is brilliant. Because you're are. People are not unclear that your arms are wide open. But that wants someone then. They spend a lot of time kind of nurturing relationships and kind of connecting. And I don't mean to sound to spongy here but connecting heart to heart and personally with people over a period of time and yes of course. There's gospel teaching around that. And yes there's there's hey here the fundamentals of the faith but that's often done in a way where whether that's the formal church service or Sunday school or so meetings in the middle of the week where people are having pizza and having a lesson someone's living room or whatever the case they've done a really really good job of not restricting this just to what happens on Sunday morning and certainly not restricting it early on to you know all right here are the here. Are the seven steps that you've you know the boxes you have to check off to kind of be in the culture and I don't want to be confusing here. I'm not interested in changing the rules of the game. I am interested in and how we kind of look at. What are we doing. Not just with converts. I would say you know. What do we do with all members about. How are we really connecting with them. And that I understand connection can be kinda nebulous but how are we linked up to them beyond just the lists or the calling or the the tasks I have no doubt we are very effective at the rudiments of religion. I sometimes get concerned that we are ineffective in truly connecting with the people in the pew that messages. So it sounds like you know from your experience coming in like we have certain administrative processes that are meant to create connection and community possibly. But they're so administrative that you can't get past the administration happening in order to even reach the connection. Is that a good way to say. It is and I want to be very clear so that you know. I don't get emails later. Neither do you. I listen I understand. Administrative is both important and practical. God's not an author of confusion we gotta have you know our house. Orderly got it. I get it check but the the issue here is that I think anything administratively.

It's what's behind it. It's i think everything we should be doing. Should be leading us to jesus and helping us deliver more like him and so we got the great models in the scripture. We know that we got a living prophet. You help us guide us. This is not complicated. But i think sometimes we can get too wrapped up and this doesn't just happen with us. I mean you know what happened to where i came from. You know. we're so wrapped up in the in. The sort of this is what we do as part of our niche. But we're missing the people that are doing it. And so i think that's a real because everybody's bringing something different to this table everybody's gonna run this race their own pace right and so i'm always thinking when i'm teaching it myself and when i'm talking to people i'm thinking about how do we get to really understand them.

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Not because we're trying to change everything to please everybody. That doesn't certainly work. But it's a lot easier to usher in procedure or administrative. Or by the way usher in the hey. This is what we do here. This is part of wearing this jersey. It's a lot easier to usher that in when i've connected some way with you before we get to that otherwise you can. You can lose folks. And i think that's real. Yeah so i'm just curious. Like from your baptists experience not that they had it figured out or anything not but is there anything that was easier to do in that context than in the latter day saint context as far as this you know creating the connection or leader to do in that context my senses we were certainly a lot freer to let it rip so we didn't have we didn't have to have four meetings and get approval about. Hey we're going to get together with everybody on wednesday night and we're gonna you know. Invite everybody over to brother house and we're going to do a lesson for the month of march out of the book back so you know. I think there was a lot more freedom to and and i'm not suggesting that we don't have that freedom here i just know from administrative point and how it was structured. We didn't have to kind of step so gently perhaps and so and truth be told. I mean we've had a history of that you know. Independent bible studies scripture studies in a home as sort of frowned upon. Because you know what what are you. What's really going on there. But were now elder cook. He presented the new to our planning. Really they've come for me. They really encourage that. You know. so sort of new delhi. Yeah right and so. I think the difference is we would and i love that and we're we read it every night as a family but my i think the issue is how do you bring people together outside of the normal confines of sunday school sunday morning. And i think that's what was different for us. We we had a certain fluency and that it wasn't an we didn't have a manual for that. this was just. This is what you did. Like if i didn't know personally what was going on with everybody and was connected with them and talking to them. Even outside of of the other staff like the regular church things than i was missing dramatically as a leader. Like what in the world are you doing. You know. Because if i don't if i don't have a sense of that and i you know i i used to tell folks all the time i mean if you don't know the names of the kids and the dog and the cat and these other things but you're interested in rippin face about how. They're living what they need to go. Do you go do this this this. I'm like well what's the name of the what's the name of the third son. I don't know well ratchet back brother. We got to come back to basics here and so for me again. I want to be careful here. I'm not suggesting that you throw caution to the wind. But i am. I am suggesting that and because we are so sort of home centric now especially in the pandemic for crying out. It doesn't seem like it would be hard. I mean i have struggled during this pandemic. i'm like wire. My nondenominational protestant friends still doing meetings.

Zooming it out. Bible studies on facebook like crazy. And we've had you know. I can count on half a hand. How many older score meetings we figured out how to do on zoom. That doesn't make sense to me. And we need to be both leveraging technology and putting this at the front because even if it is via zoom that's better and would be better than the void right. There's nothing going on. And i get that it's easy to silo. Get in in in a pandemic. It's easy to kind of get in our own worlds. But i get that but also think it's inexcusable. It's not the gospel. It's not what we read in scripture in just being. You know trying to be more village at doing being proactive. Doing those types of community focused things. Yeah i mean if i've been preaching a series in the book of accent. I'm like everywhere. You see it eating together praying together singing together worshipping together together together together together together together right and in everywhere it's everywhere right but here we are got my quiet in my study and my family and here i got the jersey on and i'm like this do what what are you doing. And it seems like when. I'm learning from this from your perspective. Is you sort of feel like there's some level of act of congress that has to take place in order for a an official sanctioned church meeting to happen and so therefore that resists enough for people to say well. I'll just wait till the elders court does something. And i think that is and it may be unfair. It may not be that. I mean look i could call. I could call up ten people right. Now let's do a zoom. I'm not breaking the law by having zoom and talking about the bible or the book of mormon. But i think it's just about us getting in that posture. I sometimes i was just talking to a good friend about this. I'm like we all seem to be looking at the other guy and looking at each other going. We're waiting on something somebody to give the green light. Green light was given when jesus said go forth and preach the gospel already got green light like we so we should be already. We don't need to wait around. None of this is is controversial. Redoing some french thing this. This is just about us going from a leadership perspective. It's like hey. I mean even just man hop open a facetime. Call somebody up.

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You know. I mean these are little things in much easier again obviously to sit from the cheap seats and go mark guys doing this right but i think from my perspective and i think for all of us not just for converts conver- conversation. This is everybody that you know. We sorta go wait a minute. We have opportunities to connect and it. Also by the way i remember. You'll love the story. I i remember sitting down with a guy that i was mentoring pastor in san antonio and i would come in every time we'd meet our audience can't see this but i'd come in with my bible right and we'd sit down. We'd start to study like i mean i would go straight off right into the study and i remember him saying to me and i mean holy spirit. Just knock me out with this statement. He goes hey m passer miller. I said yeah he said like. Is it ever possible for you. And i just to get together and have a hamburger and not talk about any of this stuff right away and i thought i mean now i know what some are thinking while we've got to preach doctrine again. I'm with you like. I'm the first guy to raise him on that but i had not connected with this guy at all like i was. I had all the stuff hurt. I knew all the things to say. We're in discipleship class. Bless god i'm gonna take you but he's like and it turns out he was going through some seriously heavy stuff and here. I am ushering in my message. But i haven't even taken the time to go. Wait a minute what is happening with you and so there would be some. That would make the case. We don't have time for all that yes you do. We're super super-busy. Now you're not. I mean there's there's

plenty of time to connect with people otherwise we're missing the plot completely and it's interesting because you know it. Let's say you were saying all this and maybe you know and you didn't have the context of being latter day. Saint as you are now we would spread like this is why churches so great gary because we have what's called the ministering program and so everybody's like assigned everybody else and we're just watching over each other so don't worry gary we we're good there. We got it figured out right and and then on the inside we say like yeah but like nobody does it or like. What's been your experience as far as like you. You see the structure. Is there. Gary like in i mean what's been the the experience of understanding that the ministering program and how that's supposed to work as sometimes it doesn't lot times it doesn't i would say first of all the family that was assigned to us and still as i. Yeah that that is our ministering family that has helped us and and talk to us they have been incredibly sweet. And i'm grateful for them particularly on the one brother was i. I have this retinal vein exclusion issue. That i've been dealing with for the last eight months in one of my eyes and he probably three or four times took me to my points. Couldn't drive afterwards. When they give me these injections and he couldn't have been more generous and there was. I can think of many times when when generosity has certainly been felt and very appreciate i think from administering topic general though again this comes down to the first way. I think we help people get better at this as to model. Somebody's got to step up and start making this more about. Hey we connect with people. Keep saying this word a lot but it's more than just you know. Well it's the month. I i've sent a tax or call somebody okay. Great check right now. Obviously we're in the middle of a pandemic right and all kinds of craziness in the world wherever you fall on all these things. It's real that it's crazy. So of all the times to be reaching out in an intentional deliberate nonstructured non scripted way. It's now And so. I think that it starts by being. I think seeing others do it in a way that that is that is genuine and and just again not a scripted thing but then also knowing that you know you've got permission to get creative with this in other. There's a lot of ways to come at things you don't have to. We don't have to fold the arms about the heavier. stop it. i mean we can. We can do this a lot of different ways. And just that that i think realizing but i think part of this skirt honestly this is. This is my basic impression. I think if folks are not daily rooted in scripture. If they're not close to jesus prayer. I think the heart can develop a certain hardness to it that a leader make things rudimentary structure. But it's not connected in a live personally with people and so it. Look if i stay close to the scripture. I'm gonna get close to. Jesus i'm gonna learn more. How how this. Thing routes f-. I'm close to prayer. I'm going to be much more sensitive to those prompts of the holy ghost say you need to call him. text him. Go knock on the door. Send a card to whatever. I'm going to be much more sensitive to that. And then as a result i think it's gonna come out in how i minister to others but ministering to others. I don't think the formula. And i'm not trying to be unkind. I don't think the formulas here's a link to the ministering handbook thing and we're going to run these reports every now and again where you tell us what's going on.

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I understand that that makes sense. Not criticizing now. But i'm suggesting that this starts with us and is my heart sensitive to what's happening with somebody else. I think it gets sensitive. Because i'm getting real close to the lord in the scripture getting real close to him in prayer so that i can hear it when he's telling me. Hey go. do this go do that. If i'm doing if i'm away from

those things and i'm not spending time genuinely in that pursuit that i'm not going to be a sensitive and then what am i left with. I'm with a checklist. I'm left with here. We are and that's cold and it's there's not much to it and i can't think of anything more portland for us to truly minister to people. But i think that that means where's our source for. How effectively minister comes jesus. So that's the source that i need to be close to it so i can understand. I can hear from the holy ghost so i'd know how to go and do right settled primary songwriter. Talk about this all the time you wanna get in my feels on my podcast. Primary songs do not break down. I can't take but i i will go. I will do things. Lord commands right. Yeah can't do it. F- i'm not in the word if i'm not in prayer fundamentals will help me be much better ministry. When you're of the spirit you don't need to be led by checklists. I love that. And i remember. I'd often remind the when. I was serving his bishop. I remember this one instance. When i called a news release citing president in her counselors and remember stating to the word. I think we you know about this. Newly called sister. And i said in one sense we look at those in the church that have callings as well. They have a lot of responsibility a lot of lot weighing on them but at the end the day they have it easy because the ministering opportunities are served to them on a platter. They don't necessarily have to go too far to find it but it's the lay member who has to wrestle and seek it out that becomes more difficult. We all have the requirement to minister and serve but for leaders. It can be a lot easier. So don't look at this new release cited president thank. Oh man that she's got a lot to to worry about now. We all have a lot to worry about. You know we all have the saints in the kingdom the that we're worrying about and sometimes we almost not that we get excited or you know when someone gets sick or going through difficult time but when someone has some. They minister who needs to ride to their doctor. It's sort of like all right. Like i've got something to do right right. I'm so glad that gary's eyeballs about to burst. Because now i can i can serve them. It's in the it's in the moments where we have to sit with it and be like okay like i gotta get close to the word and i got to pray here because like how do i do this. It's not just gonna come knocking on my door or come as a phone call from brazil. I have to engage with it and go figure had a minister. I love what you just said. I think two things have been really helpful to me because at first i did not feel and i still don't over here i don't feel like i'm being nearly as effective because i think i'm still trying to to sort of pay by the establish numbers. I think it hurts me as a as i reached out one. I've pressed in impre about this. That's the best thing anybody listening. And i've simple questions. How can i do this better. And then i just recently a week ago like guys. I have not arrived on any of this stuff about a week ago. I sent a text to the brother that that i am assigned with that. We minister to a couple of things i said. Hey you've been on the team a lot longer than me. This was literally my tax message. You've been on the team a lot longer than me can you. And because i'm fighting for feedback. Can you tell me how. I what we do here. That would be more effective. Or how i can be better you know. What can i be doing to better serve these families and so it's asking those questions even asking him even if they don't have magical answer but you start thinking about how you can actually be better and not that. There's some scale you're super minister. You're not so superminister but better in the sense that you know. Hey i think. I've i think i've got something going on here. You know i. I know that i need to that. I need to be searching like you said because not all the opportunities are going to be obvious. and let's face it. We live in a world where most people not attend you go. Hey how are things going. Everything's fine now. Meanwhile the house is burning down around him right. They're dealing with a massive financial crisis or a health crisis or a merrill issue or the kids are

hanging from chandeliers chandelier sums going crazy but of course we asked people especially men often. How are they going are good. We're not good and so all of us is fighting some silent war right at some point our so. I think that asking in prayer asking people that you trust in the church people have maybe been around. That are good at it. Fight for that feedback of. What can i be doing. I'm still working on this. Because i think for me and i i'm waiting for somebody i maybe you'll do it for me. Current some text me just say hey minister in a way that you can be creative. Gary it's okay. You don't have to do this. Because i feel very and again. This could be totally unfair. But i feel constrained by the culture a bit because i don't want people thinking. Oh the guy from the outside came in and is doing this crazy stuff over here right but i just. I know that i struggle with that.

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I want to be able to to reach a little bit more deliberately. In a way that that people can feel because i know that you know like i said that brother taken me to those eye appointments meant the world to me and that was a big obvious thing clearly like syria side issue but that meant the world to be and those conversations that happened on the way there and back those conversations were about all kinds of things right and so that can be helpful. I think fighting for the feedback praying about hiking be better. I think replaces start and i appreciate the leadership principle. I'm taking away from. This is like being intentional. Giving the people you lead permission to connect in because from your baptist experience. It was part of the culture that people would just get together and have a bible study. It's just what you. And i think now like if i was to invite people over i mean. Obviously it's different now. They may not want to go over. But you know getting my own group like there's so much resistance there the introverted screaming. Don't let these people in your house. You'll be so uncomfortable but the more we do it. We just haven't had the practice. I would say and i hate to make general statements but as a faith community. We haven't had much practice in that bible. Study situation that least. I haven't personally. And so. That's a good place that a leader to give permission to the ward say. Hey you know you guys can get together all you want night. There's nothing wrong with that in a few families. Find a family to do a come. Follow me lesson with this coming week and zoom or whatever just permission and reminding them that doesn't take an act of congress doesn't have to be church saint sanctioned or not corm approved to do these things right and it doesn't have to be super sophisticated. I mean no one needs to have like the harmonic of the exposition of the tax. I mean this doesn't need to be some formal. Let's get together will pick a section at fine out of come follow me. Great runoffs dinner again in a post covid era. Now it's fine bring your dinner onto the zoom like bring. Your dinner showed on zoom. Let's talk. let's chat it up. Like how do we. I mean someone doesn't have to be like me and be like the guy preaching it. It can just as simple as hey. This is the. Let's read it together. Hey how do we do something with this. This week is on mute. Let people talk. I mean and then all watch what happens because out of that in the beginning. Of course everybody will be sitting there like. I'm not sure but get folks used to this just used to the the cadence of it and you'll have some conversations that will come up that a blow your mind. I'll tell you why. Because i'll tell you what's going to happen because i've seen this many many times in my previous world the holy ghost is going to get up in on some of these conversations and is going to there's going to be revelation at some insight that you would never thought of plus people are giving an insight into them and now we've got

something that we can really talk to somebody about. It's much easier to have that conversation. Because i've been meeting with you for months and we've been you know having wednesday night in a pizza food study and discussion and so when i ask you four months later in how you doing garam god yes yes. I'm doing horrible. And here's why. Because now i've built this bridge and this awareness bridge this connection bridge that otherwise i wouldn't have. I think sometimes you know you'll you'll relate to this. I think sometimes when we're ministering were doing it like cold calling right like nobody knows our name yet and it feels that way because we haven't done this other stuff on the front and so i think when we're ministering it should be warm calls and if it's warm calls we've warmed them up through connection right and so yeah. I think about that often. I did a thing on my and i didn't. I didn't do anything with kerr. And you know what you just challenged me just by looking at me that way to do this this coming week. I told my podcasts. I said well you know what we need to do for the people that listen to me like being hit play. Every time i come on guys we need to have zoom at least once a month where we all jump on and we're just having a virtual prayer meeting we need to do it and i said that and i didn't do anything with kirk because i tell you what i thought. I thought either. One people are going to think that. I'm turning this into some kind of pentecostal revival which ranks would be us but not doing that. We need a little pentecostal frank. But but i was worried about that or i thought people be like in a brother miller be can't i'm like what we're getting together to pray. I got acts all over this. Become together pray right. So i need to do stuff i need to do it. And i'm naturally built for that right but it's those things where we get out and find if two people show up and we come together and agree in some prayer. Can god move on that prayer. Absolutely he can't but it gets us in a cadence together because we're doing something that's different. And what did paul say beginning. Roams the fellowship of you. And i are friendship is built on the fellowship of our mutual faith you and me and so when we do things like that a simple prayer meeting once a month i mean imagine kurt. I'm not pitching you but imagine if you got your community together with mine and we brought everybody together for a prayer meeting once a month on zoom i tell you a bunch of people would show up and if nothing else happened if you and i were the only ones prion spirit would move. I promise you would. And so it's that kind of stuff again. We're not changing the sacramento.

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The wrote no we are living it. I mean i think that's living in a very real way and kurt might at that app and he shouldn't. I'm telling you that's a good idea. No i think. I think we gotta put a leading saints Narrow gate podcast. Fray her subterranean together. I'm telling him all right. We'll look let's do. let's do anyway. Let me to throw you off with that. I just think. I just felt led to say that i think the spirit throws both off of that. So that's yeah dynamic really intrigued to get your input in 'cause let me give you two hypothetical situations and you can crack me on the baptist when i would imagine and maybe you telling us more about your experience. When was there a moment. Like what the process of becoming a baptist minister like. Do you have to fill out an application as some committee somewhere. Sign off on it. Do you just say hey have putting his money together. I got my fifteen chairs in here. We go like but there's this moment nobody called you and said brother miller. We are like to extend the calling as a badly administered. Eat right so how. How did how does that work. Like the technicalities of it. You don't no one ever asked me that question ever. That's awesome do here gary. I'm so there's really two kind of

lines kirk to traditional lines here one is the sort of protege line so think of it as the apprenticeship line okay so you said under the preaching of somebody that's been doing it you senator that for certain period of time there's not a manual on if that's three years five years and three months but you sit under that teaching or part of that really understand core doctrines the fundamentals of the faith you will and then in sitting under that then you start to preach some and then you start to preach more and then you know magically hey you're good you've been under this for awhile either. They call you like they not in the sense that like you said nobody calls you up on the phone or like they'll tell you. Hey man you're you're good to go. You don't need to sit under us. You should go. You should go start a church or you feel that way and you like i impressed. It's our time to go. That was me right now. The other path. And i'm kind of both. I was like a hybrid. So this is a bit of a mix up right so the other path is to do exactly what i said but then you go through formal seminary right so you go to grad school. Get an md masters of divinity. And do that kind of thing. So i went to do my. Md liberty theological seminary. I did it virtually because that's in lynchburg. Virginia and i lived in texas. I was in the military at the time. Thank you. Gi bill for pain for but yes so we did that while doing the sort of apprenticeship version by the debt so i was kind of a combination but ultimately kurt to answer the question ultimately. Somebody has that clear impression that it's time to do it but normally not in a vacuum. You know somebody. Has you have sat under somebody. You've been exposed enough. You know that that's happened but but you don't need a permission slip. Let's be fair if you feel it. You're gonna put yourself on the line. You're going to order the chairs. you're gonna show up for the first meeting. I mean look. The first meeting was me my wife our youngest daughter at the time. There's only one out at the time and a cat in the living room. That was meeting number one. I preached are two. It was awesome but we had this thing called the internet. Which really helped me. So i was recording all my sermons. I put them up and people are listening little facebook. Geo targeting on the ads. You know the deal and more people started hearing. Yeah goes from there. Yeah pathways but that's generally it and i appreciate understand sort of that experience where there is a smaller. Thought i feel called. I want to. I want to step forward and lead and and lee church right now. take that to. Let's say i am. Let's say i'm in a word and here. The bishop is was transferred out of state. He's moving so we know his release is coming. And i think well great that set point with the stake president. I said president. Whoever like i i want you know like i just love this gospel. I wanna serve. I think i would be a good option for the next bishop. I when i have some experience. I've been a bishop. So that might help and i loved it and so i wanna do it again like will you consider me now. If that happened my name would move from. Maybe the top of the list to all the way down to the bottom like this guy is not understand how this works. So i'm curious really seriously i mean i. Maybe i'm exposing you to part of our culture is live. I'm good no no. I'm just getting so where were you are somebody who's experienced a good. You know what it's like to retired you know. It was like the lead like to organize a church. Do all these things. Now you're in you're in this organization where you just. You can't step forward. And say well. I want to lead and if you do. They're sort of this feeling like well. Are you aspiring to certain calling and and that's very look down about now. I'm i do all podcast on what i think about aspiring to callings because the reality is i was a bishop at twenty eight little young.

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Didn't know what i was doing. I sure hope. I get another opportunity at it. I sure hope. I get more opportunity leadership now. If i was say that people would be like. No you're you're not supposed to say that. So you've shifted from this culture of yes step. Were elite brother hallelujah. Like let's hear him to this culture of like you. Just wait your turn. And maybe maybe. If now i'm kicking a lot of sacred cows here because i truly believe yeah it is done by. People are called of god through prayer and and these things but as sort of my heart aches for you a little bit. I think this is why you've started your podcasts. So you have an avenue to preach and share your testimony. Because i'm like here comes. Gary has so much has so much going momentum the spirit and now he has to just sit there you know like and maybe we'll be called to a score presidency or whatever and that'd be awesome but it just is such a different dynamic and i'm curious may maybe again. I'm just revealing the cbo but what thoughts come to mind like how. I don't know i there's no question in there but i'm just like wow interesting thing that gary's water so again in the interest of of honoring your your shell honoring the audience. I'll try to be careful with this. As i can't be i mean that i think that's important so this was an has been and i don't you know for the people who listen to me enough. They know. I don't talk about this stuff as if i've arrived in a figured it out and i've made peace with everything i haven't. I mean there are some of this that i genuinely struggle with this topic. Kirk hundred percent struggle with. I do i mean they may i mean and i don't you know i'm sure someone would love me to say. Well you know now that i'm part of this. I just accept. This is all part of divine economy of how this works. And everything's going wherever whenever and whenever and if it's all good. I don't think that way at all. It's frustrating to me personally but also know the church is not here just to cater to my needs but i do think as paul said so effectively writing to a church that at least in some parts was kind of a hot mess. He's talking to the church of corinth and he and he reminds them that. We've all got sort of gifts differing right. it's really important. Trae so like a lot of people on all sides of the doctrinal scale from the most progressively liberal doctrinal people to the hardest core folks to guys like me college more in the middle. I think that if we understand that people have gifts different kurt than than we go. Okay one that helps me understand. Different approaches a little bit better than me and after like everything but it makes me understand a little bit but for me. That is something that and i don't know what the solve is for. I don't think there is one. I think i have to continue to sorta grow and grace as the scripture. Tell me but right. But i do have i do have avenues. And and that's you know. I knew the podcast was going to start before i went to the stake center to get baptized. I told crystal. I'm like. I can't do this if i literally. I can't. I can't if i'm going to sit in not teach not preach not doing. I can't no hard pass. And i said i have to have this as part of this. She's absolutely and you know. Because that was i mean again that might sound incredibly self serving and that's okay but that's part of the gifts and i've been doing this for a long time. I don't think. God gives gifts that he just wants you to put on a shelf forever. I don't think that makes sense. And so thankfully i haven't an outlet in a way but do i do. I wish i had that reach and the ability to connect and kinda set cultural pace and and light some people up on a sunday morning. Yeah of course. I do and by the way light up in a good way right. I mean i want. I want you to walk out from a sermon on sunday. Being ready to take on the world with a water pistol. Go winning souls all over the place. Do i wish. I was doing that every week like i used to. Of course you. And i. I confided in you in our pre interview conversations. I mean i've sat. I shared this on my podcast a couple of weeks ago. I've asked my wife more than what's been like babe. No-one's here no one's listening. I did the right thing bright. You know

like. I mean this. This was right. That's not some questioning of the church of questioning doctrine. It's your place in it and your place in this world as it were so. I bet i've had those moments many many times. Yeah and you know. I i appreciate that you know walking into your baptism where you telling you. I need an avenue here. And it's going to be a podcast but i needn't avenue and when i you know i'm about to move into new ward in january building a home that we're moving in and apart amis walking into that war thinking i've gotta lead somewhere like i don't need to be the bishop but i i've gotta lead somewhere because that's just who i am and what i do and so i i may be the annoying guy who's like stuff or you know i may be looking to a get familiar with the bishop and the president not because i'm gunning for the job because like hey. I'm here like i'm experienced. What put me to work. Like what can i do. And unfortunately in our culture.

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And i'm just gonna call it out how i see it in our culture. We sorta think no actually what you're supposed to do is when a new bishop is called. Were supposed to like passively aggressively. Act like we don't want ed and oh boy well maybe you'll grow grow out. You know just so. I don't get calls like why like. Why join you some part of our culture. And i wanna tell. People come to and i was bishop. They're like oh. You're bishop like i never want to do that. And i'd say like why it's the best calling in the church like i. I'd encourage anybody if you get this opportunity. Say yes it is so remarkable. You get to see that. You told me on the the atonement work from the sidelines. I marvel you know. And but so this is something i guess. Sort of warning you walk into this culture a little bit. But also i want inspire you and others to say like we've got to stop this passive aggressive of not wanting to lead and i get life is busy or whatever but then we You know the the scripture reference but he who desires to be bishop desires a good thing or a good cause right like you go. It's beautiful and we have to stop being like. I don't know i don't really want that and if i do. I'm aspiring this whole aspiring thing. Is we it needs to be calmed. Question is what. I'm saying so and it was built so boy. We have all sorts of editing to do. But i can do any of that. Gary i don't think you should. I think it's great. Yeah i think. I think this is. This is a conversation worthy of annette's right because he's a real for me. I mean again. I appreciate your comment about. the beard. thing was hilarious. Like i gotta go like meditate on that. But yeah as someone who has a beard. But i i wonder about for me. This was genuinely wrestle in the process and it still is and how that pans out. Who knows but i am thankful. And it's all the more reason i think for those that feel like you know. Look i was in the military for twelve years. I was a non noncommissioned officer leading and kind of charge an and make it away at dna an entrepreneur on top of it right. I mean like shut the front door. I mean we do so when i think about that and then obviously doing it with with the church where i came from. This is something that i know that. It's all the more reason to do things like we talked about even as informal as they are and certainly aren't against anything but it's all the more reason. Say hey i'm gonna. I'm gonna start having meeting every winston and i'm not trying to start a cell church here okay. This is just if nothing else. I set the pace right. I model these things that i'm wanting to see right. I mean i bring in a lot of other faith quotes but you know. Be the difference. You want to see in the world right. So i mean that's the thing so if i can set that having a prayer meeting having whatever i mean at least informally that some way for me to and others i think to find a place of impact because i think there's a reason i don't think people grow cold on the pew for no reason

a lot of elements and they certainly was where i came from but somewhere built in their impact. Do i even make an impact on this thing. Like if i was laying on the floor and the and the four year because passed out and was you know what everybody just walked by. Somebody say brother. Miller right. I mean do i have. I made enough of an impact does it. I mean. I think this is an important question. Some would not like this question. But that's okay. I think when we're sitting there in the room got ask that question. Does it matter that i'm here. Yes does it matter that i'm in this building. This war district. Does it really matter. Because i could be plenty. I could have been in the baptist church when it was alive. And well i could be down at the glory house charismatic church. What a great name church. Glory house. Like so i could be anywhere but does it matter that i'm here. Not because i want everybody to cater to me no that's shortsighted to think that's what that's about. This is about goldman. Do i make some kind of impact here and kurt. It's not enough to go. Of course you make an impact through some mystical of your smile brigade. Come on really like. I want to make an impact. Now that's going to be different for. Everybody gets differing again. But that's what i think about. And i struggled with it and i think i'm certainly not the only one man preach a brother like this this concept of of really ask you know. Do i have purpose here. And i think going back to our larger discussion here of ministry to be an effective minister. I truly believe you have to demand influence and again. That doesn't mean that. That when i move into my new war that i'm gonna make it clear the state president that i need to be the next bishop where i need his job or whatever now if that comes it'd be like great that just makes us my influence a lot easier to obtain and i'm ready to roll but to go into award and say i'm just not going to be here. I'm going to have influence dramatic influence in this ward. And if there's any. I learned from being a bishop it is. I woke up one day and thought you know there's nothing ide do that. Most people can't do like the. Yeah there's a few technicality administrative things but ice shake people's hands at the back of the chapel. Anybody can do that. I'm not gonna like off or kick them out if you know welcoming the everybody into the chapel and so it just helped me leave that calling and say you know wherever i go.

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I'm going to have just as much influence as i had as bishop and that doesn't mean i demand a calling or i need a calling to make myself southfield good but i need influence. Because that's i'm a creation of heavenly father and that's what he's gray to do and that brings in more glory when i have influence you know. Yeah and i think that's. That's that's great. I think that's a problem though. Also for somebody new coming in the team. Because we don't feel like we have any influence here because you're like the rookie right now. And so if you feel like you don't have that influence or i would just put this forward and i'm not trying to open up other rabbit trails here but if somebody is not a convert me so first of all you come in and your you still kind of feel like the outsider. No matter how nice everybody has and it's cool but you don't feel like you have that influence yet. Also if you're somebody that might be a little different. Maybe you're different. 'cause you're backgrounds different. Maybe you look at the world a little bit differently. Maybe who you are is a little bit different and so that person could also feel like how can i have any influence because it seems like the only way to get influences to be like everybody else that i'm clearly not right so that person could feel lost right and floating around in the vortex of loss. Now if you want the ultimate recipe for trouble well. I feel a little bit. Lost sonam drifted away from the

scripture. Now i'm drifting away for prayer spend more time reading blogs and read it and whatever else come on somebody and then i go straight off the deep end and not. Because i'm not a good person. Not because i didn't have no trace this all the way back so i felt like i didn't have any influence and that i love that you bring up influenced by the way everybody listening. That was not in the script for tonight. That is something that people. If they don't feel like they have any influence. I think influence and impact travel together right. And so if i feel like i don't have any because i'm new or because i'm different because i had a divorce because filling the blank whatever it is then that can start a cycle that is really concerning and again i would circle back and i know i bang on this key a lot on the piano but the worst thing like the worst thing i can think of doing right there to that person's feel that way as all right. Hold on. Let me reference the checklist of what i'm supposed to say here. Let's go through this sort of procedural game and knock connecting with people as to borrow kurt is at the heart level. And so i think that that's That's part of this. Meant that's awesome well. Our time is short here but Says we have certain time we need a hit that we don't let me ask about you. Know when i think of. I remember as a young missionary i was in sacramento and i pulled over and it was just pumping gas into the car. I was driving and two baptist ministers cornered me and here. I am dislike. Hey guys i'm just getting gas here. I'm not looking for some theological argument. Right i remember one. I even have it still take my journal. He liked gave me this. This is area somewhere. I'd have to look it up. What isaiah scripture was and he was just like i remember clearly said to me. God is calling you out of the mormon church you know like okay man. I'm just getting gas again. I just want to move out of the airways and curious like like there's some strong beliefs in doctrine in in the baptist. Church that they hammer really hard like coming over to our church like you know one of my pet topics that the audience is probably tired of me hitting on. Is this concept of grace. Where i just feel like. We haven't learned how to sit with grace in our we believe it to the fullest to me. I would say we believe it. As much as the baptists or evangelical 's but there's something about our experience for some reason that we have a hard time sitting with and we default to behaviors behaviors behaviors. You know and it's in the slightest and most nuanced ways were every discussion then comes around to. Yeah but remember that checklist we to get that ministering done and and make sure you're still engaged right. What's your experience or or was that a sticking point for you. I mean because i feel like grace's a prominent I mean it is the doctrine of of jesus christ so what was your experience with some of those doctrines coming to the church. Goodness gracious so. I think look. Everybody should know this verse. If they don't need to go highlighted about ten times in your bible bud to eight nine. We'll tell you that. Were saved by grace through faith lest any man should boast right so i understand what you're saying some of the things that hit me wrong when i walked in and i would hear people say something in sunday school. That would make my thought. I was like having a seizure. Like i was like. What did they say and again. I think people are uncomfortable. Not just here anywhere. I think paul touches this very strongly in the book of romans. I think we want so badly to follow. The law were bent toward the law or towards the checklist where towards works. But the reality is the salvation plan is built built on the finished work of jesus.

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Christ which is a work of grace. We talk about the atonement. Things i loved when i came over here. Is that the super wide. This thing touches can touch anything any situation any person and

he thinks it's super but we're bent to it. We want to say what it is that we do or what we don't do. That's either keeping us inner goddess. In right that's look affair are making the case pause to make the case against it and you say look. It's not about that you saved by grace through faith do works matter. Of course they do their reflection of genuine conversion and it happens over time. What did paul said. The thing that i don't wanna do. I do all the time thing i should do. I don't do enough of welcome to me. Welcome to you right. So this grace question. I think listen there are procedures. The bible's full of some lists. There's no question about but our whole. Look when jesus said it's finished in the scripture friend. He meant it he meant it. He wasn't stuttered and he wasn't convinced he said i've already taken care of sort of this whole thing out by the finish work of the cross so as a result when you and i step into that grace. It's not an allowance to go be crazy. Paul opens up the letter of the glacier. Shouting him down. Koertzen you guys are frustrated. The grace of god right because we just said oh. I'm under grace. I'll be a crazy person now. That's not the allow. What's but grace's this thing where we get our orientation set on the idea. What is the old here. Jesus paid at all. Oh all to him. I o sin. If left a kremlin sandy washed widish. No you were talking about is. Am go there you go so it is something that i think we need to get a hold of because when you're operating in grace now it's everything is on what jesus did. Not what on. I do you know i mean what am i gonna do. That's going to top the fundamental grace of god. Nothing but that grace of god allows me to start working and becoming more. Like jesus right. Jesus told us he said look. You're going to do greater works than these ones that i've been doing talk about signs wonders and miracles. Warm not eleven. I'm the god miracles but but this is something. Where grace is a thing where you and i have to fundamentally stop we i think we get way too prideful in my where i came from. Kurt's keep it so we don't. I don't rub everybody wrong by saying what i'm saying about grace came from. They were so interested in all the things that they didn't do. We don't watch tv. We don't you know we don't watch rated movies. We don't do this we don't do this. Don't do this and very proud of that list. Good list. I mean look. There's some good lists in there. Come out from among them be separate touch. Not the unclean thing. I'm with it down with world leads cool but our foundation in our piece is in jesus jesus already paid at all so we can step operate through that grace when we do. Here's the secret then. We'll start extending that grace to other. See when we're doing the checklist thing. We tend to take the checklist everybody else. When they don't fit our checklist we wanna shout him down rebuke him. Tell him that they're not as good as we are. And and people feel isolated and it just as a hot mess but when we're understanding grace and we've real and it's all over your new testament friends and it's all over your book of mormon. You gotta tear a lot of pages out a lot of pages out for you to think that it's anything else so as a result then we start extending that grace to our spouse and extending grace to our kids and to our friends into our co workers. What's the grace grace. The unmerited favor right. i didn't do anything to earn it. It's a gift of god what romans lest any man should boast right so efficient. So the point is i struggled with this but the issue is either jesus paid at all or he didn't and i think that's what we come to with grace and i really. Yeah no it doesn't. And i think it comes when you start mixing that message with into leadership i mean because a lot of the pushback i get from leaders like okay khor i get it i we all wanna feel loved and we want a beautiful experience at church but we gotta get some stuff done. So how do you lead. And or preach with from the standpoint of grace and get people to leave their who that now they want to minister more and now they want to. You know they want to serve more. They want to do the

temple work. They want to do these things. Because i feel like that's where leaders are so afraid of completely embracing the grace message in every single meeting. Is they think. Well what if. I do that and sure. We'll feel good but nobody does anything because of it. Well i'm all about go. And do but i think people can be empowered to go and do when they understand what jesus already. Did you admit some. i think. I think it's that simple. I can preach your head off the next hour on grace. But i mean i i think if people understand what jesus did and why did it.

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Romans three twenty three all of sending come short of the glory of god. That's you that's me. There was a penalty for that. He paid the penalty so we wouldn't have to write so as a result if we understand what jesus already did then we will want to go and do. The things were called to do the things that the scripture tells us to do. Because we've got the model already. I know who i'm following. Jesus said go forth and preach the gospel to every creature. I'm not sure if. I should invite them to church. Mark sixteen fifty says you should. You'll meet me sorry. Well i'm not sure that i should be praying for healing. Sorry that's already covered to. You should do that by his stripes. We are all these things we already have them. I think that if we really understood what she's already did then we'll know what to do and if we will teach how do we. How do you preach to get people to go and do stuff preach the word. Now feel that. Thanks for that delay in the internet. Because now i've got a better answer here. It is if you preach what jesus did people know what to go and do if you preach the book of acts they're gonna know what to go and do not get up and quote three thousand quotes from somebody else had already quoted it. Don't get nervous. I'm not trying to be offensive here. I'm just trying to tell you preach the book if you're getting up to give a talk. Preach the gospel preached. What what did he do in matthew mark luke and john. What was the early church in the book of acts if you want people to know what they need to do. Go read axe. Go do it praying so winning. Healing miracles praising worship visiting gathering going doing. I mean that it's all over acts so if we want them to know what to do through the grace message. Use god's grace stab enough courage to get up and just preach the book. It's just right there. That's all that it is. I mean i've challenged my podcast listeners. Awhile ago i said for the rest of the year just read the gospels over and over and over again until you just can't do it and just start over again. Not because i don't think everything else is unimportant. I just want you. I think we're we spend all this time talking about jesus and about church stuff but we don't get intimately connected with. This is what he actually did. What was he doing you know. He was reaching the fringe reaching the marginalized. Are we doing that. Are we shouting the marginalized down or we actually reaching them. Because that's what he was doing. The person you and i wouldn't talk to. Jesus was going and talking to them. The person and i wouldn't have come within a million miles up. He was gone and talkative. Someone was sick. He was healing. Well everybody like me and you should have some oil honest with somebody sickly. Hannah pray for become on. I mean this is in there so we preach preach the book. That grace message gets into doing. Because jesus said you'll know them by their fruit. So you'll know him by. They're doing but they'll do it because of grace. Wow that's powerful gary. Where where would you send people. Obviously for your podcast. I mean i. I enjoy listening to it and and and a lot of them are just brief. You know ten fifteen minutes. The strong message. So where would you send people to connect with you and listen to more of your your stuff. I would send them to narrow gate. Podcasts dot com all one big word narrow gate podcast

dot com. All of our episodes. Are there you can use as many or as little as you like. They are generally pretty short and lots of bible. Lots of book bormann. Now we're fired up over there like you know you're going to get. You're going to get preached out. We're going to get fired up. We're going to celebrate. Jesus miracles what he's doing and i know that if people hang around there long enough they'll get in their scripture and and they'll get excited about what they find. Well i praise god that you have that venue avenue to cheer your light because man please don't ever put those skills away in their restored gospel. I mean this is god's kingdom and we need that piece of you to all grow and learn so. I'm glad that you have that. Podcast stream to speak to. So gary last question i have is Reflecting on your time as a leader both in the baptist church and now is the latter day saints. How has being a leader helped you become a better follower of jesus. Christ what a question you that the end of every one of your up. That's my thing that's long. Yeah it's kind of a john lee dumas thing at the end. Yeah so. I'm sure he does john anyway. So ask me that again. I wanna make sure that. I understood it. So reflecting on your experience as a leader both in the baptist church was the latter day saint. How is being a leader helps you become a better follower of jesus christ. Yeah so. I think that part of leadership is setting the example setting the pace and setting an example. And so in doing that. I have to know more about who jesus is not just who. He was on the pages of the scripture but who he is in my life now and it forces me by way not forcing in a bad way but it really drives me to find a way to get as close to him. As i can so that i can be more like him whenever i'm leading whether i'm leading myself because it starts there or leading my family or leading podcast audience or leaning whatever so a team at work it all applies but it really helps me to be a leadership position.

01:30:03 - 01:34:14

I think immediately drives me to a place of humility and goes. I do not know at all and i better get close to the one who does and so that helps me follow after the savior and follow after what. He's given me so that. I could be better for somebody else. That concludes my interview with gary miller. Definitely check out his podcast. Just search the narrow gate podcast and you'll find it there and whatever podcasting app you listen to just so uplifting the perspectives he shares the scriptures. He connects his messages to our great. Definitely one to have on your on your feet and listened to regularly. And i hope you appreciate this throat of the the rawness of this of this conversation. You know it's one of those. Where after the conversation. I sort of a day of passover. Was that like to too intense what we were talking about. But but it's we're just trying to talk about the realities of of some of these situations. I mean this concept of influence and desiring influence and being okay with that influence at or being okay with desire influence because as many of you know who follow the newsletter. The leading states newsletter. We've been doing the series of of simple messages or articles around the concept of aspiring. And what does it mean to aspire. And why does it have such a negative connotation in our faith community as opposed to others where gary's experience he want to become a preacher and he was sort of applauded for that and where in our faith community. That's sort of discouraged. I get there's some technicalities and differences you know as far as how inspiration for these callings comes in and whatnot. But i think it's worth wrestling with is far as just so we don't disenfranchise people who really want to make a difference because we're literally building the kingdom of god. Why wouldn't people want to be involved in that. And if they do like they should

never be shamed or discouraged or for wanting to lead in that that dynamic right and so anyways. I really hope wherever you're at whatever calling you have you have a sense or a desire for influence in your life in your ward in your faith community that your presence that you want to have purpose in being there and participating and contributing in seeing a difference because of your work. We are children of god and he has created us. He hasn't stillness talents and abilities so that we could bring glory to him because we are his creations and there's great work that can be done as we shift that mindset of saying you know what. I don't need to be the bishop. I don't need be the relief society. If i am great but i will have influence here for good. And where where can i go. Where pointing the right direction. Lord and on and i'll do it i think it's such a remarkable discussion and concept to to think about so again definitely of subscribe to the narrow gate podcasts. Listen to gary moore. You can tell that he is such a vibrant voice to listen to and you'll definitely appreciate that if there's anybody else you think i should reach out to interview. Please go to leading saints contact. We have a lot of names that come in but that doesn't mean we should slow down the names that are coming in. Please let us know if there's individuals we reach out to. That's how i got connected with. Gary miller and i'm so glad i did. My life has been blessed. I hope your life is an blessed as well and remind you once again to text. The word lead to four seven four seven four seven in order to subscribe to the leading saints weekly newsletter. It came as a result of the position of leadership which was imposed upon us. I the god of heaven who brought forth a restoration of the gospel of jesus christ was made concerning the own only true and living church upon the face of the earth. We were immediately put in a position of loneliness loneliness of leadership from which we cannot shrink nor runaway and a which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.